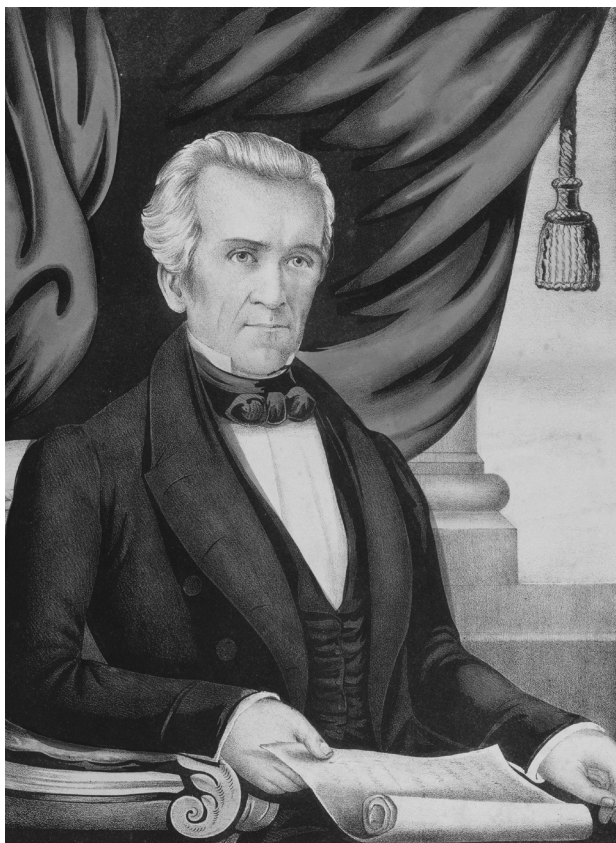


Correspondence of James K. Polk

VOLUME XII, JANUARY–JULY 1847



JAMES K. POLK

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Correspondence of
JAMES K. POLK

Volume XII
January–July 1847

TOM CHAFFIN
MICHAEL DAVID COHEN
Editors

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To

*K. Jack Bauer, William Dusingberre, Eugene Irving McCormac,
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pioneering scholars of Polk and his era*

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TOM CHAFFIN
EDITOR, *CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES K. POLK*

INTRODUCTION

Arguably, more than any other individual in U.S. history, President James K. Polk bears responsibility for shaping the boundaries of today's continental United States. By now, those boundaries have become so familiar, so accepted, so enshrined on maps, that it becomes difficult to imagine a time when they were still in flux, subject to fierce debates, and lacking the universal acceptance they now enjoy.

In their day, President Polk's territorial initiatives—in the Oregon Country, since 1818 under “joint occupation” by the United States and the United Kingdom; in Texas, at the time Polk assumed office still claimed by Mexico; and in Mexico's provinces of New Mexico and California—triggered corrosive exchanges.¹ An irony, however, generally unremarked upon, then and now, attended the waning of those debates. By mid-1848, Polk's acquisitions had given the United States a coast-to-coast breadth, rendering it truly a continental nation-state. But, over the coming years, as the new boundaries found their way onto maps, controversies about where they ran evaporated like water in the Death Valley sink.

Thirteen years after Polk's actions, the United States fought a civil war over how to fill the new lands and, more broadly, over slavery's future throughout the nation. But, during Polk's day and since, no American politician, liberal or conservative, with serious hopes of winning an election, has suggested returning California and New Mexico to Mexico, or the southern portion of the Oregon Country—modern America's Pacific Northwest—to the United Kingdom. As historian George Pierce Garrison observed in 1906, a half century after Polk left the presidency, “There are few in this day, even of those who condemn the methods of Polk, that would be willing to see his work undone.”²

Then again, while debates over the breadth of Polk's acquisitions died long ago, disputes that surrounded other aspects of his presidency

never entirely disappeared; perhaps, due to recent tribulations, they have even gained renewed force. In legacy if not in name, Polk still weighs upon us. The response of public officials, in 1998, to the sesquicentennial of his 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—by which California and other Western realms became U.S. territory—underscored his legacy's still combustible properties. Public officials on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line routinely, and often boisterously, mark anniversaries associated with the American Civil War. But as 1998 approached, officials in California, New Mexico, and other Western climes that had entered the Union as part of the 1848 Mexican Cession deemed the Treaty—and, by implication, Polk's legacy—too divisive for public celebration. For the most part, they let the anniversary pass without fanfare.

Still more recently, as this is written in the early twenty-first century, echoes of Polk-era debates resonate in contemporary conversations concerning people of Mexican heritage north of the Rio Grande; the propriety of American foreign wars that lead to troublesome occupations; and, more broadly, the growing pains of a federal union that, forsaking its Anglo-Saxon self-image of Polk's era, increasingly acknowledges a wide range of ethnic identities.

Among its other purposes, then, consider this volume—letters to and from President Polk, from January to July 1847, most published here for the first time—as part of an effort to recover, more fully and accurately, those lost debates of the 1840s. The *Correspondence of James K. Polk* does not update or replace any past edition of Polk's letters. It is the only series devoted to publishing the correspondence of the eleventh president of the United States.

Born in North Carolina in 1795, James K. Polk moved with his family to Tennessee while he was still a boy. There, in the town of Columbia, growing up as the son of a prosperous farmer, merchant, and land speculator, Polk spent his formative years. Beginning in 1813, he studied for two years at private academies near Columbia before leaving for the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. There his studies included mathematics, classical literature and languages, and natural and moral philosophy.³ After graduating in 1818, Polk returned to Columbia, where he began successful careers as a trial lawyer and in politics. In 1824, he married Sarah Childress, the refined daughter of a prosperous Tennessee planter and businessman. Polk eventually became a protégé of fellow Tennessean Andrew Jackson—and was thus dubbed “Young Hickory” in reference to his relationship with “Old Hickory.” He rose quickly in state and federal politics. Between 1823 and his death in 1849, Polk served as a member of the state legislature (1823–25), as a

member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1825–39), as chairman of that body's Ways and Means Committee (1833–35), as its Speaker (1835–39), and as governor of Tennessee (1839–41).

In 1841 and 1843, Polk lost races to regain his job as Tennessee's governor. With his political career stalled, allies in 1844 began exploring ways to elevate him to the number-two spot on that year's Democratic presidential ticket. As the national convention approached, former president Martin Van Buren seemed the likely nominee. But when Van Buren's opponents managed to retain a rule, from earlier conventions, that required the nominee to win a two-thirds majority of the delegates, Van Buren's chance faded. In the wake of his candidacy's collapse and, successively, those of several others, the convention seemed stymied. Not until the convention's ninth ballot was the nominee, James K. Polk, chosen. With allies in both the North and South, the Tennessean had emerged as the compromise candidate. It was an unexpected feat, one widely believed to have occasioned the first usage in presidential politics of the term "dark horse" candidate. In the November election, Polk narrowly defeated the Whig party nominee, Kentuckian Henry Clay. In the popular vote, Polk beat Clay by less than 2 percent; in the electoral college, he won by a 170-to-105 margin.⁴ In March 1845, when Polk took the oath of office, he became, at forty-nine, the youngest man at that time to have assumed the American presidency.

Among the narratives that inhabit the correspondence gathered in this volume, none carry more urgency than those concerning the Mexican War. Between January and July 1847, the president's supporters thrilled as names such as Buena Vista, Veracruz, Cerro Gordo, and Tabasco trumpeted by the era's penny press, became landmarks of the triumph of American arms. In July, the conflict's final engagements and the diplomacy that would shape the war's *dénouement* lay months away. But, heedless of Whig critics, the administration was already pondering the size of the war's territorial spoils for the United States.⁵

The fuse that led to the shooting war had been lit by Polk's predecessor, John Tyler. On February 28, 1845, four days before Polk took office, Congress, at President Tyler's behest, passed a joint resolution extending the Republic of Texas a long-sought invitation to apply for U.S. annexation. Predictably, Mexican officials condemned Congress's action. They disputed the border claimed by Texas; the Republic expansively claimed all land north and east of the Rio Grande, whereas Mexico regarded the more northerly Nueces River as Texas's boundary. Raising tensions still higher, Mexico had never officially recognized Texas's independence—and had vowed that U.S. annexation of the contested realm would be regarded as a belligerent action against Mexico.

Disregarding those concerns, Texas, on December 29, 1845, at least in the eyes of officials in Austin and Washington, was formally accorded U.S. statehood. Weeks earlier, in his First Annual Message to Congress, Polk, wary of European interference in the U.S. annexation of Texas, had reached back to President James Monroe's Seventh Annual Message to Congress (1823). Quoting Monroe, Polk—presenting U.S. expansionism in anti-colonial language—declared, “The American continents . . . are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.” That fall, Polk applied to Monroe's admonition the term by which, shorn of the honorific and its possessive form, it has henceforth been known: “Mr. Monroe's doctrine.”⁶

Half a year later, in April 1846, came an alleged attack on U.S. soldiers by Mexican troops near the mouth of the Rio Grande, in the disputed border region between Texas and Mexico. In May, Congress, at Polk's behest, declared war on Mexico. The president's enemies—anti-war Whigs and Democrats, abolitionists, and assorted opponents of the spread of slavery—were outraged by the declaration. Three months later, and repeatedly over the next two years, Pennsylvania congressman David Wilmot and other members of Congress introduced legislation to ban slavery in any territory won through the war. The legislation, soon called the Wilmot Proviso, passed the House several times, but failed to win Senate passage.

Echoing the outrage of Americans who opposed the conflict, the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, lecturing in England in September 1847, assayed the morality of a war against a republic that, upon its founding in 1821, had outlawed slavery. America, he inveighed, was “now seeking to perpetuate and extend the conquests of slavery, and waging a bloody war with Mexico that she may establish slavery on a soil where a semi-barbarous people had the humanity to put an end to it.”⁷

For President Polk and his cabinet, however, the war declaration of May 1846 had marked a heady moment. The administration at that time was close to concluding negotiations that would extend Old Glory's dominion to the Pacific coast. In June 1846, a treaty negotiated by Secretary of State James Buchanan and British minister Sir Richard Pakenham resolved long-simmering geopolitical rivalries between the United States and the United Kingdom over the vast Oregon Country: Britain retained title to the area now occupied by Canada's province of British Columbia, and Uncle Sam acquired exclusive title to a sprawling domain that included all of the area occupied by today's states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho and the western portions of Montana and Wyoming. Put another way, except for a southerly dip near the border's western terminus that allowed Britain to retain Vancouver Island,

the two countries agreed to divide the Oregon Country along the 49th parallel, which forms today's U.S.-Canada border. By a U.S.-U.K. treaty in 1818, the 49th parallel had already been established as the border between the two countries from Minnesota to the Rocky Mountains. And with the Buchanan-Pakenham Treaty of 1846, that line, with the single aforementioned exception, was extended westerly across the continent.

Emboldened by that outcome, Polk and his supporters, seizing on the alleged provocation near the mouth of the Rio Grande but acting on an earlier-contemplated option, settled on war with Mexico as a means by which the United States might secure its claim on Texas and, as policy objectives evolved, acquire the entirety of Mexico's sparsely settled northern frontier. That territory included, in addition to Texas, Mexico's provinces of California and New Mexico, the latter a vaguely defined realm that included all of today's state of New Mexico and much of the rest of the Lower 48's Southwest. Eventually, in 1848, by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between the United States and Mexico, the president secured all of those lands.⁸

In January 1847, when the letters in this volume commence, Polk stands two months shy of the chronological halfway mark of his four-year presidential term. Typically first-term presidents facing that milestone are preoccupied with reelection strategies. But not the fifty-one-year-old Tennessean. As a candidate, Polk—matching a promise made by his Whig opponent Clay—had forsworn a second term; if elected, he had promised, his turn in the White House would be for four years, and four years only.

Thus, from one perspective, the new president had begun his administration already a lame duck. In March 1845, when Polk took office, friends, enemies, and rivals alike—Democrats and Whigs—knew, barring unforeseen events, exactly how many days remained in his presidency. Accordingly, as the days passed, they could gage with precision Polk's ostensibly dwindling powers to reward or punish. But, from another vantage, candidate Polk's no-second-term promise gave him a singular advantage: having no need to go back to voters to win a second term, he was free to pursue his policies unconstrained by the circumspections that inhibit a president who knows he must again face the electorate.

A glass half full or half empty? The metaphor ill suits a man of such abstemious habits. Nonetheless, cumulatively, the letters in this volume suggest—at least from this historian's vantage—that Polk and his cabinet viewed his presidency, at its midpoint, as a half-full glass. That spirit of exaltation propels a letter he wrote in January 1847 to George Bancroft, his ambassador to the Court of St. James:

For myself, I rejoice that I am under no circumstances to be before the Country for re-election. This determination is irrevocable. Personally—therefore I have no interest, in the question of the succession, but I most ardently desire to maintain the ascendancy of my political principles, and to hand over the Government, at the close of my term, to a successor of my own political faith.⁹

In words and actions, Polk seems emboldened, not hindered, by his one-term pledge. Indeed, if anything, as the missive to Bancroft suggests, the promise added an urgency—and vigor—to his ever-dwindling days in office. Beyond that, his letters herein indicate no wavering on his one-term pledge.

Then and now, Polk's diplomatic achievement in Oregon and his military successes in Mexico, actions that won plaudits from leaders both domestic and foreign, have placed an aura of invincibility over his presidency. Conventional wisdom associates that presidency, indeed Polk's very name, with "Manifest Destiny." The locution was coined in 1845 by journalist John O'Sullivan: "our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions."¹⁰ Soon popularized by the era's penny press, Manifest Destiny never received a precise definition. A Procrustean phrase, more often invoked in its day by those selling newspapers than by policymakers, it came to refer to an unbridled, in most cases east-to-west, U.S. expansionism ordained by a Protestant, Anglo-Saxon God. That most of the lands eyed for conquest were home to native peoples and other non-Anglo-Saxon populations mattered little to Manifest Destiny's adherents. Nor, for that matter, did settlement associated with such movement always proceed from east to west. Often, as with those Texas-bound, many moved from northeast to southwest; in California, with many arrivals coming via the Pacific, newcomers often moved from west to east.

Polk achieved most, but not all, of the expansionist projects sought by Manifest Destiny's advocates. As a candidate, he had run on a party platform that pledged to fight for a northern U.S. border in the Oregon County that stretched deep into today's British Columbia. "Fifty-four Forty or Fight" zealots—whose trademark phrase, though often since linked to Polk's campaign, did not come into use until a year into his term¹¹—were thus crestfallen when as president he agreed, in 1846, to a treaty that settled for today's U.S.-Canada border. U.S. expansionists who favored acquisition of the entirety of Mexico and the island of Cuba were similarly disappointed. But, in the end, Polk's successes won wide approval and were celebrated, in often florid language, by politicians

and writers; “I skirt the sierras,” rhapsodized Walt Whitman, “my palms cover continents.” Henry David Thoreau famously refused to pay a tax because of his opposition to the war, an act that landed him in jail. But over time, poetically if not politically, even he could not resist the spell: “Eastward I go only by force,” Thoreau eventually wrote, “but westward I go free.”¹² Truth be known, however, the hard-headed president—skeptical of public enthusiasms and not particularly religious—never fully succumbed to the vapors of Manifest Destiny.

Letters herein to family members and those penned as he conducted a brief sentimental journey to his alma mater, the University of North Carolina, evoke a softer, even solicitous, side to the president. However heavily the duties of office occupied his time, family and friends remained important to him. Of the North Carolina visit’s first day, in fact, he recorded in his diary, “I have never spent a more pleasant or delightful afternoon & evening.”¹³

By the time Polk became president, his mane of once-black hair had faded to grey. Of medium height with a high forehead and a prominent nose, he was an introvert who nonetheless adapted to the demands of the two professions, trial lawyer and politician, that became his life work. During his early years, Polk’s rhetorical skills reputedly won him the sobriquet “Napoleon of the Stump.”¹⁴ Even so, when he could, particularly as president, Polk avoided public events, declined invitations, and shunned prospective visitors. But when necessity called, he rose to the occasion. Dutifully, twice a week, at noon on Tuesday and Saturday, he met with his cabinet. And, as the nation’s leader, he set aside two evenings each week during which citizens could visit the White House and air concerns to their president.¹⁵ Likewise, the correspondence’s window on the Polk domestic tableau reveals, by Victorian standards, a tender and equable relationship between him and his spouse, Sarah Polk, an able woman possessed of an advanced education and formidable intelligence, whose counsel, in business and politics, he often sought. The Polks had no children, but the portrait of their White House life that emerges in the letters is further softened by a retinue of nieces and nephews from Tennessee, who often stayed for extended visits.

Even so, in most cases, in words and deeds, Polk presented a coldly formal, no-nonsense persona to the world. And that approach, more than sentimental interludes with family and college memories, precluded his adoption of the Western fervor of O’Sullivan and other contemporaries. In fact, so far as we know, Polk never uttered or penned the phrase “Manifest Destiny.” Not for this pragmatic politician the bombastic rhetoric that issued from such a gaseous notion. Rather, each

expansionist project Polk undertook was designed to appeal to specific constituencies—Texas, for instance, to Southern planters and aspirant pioneers from that region; Oregon and California to, among others, mid-Atlantic and New England commercial and maritime interests, as well as aspirant emigrants from that day’s “Northwest,” today’s Midwest.

Privately and publicly, however naively in retrospect, Polk always insisted that whether acquired territories permitted or banned slavery was a separate issue, subordinate to the national interest of expanding America’s geographic breadth and furthering “the Union.” An August 10, 1846, diary entry bears witness to that attitude. The entry concerns a measure adopted days earlier by the House of Representatives. Soon known as the Wilmot Proviso, the amendment to a funding bill sought to ban slavery in any territory acquired from Mexico. Polk dismisses the amendment as “mischievous & foolish”: “What connection slavery had with making peace with Mexico it is difficult to conceive.”

Eight months later, he was equally dismissive toward efforts to leave California and Oregon open to slavery. In April 1847, opposing an effort by John C. Calhoun to leave the latter open to the peculiar institution, Polk suspected the South Carolinian of pandering to Southern slaveholders to advance presidential aspirations: “He is wholly selfish, & I am satisfied has no patriotism.” From Polk’s viewpoint, pro- and anti-slavery partisans alike were exploiting the issue of slavery for political gain: “Both desire to mount slavery as a hobby, and hope to secure the election of their favorite upon it.”¹⁶

Those attitudes notwithstanding, Polk, in his quest for new lands, was also sufficiently aware of political exigencies to, by his lights, balance acquisitions of slave and free territories. Polk, during his presidency, often produced bolder results than those achieved by his idol Andrew Jackson during *his* White House turn. (Jackson, for instance, failed in his efforts to annex Texas.) But, then again, as Polk biographer Charles Sellers has observed, Young Hickory, brought to the presidency by the barest of electoral margins, remained ever aware that he lacked the mandate—“the public confidence”—that Old Hickory and other presidents had brought to that office. Indeed, Polk, in his quest for the White House, had failed to secure a popular majority in the general election—having squeaked into office with 49.54 percent of the popular vote.¹⁷

Husbanding his political capital, Polk thus propelled his expansionist initiatives successively, not simultaneously. (More particularly, he wanted to avoid a two-front war, fighting Mexico and the United Kingdom simultaneously.) Far from being unbridled in time and space, each annexation project Polk undertook was discrete, limited in scope,

and bound by considerations of practical politics.¹⁸ Readers coming to Polk's letters in search of musings à la Thomas Jefferson on philosophy, the arts, and literature, expressed with the literary flourishes of an eighteenth-century *philosophe*, will come away disappointed. But those who seek to witness the actions at work of a Machiavellian political maestro will find precisely those.

Ironies abound. Historians associate Polk with giving the United States its modern coast-to-coast breadth, and today his name resonates in myriad place names west of the Mississippi. But those associations notwithstanding, this president who dispatched explorer John C. Frémont's Third Expedition into the West, and who subsequently brought that realm under U.S. dominion, had scant intellectual curiosity about the region. He never personally ventured into the trans-Missouri frontier or to the Pacific coast. Indeed, Frémont's father-in-law, Senator Thomas H. Benton, not Polk, was, as he had been for earlier presidents, the intellectual architect of the Polk administration's Far Western policies.¹⁹

For that matter, Polk seldom strayed far from Tennessee or Washington. During his entire lifetime, he never traveled abroad. His summer 1847 tour of New England, conducted during the period covered by this volume, represented his single foray into that region. On the eve of that outing, he wrote to an associate, "After my constant confinement here for more than two years, with the exception of less than a week, last summer, I feel that some little respite from my public labours and cares, will be proper, if not necessary."²⁰

The avoidance of travel went beyond affections for home and hearth. Polk was devoted to the work of governance. Despite frequent health woes, he possessed a work ethic of the same magnitude as that of, say, Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Edison. Indeed, for defensible reasons, he saw himself as indispensable to the competent running of state affairs. One may contest his policies and the results they produced. But Polk's intelligence, discretion, and political acumen—lapses notwithstanding—are indisputable. At his best, he conducted himself as the formidable chess-master who, in his head, plays multiple moves ahead of his opponents.

Similar to British prime minister Robert Peel, among his contemporary counterparts on the Atlantic's far side,²¹ Polk often circumvented cabinet officers. When something he deemed truly important required tending, he often saw himself as the best man for the job and otherwise supervised subordinates closely. To his diary, the president confided, "I prefer to supervise the whole operations of the Government myself rather than entrust the public business to subordinates, and this makes

my duties very great.”²² A tireless worker, Polk had few if any hobbies or outside interests. Indeed, as my colleague Michael Cohen recently remarked, Polk’s sole recreation seems to have been, fortunately for present purposes, keeping up with correspondence.

Just as Polk’s successes eventually quelled debates about his methods, so his association—however ill founded—with the hyperbole of Manifest Destiny, along with his triumphs in expanding America’s territorial bounty, have obscured ironies and outright disappointments that attended his turn in office. Disappointments included his administration’s failure, despite vigorous efforts, to win statehood for California and to establish a territorial government for New Mexico. Those tasks would be left for successor presidents and not resolved until the Compromise of 1850—itself a fragile piece of political handiwork that, in the end, provided only a brief surcease to vexations resultant of the Mexican Cession of 1848. Indeed, simmering debates over the future of slavery in the United States—debates brought to a boil by the Mexican Cession—eventually produced perhaps the central irony of Polk’s legacy: a president ostensibly devoted to U.S. nationalism ultimately, in the view of many historians, sectionalized the nation’s politics, creating a geographical fracturing that soon led to bloody civil war.

Similarly, Polk presided over an era of intense technological innovation in America. Emblematic of that progress, his nomination in 1844 was the first major news story reported by telegraph. He was also the first sitting president to be photographed in the White House. Commensurate with that era’s spirit, Polk’s presidency made its share of improvements to the nation’s domestic life. Following the lead of Prime Minister Robert Peel’s ministry, Postmaster General Cave Johnson introduced America’s first postage stamp. Until then, recipients of mail had borne the burden of paying postage due; postage stamps thus simplified and streamlined communications. Polk’s first navy secretary, George Bancroft, established the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, an act of far-reaching consequences in modernizing and expanding the global reach of the nation’s maritime force. Likewise, Polk’s establishment of an Independent Treasury (his preferred term was “constitutional treasury”) removed federal funds from the often-unstable and corrupt but politically connected private banks that, when Polk came to office, were being used to receive surplus federal funds. The Independent Treasury Act of 1846, reviving a short-lived practice from Van Buren’s presidency, mandated that henceforth all federal funds were to be kept, not in private state banks or national corporations, but in vaults owned by the federal government. Consistent with Polk’s Jacksonian convictions, all transactions were

to be conducted in hard money. Although eclipsed by national banks established during the Civil War, the Independent Treasury remained in operation until 1913, when it was replaced by the Federal Reserve System. Polk's support for the Independent Treasury is telling. In banking, as in other matters, he opposed his longtime Whig opponent Henry Clay's "American System," a program that favored protectionist tariffs, centralized control of banking and currency, and federal support for public infrastructure—"internal improvements."

By recovering lost debates and providing more background on familiar topics, the letters contained in this volume thus lift the veil on a more complex story than many earlier historians have envisioned: a president and administration with policies driven by a broad range of concerns. The correspondence reveals that even triumphs often led to vexations and unintended consequences.

Why such scant attention to those lost debates, little-known results, and unintended consequences? During much of the twentieth century and continuing into the twenty-first, a widely quoted anecdote has bolstered Polk's reputation as a politician of set goals and a master of outcomes. The anecdote portrays Polk, around the time of his inauguration, as having "raised his hand high in the air." Then, "bringing it down with force on his thigh," Polk enumerates what he predicts will be the "four great measures" of his administration: the acquisition of some or all of the Oregon Country, the acquisition of California, a reduction in tariffs (to stimulate free trade), and the permanent establishment of the aforementioned Independent Treasury. In four years, Polk accomplished all four objectives.

The thigh-slapping anecdote comes from Massachusetts-born teacher, politician, and historian George Bancroft (1800–1891). A graduate of Harvard College who pursued post-graduate studies in Germany, Bancroft devoted most of his professional career to writing books chronicling U.S. colonial history. His books sold well and made him successful and wealthy. Intermittently, Bancroft also pursued careers in politics and, later in life, in diplomacy. A Democrat, the historian early on took a liking to Polk.

Indeed, over the coming years, the barely-traveled Tennessean—learned but of austere habits and few interests outside of work—and the worldly, dandyish polyglot made an odd pairing. In 1840, Bancroft had numbered among those who sought, unsuccessfully, to make Polk that year's Democratic nominee for vice president. Four years later, Bancroft's advocacy of the Tennessean proved more successful. After helping Polk secure the Democratic presidential nomination in 1844

and, months later, win the general election, Bancroft, at age forty-four, began his service to the new president. In March 1845, Bancroft became navy secretary; and, in September 1846, he became minister to the United Kingdom.

Bancroft's thigh-slapping anecdote made an early—perhaps its earliest—appearance in a typescript entitled “Biographical sketch of James K. Polk” (c. late 1880s), now among Bancroft's papers at the New York Public Library. In an addendum to an article on Polk, published in *Appletons' Cyclopædia of American Biography* (1888), Bancroft, though he does not repeat the anecdote, nonetheless praises his former boss thusly: “His administration, viewed from the standpoint of results, was perhaps the greatest in our national history, certainly one of the greatest.”²³

In 1889, Bancroft's thigh-slapping story—ostensibly presenting the most ambitious to-do list in U.S. history—was repeated, with slight variations, in historian James Schouler's *History of the United States of America, under the Constitution*. As he indicates in a footnote, Schouler learned the story from a February 1887 letter from Bancroft. After repeating the anecdote, Schouler, borrowing almost verbatim a passage from Bancroft's letter, concludes, “And history should record that Polk entered on his official duties with the immovable purpose of carrying every one of these measures into effect, and before his term had ended accomplished them all.”²⁴ Further ratifying the anecdote, Eugene Irving McCormac recounted it in his 1922 book *James K. Polk: A Political Biography*, the first full-fledged modern study of the Polk presidency; McCormac thus stamped upon Bancroft's foggy recollection what seemed to be an imprimatur of solid provenance. McCormac concluded his study, “No other president took his task more seriously nor spent his energies more freely for his country; and few, indeed, have done more to increase the power and prestige of the nation.”²⁵

Echoing Bancroft, Schouler, and McCormac, many, though not all, subsequent U.S. historians have accorded Polk's presidency similarly favorable assessments. Most of those have repeated the anecdote or, minimally, assumed its core premise, that Polk devoted his presidency to achieving the anecdote's four goals. In 1948, Arthur M. Schlesinger asked prominent historians to rank all U.S. presidents by their performance as chief executive. When their responses were averaged, Polk finished in tenth place. “Polk set himself certain precise objectives to be achieved while he was President, and achieve them he did,” wrote Schlesinger approvingly. When Schlesinger repeated the exercise in 1962, Polk fared even better, finishing eighth. When his son, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., repeated the exercise in 1996, Polk finished at number nine.²⁶

"A great President," Harry S. Truman remarked of Polk. "Said what he intended to do and did it."²⁷ Indeed, the alleged presidential pronouncement of four goals—with and without the thigh slap—has become so ubiquitous that it has found its way into U.S. history textbooks and, in at least one case, into the lyrics of a popular song.²⁸ But this continual recounting of the anecdote and Polk's consequent high ratings come in spite of many historians' belief that Polk's policies led irrevocably to the American Civil War, the conflict that ensued a dozen years after he departed Washington. Furthermore, the letters in this volume, as noted above, tell a more complex story of Polk's administration than does Bancroft's anecdote.

What is going on here?

For starters, as it turns out, Bancroft's presidential thigh-slapping anecdote hangs by the thinnest of evidentiary threads. So far as is known, Bancroft did not write of Polk's enumeration-of-goals pronouncement until the late 1880s—four decades after Polk's presidency.

As the nineteenth century waned, so too did Polk's reputation. Many historians came to view the Mexican War as having led to the American Civil War. Mostly, however, Polk's presidency settled into obscurity. Polk had hoped that his war secretary, William L. Marcy, would write a history of the administration, but Marcy ultimately declined.²⁹ And those historians who did recount the Mexican War and other events of the era tended to rely mainly on Whig sources; to the degree that Polk was mentioned at all in such accounts, he was portrayed as a surrogate for others. In 1922, McCormac, complaining of such depictions, lamented that they tended to view Polk as the "mere tool of more capable intriguers." In the end, McCormac asserted, "the president was not even given the credit usually accorded to a successful conspirator."³⁰

During the 1880s, Bancroft—as the only surviving member of Polk's cabinet—felt a personal sting in the charges against Polk, as well as the neglect otherwise accorded the late president. According to Bancroft biographer Lilian Handlin, the historian genuinely believed that policies enacted by his former boss had richly benefitted the nation and even led to the Union's ultimate triumph in 1865. Thus, during the 1880s, Bancroft resolved to act on a long-contemplated plan of writing a biography of Polk, a work intended to vindicate its subject against neglect by historians and the rising chorus of critics.

In the end, Bancroft's failing energy and memory prevented the completion of the Polk biography and other projects he began during those years, including a biography of Shakespeare and an essay on Milton. The resolve to write a Polk apologia produced few results—mainly the article published in *Appletons' Cyclopædia* and the

never-published typescript in which Bancroft presented the thigh-slapping anecdote.³¹

In that typescript's recounting of the alleged incident, Bancroft balks at asserting that he himself heard Polk make the pronouncement; he states only that it was made in the presence of "one of those whom he had selected for one of the departments of the government." In his February 1887 letter to Schouler, however, Bancroft presents himself as the source of the anecdote ("In a private conversation of President Polk with me . . ."). Bancroft's cageyness about the source of the anecdote, forty years after the fact, seems odd. If he were witness to the pronouncement, why the hesitancy to declare that fact? Any pledge of confidentiality given by Bancroft to Polk, after all, would have been breached by Bancroft's own disclosure of the story. Besides, why would Polk require—and Bancroft feel bound to maintain—any pledge of confidentiality on a story so flattering to Polk?

Chronological inconsistencies also dog Bancroft's account of the conversation. In the first of its two recountings in his unpublished Polk typescript, Bancroft dates the conversation as having occurred "after" Polk's inauguration; in its second recounting in that same document, Bancroft places the moment "just before the inauguration." In the letter to Schouler, Bancroft sets the conversation "soon after he had taken the oath of office." Of course, historians rarely have unimpeachable sources, and witnesses to historical events cannot be expected to be able to withstand the sort of rigorous cross-examination to which a skilled lawyer, during a trial, subjects a witness for the opposing side. Nonetheless, even if one accepts the notion that Bancroft was making a good-faith effort to recall, as best he could, a long-ago incident, such inconsistencies hardly inspire confidence in the octogenarian's powers of recollection.

Beyond those circumstances, no recounting of or allusion to the incident—or any similar summation of policy goals—appears in Polk's diary. Admittedly, Polk's diary begins in late August 1845, five months after he took office. But, then again, no references to such presidential foresight appear in his correspondence thus far surveyed by this series's current editors. Nor have we located accounts of or allusions to the pronouncement in any other Polk-related contemporary documents.³²

Also curious is the anecdote's omission of Texas. It was Polk who completed Texas's annexation to the United States, and by any measure that action ranks as one of his presidency's major achievements. Equally curious is the explanation that Bancroft offers, in his "Biographical sketch of James K. Polk" typescript, for Texas's omission in the anecdote's list of presidential goals.

According to Bancroft, Polk had no reason to list Texas's annexation as one of his "measures" because that annexation was finished business when the Tennessean began his presidency. "Every vote that had been given him had been a vote in favor of the annexation of Texas, and as he was elected that matter had already been provided for and was in fact the achievement of his party under the lead of his name, as the candidate for the presidency for the next four years."³³

It is true that Polk had run on a pledge to annex Texas and that his electoral victory had prodded incumbent president John Tyler into action on the matter. But Texas, in March 1845, when Polk took office, was anything but a *fait accompli*—by no stretch of the imagination had "that matter . . . already been provided for." Indeed, before and after Polk took office, Texas ranked among his most pressing challenges in both domestic and foreign policy. In February 1845, North Carolina U.S. senator Willie P. Mangum wrote to an associate, "The arrival of the President elect has given a powerful impulse to party action on this subject.- He is for Texas, Texas, Texas; & talks of but little else."

At that juncture, domestic debates still raged over rival congressional actions concerning Texas. Measures addressed ongoing debates over Texas's borders, whether it should be admitted as a free or a slave state, and whether it should be divided and admitted into the Union as four new states. Beyond those questions, how should the United States deal with Mexico? Should the annexation simply be announced to the republic to the south? Or should U.S. diplomats be dispatched to Mexico City to negotiate terms? Sharpening concerns, many in Washington worried about ongoing British and French intrigues in Texas, as well as fears of a Mexican invasion of that republic.³⁴

Polk eventually clarified Texas's status as a new state in the Union. But the means he took to resolve the matter and its consequences, a new slave state and a war, both exacerbating North-South sectional tensions, sparked controversy. Debates raged during Polk's day and well into the 1880s, when Bancroft presented the thigh-slapping anecdote. But—again—in Bancroft's anecdote, Polk makes no mention of Texas. Instead, in its sole nod to the Mexican Cession that eventually emerged from the Mexican War, it lists a less-controversial consequence of that conflict, the U.S. acquisition of California, which eventually entered the Union as a free state in 1850. Thus, to this historian's ear, the construction, with its avoidance of Texas and Mexico but its inclusion of California, gives the ostensibly spontaneous moment of presidential bravado a studied *ex post facto* feel.

Those caveats notwithstanding, since Bancroft first recounted Polk's alleged enunciation, the bold pronouncement of goals has entered

presidential lore. Repeated ad infinitum in U.S. history textbooks, it has become U.S. political history's equivalent of Babe Ruth's called home run of the 1932 World Series.³⁵

Of course, a negative cannot be proven, and more credible evidence supporting the anecdote may yet be located. But given the astonishing powers of presidential prescience depicted, it begs credulity to believe that other contemporaries—Polk himself, his friends and family, and other advisors—would not have recounted the incident early on, widely and frequently. But, again, we know of no contemporary letter where the anecdote appears. Nor does it appear in any of three Polk eulogies surveyed by this historian, tributes penned by prominent citizens and published in the wake of his death.³⁶

Likewise, the anecdote makes no appearance in the first full accounts of, respectively, Polk's administration and his life, Lucien B. Chase's *History of the Polk Administration* and John S. Jenkins's *Life of James Knox Polk, Late President of the United States*, both generally adulatory and published in 1850.³⁷ Nor, for that matter, as noted above, does Bancroft himself recount the incident in the article on Polk in *Appletons' Cyclopædia*.

The anecdote's origin and its insinuation into accepted history evoke an exchange from director John Ford's morality tale of the Old West, the 1962 film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. A veteran small-town newspaper editor is preparing a story on the killing of a gun-slinging outlaw who has long tormented the frontier community. Around town, credit—and attendant glory—for the killing has gone to the wrong man. The editor knows the true killer's identity, and is asked if the story he is about to publish will correct the error. "No, sir," he answers. "This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."

Over the years, Bancroft's legend has become fact, and many historians have printed it. To be sure, Polk did accomplish the four objectives enumerated in the anecdote. That cannot be denied. Nor can the magnitude of his achievement in increasing the nation's area by a third. The point here is neither to diminish Polk's presidency nor to categorically refute the provenance of the anecdote concerning his early enunciation of presidential goals. Indeed, shorn of the anecdote's theatrics, a case, equally potent, could still be made for Polk as a shrewdly transformative president, one whose political acumen increased not only the size of the country, but also the powers of the executive branch. In many ways, he extended and regularized, in theory and practice, Andrew Jackson's enhanced conception of presidential powers. More than any of his predecessors, Polk, to enhance his office's influence, exalted the use of the

presidential veto and annual messages to Congress. He also, more than his predecessors, coordinated and oversaw the diverse departments of the executive branch and, informally, wielded his presidential powers to recommend legislation to Congress. Coincidentally but, in retrospect, appropriately, it was during Polk's administration that an old British tune—by then known as “Hail to the Chief”—became a fixture of presidential protocol.³⁸

Emblematic of Polk's presidential daring was the aplomb with which he essentially usurped the right, mandated by the U.S. Constitution, of Congress to declare war. As Polk biographer Walter R. Borneman observed, President James Madison, in seeking a war declaration from Congress for what became known as the War of 1812, was, as the Constitution's architect, keenly aware of that document's separation-of-powers doctrine and the executive branch's limits within that arrangement. Madison thus agonized over the war declaration and patiently accepted weeks of congressional debate before its passage. Polk, by contrast, in May 1846, aggressively petitioned Congress for a war measure against Mexico with a bellicose message that presented the conflict as a *fait accompli*: “the two nations are now at war.” The House approved the war measure after two hours of debate; the Senate took a day longer. Similarly, in prosecuting the subsequent conflict, Polk displayed a level of presidential involvement in war policies then unprecedented in U.S. history but later repeated during the administrations of Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt.³⁹

The salient point is that the Bancroft anecdote, factual or not, has had the effect of narrowing the scope of scrutiny accorded Polk's presidency—in effect, allowing Polk (or Bancroft) to list and limit the events and objectives by which that presidency should be evaluated (the “measures” of his administration). To wit, even when Polk's actions have been criticized by historians, evaluations, favorable and otherwise, have tended to focus on the four objectives listed in the anecdote.

As a consequence, Bancroft's list, while ostensibly clarifying Polk's legacy, has, in fact, served to obscure it. Through its implicit endorsement of meeting set goals as a presidency's lone measure of success (Bancroft's “standpoint of results”), the anecdote has led historians to limit the scope of their assessment of Polk's term in office. Indeed, by their preoccupation with the goals enumerated in Bancroft's anecdote, historians have eschewed other yardsticks—moral, long-range, or both—that might have yielded deeper, broader assessments. Beyond that, by focusing on the finite goals enunciated in Bancroft's *ex post facto* anecdote, many historians have been led to neglect other, lesser-known and

less-successful, domestic and foreign-policy initiatives of his administration, as well as moments of confusion and indecision that eventually led to triumphs.

Begin with the Mexican War. Yes, Polk had forsworn a second term. But the war had barely begun when he came to suspect—wisely as it turned out—his two chief generals, the Whigs Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott, of harboring presidential ambitions.⁴⁰ That wariness increasingly led Polk, already possessed of autocratic tendencies, toward involvement in war-related matters of strategy and personnel usually eschewed by civilian officials and left to military leaders.⁴¹ (Polk's unsuccessful attempt, documented herein, to install his ally Senator Thomas H. Benton as commanding general, outranking Scott and Taylor, is at once fascinating reading and a cautionary tale of political hubris.)

By summer 1847, as Polk began his quest for a diplomatic end to the conflict, the usual chess-master had faltered. The letters suggest that, as the Mexican War entered its endgame, no grand, start-to-finish vision informed his war policy. Among questions to be resolved: how much of Mexico did the United States truly want to possess? And if, in resolving that question, the administration heeded the counsel of the "All Mexico" faction among congressional Democrats, what would be the consequences? What, Polk and others asked, would be the consequences to the United States—militarily, politically, economically, and culturally—of occupying the entirety of Mexico?

As had Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, and other U.S. leaders before them, Polk allies such as Thomas H. Benton and George Bancroft elaborated overarching theories of history and empires.⁴² But Polk himself declined lofty theorizing. Mostly—building on a longstanding, occasionally bipartisan, however intermittent, tradition of national territorial expansion—he saw opportunities. If he judged them practical, he plunged ahead. Practical politics, not abstract philosophy, was Polk's *métier*.

In 1847, as spring gave way to summer, the lines of authority between the president and his generals and diplomats in the field were almost as muddled as those among officials of the collapsing and rivalry-ridden Mexican state. And, looking beyond preoccupations with Mexico and Oregon, the letters hint at broader and often-overlooked U.S. expansionist interests under Polk—concerns that go unmentioned in the Bancroft anecdote—such as Hawaii, Cuba, and other Latin American climes. Likewise, correspondence herein reveals the administration's lively interest in European and British affairs, including Polk's personal interest in Ireland and the famine then ravaging the island. In

March 1847, he placed two U.S. Navy ships into civilian hands to transport to Ireland foodstuffs donated by private charities. Correspondence also bears witness to two often-overlooked triumphs closer to home that occurred on Polk's watch: statehood for Iowa (1846) and Wisconsin (1848).

Just as the correspondence reveals the entwinement of Polk's direction of the Mexican War with concerns over party politics, so too does it reveal preoccupations with domestic, political matters. Letters concerning upcoming political races show Polk and his far-flung supporters keeping a wary eye on Democratic fortunes across the country, from the upcoming 1848 presidential race to elections for state houses and the Congress. Beyond matters to be decided by voters, discussions of political-patronage appointments—from local postmasterships to diplomatic postings and customs-house jobs—also won his attention. The letters reveal a party leader determined to use the spoils of office to reward allies and to deny political opponents, Whig and Democratic, berths in the federal bureaucracy.

Another irony is that this intensely private man bequeathed to posterity one of the most vivid accounts ever left by a U.S. president of his time in office. That circumstance owes less to any commitment to transparency held by Polk than to sheer happenstance. When Polk left Washington in March 1849, he anticipated passing his remaining years in Tennessee, much as his idol Andrew Jackson had, as a revered long-surviving elder statesman of the Democratic party. Letters herein detail the purchase of and renovation plans for the Nashville mansion in which Polk expected to spend those post-presidency years. However, death, likely from cholera, three months after leaving the presidency, denied Polk that long retirement. (Indeed, his untimely death marked the briefest post-presidency retirement in U.S. history.) That early demise also denied Polk the opportunity to destroy or edit the diary he had kept for most of his presidency—a diary eventually published in 1910. Likewise, it denied Polk the opportunity to select the letters that eventually found their way into various archives. That circumstance increases the level of candor found throughout the entire corpus of Polk's correspondence. And, unlike other presidents, Polk left behind no offspring to cull the letters, to decide which to destroy and which to preserve for posterity. Moreover, so far as we can determine, none of the letters have been redacted or otherwise altered. Most of those in this series are now being published for the first time.

Finally, one other irony of Polk's legacy, on full display in this volume's letters, concerns the role historians have assigned him in fostering sectionalism. In 1846, Ralph Waldo Emerson warned, "The United

States will conquer Mexico, but it will be as the man swallows the arsenic, which brings him down in turn. Mexico will poison us."⁴³ By now, most historians have accepted the prescience of Emerson's warning. Most agree that Polk's war in Mexico (1846–48) exacerbated North-South sectional tensions that, over the intervening years, led to the secession crisis of 1860–61, which, in turn, sparked the American Civil War (1861–65). But that view, however valid, obscures how Polk and his supporters viewed themselves in the world as they found it.

Beyond political matters the correspondence, much of it concerning business affairs of his two plantations, also documents Polk the private businessman, intimately involved in the buying and selling of slaves. Polk harbored reservations concerning the moral efficacy of slavery. As a planter and businessman, however, he seldom acted on those qualms.⁴⁴ By contrast with that acquiescence to the institution of slavery, Polk, nominally Presbyterian—baptized a Methodist, but not until close to death—and a descendant of seventeenth-century Protestant (Ulster) emigrants to the United States, displayed a principled distaste for anti-Catholic bigotry and, as president, acted upon that conviction.⁴⁵

While Polk made no effort to hide the fact that he was a slaveholder, he did seek to conceal from the public the details of those business affairs, as well as the amount of time he spent during his presidency dealing with slave-trading. In a postscript to an 1847 letter to a Tennessee plantation manager, he warns,

I need scarcely repeat to you my former request that as my *private business* does not concern the public, you will keep it to yourself. There is a great disposition with many persons, to parade every thing connected with the President whether *private or not* before the public. This I do not desire shall be the case. *Majr. Childress* explained to you last year the propriety of this suggestion; & I repeat it now, but possibly you might not appreciate its importance. J.K.P.⁴⁶

Necessity obliged Polk to sustain Democratic party support—to keep political fences mended—on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. Thus, as much as possible, he sought to avoid growing North-South sectional tensions over slavery. More to the point, like his mentor Andrew Jackson, he strived to present himself as the quintessential Unionist.

By Polk's lights, dangers to national unity came primarily not from Southern slaveholders but from New England opponents of the South's slavery. From his vantage, the latter were challenging what he and his Southern allies defended as an institution sanctioned by custom and the U.S. Constitution. Polk and other Democrats also often repeated the

charge that it had been, not Southern slaveholders, but New England Federalists, forerunners of the Whigs, who had introduced the threat of secession into American politics. A motion to break away from the Union had been associated with the Hartford Convention, convened by New England Federalists to oppose the War of 1812. Hence, in 1847, a navy officer and political supporter took time off from war duty to warn President Polk, "In the Navy we have a great majority of federalists—old federalists of the Hartford Convention stamp who would like, honestly, to see the Union dissolved."⁴⁷ Indeed, underscoring Polk's commitment to national unity, among his first acts after becoming president was to have the Democratic party's Washington organ placed under new ownership and its name changed from the *Washington Globe* to the *Washington Union*.

As earlier noted, Polk harbored no particular curiosity about the then-barely-known Western topographies of California, Oregon, and the continental interior—realms that he had dispatched John Frémont to explore and that Polk ultimately brought under U.S. dominion. Tellingly, as president-elect in 1845, Polk had given short shrift to Frémont, freshly returned from the second of his three Western expeditions. Polk was dismissive when the explorer said that he knew from firsthand experience that major rivers indicated on a map before them were misrepresented. One, Frémont said—the Buenaventura, reputed to be the Mississippi of the West—did not even exist. The explorer recalled that the president-elect "found me 'young' and said something of the 'impulsiveness of young men,' and was not at all satisfied in his own mind that those rivers were not running there as laid down."⁴⁸

Even so, to the degree that regional identity swayed the president, he seems to have thought himself as much, perhaps more, a man of the West as of the South—though decidedly not Frémont's West. In a May 21, 1847, letter that appears in this volume, Polk recalls having moved as a child from his North Carolina birthplace to "the West"—the town of Columbia, Tennessee, south of Nashville.⁴⁹ As a successful young trial lawyer during the 1830s, Polk established a plantation near Somerville, in southwestern Tennessee, and soon, as an absentee landowner, purchased other properties in Arkansas and Mississippi. Perhaps, then, the phrase that best locates Polk's regional orientation, actual and by ambition, is the "Old Southwest," a designation of that era referring to climes west of the Appalachians, east of the Mississippi, and south of the Ohio River.

Beyond grand themes and topics of Polk's presidency—territorial expansion, foreign and tariff policies, internal improvements, political

patronage, Indian matters, slavery, and the like—the letters herein offer glimpses into other concerns and relationships too numerous to detail here. They include correspondence with inventors, entrepreneurs, editors and publishers and writers, state and local political figures, teachers, students, railroad magnates, abolitionists, Polk family members, seekers of charity, foreigners wishing to immigrate, soldiers in the field, relatives of soldiers killed in the field, clergy, canal builders, city and town boosters, farmers, male and female laborers, a free black servant, admirers, and detractors—memorable in the last category, an otherwise anonymous correspondent, apparently in Ohio, who signed his missive “The Devil” (“Oh, you bloody hound of hell! You scorpion of the regions of the damned!”). That interlocutor enclosed with his letter a hand-inscribed “*leather Medal*” naming Polk “the great American Caesar” in recognition of “his bloody conquests in Mexico” and, more specifically, “For all the widowhood and orphanage, homes desolated, husbands murdered—and for the murder of the 2,000 defenseless women and children at the siege of Vera Cruz.” Apparently bemused by the missive, Polk scrawled across it, “I will preserve this infamous tirade. Possibly its author may be some-day discovered. The Post Mark indicates his residence.”⁵⁰

Two more volumes are planned to complete this series. As we worked on this book and as we plan the final two, we also have resumed the Polk Project’s canvas for unlocated letters. We work from copies of original documents; thanks to the Internet and other media, and sheer happenstance, many letters to and from Polk can and have been located since the series’s original documents canvas, conducted during the 1960s. Thus, this and future volumes will include letters located during this renewed search. Our plans also call for Volume 14—the series’s final installment—to include a compendium that publishes in full, or otherwise summarizes, letters located too late for inclusion in their chronologically appropriate volumes.

By and large, with this volume, we have continued the editorial policies and practices of earlier volumes in the series. This volume contains complete transcriptions of 344 letters; summarized versions of another ten letters appear as “briefs” within the main body; and 638 more letters are succinctly noted in the “Calendar” section at the book’s end. Of the letters published in full, one hundred are written by President Polk and 244 are incoming letters. Consistent with this series’s practice, most of the extant letters composed by President Polk during this volume’s coverage period, January–July 1847, appear in full—if only because of their relative scarcity compared to extant incoming letters. Beyond that

resolve, we eschew rigid selection criteria. Simply put, as in the past, we seek to publish in full those letters adjudged to be the most important, illuminating, or interesting—or, better yet, those that meet all three of those benchmarks.

That adherence to past editorial practices notwithstanding, with this volume we have implemented several changes. Many are minor and will likely go unnoticed by casual readers. One, more obvious, change is the inclusion of birth and death dates for all individuals identified in the notes of this volume. Another change related to personal identifications, however, warrants more than passing mention.

This change concerns slaves owned by Polk. As already noted, much of the correspondence in this series—those letters published in earlier volumes, those herein, and those to appear in future volumes—deal with Polk's purchases and sales of slaves. Unto themselves these letters tend to yield few details regarding the identities of the slaves. Moreover, the extant Polk historiography, most of it focused on policy issues, also tends to shed scant light on the identities of these individuals. Of major studies devoted to Polk, only one—William Dusingher's *Slavemaster President: The Double Career of James Polk* (2003)—offers substantial background on Polk's slaves and his business affairs.

Guided in large part by Professor Dusingher's superb and path-breaking study, we have located and acquired photocopies of many primary-source documents—sales contracts, probate-court records, and the like, in addition to Polk's letters themselves—related to Polk's business affairs. Those documents, commensurate with our time and budget constraints, allow us in this and future volumes, to a much greater extent than in earlier ones, to present in endnotes essential biographical information for many of the slaves—including, in many instances, birth and death years. Through such notes, we hope to enhance the value of this series to social historians and to historians of the African American experience.

Also worth noting, more generally, is the breadth of individuals covered by the biographical notes. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby*, the novel's narrator, Nick Carraway, recalls, as a young man, being "privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men."⁵¹ In this and other volumes of the *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, many of the letters are addressed to, are from, or allude to prominent individuals. It is the other ones—the lesser-known figures, including Carraway's "wild, unknown men"—who wrote to the president or are mentioned in the letters who often remain elusive.

In this and future volumes, as in past ones, we are making a determined effort to pick up the paper trail of *all* such individuals. When

we can confirm, beyond reasonable doubt, biographical information on those individuals—now including, however qualified, the years of their births and deaths—we have included that information. The notes cover all individuals, prominent and otherwise, who figure in the correspondence and for whom we have located information. We hope the effort will enhance the usefulness of these volumes—not only for researchers studying Polk and the politics of his era, but also for those conducting research in social history, in local and regional history, in a variety of topics in the first half of the nineteenth century, and even in earlier and subsequent eras.

To cite but one example of the fruits of that resolve, the previous volume of this series contains calendar summaries of letters from a voluble individual who wrote to the president under the pseudonym “*Amor Patriæ*,” Latin for “love of one’s country.” Likewise, a letter of his appears in this volume and others will appear in future volumes. But, thanks to dogged sleuthing by my colleague Michael Cohen, *Amor Patriæ*’s letter appears now—and the rest will appear in the future—under his real name, Andrew Lane. Thanks to Michael, we also now possess essential biographical facts concerning Lane: we know his birth and death dates and that he was a New England-born pamphleteer and lawyer who, over the years, resided on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line and helped to found a theological seminary in Ohio. So far as we know at this juncture—many letters, after all, remain to be examined—Polk never responded to Lane’s lengthy missives or learned his identity. Even so, Lane’s letters—often coyly baiting their recipient over their author’s identify and offering opinions on topics ranging from tariffs to slavery to the war with Mexico—make for compelling reading.⁵² Like other “secret griefs of wild, unknown” individuals, they also throw open a window on a bygone era that continues to shape our works and days.

Finally, allow me a brief comment concerning point of view. Among historians, depictions of wars and conflicts inevitably lead to thorny conversations concerning perspective: one people’s territorial conquest is another’s defeat. What one nation-state and its citizens experience as “annexation” or “expansion,” others experience as invasion, dispossession, or both. One group’s frontier is another’s home. All such terms come pre-loaded, and the editors of this volume are well aware of the multiplicity of perspectives by which events depicted herein might otherwise have been presented. The possibilities are limitless. To cite but two obvious examples, a Native American or Mexican perspective on events depicted herein would have yielded vastly different accounts from those we present; furthermore, to even refer to those perspectives assumes falsely the existence of monolithic Indian and Mexican

perspectives—a conceit that, if embraced, is quickly overwhelmed by a Niagara of historical evidence.

Yet, as a practical matter, no narrative can tell every story, and the past—or any shard of it—can never be fully represented in all of its complexity. All historians are thus compelled to make choices about which perspectives and which aspects of the past are represented in their labors. The perspectives—and the biases—of letters presented herein are self-evident. But issues of perspective also inform our framing of that correspondence. In the writing of endnotes and other materials that appear herein, we generally present events from the perspective of James K. Polk, his colleagues, and his era—the perspective of the letters that we seek to illuminate. On a related matter, as the war happened and ever since, the conflict in Mexico that Polk oversaw has been accorded many names, on both sides of the Rio Grande. In recent years, U.S. historians have come to call it the U.S.-Mexican War. However, in the interest of brevity—to avoid hundreds of repetitions of that polysyllabic compound word—we have in this volume elected to call that conflict what Polk called it and, until recently, what generations of U.S. historians called it: the Mexican War.

TOM CHAFFIN

EDITOR, *CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES K. POLK*

Portions of this introduction previously appeared at theatlantic.com.

1. “Joint occupation,” by which the United States and the United Kingdom agreed to defer disputes over their respective claims to lands in the Oregon Country, was established by the Treaty of 1818. The two countries renewed the arrangement in 1826, with the stipulation that if either sought to abrogate joint occupation, each would give the other one year’s notice before doing so. Mexico’s title to New Mexico, Texas, and California—all former colonies of Spain—had been established, in 1821, by Mexico’s victory over Spain in the Mexican War of Independence (1810–21).

2. George Pierce Garrison, *Westward Extension, 1841–1850* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1906), p. 207.

3. For Polk’s formal education, see Charles Sellers, *James K. Polk: Jacksonian, 1795–1843* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 41–55.

4. Abolitionist James G. Birney, representing the Liberty party, was also a presidential candidate in 1844. Although Birney won but 2.3 percent of the popular vote, many scholars believe that his candidacy, attracting antislavery votes that otherwise would have gone to Clay, threw the election to Polk. For Birney’s role in Polk’s victory, see Paul H. Bergeron, *The Presidency of James K. Polk* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1987), pp. 19–20, and Charles Sellers,

James K. Polk: Continentalist, 1843–1846 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), p. 156.

5. Among other justifications that Polk and his allies invoked for their actions in Texas and Oregon was that both areas, by prior rights, belonged to the United States. The 1844 Democratic platform thus spoke of the “reoccupation” of Oregon and the “re-annexation of Texas.” From their vantage, the U.S. claim to Oregon stretched back to explorations, in 1792, of the Columbia River’s lower reaches by U.S. merchant and sea captain Robert Gray, as well as subsequent, early U.S. activity along the Pacific Northwest coast. That U.S. claim, Polk and his allies argued, had been improperly surrendered by the Anglo-U.S. Treaty of 1818. Similarly, regarding Texas, Polk and his allies maintained that the Louisiana Purchase (1803) had included Texas, but that the Adams-Onís Treaty (1819) between the U.S. and Spain had improperly surrendered Texas to Spain.

6. Polk, “First Annual Message,” December 2, 1845, in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, ed. James D. Richardson, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1897), p. 398; Polk, diary entry of October 24, 1845, in *The Diary of James K. Polk during His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*, ed. Milo Milton Quaife (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1910), 1:70. For discussion of Polk and the Monroe Doctrine, see Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2011), pp. 97–118.

7. Frederick Douglass, lecture, Sunderland, England, September 18, 1847, quoted in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, ser. 1, *Speeches, Debates, and Interviews*, vol. 1, ed. John W. Blassingame (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), p. 416.

8. The Treaty stipulated that, in exchange for abandoning claims to Texas, New Mexico, and California, the Mexican government would be paid fifteen million dollars by the United States. The American government also agreed to pay debts owed to U.S. citizens by the Mexican republic, relieving Mexico’s government of about five million dollars in such claims. The Treaty also, in general terms, stipulated anew the boundary between the two nations, with clarifications to be made by a joint U.S.-Mexico commission.

9. Polk to Bancroft, January 30, 1847.

10. John L. O’Sullivan, “Annexation,” *United States Magazine, and Democratic Review*, July–August 1845, p. 5; Robert D. Sampson, *John L. O’Sullivan and His Times* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 2003), pp. 193–207.

11. Walter R. Borneman, *Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America* (New York: Random House, 2008), p. 219.

12. Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” (1855), in *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Library of America, 1982), p. 59; Henry David Thoreau, “Walking,” in *Henry David Thoreau: Collected Essays and Poems*, ed. Elizabeth Hall Witherell (New York: Library of America, 2001), p. 234.

13. Polk, diary entry of May 31, 1847, in *Diary of James K. Polk*, 3:45.

14. John S. Jenkins, in his biography of Polk, written shortly after the president’s death, invokes the “Napoleon of the Stump” accolade as “generally awarded” to Polk and suggests that it originated during Polk’s early political career in Tennessee. The editors of this volume, however, have located no usage

of the epithet published during the years of his life. See Jenkins, *The Life of James Knox Polk, Late President of the United States* (Auburn, N.Y.: James M. Alden, 1850), pp. 50–51; see also Sellers, *Polk: Jacksonian*, pp. 275–78.

15. Sellers, *Polk: Continentalist*, p. 307.

16. For the “mischievous” remark, see Polk, diary entry of August 10, 1846, in *Diary of James K. Polk*, 2:75. For California, Oregon, Calhoun et al., see Polk, diary entry of April 6, 1847, in *Diary of James K. Polk*, 2:257–59.

17. For Polk’s lack of “public confidence,” see Sellers, *Polk: Continentalist*, p. 201.

18. Tom Chaffin, *Fatal Glory: Narciso López and the First Clandestine War against Cuba* (1996; repr., Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2003), pp. 26–30; Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (1963; repr., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 61–64. On Polk’s avoidance of a two-front war, see Sellers, *Polk: Continentalist*, pp. 402, 410–11.

19. Tom Chaffin, *Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont and the Course of American Empire* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2002), pp. 82–85, 146, 181, 252–53, 272, 307, 490–92.

20. Polk to Cornelius W. Lawrence, May 24, 1847.

21. Norman Gash, *Sir Robert Peel: The Life of Sir Robert Peel after 1830* (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 527–30.

22. Polk, diary entry of December 29, 1848, in *Diary of James K. Polk*, 4:261. For Polk’s work habits, see also Sellers, *Polk: Continentalist*, pp. 300–306, and Eugene Irving McCormac, *James K. Polk: A Political Biography* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1922), pp. 328–29.

23. George Bancroft, “Biographical sketch of James K. Polk,” typescript, c. late 1880s, p. [1] (misnumbered as “2”), repeated with slight variation on p. 25, George Bancroft Papers, New York Public Library; Bancroft to James Grant Wilson, March 8, 1888, quoted in addendum to entry on Polk, *Appletons’ Cyclopædia of American Biography*, ed. Wilson and John Fiske, vol. 5 (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1888), s.v. “Polk, James Knox.” In a magazine article, an aging John Frémont presents a letter from the same period in which Bancroft recounts the same anecdote. Bancroft to Frémont, September 2, 1886, quoted in Frémont, “The Conquest of California,” *Century Illustrated Magazine*, April 1891, p. 923.

24. James Schouler, *History of the United States of America, under the Constitution*, vol. 4, 1831–1847 (Washington, D.C.: William H. Morrison, 1889), p. 498. See also George Bancroft to Schouler, February 5, 1887, Schouler Autograph Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

25. McCormac, *Polk*, pp. 351, 725.

26. Arthur M. Schlesinger, “Historians Rate the U.S. Presidents,” *Life*, November 1, 1948, pp. 65–66; Arthur M. Schlesinger, “Our Presidents: A Rating by 75 Historians,” *New York Times Magazine*, July 29, 1962, pp. 12, 41; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton,” *Political Science Quarterly* 112 (Summer 1997), pp. 179, 181, 183, 189.

27. Harry S. Truman to Dean Acheson, August 26, 1960, (version not sent) in *Affection & Trust: The Personal Correspondence of Harry S. Truman and Dean Acheson, 1953–1971* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), p. 246. In 1959, further elaborating on his high estimation of the eleventh president, Truman

commented, “James K. Polk, who expanded the country to the Pacific and gave us space as a continental power and a chance to grow into one of the greatest republics. James K. Polk paid the same price for that part of the country that Thomas Jefferson paid for Louisiana. Don’t forget that.” *Truman Speaks* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960), p. 24. Other presidents were less enamored: Theodore Roosevelt, as a young historian, dismissed Polk’s presidency. Oregon, he argued, was a case of Polk’s feeling obliged to repeat partisans’ demands and Secretary of State James Buchanan’s fear of upsetting the British; Texas and the Mexican War were a matter of Polk’s being bullied by slave powers into actions that produced problems left for subsequent presidents to solve. In short, Roosevelt wrote, the “administration was neither capable nor warlike, however well disposed to bluster.” Roosevelt, *Life of Thomas Hart Benton* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1887), pp. 287, 311–13, 328.

28. For just two examples of the four goals in textbooks, see George Brown Tindall with David E. Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), p. 540, and Joseph R. Conlin, *The American Past: A Survey of American History*, 3rd ed., vol. 1., *To 1877* (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2012), p. 389. The indie rock band They Might Be Giants gained attention with its 1996 recording of “James K. Polk,” a spritely song that offers a mock celebration of Polk’s presidency, with lyrics recounting his alleged objectives and attainment of them (“In four short years he met his every goal . . .”). They Might Be Giants, *Factory Showroom*, Elektra/WEA, audio CD, October 8, 1996.

29. Polk to Marcy, May 9, 1849, in William L. Marcy Papers, Library of Congress, and James K. Polk Papers, Library of Congress (to appear in a future volume of this series); for further details on Marcy as a prospective biographer, see John McDonough, “History of the Collection,” in *James K. Polk Papers: A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, 2010), p. 8.

30. McCormac, *Polk*, pp. v., 724.

31. For more on Polk’s treatment by historians during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see McCormac, *Polk*, pp. 724–25, and Lilian Handlin, *George Bancroft: The Intellectual as Democrat* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984,) pp. 340–41. Bancroft’s earlier and other major biographer, Russel B. Nye, unlike Handlin, accepts the four-goals enunciation at face value. Nye, *George Bancroft: Brahmin Rebel* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 137.

32. Of all the letters we have thus far encountered, the one that comes closest to confirming Bancroft’s anecdote is a letter, located by my colleague Michael Cohen, that was enclosed in Edmund Burke to Polk, October 9, 1847, James K. Polk Papers, Library of Congress (to appear in a future volume of this series). The enclosed letter, Nathaniel G. Upham to Edmund Burke, September 28, 1847, includes the following: “A gentleman of some standing in Massachusetts, friendly to the President, remarked to me after the establishment of the new Tariff, the settlement of the Oregon question, & the movement on Mexico, ‘that President Polk was desirous of doing every thing that would have to be done within the next fifty years.’” The Massachusetts gentleman is likely Bancroft,

but the list includes no mention of the Independent Treasury or of California—among Polk’s territorial attainments, the only one, besides New Mexico, not initiated by concrete policies of earlier administrations. And the letter’s date, September 1847, comes deep into his term in office, far too late to indicate the president’s prescience of his accomplishments.

33. Bancroft, “Biographical sketch,” p. 32.

34. Mangum to Tod R. Caldwell, February 20, 1845, in *Papers of Willie Person Mangum*, vol. 4, 1844–1846, ed. Henry Thomas Shanks (Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1955), p. 268; for external threats against Texas in early 1845, see Sellers, *Polk: Continentalist*, pp. 215, 259–63; Borneman, *Polk*, pp. 168, 178, 193–94; and Bergeron, *Presidency*, pp. 53, 60–61.

35. The slugger is alleged to have stood at home plate, gestured toward the center-field bleachers, and, on the next pitch, sent a home run over the center-field fence.

36. H. S. Foote, *Eulogy upon the Life and Character of James K. Polk, Late President of the United States, Delivered at Washington City, July 9, 1849* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Ritchie, 1849); Samuel B. Garrett, *An Oration, on the Life, Character and Public Services of the Late President James K. Polk, Delivered at Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, October 8, 1849* (Lawrenceburg: “Middle Tennessean” Office, 1849); Levi Woodbury, *Eulogy on the Life, Character, and Public Services of the Late Ex-President Polk: Delivered at the Request of the Municipal Authorities of the City of Boston, July 25, 1849* (Boston: J. H. Eastburn, 1849).

37. Lucien B. Chase, *History of the Polk Administration* (New York: John F. Trow, 1850); Jenkins, *Life of James Knox Polk*.

38. Sellers, *Polk: Continentalist*, pp. 324–26; Borneman, *Polk*, 144.

39. Polk, war message to Congress, May 11, 1846, in *Compilation of the Messages and Papers*, pp. 437–43; Sellers, *Polk: Continentalist*, pp. 265–66, 416–20; for a comparison of Polk with other presidents in wielding executive powers, see Borneman, *Polk*, pp. 208–10.

40. Scott had sought the 1840 Whig presidential nomination, which ultimately had gone to William Henry Harrison.

41. John C. Pinheiro, *Manifest Ambition: James K. Polk and Civil-Military Relations during the Mexican War* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2007), pp. 59–81, 134–40.

42. Richard W. Van Alstyne, *The Rising American Empire* (1960; repr., New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1974), pp. 1–27; Chaffin, *Pathfinder*, pp. 7–18; on specifically Jefferson, see also Peter S. Onuf, *Jefferson’s Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 2000).

43. Ralph Waldo Emerson, journal entry of May or June 1846, in *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson with Annotations*, ed. Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes, vol. 7, 1845–1848 (London: Constable & Co., 1913), p. 206.

44. On occasion, Polk intervened to keep a slave family together or acted on similarly benign impulses. William Dusinger, *Slavemaster President: The Double Career of James Polk* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), pp. 80–84. In his 1849 will, he stipulated that, if he should outlive his wife, upon his own

death all of his slaves would be emancipated. If his wife should outlive him, he left the decision in her hands but hoped that she would emancipate their slaves “if . . . she shall deem it proper.” As events turned out, however, the widowed Sarah Polk sold a half interest in most of her slaves in 1860 and lived until 1891, rendering her husband’s wishes irrelevant in that slavery in the United States had been abolished in 1865. Polk, will of 1849, in *Wills of the U.S. Presidents*, by Herbert R. Collins and David B. Weaver (New York: Communications Channels, 1976), p. 94. For Polk’s attitudes toward slavery, see Dusiinberre, *Slavemaster President*, pp. 17–22, 77–78, 120–21, 147, 168–69.

45. For an example of action against anti-Catholic bigotry, in which Polk appointed Catholic priests to accompany the army in Mexico and turned away an anti-Catholic applicant for a chaplaincy, see Polk, diary entries of October 14, 1846, and July 29, 1847, in *Diary of James K. Polk*, 2:187–91, 3:103–5, and calendar summary of Edmund C. Bittinger to Polk, June 21, 1847. Polk also had friendly relations with New York City’s Bishop—later Archbishop—John J. Hughes, arguably the most influential Irish American of that day; see Hughes to Polk, August 10, 1847, James K. Polk Papers, Library of Congress (to appear in a future volume of this series). For more on Polk and Catholic Irish Americans, see Angela F. Murphy, *American Slavery, Irish Freedom: Abortion, Immigrant Citizenship, and the Transatlantic Movement for Irish Repeal* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 177, 190, 191.

46. Polk to Robert Campbell, Jr., January 23, 1847.

47. Jeremiah George Harris to Polk, June 27, 1847.

48. John Charles Frémont, quoted in Chaffin, *Pathfinder*, p. 249.

49. Polk to William Davidson et al., May 21, 1847.

50. Anonymous to Polk, c. April 19, 1847.

51. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925; repr., New York: Scribner, 1991), p. 17.

52. Lane to Polk, January 1, 1847. See also Michael David Cohen, “James K. Polk and the Mystery of Amor Patriæ,” *New England Quarterly*, 86 (June 2013).

EDITORIAL PRACTICE

The current editors of the *Correspondence of James K. Polk* have, in most regards, retained the editorial policies of their predecessors. In some areas, however, we have modified policies to enhance completeness, conciseness, or clarity. Our guiding purpose has remained the clear and accurate presentation of Polk's correspondence, with annotation that enables modern readers to understand and use those original documents.

The main body of this volume consists of letters transcribed in full or, in a few cases, summarized—"briefed"—in detail. At the end of the volume, a calendar lists all known extant correspondence from the period covered by the volume, with short summaries of letters not appearing in the main body. Published or briefed letters are annotated with endnotes. We 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). We 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.¹

Aware that readers' main attention should fall on the texts of the letters, we have limited our annotations to identifications, information about those texts, and necessary context. People, events, organizations, publications, other topics, and uncommon terms are identified at their first mention in the volume. Thereafter, if a letter alludes to a person by an incomplete name or by a description, or alludes to a topic by an unclear name, a note gives the full name as it appears in the index. Exceptions to this rule are those few individuals who appear

with such frequency throughout the volume, and whose surnames are sufficiently distinct, that we decided giving their full names was unnecessary. These exceptions include George Bancroft, Thomas H. Benton, James Buchanan, John C. Calhoun, William L. Marcy, John Y. Mason, General Santa Anna, Winfield Scott, Zachary Taylor, Nicholas P. Trist, and Daniel Webster. Similarly, we have not explained in each instance that “General Jackson” is Andrew Jackson or that “Mrs. Polk” is Sarah Childress Polk. If a letter or annotation refers simply to “Polk” or “the president,” readers should assume that the reference is to James K. Polk. In our annotation we 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, we 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 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 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 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 used to end abbreviations and flourishes under Polk’s middle initial 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 to us 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.

Most of our transcriptions and summaries of correspondence are based on extant letters held in archives or private collections. In rare cases, they derive from publications of letters; a few calendar summaries for letters whose current locations are unknown are based on summaries, transcriptions, or manuscript images located in auction listings whose provenance we have verified. Each letter's headnote or calendar entry includes the physical description and location of the version transcribed or summarized, 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 or briefed 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 a few 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; or cancelled text that we have retained. 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 press²; 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. They surround supplied dates or correspondents' names in the calendar.

In crafting this volume's annotation, we have consulted numerous primary and secondary sources. These include many well-known reference books and monographs. To ensure accuracy, we have checked and rechecked all information in the notes, including that which appears in earlier volumes of this series. Only facts for which we have at least one reliable primary source or two reliable secondary sources have been included (see below for an exception to this rule). Owing to these considerations and pursuant to our desire that the notes not overwhelm the letters, we have foregone the naming of sources in the notes. We have, however, identified publications (including federal documents and laws) mentioned or quoted in the various texts and directed readers to outside sources of particular relevance. Polk's diary and his annual messages to Congress are mentioned throughout this volume; they can be found in editions edited, respectively, by Milo Milton Quaife and James D. Richardson.³

Letters often refer to other letters to or from Polk. In general, readers may find such letters in this series. We 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, we have supplied that information.

We have identified in notes, with archival locations, all documents enclosed within letters published or briefed in this volume. Notes also indicate enclosures mentioned in the correspondence that have not been found. Calendar entries mention enclosures but indicate in parentheses only if an enclosure has not been found or appears in a different repository from its letter's; otherwise, readers may assume an enclosure is with its indicated letter. In each relevant case, as part of the description and location that we provide for every letter, we have noted if the letter is itself an enclosure. We have omitted notes for enclosed objects, such as food; these have not been found.

We have made several changes from earlier volumes regarding identifications of people. Each identifying note now includes, immediately following the person's name, the years of birth and death. The absence of such dates indicates that research yielded none. (As in earlier volumes, the notes otherwise include biographical information only up to Polk's death in 1849, unless later activities are particularly important or are the only information known about a person.) Drawing on William

Dusinberre's *Slavemaster President*,⁴ we have included more biographical information about Polk's African American slaves than previous volumes. We have confirmed and supplemented Dusinberre's findings through primary research whenever possible, but have included his information even in instances where he remains the only source. We have made this exception to our usual sourcing protocols due to the pertinence of information on Polk's slaves and the scarcity of relevant sources.

In the calendar, we have included very brief identifications of people who appear there for the first time in the volume. In the rare situation where we have found no information about a person, whether in the main body or in the calendar, we have simply omitted the identification without mentioning its absence.

Finally, we have reduced the number of cross references from that contained in earlier volumes. In most cases, instead of relying on cross references, readers can locate additional letters and notes on a topic by referring to the index. We have included cross references where other letters are particularly vital and the index may not immediately direct readers to them.

MICHAEL DAVID COHEN

1. The volumes of those series covering 1847 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. 7 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1909).

2. During his presidency, Polk duplicated most of his outgoing letters using a copy press. The machine had first been patented in 1780 by James Watt; manufacturers had since introduced various refinements, including the ability to copy a large number of letters into a book, as Polk did. Most of the letters by Polk in this volume have been found only in his press-copy books; they are marked "press copy" in the 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, 59–62.

3. Milo Milton Quaife, ed., *The Diary of James K. Polk during His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*, 4 vols. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1910); Richardson, *Compilation of the Messages and Papers*, pp. 385–416, 471–506, 532–64, 629–70.

4. William Dusinberre, *Slavemaster President: The Double Career of James Polk* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003).

SYMBOLS

Document Classification

AD	Autograph Document
ADS	Autograph Document Signed
AE	Autograph Endorsement
AEI	Autograph Endorsement Initialed
AES	Autograph Endorsement Signed
AEs	Autograph Endorsements
AL	Autograph Letter
AL, draft	Autograph Letter, drafted by writer
AL, fragment	Autograph Letter, fragment
ALI	Autograph Letter Initialed
ALI, draft	Autograph Letter Initialed, drafted by writer
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, press copy	Autograph Letter Signed, press copy
ALs, drafts	Autograph Letters, drafted by writer
AN	Autograph Note
AN, draft	Autograph Note, drafted by writer
ANS	Autograph Note Signed
ANS, copy	Autograph Note Signed, copied by writer
ANS, press copy	Autograph Note Signed, press copy
D	Document, authorship attributed

D, copy	Document, copy
DS	Document Signed
Ds	Documents
DsS	Documents Signed
E	Endorsement, authorship attributed
E, copy	Endorsement, copy
L	Letter, authorship attributed
L, copy	Letter, copy
L, draft	Letter, draft
L, telegram	Letter, telegram
L, typed copy	Letter, typed copy
LS	Letter Signed
LS, copy	Letter Signed, copy
LS, press copy	Letter Signed, press copy
Ls	Letters
Ls, drafts	Letters, drafts
N	Note, authorship attributed
N, copy	Note, copy
NS	Note Signed
Partly printed ALS	Partly printed Autograph Letter Signed
Partly printed AN	Partly printed Autograph Note
Partly printed DS	Partly printed Document Signed
Partly printed N	Partly printed Note, authorship attributed
PC	Published Circular, authorship attributed
PD	Published Document, authorship attributed
PL	Published Letter, authorship attributed
PN	Published Note, authorship attributed

Repository Designations

CU-BANC	University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library
CtY	Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
DLC	Library of Congress
DLC-B/R	Library of Congress, Blair & Rives Papers
DLC-FP	Library of Congress, Franklin Pierce Papers
DLC-GW	Library of Congress, Gideon Welles Papers
DLC-JCFJBF	Library of Congress, John Charles Frémont and Jessie Benton Frémont Papers
DLC-JKP	Library of Congress, James K. Polk Papers

DLC-LW	Library of Congress, Levi Woodbury Papers
DLC-WA	Library of Congress, William Allen Papers
DLC-WLM	Library of Congress, William L. Marcy Papers
DLC-WWC	Library of Congress, William W. Corcoran Papers
DNA-RG 45	National Archives, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library
DNA-RG 92	National Archives, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General
DNA-RG 94	National Archives, Records of the Adjutant General's Office
DNA-RG 99	National Archives, Records of the Office of the Paymaster General
DNA-RG 156	National Archives, Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance
GEU-S	Emory University, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Atlanta
KyHi	Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort
KyLoF	Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Ky.
MH-H	Harvard University, Houghton Library, Cambridge, Mass.
MHi	Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston
MeHi	Maine Historical Society, Portland
MiU	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
MoSHi	Missouri History Museum, St. Louis
NNPM	Morgan Library & Museum, New York City
NWM	U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
NcD	Duke University, Durham, N.C.
NcU	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
NjP	Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
NjP-RF	Princeton University, Rush Family Papers, Princeton, N.J.
NjR	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick
OHi	Ohio Historical Society, Columbus
PBL	Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Penn.

PHi	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
PHi-JB	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, James Buchanan Papers, Philadelphia
PPiU	University of Pittsburgh
RPB-JH	Brown University, John Hay Library, Providence, R.I.
Tx	Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin
Vi	Library of Virginia, Richmond
VtHi	Vermont Historical Society, Barre

Published Sources

CMPP	James D. Richardson, <i>A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents</i> , vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1897)
LJKPCJ	St. George L. Sioussat, ed., "Letters of James K. Polk to Cave Johnson, 1843-1848," <i>Tennessee Historical Magazine</i> , 1 (September 1915)
LLGB	M. A. DeWolfe Howe, <i>The Life and Letters of George Bancroft</i> , vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908)
NU	Wayne Cutler, ed., <i>North for Union: John Appleton's Journal Of a Tour to New England Made by President Polk In June and July 1847</i> (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1986)
PJD	James T. McIntosh, ed., <i>The Papers of Jefferson Davis</i> , vol. 2 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981)
SL	<i>Statutes at Large</i>
ULNCP-A	Elizabeth Gregory McPherson, ed., "Unpublished Letters from North Carolinians to Polk," <i>North Carolina Historical Review</i> , 17 (April 1940)
ULNCP-J	Elizabeth Gregory McPherson, ed., "Unpublished Letters from North Carolinians to Polk," <i>North Carolina Historical Review</i> , 17 (January 1940)

WJB

John Bassett Moore, ed., *The Works of James Buchanan: Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, vol. 7 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1909)

CHRONOLOGY

1795	Nov. 2	Born in Mecklenburg County, N.C.
1806	Fall	Moved to Maury County, Tenn.
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. Nov. 5	Reelected to U.S. House 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	Winter	Sent slaves to clear land for his Fayette County, Tenn., plantation
-32		
1833	Aug. Dec.	Reelected to U.S. House 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 W., 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 Buchanon-Pakenham (Oregon) Treaty
	July 30	Signed Walker Tariff bill
	Aug. 3	Vetoed Harbors and Rivers Appropriations Bill of 1846
	Aug. 6	Signed Independent Treasury bill
1847	Oct.	Purchased the late Felix Grundy's home in Nashville
	Dec. 15	Submitted reasons for not signing Harbors and Rivers Appropriations Bill of 1847
1848	Feb. 2	Signing of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending Mexican War
1849	Mar. 4	Yielded office to his successor, Zachary Taylor
	June 15	Died in Nashville, likely of cholera

Correspondence of James K. Polk

VOLUME XII, JANUARY–JULY 1847

1847 OR 1848

FROM MARY BARNES TUTT THROCKMORTON¹

Dear Sir

Centervill, Fairfax [Va. 1847 or 1848]²

My Husband J. A. Throckmorton Esqr.³ served you warmly & zealously during your campaign of 44, but has never received the slightest return at your hands, & now stands in need thereof. He can come backed by Robert Hunter James Mason,⁴ & almost all the representation of Virginia, but he has a desire to see a President of the United States with independance enough to reward a faithful friend without his bringing all the political influence of his State to bear. A year hence it may not be in your power to do this act of justice. With warmest love to Mrs. Polk⁵ I remain

MARY THROCKMORTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. A frequent guest at Andrew Jackson's White House and an acquaintance of every president from Jackson to Ulysses S. Grant, Mary Barnes Tutt (1815–98) married John A. Throckmorton in 1839 and divorced him owing to her Unionist and his Confederate sympathies during the Civil War.

2. State and possible years identified through content analysis.

3. Virginia planter and militia colonel John A. Throckmorton (1815–91) became, in the 1850s, a clerk in the U.S. Pension Office and then the Treasury Department; he resigned in 1861 to join the Confederate army.

4. Robert M. T. Hunter and James M. Mason. Hunter (1809–87), a Virginia Democrat, served in the U.S. House, 1837–43 and 1845–47; in the U.S. Senate, 1847–61; as the Confederate secretary of state, 1861–62; and in the Confederate Senate, 1862–65. Mason (1798–1871), also a Virginia Democrat, served in the

U.S. House, 1837–39, and in the U.S. Senate, 1847–61; as a Confederate diplomat, he played a central role in the *Trent* affair of 1861.

5. Sarah Childress Polk (1803–91), the president's wife, served her husband as an advisor and confidant. Born in Rutherford County, Tenn., she was the third of six children of Joel Childress, a wealthy planter and businessman, and Elizabeth Whitsitt Childress. She was educated at schools in Tennessee and at the Moravian Female Academy (now Salem College) in Salem, N.C.

JANUARY 1847

FROM SETH A. ELLIOT¹

Dear Sir,

[Washington City]²
Friday. [between January 1
and February 26, 1847]³ P.M.

Pursuing a course which has long since met the approval of Col. Johnson,⁴ I deem it my duty to apprise you that notwithstanding the Episcopal Church has been represented for so many years at West Point,⁵ in the Chaplaincy, which is just vacated,⁶ I have perceived a movement, to-day among some prominent gentlemen of the Army, to secure *a like representative, there*. Whether or not the movement is yet perceived by you or the Secretary of War⁷ is immaterial to me.

I am not aware that Mr. Sprole⁸ is apprised of the vacancy, but I know he could be more comfortably situated than he is at present, and I am under the impression that Mr. Matthews⁹ frankness has given offence in a quarter where he will not easily have favor *proffered* him.

Were I permitted to allude to clerical statistics, I am certain, that the Episcopal Church is far behind the Presbyterian, Baptist, or Methodist Church, of our Country. And I think the President's Friends expect him, in such times as these, to countenance no man who does not feel right about the "peculiar institution."¹⁰

In haste

S. A. ELLIOT

P.S. I saw Mr. Kennedy¹¹ of Indiana last evening at Brown's,¹² where he just arrived, and when I told him Col. Benton¹³ was determined that

you should have a “fair shake” this Session he exclaimed “*I am rejoiced to hear it.*”¹⁴

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally and marked “*Private.*”

1. A native of New York and, in the 1820s and 1830s, a publisher of directories and almanacs in Washington City, Elliot (c. 1806–late 1860s) also worked in the Patent Office in the late 1820s and as an assistant naval clerk in the early 1830s. He began the position he occupied when he wrote this letter, clerk in the Navy Department’s Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, in 1845.

2. Place identified through content analysis.

3. Date range identified through content analysis.

4. Elliot probably refers to Cave Johnson (1793–1866), a lawyer, judge, banker, and trusted political advisor to Polk. Johnson, a Democrat, served in the U.S. House, 1829–37 and 1839–45, and as postmaster general, 1845–49. In 1847, he introduced the first U.S. postage stamp.

5. The U.S. Military Academy, located in West Point, N.Y., was established in 1802.

6. Martin P. Parks (1804?–1853) resigned as chaplain and professor of geography, history, and ethics at the U.S. Military Academy on December 31, 1846. A North Carolina native, he had graduated from the Academy in 1826, served two years in the army, then served stints as a clergyman in the Methodist and Episcopal churches and as a mathematics professor at Randolph Macon College in Virginia before beginning his faculty position at the Academy in 1840.

7. William L. Marcy (1786–1857) served as secretary of war for the entirety of Polk’s term. A New York lawyer and Democrat, he also served in the U.S. Senate, 1831–33; as New York governor, 1833–39; and as U.S. secretary of state, 1853–57, under Pres. Franklin Pierce.

8. William T. Sprole (1809–83) preached to a German Reformed congregation in Philadelphia, 1832–37, and to Presbyterian congregations in Carlisle, Penn., 1837–43, and Washington City, 1843–47. He served as a chaplain to Congress, 1846–47, and as chaplain and professor of geography, history, and ethics at the U.S. Military Academy from March 2, 1847, until his dismissal in 1856.

9. A native of Virginia, Presbyterian minister John D. Matthews (1809–84) by 1847 had preached in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Kentucky. After Matthews unsuccessfully applied for the chaplaincy at the U.S. Military Academy in 1845 and 1846, Polk appointed him a clerk in the General Land Office in 1846.

10. Popular antebellum term for slavery.

11. A native of Ohio, Indiana lawyer and Democrat Andrew Kennedy (1810–47) served in the Indiana House, 1835; the Indiana Senate, 1838; and the U.S. House, 1841–47. A candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1847, he died of smallpox on December 31.

12. Brown’s Hotel served as the Washington City residence for many members of Congress.

13. Thomas H. Benton (1782–1858), a Missouri Democrat, served in the U.S. Senate, 1821–51. During the later years of his public career, he became one of that body's most powerful figures, particularly in the shaping of policies concerning the federal government's newly acquired domains in the West. Benton was a friend and usually a political ally of Polk until 1848, when Polk tacitly supported court-martial proceedings against Benton's son-in-law, army-sponsored explorer John C. Frémont.

14. Elliot wrote his postscript in the left margin.

FROM ANONYMOUS

Newtown [Penn.]¹ 1s. Mo 1st² 1847

It is in the love of that gospel which desires the welfare of the souls salvation that I am led thus to address thee. I come not before thee with flattering language to elicit individual favour, but I ask thee to pause a moment and reflect upon the high responsibility that rests upon thee; thou hast been placed by the voice of the people as a ruler over a great nation. And art thou faithfully fulfilling the high trust committed to thy charge? Is not the horrid cry of war and oppression Sounded throughout our land? Have not thousands of thy fellow men within the last year been strewn on the field of battle, and the cries of the widdow and the captive gone up before that God whom thou professes to serve. Are not the bitter sighs and groans of 3 Millions of human beings arising continually before him? And, art thou not accessory to these evils? Dost thou not lend thy influence to create and to perpetuate these, that hang as a dark cloud over our once favoured country. Is not the language as applicable now as it was formerly "the leaders of the people, cause them to err."³ Dost thou assemble at the house of prayer to perform Worship unto that God whose attributs are *justice* and *Mercy*?⁴ And canst thou believe for a moment he will accept thy offerings whilst thou art causing the hearts of thousands of his children to bleed with anguish. Oh be not deceived "God is not Mock'd such as ye sow such will ye reap."⁵ Let not thy conscience then be lull'd to repose, thou art but a man and as liable to be arrested by the pale messenger of Death as any other, and how will the soul appear divested of *earthly honours* before the great judge of heaven and earth, these will prove at that solemn period but as fig leaf coverings as insufficient to the hungry and thirsty soul as the empty husks with which the poor prodigal would fain have filld himself. And altho thou mayst be surrounded by those who would flatter, would commend thee for the course thou hast taken rest assured there are thousands yea tens of thousands who would raise up their voices against it. Oh then if thou wouldst desire to be an heir of that kingdom which Christ said was not of this world, I would solemnly beseech thee

to do all in thy power to bring to a speedy close this iniquitous *war* with a weak and feeble nation, thou wilt have more true peace of mind when brought on the bed of death than if thou hadst conquered all the countries in the world.

Oh when will men professing to be christians be willing to be led by the spirit of Christ? Did he teach his followers to fight? Did he command them to bind on heavy burdens too grievous to be bourn? No! the only truths which he inculcated go to bless the *poor* in spirit the *Mourners* the *Meek*; the *Merciful* the *hungerers* and *thirsters* after righteousness the *pure in heart* the *peace Makers* and they who are *persecuted for righteousness* sake. Did he not teach them to love their enemies, to do good to those that hated them, to pray for those, that despitefully used them to return good for evil? Was not his mission to preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive and to open the prison doors of them that are bound. Alas! how few who profess to follow him imitate his example. Well may the language be applied "Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of Mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the law *judgment*, *Mercy* and *faith* these ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone."⁶

Will not the just judgments of heaven overtake a people professing to the world "that all men are created free and eaquel"⁷ yet binding down with the iron yoke of bondage 3 Millions of their fellow creatures and under the very walls where they assemble to make laws for the nation *buy* and *sell* them like bea[ns . . .]⁸ the field—how despicable must this appear [. . .] all Wise Judge, whose command is to "do unto others a ye would they should do unto you."⁹ Canst thou conceive it possible that the sin will be less because these are "found guilty of a skin not colloured like thy own"?¹⁰ Oh when will Men in power, know that *justice* and *Mercy* are the dearest attributs of God and in their fasts and thanksgivings remember that this is the "fast that he has chosen that ye undo the heavy burdens that ye let the oppress'd go free that ye break every yoke."¹¹ I have written thus plainly and that it may meet the witness for God in thy own soul is the desire of one who is willing to subscribe herself a poor

QUAKER WOMAN

AL. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. State identified from postmark.

2. January 1. The author belonged to the Religious Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers. In that era, Quakers eschewed conventional Western names for months and days of the week due to what they regarded as the pagan origins of such terms.

3. Slight paraphrase of Isaiah 9:16: “the leaders of this people cause them to err.” All biblical quotations in annotations contained in this volume come from the King James Version.

4. Although not baptized as an infant due to an argument between his father Samuel and a Presbyterian minister, Polk attended weekly Sunday services, usually at the First Presbyterian Church in Washington City. He was baptized by a Methodist minister shortly before his death in 1849.

5. Paraphrase of Galatians 6:7: “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

6. Matthew 23:23.

7. Paraphrase of the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

8. Text here and below obliterated, tear.

9. Variations on the golden rule appear in Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31.

10. Paraphrase of William Cowper, *The Task, a Poem, in Six Books* (1785), book 2: “He finds his fellow guilty of a skin/Not coloured like his own.”

11. Paraphrase of Isaiah 58:6: “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?”

FROM ANDREW LANE¹

Most excellent sir, [New Haven, Conn.]² 1st January 1847
The compliments of the season.

I duly received and read with the greatest pleasure, your most excellent message.³ You are indeed a prince for messages, and in my humble judgement, have never had your superior since the days of the immortal Washington.⁴

It was my first thought to sit down immediatly and tender you at least *my gratitude*; but on reflection, concluded to wait a while and see if any one could be found brazen face enough to say aught against it, and now having a holy day,⁵ will try to consummate my first intention.

This paper, so replete with facts relative to our Mexican difficulties, was greatly needed, *for two important reasons*—first, it will put our country in its proper light before all Europe—secondly, and not less important, it will put the people of our own country in possession of facts that the “aid and comfort” party⁶ have endeavoured with all their might to misrepresent. This is a *desideration*, and for which, every true friend of his country, I am sure, will tender his heart felt thanks.

Never was there a remark more just, *more needed*, or more deserved, than that touching *Treason*⁷; and it has taken the whole tory⁸ concern *hors du combat*!⁹ Little did they think to be so summarily and effectually exposed, and too, by a thunder bolt from such an eminence, endorsed by the high dignity of the first office in the country, as a true Bill, and

no mistake! Alas! what a dumbfounding shock! Had it been some small fry demagogue, or party hack, they could have bourn it without a groan; but as it is, they have not been able to raise their eyes from the ground since! except a few brazen hirelings, who are obliged to bark when the masters say *steboy*,¹⁰ and then they snap out the President his, *darn his long message!* You see sir, the message is too long altogether, for their comfort and consolation! All the people will read the message, and hence will get light in its straight forward current, that they can rely upon, and could get in no other way. This is gall and wormwood!¹¹ and unless they can get “aid and comfort” from some country yet undiscovered, or from Santa Anna,¹² “the hero of Mexico”!¹³—a poor devil, whiped by a handful of brave Texians, and would have been hung up by the heels, had justice been done him—they look upon that case as desperate! That poor cowardly *curse* come about as near Nepoleon¹⁴ as his [. . .]¹⁵ do to patriots!

Never were there reasons assigned more sagacious, more statesmanlike, or more patriotic, than those assigned for the admission of that wretch into the den of thieves—and whether they suit your enemies or not, believe me, they are very satisfactory to your friends, and the real friends of the country.

Your remarks in relation to the Tariff are well received, and I think from what I learn, will prove generally satisfactory. I had a long talk with a distinguish whig from Boston the other day, and he told me, he didn’t think there was any objection to having the new Tariff tryed for a year or two, and if it did not work well, it could then be changed, as you said; and if it did, it would be better to let it remain than to be forever changing.

I was well pleased, as you are well aware, with the Tariff of 42,¹⁶ because it had so quickly brought the country out of great embarrassment, and continued every thing in a most prosperous condition. Moreover, I had my fears, if protection was abolished, that it would discourage the old Southern States from going extensively into manufacturing—so indispensible to their prosperity, [. . .]¹⁷ the *whole* cotton growing States—for our nation must be *divided in some way*, or the superabundance of Cotton will bring little or nothing. The English will take good care that it don’t rise as long as there is a plenty made. They have learnt wisdom from the past.

I have ever regretted the reestablishment of the Sub Treasury,¹⁸ knowing well that it would never [. . .] sever¹⁹ any good purposes, attended with difficulties every step of the way and *enormously expensive* to the country. It is dreaded and detested by all the Banks and business men, a large proportion of whom belong to the democratic party; and you may rest assured, if it is continued, it will be the rock on which the party will be wrecked.

Far be it from me the thought, or desire, of dictating to your superior wisdom, but if you will allow me to express an opinion, I would say—that it seems to me, you owe it to yourself as well as the country, to instruct the Secretary of the Treasury²⁰ immediatly to open a correspondence with all the good Banks, in places where the Revenue is collected, and learn if they would be willing to pay 3 pr. ct. on the average deposits and disburse at such points as the government may require, provided, the deposits should again be returned to them? If they will, then let [their . . . be consolidated] and the day on which it was [concluded] stricken from the calendar. This done, and there will not be a peg left for the whig abolition party to have an argument upon, much to their sorrow and regret. And the government should never desire to disorder every business in the country, by introducing a courency that the people do not wish nor will they have, it is so inconvenient.

The war, the whig party does not address directly, as yet, because they have the fall of the old Federal party before their eyes, for their opposition of the last war.²¹ But if it be not so my system to collect the Revenue in Mexico, as I have before suggested to you,²² for the expenses of the war, and another levee becomes necessary, believe me, they will be down upon the administration and will have such an influence with the people, that they will put the party out of power. The cry of national debt and taxation is a powerful weapon, and the opposition will not be above it or able to [deny] it.

I am glad to see that you are about to adopt my suggestions with particular, to wit—That of sending a plenipotentiary with power to direct the army and navy, and to do whatever else may be necessary; and I feel well satisfied, that you could not select a better man than Colo. Benton.²³ He is a brave industrious and energetic man, not a lazy [Congressman]. He also had great experience in the civil and military affairs of his country, is, I believe, an excellent spanish scholar, and perhaps better acquainted, than any other man that I know of, with the Mexican character, and would make an excellent Gov. general of the country.

I hear that two other gentlemen have been named as “[coleagues] of the lord lieutenant,”²⁴ but were I in Col B. place, I should not want them, though both good men. No man but a fool, holding such a respectable office would run on head long without consulting the two Maj Generals,²⁵ and if necessary, the Commodore of the fleet²⁶ in all important matters. But the way is as plain as the road to market, to settle all that business.

The moment you take possession of Vera Cruz,²⁷ by all means, without another moments delay, *proclaim to the world*, that all the ports in our possession are open under the revenue laws of the United States. This will induce all the other ports at once to yield up, to get alone of

the annoying blockade. The revenue thus obtained will certainly not fail to pay off the current expenses of the army, and as soon as trade begins to resume its world channels, will begin to extinguish the debt due us. The way things have turned, it may be ten years before we get entirely through with this business; but the time will be a *millinium* to the people of Mexico; and if the thing is managed properly, they will never wish it to end—and a matter of entire indifference to our people, so long as there is no further accumulation of debt; and a matter of rejoicing, if they find, *above this*, we are gradually getting back what is due us. And foreign countries will be satisfied, because their trade will be no longer embarrassed by blockade, which, to say the least, is a matter of great inconvenience.

I don't know but it will be best, in order to make thorough work, the moment Vera cruz is taken possession of, to march immediately upon the city of Mexico, take possession, and immediately declaring the whole country under military government of the United States. Never think of going to San Loui Potosi, to have our men slaughtered under Santa Anna's fists. Let him stay there and husband his efforts as long as he can. Cut off his reserves in every direction and it will not be long before he will come out and give battle or accept the terms offered, which should be that he and all the prize fighters must lay down their arms, disband the army, and retire to private life, where they will be permitted to remain in peace and quietness; provided; they make no suspicious movement; in which event, they will be furnished with a free pass to leave the country, at very short notice. I am inclined to think they would remain quiet; if I had the handling of them, they would soon be convinced, it would be for their best interest to give me no unnecessary trouble.

It would be well after taking the city of Mexico, to instruct the Governor General to request each of the States to send him two of their most worthy citizens, one to be reelected every year to serve as a senatorial council. Then invite the people to industry, improving their farms, and making good roads, assuring them, that, if they remain peaceable and quiet, they shall find themselves better protected and better off than they ever were before; for they will have no war, and be protected against their own mercenary soldiery and tyrannical masters. That it would be much for their interest to allow english shools established among them, then they would be able to communicate with the people of the United States and gain their good will and friendship. It would be well to give those rascally *mercenary priests* to understand, that if they wished to save themselves from excommunication and driven out of the country, they would do well to see these salutary measures carried into effect.

As soon as the fighting is done, by all means employ our soldiers in making fortifications, and good roads. Many of our officers are good engineers, and those that are not will make good overseers. Should there not be employment enough of this kind, assign them lands to cultivate, giving them all the benefit—any thing in preference to idleness, *the Devils school*. It would be a good school for the Mexicans too to learn how the Americans cultivate the lands. I think it would be a good thing to encourage our young soldiers to marry mexican girls, even if you allowed every one that thus married some extra pay for the support of his wife. This would make them more contented, and not so anxious to return home. I cannot help believing, that whole country, in the providence of God, is destined to be annexed in time to ours; and the steps I have recommended in relation to our army, would be a good beginning to such an end. And should it not so result, provisions by treaty could be made for all those who might choose to remain in the country. Never think of terminating the war and giving up the possession of the country till we have gotten every dollar due us²⁸ and the expense we have been at in obtaining it. If you do, we have got the whole business to fight over again, or lose what is due us. Those people's promises are not to be depended upon, as we have had ample proof.

I²⁹ will never do to allow the army to dictate to the Government, who they shall appoint to this that or the other office. The government must be allowed to judge for themselves. The officers must be given to understand, that they are made for the *country*, not the country for them; and if they dislike the conditions, they are at liberty to return whenever they [like]. There are a plenty of men in the country, with spanish training, able and willing to lead its troops to victory. Genl. Jackson³⁰ [. . .] standing, and if any of them can show their *faith by their works* better than he, let them do it. Enough said.

Inter nos.³¹ Allow me to say—That Genl Taylor, whether supt. by the other officers or not in allowing the mexicans to march out of Monterey with their arms in their hands,³² especially if he had them completely in his power as he has proclaimed to the world, has lessened himself, I am sorry to say it, very much in my estimation. I am quite mistaken in myself, had I been in his [position] if they had marched out in that kind of style without marching over my dead body. I would have said to the Mexican Genl.—You shall have one week's provisions, or two if you would, but not a weapon of warfare do you take with you. Your government has given mine some trouble and expense to come here to take the weapons out of your hands, and to compel you to an honorable peace, and by the gods, I will do it before I have done with you, or die

in the ditch! When peace comes, be it sooner or latter, every thing will be restored to you in quite as good order as received, yet not until then.

The truth is, regardless of expense or other consequences the officers of our army from a corporal up, are looking for the Presidency; and they have no desire that the war should end too soon, lest the amount of *their glory* should be found not quite sufficient to command the first office in the country!

By the by—you are aware perhaps, that Giddings³³ of the House has been on the [*objecting . . .*] through New York and all the New England States, [*. . .*] since the adjournment of Congress. The papers though have just [*. . .*] his [*action*]. I did not see him, [but] have recently learnt, that his object has been to connect the Whig party to the Abolitionists, and doubtless flatters himself that he has done wonders! As he hoped, he gave the leader of the opposition to understand, *that the administration must be broken down*; and the way to do it was, to render the war unpopular, and then to stop the supplies. Isn't he a Solomon?³⁴ and what a patriot!

I have always been too independent to seek office and moreover believe with Mr. Jefferson³⁵ that, "the private station is the post of honor,"³⁶ but I would have given one hundred dollars for one hour upon the floor of Congress to have replied to his speech upon the war part of your Message.³⁷ If I had not slashed him from Dan to Beersheba³⁸ I don't know myself.

However I think you are quite a match for all your enemies. Let *them get over the message if they can*. It will live and speak for itself to your honor and glory and that of your country, and to the disgrace and confusion of the "aid and comfort" party to all patriots.

What a glorious thing it is for the South that they have ever been ready and willing, with men and means, whenever their country called—"First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of their country"³⁹—and God bestowed them with the Presidential chair, *his ministers*, almost all of them since the formation of government; *cowardly, traitorous, Abolitionists to the contrary notwithstanding*.

Were I a member of Congress, I would consult with the Southern delegation and that of the middle and western States, and if [they] all had every thing completely understood for a strong fight, I am greatly mistaken if I did not badly fight the Abolitionists *in particular*, and the Tories in general. On the first befitting occasion, I would raise and say—We of the South, Mr. Speaker,⁴⁰ are quite tired of this purile and evil, contemptible slang and insult, that has been heaped upon us by a set of pseudo masters, ever since the formation of this government. During this long while, we have borne it all with great patience, in hopes that

our assailants would see its impropriety, refrain from their aggressions, and return to sanity. But sir, instead of our hopes being realized, *since they have got fat upon the spoils of the South*, their brazen faced impudence has become so intolerable. Our treaty⁴¹ has been mocked and scoffed at, till indeed, farther patience cannot be considered a virtue. And as Holy Writ says—That, “A house divided against itself cannot stand”⁴²—perhaps it will be better before we arrive at open collision, like two christian brothers, to divide the parental estate in peace and quickness, leaving each to manage his own affairs in his own way, having as little to do with each other as possible, for the future; believing the Supreme has not delegated his right to judge and rule world to either party. “Who art thou O man that judgst thy brother? to his own master he standeth or faileth.”⁴³

Now to my northern brothers I would say, where shall the line of demarkation be? Shall it be Mason’s & Dixon’s?⁴⁴ What do the gentlemen from Pennsylvania say to this? No! *If a divission must be had, we prefer to go with the South*. What say you, New Jersey? D[itt]o.⁴⁵ And New York? the same. And the western states? *With the South*. Well, my Northern brothers, you have the pleasure of finding your Southern line the northern boundary of New York, and everything considered, about the same dimensions as the Empire State. A pretty little nation any how! Should there be any *imaginary* loss in all this, by way of paying *thirty five per cent duty* on your manufactories and so forth, sent to the Southern market, this you certainly will deem but trifling when you take into consideration that you will then have privilege of erecting your little nation into a *Kingdom*, with lords and ladies, dukes & dukedums, just as many as you please, and *have room for*. Should your youngmen of skill and talent become restive and think they could do better to move within the line of *free trade*, don’t despair at this, for it is more than propable their ranks would be partially filled up by your *abolition brethren*! from the middle and western States; and if this should not be satisfactory, perhaps a few *antirenters*⁴⁶ might be thrown into the bargain, especially, if the whigs could spare this motly concern from their ranks. Should you find however that you need more *protection* than you ever did before, perhaps Great Britain will be kind enough to re-*annex* you to the Canadas and take you again under *her* protection, then doubtless you will get protection enough of all *sorts*.

Believe me, if ever a dissolution takes place, the new confederation will take good care to place the penetintary before the eyes of all *ismaels*⁴⁷ and all other *violaters of law*, contracts and good faith, *for all future time*. We read of but one exodus from Heaven,⁴⁸ and it is to be presumed that the new constitution will be *so guarded* that only one

will be found necessary on this part of the Earth. The South feel that she holds her servants by the laws of God and man, and needs not the sanction of new England to perfect her title. She feels moreover, that she is quite able to take care of her own affairs, and her worst enemies into the bargain if they came within her reach. *Verbam sat sapienti.*⁴⁹

This will do for the exordium. The next would follow the Bill of complaint, and the law and the testimony; but that we will dispense with for the present.

In relation to the new loan,⁵⁰ that doubtless will be authorised, allow me to say, that I would not attempt, but as a dernier resort, to have it taken in this country. The government has been quite enough insulted by the Bankers in Wall Street, and by the tory Press, in trying to reject its credit and deprive it of means to carry on the war.

While money is abundant at 2 to 2 1/2 pr. ct in London, I cannot believe but we could easily get all the money we may need at from 3 to 4 [*with*] a difference. At all events, nothing could be lost by addressing a note at once to our minister at London,⁵¹ to make the enquiry through the Barrings,⁵² who perhaps are better acquainted with our country than any other house, and as certain. Or if you prefer, send an Agent who can place the thing in proper light before them. As an inducement, it would be well to make the interest payable in London, which can make but little or no difference to us, as Bills of Exchange can always be had at resonable rates, especially, if the New Tariff keeps the balance of trade in our favor; and if it fails to do that, it must be immediatly altered; for it will never do to let the balance go against us. *As with an individual so with a nation.*

There is no nation on the face of the Globe more secure, willing, or better able to pay her debts than ours; and if it was properly represented in Europe, the Bankers, I verily believe, would advance what we want on the most favorable terms; at any rate, it is worth the trial.

If we can obtain the money from abroad, the better way would be to import it in specie; or at least, half the amt.; and perhaps, Bills to advantage might be sold for the remainder.

The better way, I think, would be make the loan for ten years, without the privalege of redeeming till maturity. But if you think twenty years would be better, with this privilege, do it; but by all means redeem at the face, or at the same rate at which the Drafts were sold. If you knew the Bankers of Wall Street as well as I do, you never would have the price indefinite. The moment they saw the Government was about to redeem, by combination they would put the price up 5 to 10 pr. ct., and the next moment thereafter down it would go again to its old standstill.

I hope you will order a strict watch to be kept on those *shoats*, the contractors, and the sellers of the Army—the former should be allowed

a commission for everything purchased at the *lowest cash value*—the latter twenty five pr. ct. on *actual cash*, and expulsion and the penitentiary for the first departure, *without benefit of clergy*.

AMOR PATRIÆ

Post Scriptum I learn that Governor Edwards⁵³ is now on a visit to the city of Washington. My friend Lane⁵⁴ is well acquainted with him and thinks him a very excellent man.

The Governor lives in a very quiet and retired manner, having with him his only single daughter,⁵⁵ a highly accomplished and excellent young lady, for his housekeeper.

Had you a highly respectable and pretty little office to give him to employ his leisure hours, I think you would make more friends than enemies by presenting it to him. The collectorship of that Port, if it could have been done, would doubtless have been very acceptable.

I see that great hopes are entertained by the speculators in Telegraph stock, that they will induce the Government to buy it at great profit!⁵⁶ But if you wish the Telegraph to be of service to the country, and not a dead weight and continual heavy expense to the government, let it remain in *private hands*. The Newspapers generally will be obliged to support it; for it will never do to let one hear the news earlier than the others. In this way it will be kept in good order, managed economically, and made beneficial to the country. The P.M. General⁵⁷ will have quite as much as he can do to manage his department *officially*, with being incumbered with the Telegraph.

I see the two million Bille will soon be brought forward—and with it the *slave* question!⁵⁸ If there be an attempt again to bring that subject before Congress, who have no cognisance of the case, I hope it will be met by the South in a cool but determined manner; as human dignity and self respect requires. The moment the subject is broached the Southern delegation, without distinction of party, should raise in a body upon the floor and give the northern demagogues to understand that that exciting subject cannot be brought there again with impunity—That every new State has the *right* to frame its own constitution without dictation from Congress, and to admission into the Union, without the imposition of new conditions, prescribed and guaranteed by the constitution of the United States.

That if the northern delegation think to go beyond this and attempt to prevent a new Southern State from admission into the union with *Slaves*, if they prefer it, engrafted upon this Constitution, no new northern State could expect the consent of the South to their admission, without the institution of *Slavery* being engrafted on their constitutions. Then would come the *tug of war* would come, and every Southern

member would be found with sword and pistoles at his side ready to legislate upon the terms laid down by the Constitution of the United States and *none other*; and *woe* be to the delinquent that would attempt to legislate upon any other!

Then doubtless, the perfectionism of fanatical hypocrisy would ripen into *perfection* quite as fast as [heart] could wish.

Is this state of things desired by our northern brethren? If so, lead on, and time will tell the tale!

We of the south desire peace and fair dealing, if to be had on honorable terms, and we know our northern *democratic* brothers desire nothing else. But the fanatical selfrightious herd are determined to continue through their demagogues to insult us, and not only us, but the God that made them, *upon this floor*, consecrated by the blood of our patriotic fathers, and drive us to desperation, with their *insolent* meddling with our affairs; as though they have not sins enough of their own to answer for! They talk of the *Golden Rule*! Their golden rule is the rule of *gold*—“*Rem, facias rem, recte, si posis! si non, quocumque modo, rem*”⁵⁹—as if they were our Judges and Masters! Let them push to the conclusion of the whole matter, if they think it worth the experiment! *A word to the wise is sufficient.* A.P.

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received January 6, 1847 (Walker erroneously wrote “1846”); “Anonymous/ some sense in it—about matters & things in general.”

1. Andrew Lane (1796–1862) wrote this letter and at least six others to Polk under the pseudonym “Amor Patriæ,” Latin for “love of one’s country.” (He was the author of the letters of April 6 and October 20, 1846, listed in Volume 11 of this series as anonymous.) Born in New Gloucester, Mass. (now Maine), as a young man he moved to Illinois and then to Louisiana. There he and his brothers Ebenezer and William A. Lane operated a New Orleans mercantile business, E. Lane & Co., and Andrew studied law and briefly held a judicial post. In 1828–33, the Lane brothers donated money to found Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, to which city Andrew and Ebenezer moved. Andrew had relocated to New York City by 1840 and to New Haven, Conn., by 1845. Sometime before 1846 he acquired a plantation and he retained ownership while in Connecticut. He published three proslavery pamphlets as “Amor Patriæ,” beginning with *A Comparison of Slavery with Abolitionism; Together with Reflections Deduced from the Premises, Touching the Several Interests of the United States* (1848). Continuing to practice law, he lived in New Haven the rest of his life. For more on Lane’s life and writings, see Michael David Cohen, “James K. Polk and the Mystery of Amor Patriæ,” *New England Quarterly*, 86 (June 2013).

2. Probable place identified through content analysis and external research.

3. Lane refers to Polk’s Second Annual Message to Congress, December 8, 1846.

4. George Washington (1732–99) served as a delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses, 1774–75; as commander in chief of the Continental Army, 1775–83; and as the nation's first president, 1789–97.

5. January 1, 1847, fell on a Friday. By “holy day,” Lane presumably refers to the secular New Year's Day celebration. The spelling “holyday” sometimes was used in the nineteenth century to identify a day of recreation.

6. Apparent derogatory reference to Whigs who were opposing the war against Mexico. The phrase derives from Article III, Section 3 of the Constitution, which defines treason as, among other actions, the giving of “Aid and Comfort” to the nation's enemies.

7. In his Second Annual Message, Polk derided Americans who described the war as “unjust and unnecessary and as one of aggression on our part upon a weak and injured enemy.” By giving “aid and comfort” to the Mexicans, he argued, they “encourage the enemy and protract the war.”

8. Pejorative derived from a conservative faction and later party in British politics aligned with the Crown, used by Democrats to refer to the U.S. Whig party and its Federalist predecessor.

9. The French expression “hors de combat,” literally “out of combat,” means “disabled.”

10. Command to order dogs to attack pigs or other animals.

11. Quotation from Deuteronomy 29:18: “a root that beareth gall and wormwood.”

12. Gen. Antonio de Padua María Severino López de Santa Anna y Pérez de Lebrón (1794–1876)—hereafter referred to as Santa Anna—commanded Mexican military forces during the war for Texas independence and the Mexican War and led Mexico's government several times during the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s.

13. Newspapers of the period refer to Zachary Taylor or Winfield Scott as “the hero of Mexico,” but *The Whig Almanac and United States Register for 1847* describes Santa Anna as “the expatriated chief (and only hero) of Mexico.”

14. French political and military leader Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) was often invoked in the era's discussions of nationalism, revolution, and military affairs.

15. Unless noted otherwise, brackets indicate a word or words illegible or uncertain due to faded ink.

16. Lane refers to his comments in Lane to Polk, January 1, 1846, (to be included in a future volume of this series) Anonymous to Polk, April 6, 1846, and Anonymous to Polk, October 20, 1846. ALs. DLC–JKP. Known by its critics as the Black Tariff, this measure was passed in 1842 by a Whig-dominated Congress and reluctantly signed by Pres. John Tyler. Supported by Northern industrialists, it imposed stiff protectionist tariffs on imports of manufactured goods. In 1846, with support from Southern agrarian interests, congressional Democrats passed and Polk signed what became known as the Walker Tariff. Named for Secretary of the Treasury Robert J. Walker, it dramatically reduced the duties imposed by the earlier legislation.

17. Word obliterated, ink blot.

18. A key component of Polk's domestic agenda, the Independent Treasury system, created by Congress in August 1846, required that all federal funds be retained in the U.S. Treasury building and various federal subtreasuries scattered across the country. The legislation stipulated that all funds going in and out of the system be in specie. Privately owned banks were excluded from those transactions.

19. Lane probably meant to write "serve."

20. A Pennsylvania native, Robert J. Walker (1801–69) practiced law there and in Mississippi before serving, as a Democrat, as a U.S. senator from Mississippi, 1836–45, and secretary of the Treasury, 1845–49.

21. Much of the Federalist party, predecessor to the Whigs, had opposed the War of 1812.

22. Anonymous to Polk, October 20, 1846. In that letter, Lane proposes the taxation of commerce at Mexico's seaports to pay the United States' war expenses.

23. Lane probably refers to Lane to Polk, January 1, 1846, (to be included in a future volume of this series) in which he recommends that the government appoint "an extraordinary Agent" whenever "any extraordinary [diplomatic] matter turn[s] up." AL. DLC-JKP. Thomas H. Benton had scant military field experience, having served as a colonel in the Tennessee Volunteers, 1812–13, and a lieutenant colonel in the army, 1813–15. He was also, early on, a critic of Polk's war policies. But he was chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, an expert in matters related to Mexico, and a Polk confidant. Therefore, Polk on December 29, 1846, complied with a request made by Benton in November to ask Congress to create an army rank of lieutenant general that would give him command over all forces in Mexico. Democrat Benton, during the presidencies of Polk's two predecessors, William Henry Harrison and John Tyler, (1841–45) had effectively become the architect of U.S. policies in the Far West. Domination of Polk's war policies would have only added to Benton's influence over federal policies. The Senate on March 3, 1847, confirmed Benton's commission at the rank of major general, but stipulated that he, if he accepted the generalship, would not outrank Maj. Gens. Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott.

24. At least one newspaper, the *Raleigh Register*, and *North-Carolina Gazette* of March 26, 1847, listed "Lord Lieutenant" as a possible title for Benton. No plan to appoint colleagues of his has been confirmed.

25. Although four army officers then held the rank of major general, including William O. Butler and Robert Patterson, Lane probably refers to the two senior officers, Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor. Scott (1786–1866), a Virginia native whose army service reached back to 1808, commanded U.S. forces during the War of 1812 and several Indian wars and later became general-in-chief of the army, 1841–61. His Mexican War victories included the 1847 Battles of Veracruz, Cerro Gordo, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, Chapultepec, and Mexico City. Scott was a Whig and his relations with Polk were fraught with tensions and mistrust. He was the Whigs' nominee for president in 1852, but lost to Democrat Franklin Pierce. Before retiring from the army in 1861, he devised the strategy, initially derided as the "Anaconda plan," that ultimately produced

the Union's victory in the Civil War. Virginia native and Kentucky resident Taylor's (1784–1850) army career, begun in 1803, included the War of 1812 and various Indian wars. Among his Mexican War victories were the Battles of Monterrey and Buena Vista. He was elected as a Whig to the presidency in 1848. He held that office from March 1849 until July 1850, when he died in office and was succeeded by Millard Fillmore.

26. The Mexican War naval fleet was divided into two units. David Conner commanded the Home Squadron, which consisted of all forces in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, while Robert F. Stockton commanded the Pacific Squadron. Pennsylvanian Conner (1792–1856), a veteran of the War of 1812, served as chief of the Bureau of Construction, Equipment, and Repair, 1842–43, before commanding the Home Squadron, 1843–47. During the Mexican War, he blockaded Mexico's Gulf ports and supported the amphibious landing at Veracruz. Stockton (1795–1866) of New Jersey, who served in the navy 1811–26 and 1838–50, commanded the Pacific Squadron from October 1845 to January 1847. Commanding forces on land and sea, he participated in the U.S. conquest of California. He campaigned for Whig presidential candidate William Henry Harrison in 1840 but served in the U.S. Senate as a Democrat, 1851–53.

27. A major port on Mexico's east coast, Veracruz was in March 1847 the site of a landing by U.S. amphibious forces under Gen. Winfield Scott.

28. Polk and other Mexican War proponents cited private debts owed by Mexico to U.S. citizens as a principal justification for that conflict.

29. Lane probably meant to write "It."

30. Polk's political mentor, Andrew Jackson (1767–1845) served in the U.S. House, 1796–97; in the U.S. Senate, 1797–98 and 1823–25; and as governor of Florida Territory, 1821. Hailed as a hero for his leadership at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, he served as the first Democratic president, 1829–37.

31. Latin expression meaning "between ourselves."

32. After a four-day battle at Monterrey, Taylor on September 24, 1846, accepted a capitulation by Mexican general Pedro de Ampudia (1803–68). Under its terms, the Mexicans left the city but kept their weapons and both sides agreed to an eight-week armistice. On October 13, Polk, through William L. Marcy, ordered the end of the armistice.

33. Joshua R. Giddings (1795–1864) of Ohio served in the U.S. House successively as a Whig, a Free Soiler, and a Republican, 1838–59. He ranked among that body's most strident opponents of slavery.

34. Solomon, the third king of biblical Israel, is known for his wisdom.

35. Politician, author, lawyer, and planter Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) was the principal author of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, 1776; Virginia governor, 1779–81; minister to France, 1785–89; U.S. secretary of state, 1790–93; vice president, 1797–1801; and president, 1801–9.

36. Giddings addressed the House regarding Polk's Annual Message and the Mexican War on December 15, 1846.

37. Paraphrase, misattributed to Jefferson, of a line from Joseph Addison, *Cato. A Tragedy* (1713): "When Vice prevails, and impious Men bear Sway, / The Post of Honour is a private Station."

38. Paraphrase of “from Dan even to Beersheba,” from Judges 20:1 and elsewhere in the Old Testament. Dan and Beersheba were towns at the northern and southern extremities of ancient Israel.

39. Paraphrase of Henry Lee III’s eulogy for George Washington: “first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen.”

40. Pennsylvania native and Indiana physician John W. Davis (1799–1859)—not to be confused with Senator John Davis of Massachusetts—served as Speaker of the U.S. House, 1845–47. A Democrat, he served in the Indiana House, 1831–33, 1841–43, 1851–52, and 1857; in the U.S. House, 1839–41 and 1843–47; as commissioner to China, 1848–50; and as governor of Oregon Territory, 1853–54.

41. Lane probably refers to the Missouri Compromise. Under that arrangement of 1820, proslavery and antislavery members of Congress agreed to admit Maine as a free state and Missouri as a slave state, but to prohibit slavery in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase north of 36° 30’.

42. Variations of quotation appear in Matthew 12:25, Mark 3:25, and Luke 11:17.

43. Paraphrase of Romans 14:4: “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.”

44. Mason and Dixon’s line, or the Mason-Dixon line, was surveyed by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, 1763–67, to demarcate Maryland’s northern border with Pennsylvania and its eastern border with Delaware. Since then, Americans have used the line and its westward extension, literally and metaphorically, to denote the boundary between the U.S. South and North.

45. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

46. Antirenters were tenant farmers in New York who demanded the replacement of the large, rented estates that filled much of that state with small, owner-operated farms. The antirent movement flourished from 1839 to 1846, during which time antirenters petitioned the state government for reforms and elected a number of their own candidates to political office. It declined as a political movement beginning in 1847, though many tenants then purchased the land they farmed.

47. The biblical figure Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, was cast out by Abraham and wife Sarah. The angel of God declared, “he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him” (Genesis 16:12). The word thus denotes “an outcast, one at odds with society.”

48. Lane refers to the expulsion of the angel Lucifer from heaven, mentioned in Revelation 12:8–9 and elsewhere in the Bible.

49. The Latin expression “*verbum sat sapienti*” means “a word to the wise is enough.”

50. In his Annual Message, Polk urged the passage of a loan bill of eighteen to nineteen million dollars to pay for the Mexican War.

51. A historian and politician from Massachusetts, Democrat George Bancroft (1800–1891) played a key role in securing Polk’s nomination at the Democratic National Convention of 1844 in Baltimore. He served under Polk as secretary of the navy, 1845–46, and minister to the United Kingdom, 1846–49.

52. Barings Bank, or formally Baring Brothers & Co., the British bank that helped underwrite the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, was founded in 1762 as the John and Francis Baring Company.

53. A resident of New Haven and, by 1847, a Democrat, Henry W. Edwards (1779–1847) had served in the U.S. House, 1819–23; in the U.S. Senate, 1823–27; and as Connecticut governor, 1833–34 and 1835–38. He died July 22, 1847.

54. Andrew Lane, writing anonymously, probably refers to himself.

55. Henrietta Edwards (1815–94).

56. Polk's presidency coincided with the rise of the telegraph as a major means of communication in the United States. The first significant public event reported via the then-new medium was Polk's nomination in Baltimore in 1844 as the Democratic presidential candidate.

57. Postmaster General Cave Johnson.

58. In August 1846, Polk had asked Congress for a two-million dollar appropriation for the Mexican War. Rep. David Wilmot of Pennsylvania had introduced an amendment to the resulting bill excluding slavery from any territory acquired in the war. The amendment had passed in the House but not in the Senate; the unamended bill also had failed in the Senate. The Wilmot Proviso was repeatedly introduced thereafter, including as an amendment to the Three Million Dollar Bill of early 1847, but never won Senate approval.

59. Paraphrase of Horace *Epistles* 1.1.65–66: “rem facias, rem,/si possis, recte, si non, quocumque modo, rem.” The Latin translates, “make money, make money, if possible in the right way, if not, in *some* way.”

FROM JAMES WALKER¹

Dr. Sir,

Columbia [Tenn.]² January 1 1847

I drew on you yesterday at 60 days date for \$1400— to pay for Dolly & her children.³

The price is an exorbitant one and I feel that in the matter the old Lady⁴ has been badly treated—indeed I look upon it as unfriendly & ungenerous, under the circumstances.

At the same [time]⁵ I addressed you,⁶ I wrote to Mrs. Dickinson,⁷ in your mother's name, saying she had heard Dolly was to be sold, and requesting to have the refusal of her at a fair price—that she was prepared to pay the money for her. To this letter no reply was made. A few days ago we heard that she was to be sold, and to other persons out of the family. It was said Col Trotter⁸ was to have her. On the 30th Miller,⁹ (one of Dr. D's¹⁰ exrs) came out, and towards evening came up and informed the old Lady that he had come out to sell the negroes—would sell them privately if he could get the price he should ask—if not he would put them to the highest bidder at 12 m[onths]¹¹ credit. She asked him his price. He said \$1500 12 *ms.* I being sent for told Miller

the price was far above their value, and I could not advise her to give it—would prefer her going to the highest bidder & taking chances. He went off promising to come up in the morning before doing any thing. I had concluded to risque a public sale, believing no one would bid against your mother out of pure malice, and that no fair bid could go over \$1200. but determined to buy her any how. When he came up yesterday he still insisted on \$1500. I urged it was exacting unjustly owing to what he saw was a matter of feeling—told him he might himself choose any two respectable men to value the property and I would give him 5 pr. cent on their valuation—this he refused. Your mother then asked him to go and get the best offer he could, and then give her the refusal—this he refused—she then asked him to put her up to the highest bidder at fair sale. To this he replied that he believed he could get \$1500 for them at Nashville and he would not take less—that if he put them up and she & children did not bring his price, he would stop the sale or bid them off himself & take them to Nashville & sell them, separately her & the oldest boy. In short it amounted to this: your mother must pay \$1500, 12 ms for them or *she* should not have them.

You know how such a state of things would operate on the old Lady's feelings & nerves. I thought it my duty to put a stop to it, and seeing he was determined to extort to the utmost cent, I concluded to settle the matter at once, believing a few hundred dollars was of no consequence, compared to your mother's peace of mind, the ballance of her days. I asked him, what he would take off for Cash. He said \$100. This I gave him, and so closed the matter. I have detailed these particulars that you may know the reason's why I gave such a high price. Negroes have risen very much here in the last month, but \$1200 at 12 m. would have been the fullest rates for such property—but your mother's peace & quiet for life, is not to be estimated by dollars & cents—he might have had \$2000, if he had been smart enough to ask it.

Your mother desires me to say to you that you can have Garrison,¹² at whatever price you choose to fix. She does not want an extravagant price for him—her request is that you fix the price, *moderate*. Let me know what it is, and I will send you her Bill of sale for him & her receipt on her legacy¹³ for the ballance. I sold the bill at par.

JAMES WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received and answered January 10, 1847; "Has drawn on me for \$1400, to pay for *Dolly* & her children for my mother; My mother is accountable to me for this sum."

1. A planter and a successful businessman in Columbia, Tenn., Walker (1792–1864) had married Polk's sister Jane Maria in 1813. They lived next

door to Samuel and Jane Knox Polk. By 1846, Walker was operating a furnace and forge.

2. State identified from Polk's AE.

3. Formerly slaves of the Polks, Dolly and her children were owned by William G. Dickinson of Franklin, Tenn., at the time of Dickinson's death in 1844; Jane Knox Polk still owned Dolly's mother, Violet. In late 1846, Dickinson's widow Catherine R. T. Dickinson put them up for sale.

4. Jane Knox Polk (1776–1852), the president's mother, lived in Columbia. A widow since 1827, she had inherited slaves from her father and from her husband Samuel.

5. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

6. Walker to Polk, December 14, 1846.

7. Catherine R. T. Dickinson (1796–1848). (Volumes 10 and 11 of this series erroneously refer to her as Lucinda Dickinson.)

8. Walker may refer to Joseph H. Trotter of Giles County, schoolteacher Isham A. Trotter (c. 1809–1850s?) of Fayette County, or Bedford County land-owner Richard Trotter.

9. John W. Miller (c. 1804–1870s?), a Franklin, Tenn., constable and slaveowner, was one of the executors of William G. Dickinson's estate.

10. A native of New Hampshire, William G. Dickinson (1791–1844) moved to Tennessee in the 1810s. There he lived in Columbia and Franklin and became a slaveholder and prominent surgeon. His daughter, Belinda G., married Polk's brother William H. in 1837. Both William Dickinson and Belinda Polk died in 1844.

11. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

12. Garrison (1815?–?), also called Gary or Gerry, was a pygmy and was married to Caroline Harris. Polk rented him from Jane Polk to work on the Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation until purchasing him in 1847. He remained there at Polk's death.

13. Walker refers to Jane Polk's legacy under the will of her son Samuel W. Polk. See letter and notes in Polk to Walker, January 10, 1847.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG¹

My dear Sir

Liverpool [England] 4t Jany 1847

The message arrived late by The Ashburton & Skiddy² a few days before the Steamer.

It is well received here by the mercantile Businessmen and manufactures which is The only classes that know any thing of *us*. These are perfectly satisfied that we have good cause of War with Mexico and that we have put up with a great deal from her. The message is a fine expose [o]f³ that whole matter and will do much to satisfy The world that you are right. It will do much too at home. Our own people wanted just such an Expose to put Mr Webster⁴ right. Mr Calhoun⁵ must feel

himself rather unpleasantly situated when he refers to his cause in the *State dept* & his speeches & votes of last session.

The London papers have generally republished the message *entirely* and many [o]f the papers in Ireland. Heretofore they mainly made *Extracts* &c. They will never forgive *you* for the manner in which you sprung the Oregon Question on Them, and forced it on to a settlement.⁶ They wished that Question to remain an open one to be used when it suited them.

Now they are dependent on us for Cotton Bread-Stuffs and provisions. Still they hate and despise us, but our principles are finding they way over and before the Harvest. They may have trouble at or near home, but the masses are *starved* and have no Energy or Spring in Them. The Gold too is going over in large amts. This gives them Trouble; Belgium & part of France are very short of Provisions which will assi[s]t the demand.⁷

I was much asstonished at some of the state Elections and at the defeat of Mr Wright.⁸ I do not see that our papers or speakers handle or use the very high prices *now* obtained for Cotton Bread Stuffs Provisions &c. The South are reciving very high prices for *Cotton Rice* &c. The grain growing states are in better Luck if posible. Flour in 13 and 4 of English 10\$ Indian corn sold yesterday \$216 our currency & Bushel every thing *American* in This propo[r]tion. If all this was fairly laid before our people we could not be defeated any where.

You have forgotten me in The Mexican War and I assure you I feel it. I regret I ever left my country. Had I have been at Home I would have been with the Tennesseans and if I thought there was to be a nother Battle I would go by a land Train steamer direct as a volunteer—without rank pay or emolument.

I feel mortified about it and always intended to engage in some way or position in it but did not bother to urge it, or embarrass you.

I inclose a letter for little Ethie.⁹ Present me kindly to Mrs. Polk Mr & Mrs. Walker Miss Rucker, and Master Marshall.¹⁰

R ARMSTRONG

[P.S.] Please My dear sir remember Capt. [. . .] case of the cotton service see Mr Osgoods letter which I inclosed you.¹¹

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 27, 1847.

1. Gen. Robert Armstrong (1792–1854), born in Virginia, served as an army officer during the War of 1812 and the Second Seminole War and as postmaster at Nashville, 1829–45. A Democrat, he ran unsuccessfully for Tennessee governor in 1837. One of Polk's closest political friends, he managed Polk's three gubernatorial campaigns and his presidential bid in Tennessee. Following

appointment by Polk in 1845, he served as consul at Liverpool, England, until 1852. In 1851, he became, with Andrew J. Donelson, co-owner of the *Washington Union*; in 1852, he became Congress's printer.

2. The *Ashburton* was a 449-ton vessel built by U.S. shipbuilders William Currier and Donald McKay in 1842. The 930-ton packet ship *John R. Skiddy* was built by the U.S. firm of McKay and William Pickett in 1844.

3. Letter inserted here and below to complete probable meanings.

4. A native of New Hampshire and later a resident of Massachusetts, lawyer Daniel Webster (1782–1852) served in the U.S. House, 1813–17 and 1823–27; in the U.S. Senate, 1827–41 and 1845–50; and as U.S. secretary of state, 1841–43 and 1850–52. Originally a Federalist, he became a Whig by the early 1830s. During most of his career, Webster advocated for a strong national government, the abolition of slavery, and New England manufacturing and maritime interests.

5. South Carolina politician, lawyer, and planter John C. Calhoun (1782–1850) served in the U.S. House, 1811–17; as secretary of war, 1817–25; as vice president, 1825–32; in the U.S. Senate, 1832–43 and 1845–50; and as U.S. secretary of state, 1844–45. First a Democratic Republican and later a Democrat, he remained a consistent advocate for causes associated with the South's planters. His positions shifted, however, between unionism and Southern sectionalism.

6. The Buchanon-Pakenham Treaty, in 1846, resolved rival claims by the United States and the United Kingdom in the Oregon Country, which included today's Pacific Northwest region of the United States and Canada's province of British Columbia.

7. The Irish potato famine of the middle to late 1840s led to British demand for U.S. food-stuffs, a demand increased by the inability of France, Belgium, and other European countries to meet that need.

8. Lawyer, soldier, and politician Silas Wright, Jr., (1795–1847) was a leading member of the Albany Regency, a cabal of Democratic leaders who controlled New York state politics from the early 1820s into the late 1830s. Wright was a state senator, 1824–27; a member of the U.S. House, 1827–29; New York state comptroller, 1829–33; a member of the U.S. Senate, 1833–44; and New York governor, 1844–46. In 1844, he declined the Democratic party nomination to run for vice president on a ticket headed by Polk.

9. Letter not found. Elizabeth Armstrong was Robert's daughter.

10. Sarah Childress Polk, Joseph Knox Walker, Augusta Adams Tabb Walker, Johanna L. Rucker, and Marshall T. Polk, Jr. Joseph Knox Walker (1818–63), Polk's nephew and law partner, served as the president's private secretary, 1845–49, and in the Tennessee Senate, 1857–59. He married Augusta Adams Tabb (1824–60) in 1841. Rucker (1822–53), Polk's niece, made extended visits with the Polks in Washington City. Although her family referred to her in letters as "Johanna," the census and some other acquaintances spelled her name "Joanna"; no signature of hers has been located. Marshall T. Polk, Jr., (1831–84) Polk's nephew and ward, attended Georgetown College, Georgetown, D.C., before being appointed to the U.S. Military Academy in 1848; he graduated in 1852 with the rank of second lieutenant.

11. Enclosure not found. The captain's surname is illegible in the manuscript—possibly either "Prance's" or "Provost." A Captain Prance was, in the 1850s, captain of the *Saint Michael*, apparently a British ship, and there was also a Captain Provost in that era's British navy. The sentence's concluding reference is possibly to Gayton P. Osgood (1797–1861), a former Democratic congressman, 1833–35, from George Bancroft's native Massachusetts with ties to the Polk administration.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My dear Sir, 90 Eaton Square London. January 4, 1847

I was a little disappointed at not receiving a private letter from any body at Washington. But I can well understand the imperative demands upon your time at the opening of Congress. Many thanks for your message which is both clearly and vigorously written. The comments upon it in many of the English papers spring from their consciousness of your success and of their own inability to interfere. It was a hard lesson for England to learn, but she has learned it, that America means to go on her own way, and that Europe, though it might gaze with envy, must give up the thought of swaying her destiny.

I have written to the Department¹ the state of the money market. I also send you the Times' Newspaper, in which you will find Mr Webster & his free trade speeches, very amply commented on.² The one in which Mr Dallas³ is vindicated, is very well done & I wish Mr Dallas might see it. Mr Hume⁴ called on me last evening, and we had a very long chat. He is about the size and weight of Benton, and has a very good opinion of his own movements in Parliament. He has at last got possession of a copy of the Boston Resolutions & of Webster's Speech in 1840; and the effect upon Webster's reputation in England is appalling.⁵

The news from America has been looked forward to with intense avidity. When the message came, they found it unanswerable. They saw that the Californias would certainly become ours, & they set up a savage, incoherent growl. The growl was the more fierce, because they intend only to be *lookers on*. The affairs of Ireland are much worse for them than you can conceive. I had no idea of the difficulties of a settlement of the questions that arise there, till I came to have the opportunity of near observation. The result must in the end be, enlarged & radical concessions to Ireland, at the expense of the Anglo-Irish church & to the repression of the Anglo-Irish landlords; and those concessions will not be made, till the crisis becomes more imminent.

Then too Lord Palmerston⁶ has broken with Guizot and Louis Philippe, and does, by no means, carry the English Public along with

him.⁷ Guizot & Louis P. are on this occasion firm. It was the court which led to this mistake of the English ministry. The queen Victoria has herself addressed a letter to the queen of the French, & another to the Queen of the Belgians,⁸ mildly written, it is said, but still expressing her dissatisfaction. That discontent is not shared by the British people. On the other hand Guizot has written to Lord John Russell⁹ a letter, insinuating that it would be better to have a more peace-loving man than Lord Palmerston to manage English foreign affairs. Lord John of course showed the letter to Palmerston, and this did not improve the friendly relations of the antagonist diplomatists. Afterwards Count Jarnac¹⁰ presented a paper to Lord Palmerston, and reported to Lord John Russell, that the paper had been received without attention by Lord Palmerston. On the other hand Lord Palmerston avers that in a conversation of two hours he went over the despatch with Count Jarnac point by point. Of course here were new causes of anger.

As to commerce you may rely that the demand for American produce will continue.¹¹ This year of famine is not to end the demand. On the contrary England & Ireland will for the next year be dependent upon us.

On the other hand, the demands from America for English manufactures, are not much increasing. A vast deal of our commerce has been transferred to the continent; to Belgium, France & Germany. Iron is too high to admit of being exported, and will remain so for some years yet. Coal is in London \$7.50 per ton. Practically, specie must continue to flow in upon America.

I sometimes wish I had *authority* from you (permission I suppose I have at my discretion) to step over to Paris for a week with the right to speak officially with Guizot for two hours. The papers now say, that Bagby¹² is to come over. I think Guizot has had experience enough to make him look with different eyes on the balance of Power in America.

Best regards to Mrs. Polk & your household.

GEORGE BANCROFT

P.S. I hope the loan may be negotiated in America; but European capitalists will desire to compete for it. I had a sort of offer for the whole at par or in case the English moneymarket shares the disposition of the [government]¹³ at 96. I sounded the idea of borrowing money [at] such rates, but it is well eno' to know the disposition of people here. The reasoning ones know that American Stocks are now the safest in the world.

The British public, in the midst of all this clamor, heartily admire the heroic firmness with which you stand up for your own views on commerce.

ALS, press copy. MHi. Probably addressed to Washington City. Extract published in *LLGB*, pp. 5–7.

1. State Department.
2. Enclosure not found. The *Times* is a London newspaper published since 1785.
3. Philadelphian George M. Dallas (1792–1864), after holding various offices in Pennsylvania, served as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, 1831–33; as minister to Russia, 1837–39; as Polk's vice president, 1845–49; and as minister to the United Kingdom, 1856–61. Early in 1844 Dallas followed the lead of Robert J. Walker in advocating the annexation of Texas.
4. Born in Scotland, Joseph Hume (1777–1855) was a surgeon and a radical politician. He occupied seats in the United Kingdom's House of Commons from 1812 to 1855, representing intermittently Scottish, English, and Irish constituencies. At the time of this letter's composition, he represented Bedfordshire, England.
5. The specific Boston Resolutions and Daniel Webster speech of 1840 referred to cannot be identified.
6. Henry John Temple, Lord Palmerston, (1784–1865) served as foreign minister of the United Kingdom, 1846–51, in the Liberal party government of Lord John Russell. He later served as prime minister, 1855–58 and 1859–65.
7. The constitutional monarch Louis Philippe (1773–1850), who styled himself King of the French, reigned from 1830 until 1848, when angry Parisian crowds forced his abdication. Historian and statesman François Guizot (1787–1874), a leading political figure, held successive governmental positions during Louis Philippe's reign, including that of prime minister, 1847–48. The Franco-Anglo tension to which Bancroft refers arose from the so-called Affair of the Spanish Marriages. To create closer ties between France and Spain, Guizot successfully manipulated circumstances to produce marriages, in 1846, of two members of Spain's royal family, Queen Isabella II and her sister María Luisa Fernanda, to spouses related to the French Bourbons. Afterwards, Palmerston, believing that the marriages violated an earlier Anglo-Franco understanding, expressed outrage toward the French government.
8. The constitutional monarch Victoria (1819–1901) reigned as Queen of the United Kingdom, 1837–1901. Maria Amalia Teresa (1782–1866), consort to Louis Philippe, was Queen of the French, 1830–48. Louise-Marie de Orleans (1812–50) was Queen of the Belgians, 1832–50. She was consort to Leopold I, the new state of Belgium's first king and an uncle of Queen Victoria.
9. Heading Whig and Liberal party governments, Russell (1792–1878) served as prime minister of the United Kingdom, 1846–52 and 1865–66. He served in the House of Commons, 1813–55 and 1859–68.
10. Count Philippe de Jarnac (1815–75), a French diplomat in London, was close to Queen Victoria and various high British officials. His father had emi-

grated from France to England; the family owned a large estate in County Tipperary, Ireland.

11. Trade between the United States and United Kingdom had been bolstered by tariff reductions enacted in 1846 in both countries: the repeal of the United Kingdom's Corn Laws and, shortly thereafter, the Walker Tariff.

12. Democrat Arthur P. Bagby (1794–1858) served as Alabama governor, 1837–41; U.S. senator, 1841–48; and minister to Russia, 1848–49.

13. Word here and below uncertain, light and blurred ink transfer.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.¹

Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany. 5th 1847

On the 12th of the last month I wrote to you, two letters, the one addressed to you in *Noxubee*, and the other under cover to *Mr Marrs*² in Yalobusha, to be delivered to you on your arrival at my place. In both these letters I authorized you to draw on my commission merchants (*Messrs Pickett & Co*)³ of New Orleans, for \$3,000, of the proceeds of my crop, and to apply the proceeds in the purchase of an additional force for my place. Since that time I have made a closer calculation of my means, and find that I cannot conveniently spare that amount at this time. I write you this letter therefore to countermand the authority then given. If you have not drawn on *Pickett & Co*, when you receive this letter, I do not wish you to do so. If you have drawn and have not laid out the money, I wish you to hold it in your hands, until you can hear from me again, when I will inform you what to do with it. I wish you to write to me on the receipt of this letter, whether you have drawn the Bill on *Pickett & Co* or not, and if you have, whether you have laid out any of the money. As soon as I can hear from you on the subject, I will write to you. Of course you will draw on *Pickett & Co* for the amount of *Mr Marrs's* wages, and the plantation expenses. This is all that I can conveniently spare at present.

I have not heard of the arrival of any of my cotton at New Orleans, though *Mr Marrs* writes to me that it was shipped from Troy⁴ on the 10th of December.

As I am not certain whether you may have left *Noxubee* for Tennessee, I have written to you to day to Columbia.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Noxubee County, Miss., and marked “(Private).”

1. Campbell (1797–1852) served as Polk's business agent in Columbia, Tenn., the location of Polk's home. The son of John and Matilda Golden Polk Campbell, he used the suffix “Junior” to distinguish himself from his uncle of the same name.

2. Polk misspelled the name of John A. Mairs (c. 1807–1880s?), a Virginia native and the overseer of Polk's Mississippi plantation since 1845.

3. Formerly known as William S. Pickett & Co., the cotton brokerage house of Pickett, Perkins & Co. consisted of Pickett, William M. Perkins, and Samuel P. Walker. It was originally based in New Orleans and then added a second office at Memphis.

4. Mairs to Polk, December 17, 1846. Polk owned a warehouse at Troy in eastern Mississippi. There he stored cotton grown on his Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation until rains swelled the waters of the nearby Yalobusha River to a level sufficient for a boat to transport the shipment downriver toward New Orleans.

FROM HENRY HORN¹

Dear Sir,

Philadelphia 5th Jany 1847

My friend Col. John J. McCahen² of this City being anxious to obtain the appointment of a Captain in the new regular Army which you contemplate raising for the Mexican Service³—has requested me to say a word in his behalf, which I do most cheerfully. I have known him from his boyhood, his propensities have always been of a military character, brave patriotic and uniformly Democratic. I feel therefore that I may safely recommend him to you as one possessing all the qualifications essential to the formation of a good soldier and a valuable officer.

From the vote recently taken in the House of representatives relative to Tea and Coffee⁴ it appears that there is but little probability that any law taxing these articles can pass during the present session of Congress, and that no aid from that source in obtaining the contemplated loan can be expected. Nor do I believe that the passage of such a law would materially facilitate the taking of the loan. The Capitalists here and elsewhere so far as I can learn do not doubt the ability of the Government to meet the interest of the loan in the absence of that law, its resources from other objects being abundant.

Should however a loan of twenty millions be required and put in the market in the aggregate even at Twenty years and at an interest of six per Cent it would doubtless drag along heavily and find but few takers at *par*. Not however on account of any distrust in the disposition or ability of the government punctually to pay the interest and ultimately to pay the principal of the debt, but from a belief that by holding back for a time the necessities of the government would become so urgent as to oblige the acceptance of proposals at a rate considerably below *par*. This you will say would not be patriotic in the capitalists. I admit it. But patriotism with most of them is but of a secondary consideration. Self

interest is the main spring to the actions of the generality of mankind at the present day.

The difficulty however of obtaining the loan upon fair and reasonable terms I believe may be obviated by a judicious resort to the issue of Treasury notes⁵ of from fifty dollars upwards bearing an interest of six per cent and made payable in one or two years, allowing the holder the privilege of converting them at maturity into a twenty years loan at the same rate of interest.

This it is confidently believed would call into action an immense amount of dormant capital now in the hands of small capitalists. The investment would be eagerly embraced by those having from one hundred to four or five thousand dollars to spare, either as a temporary or permanent investment. These notes would by the requirements of the commercial community and others having payments to make to the government always be kept at or above par.

These suggestions will be made more fully and at large if I should (as I hope I may) be able to make them before long in person.

HENRY HORN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Marked "*Private*." From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received January 10, 1847; "*Private*."

1. A Philadelphia Democrat, Horn (1786–1862) served in the U.S. House, 1831–33. Polk nominated him as customs collector at Philadelphia in 1845 and 1846, but the Senate rejected the nominations. Horn nonetheless served over a year in that post before the Senate confirmed an alternate nominee.

2. McCahen (c. 1809–1853), an accountant, was among the leaders of the Buckshot War of 1838, a demonstration by Democrats against disputed Pennsylvania election returns. He represented Philadelphia County in the Pennsylvania House in 1842.

3. In his Second Annual Message to Congress, Polk called for raising an additional regular army force for the war in Mexico.

4. The House passed a resolution against taxing tea and coffee on January 2.

5. The term "treasury notes" in the nineteenth century referred to short-term debt instruments issued by the federal government.

FROM THOMAS ALLEN¹

Sir, Crystal Springs, St. Louis, Mo. Jan 8. 1847

Your Excellency having by Proclamation authorized a sale to take place at Dubuque in the State of Iowa, on the 8th of March next, of sundry mineral lands in that vicinity in the state of Iowa, heretofore reserved from sale,² I feel it my duty to transmit to you my solemn

and earnest protest against such proceeding on your part, respectfully shewing:

That the Government of the United States has no legal title to those lands and mines at Dubuque situated within that tract on the western bank of the Mississippi River, containing seven leagues in front on said river by three leagues in depth, commencing at the upper hills of the little Maquanquitois river, and extending below to the Mesquabynanques hills, and granted to Julien Dubuque by the Spanish Government in November 1796.³

That the Government of the United States expressly recognized the grant to Dubuque in ratifying the entire treaty made with the Sac and Fox Indians in 1804, a special exception of the said lands in favor of the grantee from the Spanish Government, being a part of the said treaty.⁴

That by the treaty with France in 1803, the United States stipulated to protect the inhabitants of the territory of Louisiana thereby ceded, in their *rights of property*, that Commissioners of the United States government,⁵ ascertained and declared the said claim of Dubuque, "to be a complete Spanish grant, made and completed prior to the first day of October 1800," one Commissioner dissenting from the decision of the majority, being of the opinion that the claimants had only an incipient title,⁶ but the supreme Court of the United States have decided (4th Peters 512, & 9th Pet. 133) that incipient titles to lands are *property*,⁷ therefore, whether the grant to Dubuque be a complete or an incipient title, it is a *right in the property*, which the United States are solemnly pledged to protect.

That no title to the said tract of land has ever been conveyed to the United States: the treaty of 1803 ceding only *unoccupied* lands, and the treaty of 1804 with the Indians, expressly & purposely excepting the said tract from cession to the United States; both which said treaties the government of the United States voluntarily ratified and confirmed.

That by an act of the Congress of the United States approved March 3. 1811, *unrepealed*, it was expressly provided, "*that till after the decision of Congress thereon, no tract of land shall be offered for sale*, the claim to which has been, in due time, and according to law, presented to the recorder of land titles in the district of Louisiana, and filed in his office, for the purpose of being investigated by the Commissioners appointed for ascertaining the rights of persons claiming lands in the Territory of Louisiana."⁸

That the said claim of Dubuque was so presented and filed, and there has, as yet, been no "*decision of Congress thereon*," there being two reports of Committees in Congress in favor of the claim, and one or two against it, indisposed of, and the subject is still in Congress pending.⁹

Therefore, it is submitted to your Excellency whether it be lawful now to offer for sale the said tract of land or any part thereof, so as aforesaid granted to Julian Dubuque.

Now therefore, being one of the legal representatives of the said Dubuque, and entitled by one conveyance to 8392 arpens of his said grant, I do hereby most solemnly protest against the sale and the offering for sale of the lands comprised within the said grant, or any part of the same, by the government of the United States, or by any of its officers.

Earnestly hoping and requesting that: your Excellency, in "faithfully executing the laws,"¹⁰ may so feel the paramount obligations of the treaty of 1803, the force of the provision of the act of 1811, and a spirit of justice to private right, as to be persuaded to suspend or postpone the contemplated sale of the lands comprised within the grant aforesaid, until the title thereto shall either be passed upon by Congress, or settled by the Judiciary of the country.

I will add, historically, for the information of your Excellency that, Julien Dubuque, possessed and occupied his grant from 1788, until 1808 or 9, when he died and was buried at Dubuque in the soil he claimed as his own. He sold, in Oct. 1804, about one half of his grant to Auguste Choteau¹¹ then of this City, for \$10,848.60. After Dubuques death, the remaining half of the grant was divided into lots by plat, and sold under order of court, by his administrator duly appointed and qualified, for the payment of Dubuques debts. It so happened that, nearly all the purchasers resided in this City of St. Louis, where they or their descendants continue to reside, and number over fifty of our most respectable citizens, some of them, however, being minors & orphans. Lot numbered *Eleven* (11), consisting of 14,088 arpens, was purchased, at the sale, in equal parts undivided, by William Russell, Edward Hempstead & Rufus Easton,¹² the last of whom sold his interest to the said William Russell. The said William Russell has since conveyed his interest to the undersigned. This lot (11), it is understood, lies near the present town of Dubuque, fronts on the Mississippi river, and runs back to the western boundary of the original grant. All, or nearly all the claimants, except myself, have employed an attorney,¹³ who is now understood to be at Washington to represent their case to the government, & this will account for my appearing alone in this remonstrance, and without consultation with the other claimants or their attorney; it being also my intention, without knowing what theirs may be, to bring suits in partition and ejectment in the courts of Iowa, as soon as practicable, after their due organization,¹⁴ and of this, any persons proposing to purchase, hereafter, of any officer or agent of the government, will have notice.

THO. ALLEN

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received January 23, 1847.

1. A native of Massachusetts, Allen (1813–82) founded the *Washington Madisonian* in 1837. In 1842 he moved to St. Louis, where he briefly practiced law before beginning to promote railroads and internal improvements in 1848. Over the next three decades, he became a major railroad builder and president of a railroad company. He was a member of the Missouri Senate, 1850–54, and the U.S. House, as a Democrat, 1881–82.

2. Polk’s proclamation of September 5, 1846, authorized this sale of public lands containing lead mines.

3. Born in Quebec, Canada, Dubuque (1762–1810) spent most of his life mining and trading with Indians in Iowa. In 1788, he won either possession of or exclusive lead mining rights in the Fox Indians’ territory. The Spanish government later affirmed his claim to that territory.

4. The treaty of 1804, in which the Sac and Fox Indians ceded their lands to the United States, excluded all lands that Spain had granted to individuals or groups. It followed the Louisiana Purchase from France (1803).

5. In the margin Allen wrote “20th Sept. 1806.”

6. In 1805, Dubuque and Auguste Chouteau, to whom Dubuque had sold part of the Fox land, presented their claim to a board of U.S. land commissioners. Allen quotes from the proceedings of the board in 1806. See those in *Laws, Treaties and Other Documents, Having Operation and Respect to the Public Lands* (Washington, D.C.: Roger C. Weightman, 1811), appendix pp. 84–85.

7. Allen cites two Supreme Court decisions, *Soulard v. United States* and *Smith v. United States* (decided together, 1830) and *Delassus v. United States* (1835), in Richard Peters, *Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of the United States*.

8. Paraphrase of “An Act providing for the final adjustment of claims to lands, and for the sale of the public lands in the territories of Orleans and Louisiana, and to repeal the act passed for the same purpose, and approved February sixteenth, one thousand eight hundred and eleven,” *SL*, 11th Congress, 3rd Session, Chapter 46: “that till after the final decision of Congress thereon, no tract of land shall be offered for sale, the claim to which has been in due time, and according to law, presented to the register of the land-office, and filed in his office, for the purpose of being investigated by the commissioners appointed for the purpose of ascertaining the rights of persons claiming land in the territory of Orleans.”

9. Dubuque’s and Chouteau’s heirs continued to pursue the land claim in the 1840s. A Senate committee reported in favor of the claim in March 1846; a House committee reported against it the same month, with a minority reporting in its favor in May. See Senate Document No. 256, 29th Congress, 1st Session; House Report No. 432, 29th Congress, 1st Session; House Report No. 675, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

10. Paraphrase of the presidential oath in Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution: “faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States.”

11. Born in New Orleans, Auguste Chouteau (1739, 1749, or 1750–1829) was a founder of the settlement that grew into the city of St. Louis. He was also

patriarch of St. Louis's Chouteau fur-trading dynasty and held various public offices.

12. Russell, Allen's father-in-law, went to St. Louis in 1804 as deputy surveyor for Louisiana Territory. Having grown wealthy buying up lands he had surveyed, he furnished a large dowry when Allen married his daughter in 1842. Hempstead (1780–1817), a St. Louis lawyer, served as attorney general of Upper Louisiana Territory, 1809–11; delegate to Congress from Missouri Territory, 1812–14; and Speaker of the Missouri territorial legislature, 1816–17. Easton (1774–1834), a St. Louis lawyer and real estate speculator, served as delegate to Congress from Missouri Territory, 1814–16, and attorney general of Missouri, 1821–26.

13. Ferdinand W. Risque (c. 1815–1862), a Virginia native, practiced law in St. Louis before moving to Washington City around 1840.

14. Iowa attained statehood on December 28, 1846.

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir

Yellowbusha Ct. Miss Jan. 9th 1847

I have received both of your letters of the 12th Decem 46. I am now at your plantation. Your people are all in good health, and dooing will. They are going on clearing finely.

I have setled up all of your business as far as it can be done at this. I got here on the 6th Inst. with the Girl (Agness)¹ that Col Childress² sent down to me on the 28th November last & I also brought a Boy 17 or 18 years old (Jo.)³ that I Bought of C. B. Hadly Agent for Y. S. Pickard.⁴ I bought for the purpose of speculation & could have got \$700. in gold for him before I got your letter in Macon.⁵ After getting yours I concluded to let you have him. I gave \$625 & shall charge you \$650. the asking price for young Women. I shall use my best exertions to have three or four more on the farm in time to make the crop. I must buy two More Muels. I have written to Picket⁶ to let me know at Mobile what young Negroes are worthe in Neworleans. If the prices will Justify I will go there if I do not buy while in Mobile. If I should fail in both places I will be in Columbia about the last of Febrary next & will send or bring them down with the Muels. If I should buy⁷ I have paid out all of my own Money & drew a check on Picket Perkins & Co. for three hundred dollars. You will see on the oposite a full statement of all the expences. Their is nothing owing here that is due. I have setled all.

Jas K Polk to Robt Campbell Jr [. .] ⁸ Jan 9th 1846	
after deducting \$37.85. cents from former Act	
rendered in November 1846 leaves due me	\$26 50
Expences of Agness to my plantation	3.00

	Expences of self Agness Jo & two horses	12.00
	To 10. days services self	20.00
	To Cash paid for Jo.	625.00
	Charge Extra for Jo.	25.00
Jan 7.	Paid Jno A Mairs ⁹ for seivices of 1846.	450.00
"	Paid Freeland Blacksmith ¹⁰ Act for 1846.	79.30
	Paid for shares & sundries for plantation	44.50
8th	Paid Doct. Wilbourn ¹¹ Medcal Act.	12.75
9.	" Taxes for 1846 & a part 45	51.75
"	" Negroes for crops 1844. & 1846.	250-05
"	" Doct. Powel ¹² Medical Bill	22.50
		\$1622.35
	Credit by Check drawn on	
	Picket Perkins & Co. Neworleans, for	300
	Due me	\$1322.35
	Expences to my plantation four days, 2. horses	<u>5.25</u>
		\$1327.60

I will also give you a list & statement of the Negroes I have paid the amount they had each year & the price I gave each year. I gave them for the year 1844 I paid them 1 1/4 cts per lb as was by Mr Mairs after he came to the plantation for their crop of 1846. I gave 2. cents per lb. in the seed, as they prefered taking their pay in that way.

	<u>1846</u>	<u>for</u>	<u>1844</u>	Total Paid each
Elizabeth. ¹³	\$750.	for	425.	\$1175
Ben ¹⁴	280		137	417
Pompy ¹⁵	316		175	491.
Allen ¹⁶	830		875.	<u>1705</u>
				\$3788
Brought forward. ¹⁷				<u>Total</u> \$3788.
	1846		1844	
Alfonso. ¹⁸	760		382.	1142
Bob. ¹⁹	544		768	1312
[Renner] ²⁰	596.			
Perry ²¹	826.		1093	19.19
Charley ²²	764		637	1401.
Emanuel, ²³	456			
Gary ²⁴	360		437	797.
Barbary ²⁵	420			
Giles ²⁶	924		775	1699

Caroline. J. ²⁷	538	850	13.90
Fill & Eve ²⁸	956	1062	2018
Henry ²⁹	1620	1793	34.13
Adison ³⁰	950	750	1700
Gilbert ³¹	608	677	1285
Caroline C ³²	582.		
Wilson ³³	650		
Clora ³⁴		437	
	\$13730	\$11275	\$250,05

I paid the above amounts to them in gold & silver which pleased them very much. The amount I hav[e]³⁵ paid the Negros seems large but it is the amount of their cotto[n] for the two years, 1844 & 1846.

I have full Tax receipts for all of your lands from 1842 up to the present year except the South 1/2 of the W 1/2 of the N.W 1/4 of Section 28 Township 24 R. 5. E. which was entered by Doct Caldwell³⁶ & never has been given in for taxes since it was entered. It was sold in 1844 for the Tax of 1843 & was purchased by Raybourn³⁷ & M C. Gavin for \$1.50. I saw Mr Raybourn & insisted on redeeming the 41. acre block, which was sold and was willing to pay him the percent allowed by law, & all cost, but he (Raybourn) refused saying he Bought it for speculation & would not take less than \$3.00 per acre which I refused to give believing his title not to be good. I made a tender of the gold to him in the presence of the sheriff with all cost & lawfull Interest thereon. I now leave it with you to say what course I shall pursue. I found upon examination that the tax had not been paid upon the same block of 41 acres for the years 1845. and 1846 which I paid and imbraced it in the receipt that I took for your whole taxables for 1846.

I have instructed Mr Mairs to give in for taxes hereafter the whole of S. 28. and the N 1/2 S. 33. all in T. 24. & N 5. E. which imbraces all of your lands for I was particular in examining the land office at Grenada. The 40. acre block that you entered will be Taxable this year, which imbraces the whole of S 28. By Instructions that I gave Maj Maney in Carolton while their last fall was if I was not their by the 1st day of January 1847. for him to hire out Harry³⁸ to some punctual man. He done as I directed. I got their on the 5th Jan, and he was at work. He hired for \$275. I could not collect any of the former hires. I put both notes out for collection and Instructed Harry to wind up all of his business & if I was not at Carrolton by the 1st of January next to go on up to your plantation & that I would have him a set of tools their by that time.

I will draw on Picket & Co. if I should not go to Neworleans for the amount that I have advanced & expences for you. I have ordered your

baggin Rope twine salt &c &c. to be sent to Troy, Miss. You must excuse this scroll as it was the only sheet of paper on your plantation. I commenced it at your farm & have finished it at mine. Your Cotton was all shipped in December last in good order. I will be in Columbia the last of February. You can answer me their. You did not say to me in your last whether you had bought in Nashville or not.

ROBT CAMPBELL JR.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received and answered January 23, 1847.

1. Agness, or Agnes, (c. 1833–1853) was purchased without her parents. She remained on Polk's Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation after his death.

2. John W. Childress (1807–84), Sarah Childress Polk's younger brother, had studied law in Polk's office. A resident of Murfreesboro, Tenn., he served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1848.

3. Brought to Mississippi from Tennessee, Jo, or Joe, (c. 1829–?) fled twice in 1847 and three times in the first half of 1848. Polk asked John T. Leigh to sell him in June 1848, but Joe remained on the plantation until after Polk's death.

4. Christopher B. Hadley and Young S. Pickard. A native of North Carolina or Georgia, Hadley (c. 1802–1860s?) had acquired land in and moved to Maury County, Tenn., by 1840. A native of North Carolina and a former resident of Maury County, Pickard (c. 1798–1880s?) moved to Savannah, Ga., in 1827 and served as jailer there in the 1830s. By 1847, he had returned to Maury County and become involved in Democratic politics there.

5. Presumably Macon, Noxubee County, Miss.

6. Pickett, Perkins & Co.

7. Campbell may have intended to place "If . . . buy," which he inserted with a caret, before the period.

8. Word or character illegible.

9. "Jno" was a common abbreviation for John.

10. A John B. Freeland lived in neighboring Lafayette County, Miss., but his profession has not been identified.

11. A native of Virginia, William B. Wilbourn (originally Wilbourne) (1810–71) was a Yalobusha County physician and served as postmaster at Oakachickama.

12. A native of Virginia, William Powell (1819–90) began practicing medicine in Yalobusha County in 1839.

13. Previously a slave of Joel Childress, Elizabeth (c. 1816–?) was purchased by Polk from Childress's creditor in 1828. By 1832, Polk had sent her to his Fayette County, Tenn., plantation, where she married a slave from a nearby plantation. In 1835, Polk sent her to his Mississippi plantation, where she married another slave not owned by Polk and where she still lived at Polk's death. She had at least seven children, four of whom survived childhood.

14. Polk probably acquired "old Ben" after the 1831 death of his brother John L. Polk, who had inherited the slave from their father, Samuel. Polk had since sent old Ben from Tennessee to the Mississippi plantation, where he still lived at Polk's death.

15. Polk probably acquired Pompy, or Pompey, (c. 1806–?) after the 1839 death of his brother Samuel W. Polk, who had inherited the slave from their father, Samuel. Polk had since sent Pompey from Tennessee to the Mississippi plantation, where he still lived at Polk's death.

16. Purchased by Polk in 1839, Allen (c. 1794–?) remained on the Mississippi plantation after Polk's death.

17. A new manuscript page begins with this line.

18. Born about 1827, Alfonso, or Alphonso, (c. 1827–?) was sold with his family to Polk by brother-in-law John B. Hays in 1832. Although Polk seems later to have sold them to Jane Knox Polk, Alphonso remained on Polk's Mississippi plantation, where he may have studied blacksmithing under Harry. He married Maria Davis (c. 1831–?), whom Polk purchased in February 1847; they had four children, of whom one survived.

19. Polk had rented Bob, an unmarried slave, from the estate of Marshall T. Polk since 1842. He remained on the Mississippi plantation at the time of Polk's death.

20. Name uncertain.

21. Polk bought Perry (c. 1818–?) from William H. Polk in 1838. Perry was shot in the leg by a white neighbor during an escape attempt from the Mississippi plantation in 1840. He survived and remained on the plantation after Polk's death.

22. Charles, or Charley, (c. 1825–?) later married Polk's slave Rosetta. They remained on the Mississippi plantation at the time of Polk's death.

23. Emanuel remained on the Mississippi plantation at the time of Polk's death.

24. Garrison.

25. Campbell probably refers to Barbara (c. 1823–?), a slave of Marshall T. Polk, Jr., who worked on Polk's Mississippi plantation. She had married Polk's slave William, or Billy, Nevels by 1848; they had two children together.

26. Giles (c. 1818–?) was bought by Polk in 1831 and sent from Tennessee to Mississippi in 1835. He married Daphney; they had at least two children. They remained on the Mississippi plantation at the time of Polk's death.

27. Caroline Johnson (c. 1818–c. 1857), part of a family Polk bought for his Mississippi plantation from William H. Polk in 1838, married the foreman of Leigh's nearby plantation. Leigh and Polk each declined an offer to buy the other's slave and unite the couple in 1846, but Polk promised Leigh not to move Johnson away. She remained on Polk's plantation when he died.

28. Fill, or Phil, (c. 1813–?) was bought by Polk for the Mississippi plantation in 1834 after he ran away from his previous owner. He was a skilled blacksmith, shoemaker, and fieldhand. Eve, or Evy, (c. 1815–?) was purchased from Kentucky for Polk's Tennessee plantation in 1831. She had at least one child there before

Polk separated her from her husband by sending her to Mississippi. There she married Phil, with whom she had ten more children. Six of her children probably died before adulthood. Phil and Eve were the only couple on the plantation to labor as a pair. They remained there after Polk's death.

29. Polk bought Henry Carter (c. 1812–1852) from Archibald Burrus Carter in 1834, partly to avoid separating Henry from his wife Mariah when Polk moved her from his Tennessee to his Mississippi plantation. Polk's most productive worker, Henry fled in 1840 after being whipped by and fighting with overseer John J. Garner. He then returned and he and Mariah remained on the plantation after Polk's death.

30. Polk probably acquired Adison, or Addison, (c. 1814–?) after his brother Franklin E. Polk's death in 1831. Brought to the Mississippi plantation in 1835, Addison fled in 1840, again in 1841 after overseer Isaac H. Dismukes whipped him and threatened his life, and again in 1842 and 1848. Married to a slave on another plantation, he remained on Polk's plantation after Polk's death.

31. Gilbert (c. 1808–?) belonged to Silas M. Caldwell before being sold to William H. Polk in 1836 and to Polk in 1838. Married to a slave on another plantation, he fled Polk's plantation at least ten times, including twice to his former master, Caldwell, in Tennessee. He remained on the Mississippi plantation after Polk's death.

32. Caroline Childress (c. 1830–?) belonged to Elizabeth Whitsitt Childress, working as a seamstress and house servant, until 1845. Elizabeth sold her to Polk that year because of an accusation of prostitution to a white man. At Polk's Mississippi plantation, where she remained after Polk's death, she worked in the cotton fields.

33. A son of Henry Carter and Mariah, Wilson (1833–?) was among the first slaves brought to Polk's new Mississippi plantation in 1835. He remained there after Polk's death.

34. Campbell may refer to Cloe (c. 1788–?), Caroline Johnson's mother, whom Polk bought with her children from William H. Polk in 1838. Polk had sold her husband "Chunky Jack" away, on William's behalf, in 1834. She remained on the Mississippi plantation after Polk's death.

35. Letter here and below cut off side of page.

36. Silas M. Caldwell (1794–1846) was a Haywood County, Tenn., planter and physician who married Lydia Eliza Polk, sister of James K. Polk. He was Polk's partner in purchasing the Mississippi plantation in 1834.

37. John K. Rayburn (1795–1857), a Virginia native and a veteran of the War of 1812, served as Wayne County, Tenn., sheriff, 1822–34, and in the Tennessee Senate, 1833–35. After his term ended, he moved to Panola County, Miss., later becoming U.S. marshal for the Northern District of Mississippi, 1848–49.

38. "Long Harry" (late 1790s–?), who had worked as a blacksmith since 1811, probably became Polk's property when Samuel W. Polk died in 1839. He worked in Columbia and West Tennessee until, by 1841, Polk sent him to Carrollton, Miss., near where his enslaved wife lived. In both states, Polk hired out Harry, giving him exceptional independence. In 1848, however, Polk moved him to the Yalobusha County plantation, away from his children and, though Polk probably did not know it at the time, a second wife.

FROM JEREMIAH GEORGE HARRIS¹

My Dear Sir— US. ship Albany² Off Vera Cruz Jan. 9, 1847

We arrived at our present anchorage near Green Ilsa³ last evening at 8 o'clock, in six days from Pensacola, during which time we encountered a "norther,"⁴ in which our new ship behaved most beautifully. The only news which we learn here is that the Mexican Congress have resolved on a vigorous prosecution of the war—and this is but rumor as we have seen no documents on the subject. Your advice is no doubt later and more reliable than any thing I can give.

We shall weigh anchor to-morrow morning for a cruise up and down the coast off Del Gardo⁵ some forty miles distat, where we hope to do good service, if not thwarted by these terrible "northers." This is a beautiful ship, and has a company of sea-officers on board who know how to manage her admirably. She was the admiration of every body at Havana and Pensacola, and is regarded the most beautiful ship in the service by the officers of the squadron who have visited us to-day. Com. Conner dined with Capt Breese⁶ to-day.

Should this blockading business⁷ be over before the sickly season⁸ sets in here, and the government should determine to send a beautiful specimen of yankee naval architecture and Yankee seamanship to a pleasant foreign station I doubt whether there is a vessel in the service which would reflect more credit on our country abroad than the Albany. And her commander (a brother of Senator Breese⁹ of Illinois) every inch an officer and a gentleman, is worthy of any post that may be assigned to him. I have no doubt but Senator Breese feels somewhat interested in the destination of this ship.

This famous "castle"¹⁰ is certainly a formidable fortification—but the officers of the squadron—I mean the juniors, generally—are ready and willing to give it battle whenever the word shall be given. Of all these matters however you are so much better advised than I can be, having been here but 24 hours, that I will say no more about them.

Give my respects to your family and believe me . . .

J GEO. HARRIS

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. A New England Democrat, Harris (1809–1901) was associated with several Massachusetts and Connecticut newspapers before becoming editor of the Nashville *Union* in 1839. In 1843, he became an agent of the United States for tobacco sales in Europe. In 1844, he authored a campaign biography of Polk; in 1845, Polk appointed him to a pursership in the navy.

2. Built in the New York Navy Yard, the 1,064-ton sloop of war *Albany* was commissioned in November 1846 and belonged to the Home Squadron.

3. Isla Verde (Green Island).
4. Mariners' term for seasonal, northerly winds in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.
5. Del Gardo reference cannot be confirmed. No place with a similar name can be located forty miles from Veracruz.
6. David Conner and Samuel L. Breese. Appointed a midshipman in the navy in 1810, New York native Breese (1794–1870) participated in the Battle of Lake Champlain in 1814. He became a captain in 1841 and assisted in capturing Tuspan, Tabasco, and Veracruz during the Mexican War.
7. In May 1846, Polk ordered the navy's Home and Pacific Squadrons to blockade all Mexican ports.
8. The "wet season" along Mexico's Gulf coast and throughout much of the country is a period of heavy rainfall, roughly May–October, conducive to the breeding of malaria and other tropical and subtropical diseases.
9. An Illinois Democrat and attorney, Sidney Breese (1800–1878) served as U.S. district attorney for Illinois, 1827–29, and U.S. senator from Illinois, 1843–49. Before and after his Senate term, he sat on the benches of various state and federal courts in Illinois.
10. Construction began on the Castle of San Juan de Ulúa, overlooking the port of Veracruz, in 1565. Following the Mexican War of Independence (1810–21), the fortress became, in 1825, the last Spanish fort to fall to rebel forces. The redoubt served as a prison for political prisoners until its capture by U.S. forces in March 1847.

TO JAMES WALKER

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany 10th 1847

I received this morning your letter of the 1st Instant, informing me that you had purchased *Dolly and her children* for Mother¹ & that you had drawn on me for \$1400, payable at sixty days after date. I agree with you, that the price is a high one, but I fully approve what you have done. Under the circumstances had I been present I would have done the same thing. You say that Mother wishes me to put a price on *Garrison* and that she will convey him to me in part payment—of the amt. advanced to her to buy *Dolly & her children*. I scarcely know what price to name. He is of small size and is I should judge between 30 & 33 years of age. When you were here last spring, I think we agreed that \$500.— would be a moderate & fair price. If you think so & mother is satisfied, take her conveyance for him at that price and enclose it to me. I wish you also to take her receipt for the balance (\$900.)—as so much of her legacy under the Will of Samuel W. Polk Decd.² Get the Receipt [to]³ express in its form that, that sum has been paid to her by me as Executor of Sam'l W. Polk Decd. in discharge of so much of her legacy

under his Will. This Receipt also you will please enclose to me, and this will close the transaction.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. Jane Knox Polk.

2. Samuel W. Polk (1817–39), the president's youngest brother, died of tuberculosis at age twenty-one. He had been a student at Yale College in New Haven, Conn.

3. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany. 11th 1847

I have received your letter of the 3rd Instant,² in which you give me your views in relation to the manner of prosecuting the Mexican War. I have only time to say, that if I can be sustained by Congress, it will be vigorously conducted. What Congress will do is not certain. All who have spoken, with but few exceptions say, they will vote the men and money required, but judging from what has already occurred, many members are disposed to think nothing proper which has been recommended. The Federalists³ as a matter of party policy, oppose any thing recommended, especially if they can have the countenance and co-operation of a fraction of the Democratic members, who from various considerations, act with them. As an illustration of the state of things in the House of Representatives, I might point you to the vote on Saturday last, in which the Bill to authorize 10. regiments of the Regular army,⁴ was saved by a single vote. But I have not time to go on as fully with this matter as I would desire.

In regard to that part of your letter, relating to my private business, I have only to say, that if *Mr Bass* chooses to re-rent my house,⁵ I have no objection. I can have no objection, provided it does not affect my policy of insurance on the property. Should *Mr Bass* re-rent the premises I have to request that you will see, that my policy of insurance is not vitiated by it. In your letter inclosing to me the policy of insurance you enquire if *Mr Bass* has given his note, for the rest of the present year. This question I am not able to answer, but must refer you to *Gov. Brown*⁶ who made the contract for me. If he has not given the note you can take it. I will write to *Mr James H. Thomas*⁷ of Columbia to refund to you the amount which you paid for insurance. I do not know what is the usage as to the payment of taxes. If I am to pay them for the present

year, I request that you will do so for me. In a word I desire that you will take the whole agency of the property, and manage it as you would for yourself. *Mrs. Polk* will visit Tennessee during the next spring or summer & will consult with you as to the improvements proper to be made.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “(Private).”

1. A Polk intimate both politically and personally, Kentucky native Stevenson (c. 1812–84) achieved success as a businessman and railroad magnate in Nashville. He increased his prestige through three successive marriages into prominent Tennessee families: to Elizabeth Childress, first cousin of Sarah Childress Polk, in 1834; to Elizabeth Brown, daughter of wealthy Nashvillian Milton Brown, in 1850; and to Maria L. Bass, daughter of John M. Bass, president of Nashville’s Union Bank of Tennessee and mayor of Nashville (1833–34), and granddaughter of Polk’s mentor, Felix Grundy, in 1854. Stevenson’s ties to Democrats reached back to Andrew Jackson, and he played a key role in winning the presidency for Polk. According to the *New York Times*’ obituary of Stevenson, Polk died in his arms.

2. Letter not found.

3. Although the Federalist party had ceased to exist decades earlier, antebellum Democrats persisted in the use of “Federal” and “Federalist” as pejoratives for that day’s Whig party. The usage underscored widespread popular equations between the Federalists and antidemocratic biases allegedly held by Whigs.

4. Reference is to legislation, commonly known as the Ten Regiment Bill, sought by Polk and eventually passed by Congress in February 1847, that authorized the creation of and funding for ten new army regiments for service in Mexico. The legislation called for the regiments to be disbanded after the Mexican conflict. “An Act to raise for a limited Time an additional military Force, and for other Purposes.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 8.

5. John M. Bass (1804–78) sold the home of his late father-in-law Felix Grundy, located at 11 Vine Street (now 714 Church Street) in Nashville, to Polk in October 1846. He continued, however, to live there as a renter.

6. Polk’s law partner, 1822–24, and lifelong friend, Democrat Aaron V. Brown (1795–1859) served as U.S. representative from Tennessee, 1839–45; governor of Tennessee, 1845–47; and postmaster general, 1857–59.

7. A North Carolina native, Thomas (1808–76), after his admittance to the bar in 1831, practiced law in Columbia and served as state attorney general for the judicial district that included Maury County, 1836–42. In that post, he prosecuted Polk’s brother William H. Polk for the 1838 killing, in a duel, of attorney Richard H. Hays. Thomas sought to prosecute the defendant for murder, but the charge was reduced by a grand jury to assault and battery; William H. Polk was subsequently convicted. (See letter and notes in John B. Hays to Polk, December 4, 1838.) In 1843, Thomas and James K. Polk became law partners. A Democrat, Thomas also served in the U.S. House, 1847–51 and 1859–61.

FROM CHARLES E. WORTHAM ET AL.¹

Frankfort [Ky.] Jan. 12. '47

The undersigned would respectfully present to the President of the United States, Cassius M. Clay,² as a fit & proper person to be appointed Colonel of one of the regiments of regulars about to be raised. Of strong, and active intellect—indomitable energy and *unquestioned courage*—he eminently combines all the qualities, and attributes to fit him for such a command. Now in the service of his country as a Captain in Marshall's³ regiment of twelve months volunteers, he has established a character which strongly commends his claims to a higher rank. We do not believe a man better qualified in every way for the rank asked, can be found in Kentucky.

CHARLES WORTHAM

ANS. KyHi. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Letter written by Wortham and signed by him and sixteen others. A Whig, Wortham (1802–1871) served in the Kentucky House, 1846–47, and as a justice of the peace for Grayson County, Ky., 1847. All eight other signatories whose names are legible and identities confirmed were Kentuckians.

2. A lawyer and a Whig, Cassius M. Clay (1810–1903) served in the Kentucky House, 1835, 1837, and 1840. In 1844, he campaigned for his cousin Henry Clay, Polk's Whig rival for the presidency. In 1845, Cassius Clay founded the abolitionist *True American* weekly newspaper in Lexington. He accepted a captaincy early in the Mexican War and was imprisoned at Encarnación on January 23, 1847. He later served as minister to Russia, 1861–62 and 1863–69.

3. A Louisville, Ky., lawyer and a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, Humphrey Marshall (1812–72) joined the state militia in 1836 and became colonel of the First Kentucky Cavalry Regiment in June 1846. He later served in the U.S. House as a Whig, 1849–52, and as a member of the American (also known as "Know-Nothing") party, 1855–59, and as minister to China, 1852–54.

FROM ROBERT H. MORRIS¹

My Dear Sir.

New York January 14th 1847

I have this moment been informed, from a source in whos accuracy of information I rely, that the "Christoval Colon" a ship belonging to Spofford Tiloston & Co.² of this City, Captain Smith,³ for Havanna, has on board a large amount of Bank Books for the Mexican government, which are contained in two large Boxes. Also that a large amount of United States Treasury notes, purchased here and in Philadelphia on Mexican account will go out in her. It is believed that a valuable portion of her cargo is on Mexican account and will be run from Havanna to some Mexican port.

I have deemed it prudent to inform the government of this and prefer doing so directly to you rather than to the secretary. Should you or the appropriate department desire more information upon this subject and will so inform me, I will use the same source to obtain it that has given me this.

ROBT. H. MORRIS

[P.S.] The "Christoval Colon" will sail to day or tomorrow. RHM

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private.*"

1. Morris (1802–55), a New York City lawyer and Democrat, served in the New York House, 1833–34; as New York City recorder, 1838–41; as mayor, 1841–44; and, appointed by Polk, as postmaster at New York City, 1845–49. He was elected to the state constitutional convention in 1846.

2. The *Christoval Colon*, built in New York City and owned by shipping company Spofford, Tileston & Co. of that city, regularly sailed between there and Havana, Cuba, from 1836 to 1848.

3. Benjamin Smith of New York City had become captain of the *Christoval Colon* by 1836 and retained its captaincy until 1848 or 1849. By 1850 he had become captain of the packet *James Drake*, also owned by Spofford, Tileston & Co. and also sailing between New York City and Havana.

FROM GOUVERNEUR KEMBLE¹

My dear Sir,

New York 15th Jany 1847

You were kind enough to intimate on parting, a desire that I should make to you such suggestions as I might consider useful in the present state of affairs at Washington.

There is little that I have not already stated in conversation, in regard to the democratic delegation in congress from New York. I believe that I have done every thing towards their conciliation, that can at this moment be accomplished, but for some time at least, great caution will be necessary in making appointments in this State. I would advise that the Pennsylvania delegation be attended to, although little was said to me directly, it was evident that a good deal of dissatisfaction existed among them, but I am too little acquainted with the local politics of the state, to advise the best course to be pursued.

In accordance with the wishes of the democrats from New York, confirmed by my own opinion, I recommend Robert Temple² of Albany, as the best appointment of Brigr Genl. from this State. Permit me now to add, that in case of an appointment from Pennsylvania, I believe the most popular one would be that of Gen Geo Cadwalader³ of Philadelphia, who is the idol of the common people of that City, and I am assured on all

hands could bring a larger number of men immediately into the field, than any individual in that, or possibly any other state in the union.

Col Thomas⁴ of this City, I understand declines going to Mexico, and offers to transfer his regiment to Capt. Talcott,⁵ formerly of the Engineers, Brother of Coll. Talcott⁶ of the ordnance, a man distinguished for his scientific attainments, and an excellent soldier. He will be in Washington shortly on some business relating to the coast Survey.

In closing this letter, permit me to ask for a Lieutenancy in one of the new regiments for a son of Saml. L. Gouverneur, now of the State department. He is a grandson of the late president Monroe,⁷ a very promising young man, and extremely desirous of entering the army.

GOUV. KEMBLE

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private" on the cover. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received January 17, 1847; "Private."

1. A New York Democrat and prominent industrialist, Kemble (1786–1875) established the West Point Foundry in Cold Spring, N.Y., in 1818. He served in the U.S. House, 1837–41, and as a delegate to the New York constitutional convention of 1846 and the Democratic National Conventions of 1844 and 1860. He was a close, life-long friend of author Washington Irving.

2. Robert E. Temple (1808–54) was a Vermont native and an 1828 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, on whose faculty he served intermittently during the late 1820s and early 1830s. He fought in the Second Seminole War, 1836, and the Mexican War, 1846–48, and served as adjutant general of New York, 1846–47 and 1853–54. Temple became colonel of the army's Tenth Infantry Regiment in spring 1847.

3. Cadwalader (1806–79), a Philadelphia lawyer and militia officer, suppressed a series of riots in Philadelphia in 1844 that pitted Irish Americans against supporters of the American party. He was appointed a brigadier general in the army on March 3, 1847, and brevetted major general on September 13 for gallantry at the Battle of Chapultepec. Discharged in 1848, he served again as a Union general during the Civil War.

4. Columbia, Tenn., native John Addison Thomas (1811–58) graduated from the U.S. Military Academy, 1833; taught there, 1838–41; and served as its commandant of cadets, 1842–45. Thomas resigned from the army in 1846 to begin a New York City law practice. In July 1846, he became colonel of the Fourth New York Volunteer Regiment, which was raised for the war in Mexico but never deployed.

5. A civil engineer originally from New York City, Sebastian V. Talcott (1812–88) participated in surveys of the Canadian border, the Hudson and Mississippi Rivers, and the Erie Railroad before joining the U.S. Coast Survey.

6. Having served in the army since graduating from the U.S. Military Academy in 1831, George H. Talcott (1811–54) became a first lieutenant of ordnance in 1838. While in Mexico, 1846–47, he became a captain of ordnance on March 3 and a major of voltigeurs on April 9, 1847.

7. Virginian James Monroe (1758–1831) served in the Continental Congress, 1783–86; in the U.S. Senate, 1790–94; as minister to France, 1794–96 and 1803; as governor of Virginia, 1799–1802 and 1811; as secretary of state under Pres. James Madison, 1811–17; and as president, 1817–25. Due to relative political comity in U.S. politics during Monroe's two-term presidency, the period often is called "the era of good feelings." His private secretary and son-in-law, Samuel L. Gouverneur, Sr., (1799–1865) served in the New York legislature, 1825; as postmaster at New York City, 1828–36; and as clerk in the Consular Bureau of the U.S. State Department, 1845–49. Polk appointed Samuel L. Gouverneur, Jr., (1828–80) second lieutenant of the Fourth Artillery Regiment on March 8, 1847; he remained in the army until 1849.

FROM PICKETT, PERKINS & CO.

Dear Sir

New Orleans Jany 15th 1847

Referring to your last advices under date of 14th Nov. last, we find you instructed us to make sale of your crop of cotton as soon after arrival as we conveniently could, and to render you a/c sale. We have now the pleasure to hand you herewith an acct. of the sale of 103 Bales, all we have recd from your shippers at Troy Missi., nett proceeds of which at your credit \$4.988.16. We also hand you Statement of acct. with us showing balance due you of \$4.595.16 all of which we hope you will find correct and Satisfactory.¹

There occurred a circumstance in the sale of your cotton which it is proper we should communicate to you, and we shall also write to your overseer² on the same subject with the view of preventing in future the recurrence of it.

The first shipment of 96 Bales reached us on 23d ult. just in time to realise the material advance in prices occasioned by the reception of the very favorable advices from the Liverpool market. We therefore lost no time in placing it upon the market, and Shortly made sale of it at 10 5/8c. being the highest point our market had reached. In the course of delivery & weighing, the purchaser or his brokers discovered a few bales *mixed in the packing*, having good cotton on the side, & lower or inferior put in the middle of the bale, which caused them to suspend their operations & report the case to us. The writer spent the greater part of New Year day in the yard of the cotton Press, personally inspecting the cotton & found some 10 or 15 Bales mixed in the manner described, some more & some less, but all sufficiently so, to justify the purchaser, according to the law & usage prevailing here in such cases, to throw up the sale, which he did not hesitate to do, particularly as he had bought it at a very high price, and our market had then declined a little, & gave

indications of further receding. Under this state of things we had to take the cotton back & resell it with all its imperfections made known, and we cannot but regard the sale last made, as better than the first, since the *loss of character* to a crop of cotton resulting from a “faux pas” of this kind, the whole being suspected, generally affects the *price* to a greater extent than the value of the cotton is really deteriorated. The loss usually sustained being about 1/2c. p lb.

Two years ago the house of W S Pickett & Co sold a portion of your crop which was exported to Barcelona, and in due time there came back a reclamation upon us for false packing or mixing of some few bales amounting to 12 or 15\$. As the amount was small, and we had reason to doubt the justice of the claim, we paid it without taking further notice of it so far as you were concerned. We have no doubt in both cases, that it was the result of carelessness or ignorance on the part of your overseer in packing different qualities of cotton in the same bale.

But for the objections mentioned above, which we hope will be remedied in future, the writer has observed a yearly improvement in the staple & handling of your crops, the latter ranking quite high in the scale of excellence. The 7 Bales sold at 9 1/4 was a subsequent shipment, of inferior quality the last of the crop we presume.

PICKETT, PERKINS & Co.

L in William S. Pickett's hand. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “pt. Mail.” From Polk's AE: received January 25, 1847; answered January 27 and February 19, 1847.

1. Ds in William S. Pickett's hand. DLC-JKP.

2. John A. Mairs.

FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir,

Columbia Tenn Jany 16th 1847

Your favor is duly recd.¹ I have in a good degree anticipated your wishes. I have rented your store house to Capt. Helm² at the same price he pays for last year, & hired Elias³ to Matthews the present keeper of Edmeston's Hotel⁴ for \$80. I have supplied your mother with groceries amounting to \$65.75 for which sum I inclose her receipt,⁵ & again assured her of my readiness to supply her with money or any thing she desired, & of your request that she will unhesitatingly ask anything that will contribute to her pleasure or comfort.

Our friends are beginning to move upon the subject of our elections, heartily approve of your message &c—some wish me to go to Congress.

This would be a new business to me & fear my abilities to do much for the country or myself in such a station.

I will give Maguire⁶ the notice you desire.

JAMES H. THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received and answered January 26, 1847; "Encloses Receipts of *Mrs. Jane Polk* for \$65.75: as part of her legacy under the Will of Samuel W. Polk decd."

1. Polk to Thomas, January 1, 1847.

2. An early Maury County, Tenn., settler from Kentucky, Meredith Helm (c. 1780s–1870s?) established a tannery in Columbia. He also owned a leather and shoe shop there and served nine terms as mayor, 1829–52.

3. Elias (c. 1805–1886), whom Samuel Polk gave to Polk as a wedding gift in 1824, worked as Polk's personal servant in Tennessee and Washington City and as a courier during the election of 1844. Polk also hired him out in Columbia. After the Civil War, taking his former owners' surname, Elias Polk became a leader among Democratic Tennessee blacks. Near the end of his life, he worked for the post office.

4. A Mr. Matthews kept the Columbia Inn, owned by James Edmondson (?–late 1840s?).

5. Enclosure or enclosures not found.

6. Born in Ireland, Patrick Maguire (1775–1850) was a prominent Columbia businessman and landowner.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN¹

Dear Sir/

[Washington City, c. January 18, 1847]²

I find that the last part of the Despatch³ containing a positive instruction is so inconsistent with the first part w[hi]c[h]⁴ is discretionary, that the whole must be remodelled. As Mr. Porter⁵ will go express to Pensacola tomorrow, there will probably be no delay in waiting a day.

[JAMES BUCHANAN]⁶

AL. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. A native of Pennsylvania and for most of his public career a Democrat, Buchanan (1791–1868) served in the U.S. House, 1821–31; as minister to Russia, 1832–33; in the U.S. Senate, 1834–45; as U.S. secretary of state, 1845–49; as minister to the United Kingdom, 1853–56; and as president, 1857–61.

2. Place and approximate date identified through content analysis.

3. Reference is likely to the dispatch drafted on January 15 to be sent to Mexico's minister of foreign affairs, José Ramón Pacheco. That dispatch proposed the appointment of American peace commissioners to negotiate a treaty. See the final dispatch, dated January 18, in *WJB*, pp. 198–99.

4. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

5. Buchanan probably refers to Passed Midshipman William C. B. S. Porter (?–c. 1860), who achieved the naval rank of master in 1848 and lieutenant in 1849.

6. Signature cut out of letter.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My dear Sir, 90 Eaton Square, London. January 19 1847

Although there is no regular steam packet, I cannot but write a line to you today, as a vessel with a propeller is to sail from Liverpool tomorrow.

Public affairs remain as I last reported them to you. Ireland becomes the all-absorbing topic. The evils of abject poverty and well-grounded discontent are heightened by famine; & the ministry, & the British public, & the opposition, & most of all, Ireland itself, knows not what to propose. All thought of troubling France about the Montpensier marriage¹ is renounced openly by almost all. Louis Philippe has had a signal triumph, though at the expense of the *entente cordiale*.² The attempts from this side the channel to overthrow Guizot,³ have ended in renewing his strength, and the English are chagrined to find, that their own minister has not the best of the argument, and that the English despatches are inferior to the French in dignity and fairness. Lord Palmerston is a good deal worried, and is not, I think, sustained by public opinion here.

Towards the United States the feeling is such as I have heretofore described to you. They do not love us; but they are compelled to respect us. In the Times of the 18th you will see one of my despatches as Secretary of the Navy cut up, though my name is omitted.⁴ But it all amounts to nothing. England sees that the Californias must be ours; & sees it with unmingled regret, but remains “neutral.” You may rely on my conducting myself with circumspection; and, what is more important, you may rely, I think, that the embarrassments of domestic affairs here, will forbid all British or French interference in Mexican affairs.

I have now a request to make to you, to which I earnestly entreat your particular attention, as to a point in which I feel a very great interest & in which I think the reputation of your administration may very eminently be advanced. You remember the *democratic* treaty between Frederic of Prussia & Franklin & I think Jefferson for the abolition of privateering as far as the relations of Prussia & America were mutually concerned.⁵ I wish *your* authority to offer in *your name* to the British Govt. to negotiate at once a treaty for the same end between Great Britain & the U. States. Such an offer, whether accepted or rejected, would, I firmly believe, in either event, have a most beneficial result.

1. Privateering is at best but a legalized piracy: it is part of advancing civilization to abolish it every where.

2. England pretends to be superhumanly philanthropic. Make an offer on this point, & bring them to the test on a practical question. The measure, therefore, right and worthy of applause in itself, would be right in reference to the present aspect of England, & produce a decided effect on European opinion.

As far as your own reputation is concerned, I think the measure equally desirable. If the offer is made, I will make it with an emphasis, that shall show, that though Mexico involved your administration in war, you yourself, like Jefferson, were mindful of the interests of humanity.

These are by no means all the motives that conspire to favor the proposition. Your own mind will suggest others. I can only say, if you grant me leave to enter upon this subject, I will do all in my power to conduct the affair in a manner as shall leave no cause for regretting, that it was entered upon.

By the Cambria⁶ I received my new commission with the sanction of the Senate.⁷ Let me express to you my thanks that you at once sent in my nomination, and settled the whole affair so promptly. I feel greatly obliged to you and the cabinet for the handsome manner in which the confirmation was perfected. Be assured yourself, & let each member of the cabinet have the firmest conviction, that nothing in my power will be wanting to promote your & their reputation and prosperity.

My best regards to Mrs. Polk. I have been expecting a letter from her and from you.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS, press copy. MHi. Excerpt published in *LLGB*, pp. 7–8.

1. Antoine Marie Philippe Louis d'Orléans, Duke of Montpensier, (1824–90) youngest son of Louis Philippe, married the Spanish Infanta María Luisa Fernanda (1832–97) on October 10, 1846. The marriage prompted widespread opposition in France and the United Kingdom and led many to wonder whether the couple's children might inherit both the French and Spanish crowns.

2. French expression meaning “friendly understanding.” Its diplomatic usage was first employed during this era to denote the newly amicable relations between France and the United Kingdom. The term has since acquired more general currency in diplomatic affairs.

3. François Guizot.

4. The London *Times* editorial quoted Bancroft's orders to Cdre. John D. Sloat of June 24, 1845, and July 8, 1846.

5. Bancroft errs slightly. Privateers were privately owned ships with civilian crews, outfitted and licensed to prey upon an enemy's civilian fleet. An

anti-privateering treaty was negotiated in 1784 and signed in 1785 by the Prussian government of Frederick the Great and the United States. John Adams, however, then minister to Prussia, began the talks; after he left for London to become minister to the United Kingdom, Thomas Jefferson completed the negotiations while serving as the new minister to France (1785–89). Benjamin Franklin, Jefferson's predecessor as minister to France (1778–85), had suggested the concept of the pact. Frederick II (1712–86) reigned as King of Prussia, 1740–86. Inventor, statesman, journalist, and polymath Franklin (1706–90) played major roles in America's early political life, notably helping to draft the Declaration of Independence, 1776, and the Constitution, 1787. Adams (1735–1826) played similarly vital roles during America's early years, including serving as the nation's second president, 1797–1801.

6. The *Cambria*, a paddle-wheel steamship, was launched in 1845 by the British and North Atlantic Steampacket Company, later reorganized into the Cunard Line. Along with several other vessels, this passenger ship delivered mail between the United States and the United Kingdom, crossing the Atlantic in less than two weeks on a regularly scheduled Liverpool-Halifax-Boston route.

7. The Senate confirmed Bancroft's appointment as minister to the United Kingdom on December 23, 1846.

FROM ELIJAH F. PURDY¹

Respected Sir:

New York, Jan 21st, 1847

Mrs. Stevens,² the celebrated writer of our City, visits Washington and avails herself of the opportunity to pay her respects to the President of the United States. I introduce her as a lady of high literary acquirements, distinguished for her great knowledge of the world. She holds a ready and powerful pen, and not unfrequently wields it in ably defending and sustaining the great questions of the Country, and the Administration which the people have placed in power to carry those questions onward.

I cheerfully commend her as an acquaintance well worthy of notice.

ELIJAH F. PURDY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably delivered by Ann Sophia Winterbotham Stephens. From Polk's AE: received February 1, 1847.

1. A New York City Democrat, Purdy (1796–1866) served intermittently as acting mayor in the 1840s and later became a powerful figure in Tammany Hall. Polk appointed him surveyor of revenue for the port of New York in 1845.

2. Purdy misspelled the surname of Ann Sophia Winterbotham Stephens (1810–86). The founder of Maine's *Portland Magazine* in 1834, Stephens moved with her husband to New York City in 1837. There she became a frequent contributor to *Graham's Magazine* and various magazines directed toward women. Her books include *The Diamond Necklace, and Other Tales* (1846). She later wrote what many regard as the first "dime novels."

FROM CORNELIUS P. VAN NESS¹

Dear Sir

Washington Jany 22d 1847

Having heard a report that a man by the name of Charles A. Secor,² from Newyork, has been recommended to you for some employment, or notice, I deem it my duty to let you know what kind of man he is. For this purpose I beg leave to send, herewith, a copy of an official document, and some accounts,³ which, I think, will show that this Secor is wholly unworthy of any employment, or notice, in any form or manner, from the government.

C. P. VAN NESS

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. A native of New York, lawyer and politician Van Ness (1782–1852) served as governor of Vermont, 1823–26.

2. A New York City ship-chandler, Secor served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1844.

3. Enclosures not found.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir

Washington City Jany. 23rd 1847

I have received your letter of the 9th Instant, giving me a very satisfactory account of my business at my plantation. I wrote to you on the 5th Instant, but of course you could not have received my letter, when you wrote. In that letter I informed you, that upon a closer calculation of my means, I preferred that you should not lay out any more money at present, in the purchase of property for me. You inform me that you had made one purchase for me, and I write now to say that, that is all right. Any purchases which you had made before you received my letter of the 5th Instant, I will of course confirm & ratify. After you received that letter you would of course make no more purchases for me. It is true I could raise the money here upon time, to carry out my original intentions, as expressed to you in my letter of the 12th of Decr., but upon reflection prefer not to do so. Whatever balanc there be of my crop, after paying your drafts on *Pickett & Co*, I will need here. You remind me in your letter, that I had omitted to inform you, whether I had purchased property in Nashville. I have contracted for the *Grundy*¹ place, but have no payment to make before the 1st of January next. By that time I can make the proceeds of my present year as [. . .]² available to me.

JAMES K. POLK

1. A Democrat, Read (1793–1869) served in the Indiana House, 1821, 1823, 1826–30, and 1839–40, and in the Indiana Senate, 1841–49. He ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1831 and 1834 and served as a Polk presidential elector in 1844.

TO JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany. 26th 1847

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th Instant, relating to my private business, and enclosing to me a Receipt from mother¹ for \$65.75, paid to her by you, as part of her legacy under the *Will* of Samuel W. Polk Decd. I thank you for your attention to my business, and have to request that you will forward to me a statement of the monies which you have collected and paid out for me, since I left Tennessee. I desire this because I do not know how my account with you stands, and because as you know I have always been in the habit of keeping my business, small or great in a snug condition. I owe *Mr V. K. Stevenson*² of Nashville \$45, he having paid that amount for me, which I request you to pay to him, taking his receipt for the same as soon as you have a convenient opportunity to do so. I wish you to write to me whether there is any serious apprehension that the suit brought for the real property in Columbia by the old lady from Mississippi,³ can be determined in her favour. I have scarcely given a serious thought to the subject, knowing that the town was laid off, and the lots sold near forty years ago, and that the purchasers have been in quiet and undisturbed possession ever since. Still as the suit has been brought it will be important that it should be properly defended. I take it for granted that the property-holders in the town will attend to it. *Mr Maguire*⁴ from whom I bought (except my store-house) will as you state have notice to defend for me, and I am more than willing to bear my proportion of any expenses for fees of counsel or otherwise, which may be incurred in the defense.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. Jane Knox Polk

2. Vernon K. Stevenson.

3. A widow and a daughter of Tennessee pioneer Anthony Bledsoe (1733–88), Polly Bledsoe Weatherhead claimed a right to hundreds of acres of her father's property under his will. Pursuant to those claims, in October 1846 she filed a federal suit, seeking to eject twenty-two rival claimants from those properties. Bledsoe's land had included the town of Columbia. Although Weatherhead's suit did not name Polk as a defendant, he noted in his letter to Thomas of January 1, 1847, that the property in dispute included his. He was concerned that her legal

actions might intrude upon his efforts to sell his home in Columbia. (Volume 11 of this series erroneously identifies Weatherhead as Milly Weathered Bledsoe and Anthony Bledsoe as her father-in-law.)

4. Patrick Maguire.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany. 27th 1847

I wrote you on the 5th and 23rd Inst. Since the latter was written I have received from *Pickett Perkins & Co.* an account of the sale of my cotton.¹ The nett proceeds after paying freight & all other expenses, amount to \$4988.16. In you letter of the 9th Inst. you inform me that you had drawn for \$300. You state also the amount due upon your account current with me, in the settlement of my business at my plantation, including the price of an additional hand² for which of course you have drawn or will draw. Whether you have drawn for any further amt. I am not informed & therefore cannot tell what the balance in the hands of *Pickett Perkins & Co.* may be for which I can draw. The object of this letter is to request you to inform me as soon as you receive this letter, what amount you have drawn for, so that I may know for what amount I may draw.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Noxubee County, Miss., and marked “(Private).”

1. Pickett, Perkins & Co. to Polk, January 15, 1847.

2. Joe.

TO PICKETT, PERKINS & CO.

Gentlemen

Washington City Jany. 27th 1847

I have received your letter of the 15th Instant, transmitting to me an account of the sale of 103. bags of cotton, which is satisfactory. You state the balance to my credit to be \$4595 16/100. I have authorized my agent *Col. Robert Campbell Jr* to draw on you for a part of this amount, but do not know for what precise amt he has drawn or may draw. At present, I wish you to remit to me a draft for \$1000. drawn on Washington or some other of the Eastern Cities. When I hear from *Col. Campbell*, I will advise you what disposition to make of the balance which may be in your hands.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to New Orleans.

TO MARY BERKLEY CHILDRESS¹

Dear Madam

Washington City Jany. 29th 1847

Your son *Thomas* I learn is at home, on leave of absence from the squadron in the Gulf,² and under orders to join the Naval School at Annapolis³ shortly. I fear he may not be pleased with the service, but this is not unfrequently the case with young men, when they first enter it. He will make a great mistake, and one which he will regret in after-life, if he resigns. My advice to him is, to come on to the School as early as he can do so. He will then have opportunities of improvement & acquiring an education, which he cannot otherwise have.

Your son *William J. Childress* wrote to me in October,⁴ but my time has been so constantly occupied, that I have not answered him. My advice to him is, to pursue his studies preparatory to his entering the academy at West Point. I fear from his letter that he does not appreciate the great advantages of a situation at that institution. Hundreds of young men, of the most respectable families in the country seek situations there, and from the limited number to be bestowed cannot obtain them. The appointments will be made in the latter part of February, but he will not be required to be at West Point before the beginning of June. It is an excellent institution & one at which he may acquire as good an Education as can be acquired in the country.

I take a deep interest in the future welfare & prosperity of your sons, and you will believe me sincere I know, when I say, that they will commit a mistake which they will regret all their lives, if they fail to avail themselves, of the opportunity now presented to them, to make themselves independent & respectable citizens and officers. I know you are not much in the habit of writing, & request therefore that you will get *Mr Jno W. Martin*⁵ to write me in answer to this letter.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. The appointments to West Point, will be made in the latter part of February, and I desire to be informed, without delay, whether your son Wm. J. Childress desires the appointment or not. It is proper that I should add that unless he is prepared to stand an appraisal examination upon the catalogue of studies, which I sent to him some months ago,⁶ he cannot enter the institution. Upon this point his man⁷ will be able to judge. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to "Near Franklin Tennessee."

1. A resident of Williamson County, Tenn., Mary Berkley Childress (c. 1804–1850s?) was the widow of William G. Childress, a cousin of Sarah Childress Polk who had died in 1846.

2. Polk had appointed Thomas B. Childress (c. 1828–1910s?) a midshipman in 1846. He was serving in the Home Squadron.

3. Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft established the Naval School to train midshipmen in 1845. Located at Fort Severn in Annapolis, Md., it took most of its faculty from the Philadelphia Naval Asylum school, which it replaced. In 1850, it was renamed the U.S. Naval Academy. Hereafter in this volume's annotation, we refer to it by that modern name.

4. William James Childress to Polk, October 12, 1846. William James Childress (c. 1828–?), known as James, was Thomas B. Childress's twin.

5. John W. Martin (c. 1810–1870s?), a Nashville merchant and slaveowner born in Virginia, was William G. and Mary Berkley Childress's son-in-law.

6. Polk to Mary B. Childress, July 6, 1846.

7. Polk probably refers to William James Childress's teacher.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM¹

My dear Sir,

Nashville Tenne. 29 January 1847

Since I came into the Bank I have been so incessantly employed that this is the third short letter that I have attempted to write. During the winter we have *taken rooms* at the Inn, that is; my wife² & myself occupy Tommy Crutchers³ old stand of 16 feet square. We go out saturday evenings & come back in time for Church sunday morning in a Buggy. When the mornings get longer & warmer, I will go home every night, or if I find that impracticable, I will quit the Bank.

Gov Brown⁴ went off some two weeks ago to his plantation at Columbia having heard before he left that his overseer was sick, & that there was much sickness amongst his negroes. He will be compelled to run for Governor, as the Whigs will ultimately fix on Gust Henry⁵ or some other Civilian. The last Banner⁶ article indicated a withdrawal of Col Campbell.⁷ Nothing is done about Congress candidates except an awkward movement in the Mountain district⁸ where the democratic opposition to Sam Turney⁹ attempted to forestal him when they ought to have known that he was determined to run & that they could affect nothing. They feel that he is fastened on them against their wills but the times & the circumstances made it impossible for them to shake him off. Doct Jordan¹⁰ from Kingston was here last week. He says that Hembree¹¹ will be elected Senator from that district in place of Lenoir,¹² a gain, but Hembrees place from Roane will be filled by Clark, a loss. Nicholson¹³ attends the Courts Chiefly, is some times in Bank & still attends some to the Union, neither Eastman¹⁴ nor any one else being here. Mrs Grundy¹⁵ died at Eakins two days ago & was buried today. The winter has been severe since the 7 inst—all produce selling well.

DANIEL GRAHAM

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “Private” on the cover. From Polk’s AE: received February 7, 1847.

1. A native of North Carolina and resident of Murfreesboro, Tenn., Daniel Graham (1789–1869) served as Tennessee secretary of state, 1818–30; state comptroller, 1836–43; cashier of the Bank of Tennessee in Nashville, 1846–47; and register of the U.S. Treasury, 1847–49.

2. Maria M’Iver (c. 1802–1870s?) married Daniel Graham in Rutherford County, Tenn., in 1823. They were staying at the Nashville Inn in 1847.

3. A native of Virginia, Thomas Crutcher (1760–1844) served as treasurer of Tennessee’s western district, 1803–36, and as mayor of Nashville, 1819.

4. Aaron V. Brown.

5. Gustavus A. Henry (1804–80), a Kentucky lawyer and businessman, served in the Kentucky legislature, 1831–33. He moved to Clarksville, Tenn., and became an active Whig. He served as a presidential elector in 1840, 1844, and 1852. He ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 1843 and for governor in 1853.

6. The Nashville *Republican Banner*, that city’s first regularly published daily newspaper, began operating in 1837. Organized by John Bell, the daily replaced two earlier Whig newspapers based in Nashville, the *National Banner* and the *Whig*, and became the chief voice for the state’s Whigs.

7. Graham likely refers to Brookins Campbell (1808–53), a Democrat whom Polk appointed assistant quartermaster in the army in 1846. A native of Washington County, Tenn., Campbell served in the state house, 1835–39, 1841–43, 1845–47, and 1851–53; in 1845 he was Speaker. He later served in the U.S. House from March 1853 until his death that December.

8. The Mountain District, Tennessee’s Fifth Congressional District, was the section of Middle Tennessee east of Nashville that included McMinnville.

9. Samuel Turney (1795–1862 or 1863) was a White County lawyer who served as a Democrat in the Tennessee House, 1829–35, and the Tennessee Senate, 1839–47. He returned to the state senate as an American party member, 1855–57, and entered the Tennessee Confederate Senate in 1861.

10. Physician Lewis W. Jordan (c. 1794–1870s?) of Kingston, Tenn., served as a surgeon in the Fourteenth Infantry Regiment during the Mexican War.

11. Joel Hembree (1796–1868), a farmer and a veteran of the War of 1812, represented Roane County as a Democrat in the Tennessee House, 1839–43, 1845–47, and 1849–51.

12. A native of North Carolina, Isaac T. Lenoir (1807–75) founded the town of Sweetwater, Tenn. A Whig, he represented Roane County in the Tennessee House, 1843–45, and represented Roane, Anderson, Campbell, and Morgan counties in the Tennessee Senate, 1845–47.

13. Lawyer and Democrat Alfred O. P. Nicholson (1808–76) represented Maury County in the Tennessee House, 1833–37, and Maury and Giles counties in the Tennessee Senate, 1843–45. He served an interim appointment in the U.S. Senate, 1840–42. After moving to Nashville in 1844, he edited the Nashville *Union* before becoming president of the Bank of Tennessee, 1846–47.

14. A native of New Hampshire, Elbridge G. Eastman (1813–59) moved to Tennessee and established the Knoxville *Argus*, a Democratic newspaper, at Polk's encouragement in 1839. He became editor of the Nashville *Union*, later known as the *Union and American*, in 1846.

15. Anne Phillips Rogers Grundy (1779–1847) died in Kentucky. Known as Nancy, she had married Felix Grundy in 1797.

FROM JAMES G. M. RAMSEY¹

My Dear Sir

Mecklenburg [Tenn.] Jany. 29. 1847

You have been heretofore informed that my son J. Crozier Ramsey² had from mistaken estimates made an unfortunate contract for carrying the Mail on this route. He took it eight hundred dollars too low. But with a commendable energy & perseverance he is making the best he can out of a bad bargain & is complying with his contract with entire punctuality. He visits Washington with the hope of effecting some changes on the route which will be advantageous alike to the P.O. Department & to the Contractors.

As his contract was likely to involve him in some losses I suggested to Col. Johnson³ that possibly there might be an agency in Tennessee or elsewhere which might be assigned him, that would lighten the loss he will sustain. To this suggestion the P.M. General replied that he had dispensed with most of the agencies in his Department—but that if one should be demanded, it would please him to give it to my son. Should none such be wanted I know you will not consider me as imposing upon your kindness or your good feelings when I request that if you have any service out of Washington to which he is competent you would give it to him to do. He is full of energy & expedients & would promptly & faithfully execute & deliver any command or message with which the Executive might entrust him.

You have been so long accustomed to storms & tornedoes in the political world that I hope you will not allow the present tempest to disturb your tranquility. It is entirely paroxysmal & will soon go off. Annoying it must be but can, will, do no lasting injury to your administration. The virtuous, able & patriotic Madison⁴ passed through the same ordeal but came out unscathed. There is a deep under-current at work all over the country—& especially in Tennessee & the South-West that will overwhelm with infamy & disgrace all the Gentrys Davis—Crittendens & Websters⁵ that are giving aid & comfort to the enemy. There will be a re-action soon. I can already see it here. Brown will beat Henry—or Anderson will beat Campbell.⁶ The Whigs are dividing

& subdividing in every county & District of the State. But I know I am trespassing upon your time & only add assurances of the esteem & consideration with which . . .

J. G. M. RAMSEY

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Ramsey (1797–1884) was a Knox County, Tenn., medical writer, railroad promoter, banker, and historian. He was trained in medicine but never practiced. He played a key role in the 1844 presidential campaign by refuting charges that Ezekiel Polk, Polk's grandfather, had been a Tory during the Revolutionary War. He held numerous positions in private corporations and in government. From 1823 to 1861, he served as postmaster at Mecklenburg, Knox County.

2. Attorney John Crozier Ramsey (1824–69) later became district attorney for Knoxville, Tenn., and, during the Civil War, used the post to advance pro-Confederate sympathies.

3. Cave Johnson.

4. Among other political roles during the Revolution and Early Republic, James Madison (1751–1836) served in the Continental Congress, 1780–83 and 1787–88; as the primary author of the Constitution, 1787; and as president, 1809–17.

5. Meredith P. Gentry, John Davis, John J. Crittenden, and Daniel Webster. Gentry (1809–66), a member of the Williamson County bar, served as a Whig in the Tennessee House, 1835–39, and in the U.S. House, 1839–43 and 1845–53. Davis (1787–1854)—not to be confused with Indiana congressman John W. Davis—a Massachusetts Anti-Jacksonian and later a Whig, served in the U.S. House, 1825–34; as governor of Massachusetts, 1834–35 and 1841–43; and then served in the U.S. Senate, 1835–41 and 1845–53. A Kentucky lawyer, Crittenden (1786–1863) had a five-decade political career in which he successively was a member of the Democratic-Republican, Whig, American, and Unionist parties. He served as U.S. senator, 1817–19, 1835–41, 1842–48, and 1855–61; U.S. attorney general, 1841 and 1850–53; Kentucky governor, 1848–50; and U.S. representative, 1861–63.

6. Aaron V. Brown, Gustavus A. Henry, Alexander O. Anderson, and William B. Campbell. Anderson (1794–1869) served in the War of 1812, during which he fought under Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans. He served as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, 1840–41. Campbell (1807–67), a lawyer from Carthage, Tenn., was a veteran of the Second Seminole War. He served in the state house as a Whig, 1835–36; in the U.S. House as a Whig, 1837–43; as Tennessee governor as a Whig, 1851–53; and in the U.S. House as a Unionist, 1866–67. He served as colonel of the First Tennessee Infantry Regiment, 1846–47.

TO GEORGE BANCROFT

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany. 30th 1847

I thank you for your several letters, the last under date of the 4th Instant. ¹ It is gratifying to your friends, to learn from various sources, that you have been so well received, in England. I doubt not that your mission will be eminently useful to your country, and that you will add to your already high reputation. Your nomination was promptly confirmed by the Senate, without objection from any quarter, a circumstance, which in these times of party excitement, is highly honorable to you.

My responsibilities have increased since you retired from the Cabinet, and especially since the meeting of Congress. We have as yet, no reliable assurance, of a disposition on the part of the Mexican rulers to treat for peace, still I think they are desirous to do so, but are restrained, by the fear that any concession to the U.S. would cost them their places. No party in power in Mexico is probably strong enough to make such a peace as we could accept, without producing a Revolution which would enable some other faction to come into power. The present party in power, I have reason to believe would treat for peace, if they possessed the means—to sustain the army, for the time being; and hence the great importance of the two million appropriation, for which I asked at the last Session of Congress, and again at the present Session. It is doubtful whether it will be granted. The vexed question of Slavery as connected with it, has again been thrust before Congress, as you will have seen. You will be surprised I know, to see that this agitating subject, which can result in no good, and must be mischevous was brought forward not by a Federal member but by *Mr Preston King*² of N.Y. It has distracted the Democratic party in Congress, producing sectional excitement & destroying all harmony in their action. The Federal party avail themselves of our divisions, and though the Session of Congress is now two thirds over, nothing has been done to sustain the Government in the vigorous prosecution of the War, unless it be a *loan-bill* which did not pass until two days ago.³ All the War measures which recommended in my annual message, still linger before Congress. Almost all who have participated in the debates in Congress avow their willingness to grant all the men & money which the Government want, but still every measure is postponed, until the delay has become most embarrassing to the Government. For myself I will do my duty, and leave the rest to God and my country. The truth is that the spirit of the people is far in advance of that of Congress. The factions in Congress, who it is not to be disguised are shaping their course, with a view, to advance the interests of their

respective favourites in the next Presidential Election, have had much agency in producing the present unfortunate state of things. For myself, I rejoice that I am under no circumstances to be before the Country for re-election. This determination is irrevocable. Personally—therefore I have no interest, in the question of the succession, but I most ardently desire to maintain the ascendancy of my political principles, and to hand over the Government, at the close of my term, to a successor of my own political faith. Though I deeply regret the want of energy—and prompt action by Congress, you must not suppose that I am disponding, or that I will not persevere the course of policy, which I presented to the country in my message.

This is the last day I can write, in time for the next Steamer: It is Cabinet day, and the hour of meeting has arrived. I must therefore conclude this hasty letter.

With the kind salutations of Mrs. Polk and myself to Mrs. Bancroft.⁴

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MHi. Addressed to London and marked “(*Private*).” See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

1. Bancroft’s other letters from London were dated October 4, 1846; November 3, 1846; December 1, 1846; and December 3, 1846.

2. King (1806–65) served in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1843–47, and as a Free Soiler, 1849–53, and in the U.S. Senate as a Republican, 1857–63. He proposed a bill outlawing slavery in all new territories on January 4, 1847.

3. Polk signed the loan bill, which authorized the issue of twenty-three million dollars in treasury notes, the day it passed, January 28, 1847. “An Act authorizing the Issue of Treasury Notes, a Loan, and for other Purposes.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 5.

4. Bancroft married widow Elizabeth Davis Bliss (1803–86), his second wife, in 1838. She had been born into the Davises, a prominent family of Massachusetts Whigs. She had married her first husband, Massachusetts attorney Alexander Bliss, in 1825, and they had remained married until his death in 1827.

FROM CALEB CUSHING¹

Dear Sir:

Boston Jany 31. 1847

We are making all possible efforts to have our Regt ready for embarkation; but you are well aware of the extraordinary obstacles the officers have had to encounter in consequence of the extreme party bigotry which prevails in this State, & you will, therefore, I trust, make proper allowance for unavoidable delays.

I write now especially to ask your kind consideration of the appointments the field officers have recommended, and in all which we have cordially concurred, as [best]² for the interest of the Regt.

We are sparing no effort³ to fill it up as a Massachusetts Regiment, and therefore I do not *at present* say anything as to the other alternative, which you were so good as to encourage us to hope might be adopted in the last resort, if the Ten Regiment Bill passes.

C C.

ALI, draft. DLC–WWC.

1. Cushing (1800–1879), a native of Massachusetts, served as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1835–43; as minister to China, 1843–45; and as U.S. attorney general under Pres. Franklin Pierce, 1853–57. At the time of this writing Cushing, a militia colonel, was organizing a Massachusetts regiment to serve in Mexico; Polk appointed him a brigadier general on April 14, 1847.

2. Word uncertain.

3. Cushing wrote “pain” above this word but did not strike it out.

FEBRUARY

FROM SIMON CAMERON ET AL.¹

[Washington City, c. February 1847]²

The undersigned Democratic Members of Congress from the State of Pennsylvania would most earnestly recommend to your Excellency Col. V. E Piollet³ for the appointment of Paymaster in the Army; in the place of Major Andrews,⁴ appointed Colonel. We assure your Excellency that Col Piollet is a gentleman of high standing and character in our State, and that his appointment would be gratifying to a large circle of friends, and to the Republican party⁵ of our State.

SIMON CAMERON

ANS, copy. PHi-JB.

1. Letter written by Jacob Erdman, who signed Cameron's name, his own, David Wilmot's, and those of seven other Pennsylvanian Democratic members of the U.S. House. Cameron (1799–1889), a former Whig, newspaper owner, banker, and railroad president, was born in Maytown. He served in the U.S. Senate as a Democrat, 1845–49, filling the seat vacated by Secretary of State Buchanan. He later served in the Senate as a Republican, 1857–61; as secretary of war under Abraham Lincoln, 1861–62; as minister to Russia, 1862; and again in the Senate, 1867–77. Erdman (1801–67), a farmer from Coopersburg, served in the Pennsylvania House in the 1830s and in the U.S. House, 1845–47. Wilmot (1814–68), a lawyer from Towanda, served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1845–51. One of the founders of the Republican party in 1854, he served in the U.S. Senate as a Republican, 1861–63, filling the seat vacated by Secretary of War Cameron.

2. Probable place and approximate date identified through content analysis.

3. Victor E. Piollet (1812–90), a farmer from Wysox, Penn., served in the Pennsylvania House, 1846–47. His advocates were ultimately successful; Polk appointed him army paymaster on June 17, 1847. He served until 1849.

4. A veteran of the War of 1812, Timothy P. Andrews (1794–1868) served as army paymaster, 1822–47. After being promoted to colonel on February 16, 1847, he commanded a regiment of voltigeurs in Mexico. He was brevetted a brigadier general on September 13, 1847.

5. Members of the antebellum Democratic party often referred to themselves as the “Republican party.” This usage went back to Thomas Jefferson and the Democrats’ predecessor party in the early American republic. It faded during the 1850s with the emergence of the Republican party of John C. Frémont and Abraham Lincoln.

FROM RICHARD M. YOUNG¹

Sir, Springfield, Illinois February 1st 1847

In consequence of continued high water in the Wabash river, and other streams in that region of country, which very much obstructed the passage of the Eastern mails, for several weeks past, until very recently, I did not receive notice of my appointment as Commissioner of the General Land office, until the 25th of the past month of January, and then by letters from Judges Douglass and Breese² from Illinois, as no commission has reached me as yet.

Upon the receipt of this information, I immediately resigned my Commission as one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of this state, and commenced arranging my affairs, so as to proceed to Washington as soon as possible. My present expectation is, to arrive there about the 20th of the present month, as I shall not [start]³ upon my journey now, in the course of a week or ten days. Allow me to avail myself of this opportunity to express to you my sincere acknowledgements, for the confidence reposed in my capacity and integrity, in conferring upon me the appointment, under the circumstances attending it.

RICHARD M. YOUNG

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. A Democrat and a Kentucky native, Young (1798–1861) was commissioner of the General Land Office, 1847–49. He had begun his legal and political careers after moving to Illinois in 1817, serving in the Illinois House, 1820–22; as a federal circuit court judge, 1825–37; in the U.S. Senate, 1837–43; and as an Illinois Supreme Court judge, 1843–47.

2. Stephen A. Douglas and Sidney Breese. Douglas (1813–61), a Democrat, lawyer, and teacher, served in the Illinois House, 1836–37; as Illinois secretary of state, 1840–41; on the Illinois Supreme Court, 1841–43;

in the U.S. House, 1843–47; and in the U.S. Senate, 1847–61. Northern Democrats nominated Douglas for the presidency in 1860, but he lost the general election to Republican Abraham Lincoln.

3. Word uncertain, ink blot.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL¹

Dear Sir

Bolivar Ten Feby 2 1847

I have collected the \$500.00 note for land, due the 1st Inst—and, \$160.00 for Rents. The balance of the rent Money Say about \$130 will be collected next month. When received I will render you my annual a/c of receipts & disbursements.

I have to day bought for you a negro Girl aged about 15 years²—price paid \$525.00. She is a Virginia raised negro & accustomed to work in the field. I consider that I got a very good bargain considering the high price negroes are selling at. I bought her from a Negro trader from Virginia.³ She is not well clothed. I may have to give her a dress & Blanket before starting her to your plantation, which I will do by the first opportunity, which will be in about ten days. One of my neighbors will send a wagon down to Coffeetown about that time.

Yours of the 13th Covering T M Actons a/c for the Jackson Republican⁴ has been recvd & will be attended to.

I leave for the North on the 6th Inst. Possibly I may take Washington in my way. If I do not you can address me on my return home, or at Philadelphia early in March & direct what I shall do with the balance that I shall have in my hands.

Enclosed I hand you A Whickers Bill Sale for the Negro with my transfer of the same to you.⁵

E. P. McNEAL

[P.S.] My address in Phila. care of Messrs T C & W P Rockhill & Co.⁶

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private.*” From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received February 12, 1847; “*Private.*” From Polk’s AE: “Has collected \$500. for land sold for surplus also \$160. for rents collected for M. T. Polk’s heirs”; identifies the slave as Maria.

1. A first cousin of Polk, McNeal (1804–86) was a merchant and land agent in the town of Bolivar, in southwestern Tennessee. He managed Polk’s business affairs in the area.

2. Maria Davis.

3. Allen Whicker.

4. Letter not found. Thomas M. Acton edited the Jackson (Tenn.) *Republican*, a weekly Democratic newspaper published 1842–48.

5. Partly printed DS and ADS. DLC–JKP.

6. McNeal wrote his postscript in the left margin. He refers to the Philadelphia dry goods store of Thomas C. and William P. Rockhill.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dr. Sir, Columbia [Tenn.]¹ Feb. 2d. 1847

I have been from home since the receipt of yours of the 10th ult. until yesterday. I now send your mothers Bill of sale for Garrison, and receipt for \$900,² which satisfactorily closes that transaction.

I am now busily engaged in manufacturing Iron & much from home. Pig Iron has declined about the reduction of duty under the Tariff of 1846.³ The Whigs say, it is the new Tariff that has done it. I am inclined to think it is the home competition in producing the article—be this as it may, the modification of the Tariff was a just and wise measure, and the people seem to be every day becoming more sensible of it. It will be hard for the Whigs to make capital out of the Tariff of 1846 in Tennessee even in the elections of 1847—and time will make the measure still stronger. I shall loose some 2 to \$3000 by the decline in price of Iron but still think I can make a good business of it. I think I can make pig-Iron at from 12 to 13 pr. Ton at my works—and Raw Iron at a cost of about \$50. This will pay a fair profit. I ought to be, and am satisfied. I think the Tariff & Mexican War are most unfortunate issues for the Whigs, and these seem the main issues they have chosen.

JAMES WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received February 12, 1847; "Private."

1. State identified through content analysis.

2. Walker enclosed Jane Knox Polk's bill of sale for the slave Garrison to Polk for five hundred dollars and her receipt for nine hundred dollars from the legacy of Samuel W. Polk, both on the same sheet and both dated February 1, 1847. DsS. DLC–JKP.

3. Walker Tariff.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My dear Sir, London. 90 Eaton Square Feb. 3. 1847

I have not much to communicate, but still will write a line.

First I must express to you my regret that Congress refuses to impose a duty on tea & coffee. Nothing but that was needed to have inspired complete confidence. I look forward to the action of Congress with anxiety.

The Brazilian minister here,¹ spoke to me of the intention of his Government to ask the recall of Mr Wise²: and seemed very much to wish that the recall may be managed in such a way as to produce friendly feeling between the Governments. I told him I would write to you a private word on the subject. And I do it the more willingly as I am persuaded of the sincere desire of Brazil to be on friendly terms with the U.S. If the accounts which have reached England respecting Wise's conduct [are true],³ I cannot but think your forbearance should come to an end.

There is another matter on which I might perhaps speak to you. The Senators of Florida⁴ are currently quoted here, as of the opinion that the State of Florida is not liable for her territorial bonds: but that recourse must be had, to the Banks for whose benefit, or to the United States under whose authority & apparent sanction the bonds were issued. I have even been asked privately, whether I would receive and forward a communication to the Government of the United States inviting their attention to the subject. The senators from Florida are understood here as saying, that the territorial Government was instituted & the territorial Governor appointed by the United States: that the United States through the affirmation of their Governor, gave a sanction to the loan, the more so as the territorial legislation was approved by Congress generally if not specially. Thus far I have kept clear of the subject, but am liable at any moment to be questioned about it. I should like very well to have some direction on the subject, in case I cannot avoid it.

Give my best regards to Mrs. Polk. By the next steamer I may be able to send you more definite accounts of the shape parties are assuming. At present, the opposition are heaping mountains of responsibility on the present ministry⁵ which must in the end overwhelm them.

GEORGE BANCROFT

[P.S.] Poor Grund⁶ is, I see, out of office. I thought it not fair to burden him with Postage, & enclose, what I take to be an official parcel for him.⁷

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

1. José Marques Lisboa, a longtime Brazilian diplomat, served as Brazil's minister to the United Kingdom, 1841–51.

2. A lawyer from Virginia, Henry A. Wise (1806–76) served in the U.S. House, 1833–44; as minister to Brazil, 1844–47; and as governor of Virginia, 1856–60. Initially a Democrat, he broke with Andrew Jackson during the Bank War and briefly joined the Whig party. Although an apologist for slavery, he antagonized many in Brazil with his opposition to that country's continued participation in the international slave trade. Two incidents led Brazil to request Wise's recall.

On October 31, 1846, Brazilian police arrested Lt. Alonzo B. Davis and sailors Michael Driscoll, Lansing (or Lancing) Sanborn, and William Smith, all of the USS *Saratoga*, in Rio de Janeiro after Driscoll drew a knife. Davis (?–1854), a Delawarean, had joined the navy as a midshipman in 1831 and become a lieutenant in 1841. He served on several ships involved in exploration and the U.S. Coast Survey before sailing for the Gulf Coast on the *Saratoga* in 1845. Driscoll (c. 1824–?) was a New York native. The third U.S. military ship to carry the name, the USS *Saratoga* left the Gulf Coast to join the Brazil Squadron at Rio late in 1845, and in 1847 supported the blockade of the Mexican port of Tuxpan. When Wise demanded the four *Saratoga* men's immediate release and an apology, Brazilian authorities freed three of the men but retained Driscoll for trial. When, on November 15, Wise ignored an invitation to the baptism of the Infanta Isabel Orleans-Bragança. Brazil issued calls for his recall on January 20 and February 2, 1847, demands the Polk administration nominally rejected, respectively, on January 20 and February 10. On the latter date, however, Polk affirmed his intention soon to replace Wise due to the minister's own request before the *Saratoga* incident.

3. Words inserted to complete probable meaning.

4. David Levy Yulee and James D. Westcott, Jr. Yulee (1810–86), a lawyer born David Levy in St. Thomas, West Indies, represented Florida as a territorial delegate in the U.S. House, 1841–45. He represented the state of Florida as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, 1845–51 and 1855–61. Virginia-born lawyer and Democrat Westcott (1802–80) represented Florida in the U.S. Senate, 1845–49.

5. Lord John Russell's ministry.

6. A native of Bohemia in today's Czech Republic, Francis J. Grund (1804–63) in 1825 moved to Philadelphia, where he worked as an author and journalist. He served as U.S. consul at Antwerp, 1844–47.

7. Enclosure not found.

FROM ALFRED BALCH¹

Dear Sir,

Nashville 4th Feby 1847

The publication of Taylors letter² by the permission of Gaines³—the proposition of Cilley in the senate⁴—the skulking of Calhoun and his few followers together with the tardy movments of our forces in Mexico have thrown our people into the worst possible humor. They are cursing and swearing like sailors in a tempest. Mr Calhoun is losing all the fame which he acquired by his fortitude and courage in the war of 1812. His mind is certainly becoming weak: for he seems to be as timid as a superannuated old man. The truth is some of our party in Congress are acting badly. The Democracy⁵ of the west are complaining of them bitterly. The conduct of the Federalists and of some of our own party leaves you but a single and a narrow path to travel—All that you can or ought to do is to call loudly sternly and incessantly for money men & munitions of war that hostilities may be waged efficiently against

the enemy and the honor of the nation preserved. The Masses will not permit you to suffer whilst you are in the line of your duty.

A great majority of the people in Tennessee have read Taylors letter with utter astonishment. Many of them consider its contents to be treasonable knowing as they do that it will be published in the papers of Mexico and that it offers direct encouragement to the mexicans to hold out and reject all propositions for peace. The letter is a thousand times worse than Websters speech in which he told the world that our expenses were nearly a million a day!⁶ and consequently that our treasury must soon become bankrupt.

ALFRED BALCH

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received February 12, 1847; "private." From Polk's AE: "Approves my course in the Mexican Wa. condemning the publication of Genl Taylor's letter to Genl. Gaines."

1. A Nashville lawyer and influential political strategist, Balch (1785–1853) accepted an appointment to a four-year term as judge of the U.S. Middle District of Florida in 1840, but resigned his judgeship before the end of his term and declined all subsequent overtures to run for public office.

2. In January 1847, the New York *Express*, followed by other newspapers, published a letter from Zachary Taylor to Edmund P. Gaines critical of Polk's Mexican War strategy. The letter, which Polk regarded as evidence of Taylor's political ambitions, had been written November 5, 1846, in Monterrey, Mexico, and provided by Gaines to the *Express* without Taylor's consent.

3. A Virginia native, Edmund P. Gaines (1777–1849) entered the army in 1799. He achieved the rank of brigadier general, brevet major general, during the War of 1812 and commanded the Western Division at the outbreak of the Mexican War.

4. A veteran of the War of 1812 and a member of the Liberty party, Joseph Cilley (1791–1887) represented New Hampshire in the U.S. Senate, 1846–47. On January 21, 1847, he submitted a resolution calling for the removal of the army from Mexico.

5. Common antebellum epithet for the Democratic party.

6. Balch likely refers to a speech Daniel Webster gave November 6, 1846, at Faneuil Hall in Boston.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN¹

Dear Sir,

Washington City, February 5th 1847

Between four and five weeks ago, a few days after I was last at the Executive Mansion² on a public evening, I contracted a cold from exposure in a snow storm, which resulted in a pretty sever affection of my liver as I was medically advised. When Dr. Douglas³ came—in fact

he was here at the time—and agreeing in opinion with others as to my complaint, he put me upon a course of *blue pills* which has rendered it prudent, according to his positive injunctions, for me to remain within doors ever since. The calomel—and it is my first time of ever using it—has completely relieved me; so that if it were not for some soreness of my mouth still remaining, I would be in better health than I have been in for a year. My instructions have been not to drive the calomel off by drastic medicine, but let it have its own way. I have not taken a pill in two days. During all the time, however, I have been able to keep all my official work fully up, which I have done at my room with the aid of a Messenger⁴—and also, in my office, by instructions to, and the vigilant aid of my first clerk.⁵

I would not trouble you with these personal details, but for the fact of just having received a letter from our old common friend Gov. Yell,⁶ in which he requests me earnestly to mention some matters to you in regard to his personal as well as public affairs and position. His letter is dated Camp Near Parras, Mexico, December 14th, 1846. It has been a long time on the way, as it only came to hand yesterday. You may have letters from him of a later date. Yet, I feel it to be my duty to comply with his request, and as it may be four or five days before I go out, I take the liberty of doing so by this letter.

He speaks of his devotion to the interests of his party and the war having thrown him out of public life prospectively in his own state for some time at least; and that the time of his Regiment will expire before a great while. If the war continues until his troops are discharged, he says he will continue himself in service in some volunteer capacity, even if it be as a private. He remarks frankly, that you need no information as to his character, zeal, faith, or qualifications for any position that may be open, in the Army or out of it—that you also know that his condition in life requires that he should be doing something. He remarks, that if we should acquire California at the end of the war, that any suitable employment in that new Territory would be grateful to him. In the end, declaring the fullest confidence in your friendship and good wishes, that he only desires you, as things progress in the war, or at its close, to remember him in any thing you may be able to do for him, just as you may think he deserves, in justice to yourself and all others. This is the exact substance, as I understand, of what he desires me to say to you as his friend, and as from himself. I need not add, that I have ever esteemed Gov. Yell as one of your truest friends, and as a democratic republican of the soundest principles. Individually, I have known no man of a warmer or better heart.

I think you and I always had somewhat the same opinion of Mr. Andrew Johnson,⁷ and some others of our old impracticable friends. It is now demonstrated that these opinions were founded in no error of judgment. I need not say, that I have read Mr. Johnson's speech on taxing tea and coffee,⁸ and his incidental remarks on other occasions, with shame and regret as a Tennessean. Homely and musty as the saying is, you cant make a silk purse of a sow's ear.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally; marked "(Confidential)." From Polk's AE: received February 1847.

1. A lawyer from McMinnville, Tenn., and founding editor of the *Nashville Union*, Laughlin (1796–1850) served as a Democrat in the Tennessee Senate, 1839–45. Polk appointed him recorder in the General Land Office; the Senate gave its approval on March 16, 1845.

2. Built between 1792 and 1800, the president's residence went by several names in the nineteenth century. In Polk's time, it was known officially as the Executive Mansion and unofficially as the White House. It was located then, as now, at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

3. Laughlin probably refers to Charles Douglas (?–1851), a physician from Connecticut who had been a leader of the Working Men's political movement of the 1830s. Douglas declined Polk's offer of a Brazilian consulate in 1845 but accepted an appointment as commissioner of public buildings in March 1847 and served until 1849.

4. The General Land Office in 1847 employed two messengers, Grafton Powell and John McMahon, and two assistant messengers, Isaac Goddard and Samuel Walker.

5. Laughlin probably refers to James H. Piper (1800–1854). A former president of Columbia College in Columbia, Tenn., and East Tennessee College in Knoxville, Piper served in the Virginia Senate, 1840–46; as principal clerk of public lands in the General Land Office, 1846–47; and as acting commissioner of that office for most of 1846 and January 1847.

6. Polk's friend Archibald Yell (1797–1847) practiced law in Fayetteville, Tenn., before serving as U.S. judge of Arkansas Territory, 1832–35; as U.S. representative from the state of Arkansas, 1836–39; as governor of Arkansas, 1840–44; and again as U.S. representative, 1845–46. He resigned from Congress to command a volunteer regiment from Arkansas in the Mexican War. A Democrat, he died in the Battle of Buena Vista on February 23, 1847, days after his letter reached Laughlin.

7. Johnson (1808–75), a Democrat who began his career as a tailor in Greeneville in East Tennessee, was often critical of Polk's patronage decisions. He served in the U.S. House, 1843–53; as Tennessee's governor, 1853–57; in the U.S. Senate, 1857–62; as military governor of Tennessee, 1862–65; and as vice president, March–April 1865. After Abraham Lincoln's death, he served as president, April 1865–March 1869. In 1868, the U.S. House impeached him but the Senate voted for acquittal. He again served in the U.S. Senate, March–July 1875.

8. On February 2, 1847, Johnson gave a speech in the U.S. House opposing a proposed tax, supported by the Polk administration, on tea and coffee.

FROM GEORGE CADWALADER

Sir,

Philada. 6th Feb'y. 1847

When I was recently in Washington, I learned that it was not your intention to make the appointment of a Brigadier General, until the Bill for the increase of the Army had been disposed of by Congress.¹ As the Bill will probably have been passed before this reaches you I take occasion to repeat the tender of my services which I have already had the honor to make, and must plead my deep anxiety to participate in the pending interesting Military movements, as my excuse for thus addressing you upon the subject.

GEO. CADWALADER

LS, copy. PHi.

1. Ten Regiment Bill.

FROM WILLIAM L. HELFENSTEIN¹

New York City, February 6, 1847

Helfenstein criticizes John Wentworth's attack on Thomas Ritchie,² which he believes will backfire on Wentworth. Democrats voted for Wentworth blindly, but his popularity will not last. He lacks "Party fidelity." Wentworth owns a press and has curried support in his district through printed matter. Some accuse him of distributing obscene material. Helfenstein supports the Washington *Union* and wishes it had a larger circulation in Wentworth's district than Wentworth's newspaper, the Chicago *Democrat*. The Whigs may soon persuade Wentworth to oppose the war; he is vain and susceptible to their flattery because he worries that no prominent Illinois Democrats will be among the war heroes. But he will try to return to the Democratic party.

Helfenstein dislikes Democrats who oppose the administration. Their support, he argues, would bring the war to a successful conclusion; that, in turn, would increase the administration's popularity. Acquiring new territory, Helfenstein adds, would benefit the country.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Marked "*Private*" on the cover and "*Private*" at the top of the letter.

1. A native of Pennsylvania and a Democrat, Helfenstein (1801 or 1805–1884) ran unsuccessfully for a U.S. House seat from Ohio in 1834, then served as judge of the district court of common pleas in Dayton, Ohio, 1835–42. He practiced law in Milwaukee, Wisc. Terr., and, by 1845, in Chicago, before returning to Pennsylvania in 1849 to begin a career in the coal business.

2. Wentworth (1815–88), a native of New Hampshire, moved to Chicago in 1836. A former teacher and, after 1841, a lawyer, he became editor of the city's first newspaper, the *Chicago Weekly Democrat*, in 1836 after its founding that year. He later owned the paper, which in 1840 became the daily *Chicago Democrat*; he closed the paper in 1861. Wentworth also pursued a political career, serving in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1843–51 and 1853–55, and as a Republican, 1865–67. Virginia-born reformer, politician, and journalist Ritchie (1778–1854), former editor of the Richmond *Enquirer*, published and edited the Washington *Union*. The organ for the Polk administration, the *Union* was the successor publication to the Washington *Globe*, which had served the same purpose for the presidencies of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren. In a February 4, 1847, speech before the U.S. House, Wentworth responded to a critical article in the previous day's *Union*. He defended his loyalty to the Democratic party, his opposition to a tax on tea and coffee, and his support of the Wilmot Proviso. He accused the paper of using its attack on him regarding the Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill to hurt the Democratic candidates for president and noted his own former opposition to the Democratic party.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Yalobusha County, Miss. February 6, 1847

Mairs reports that Polk's slaves are healthy. He also reports that they have plowed, planted the cotton seed, and cleared fifty to sixty acres. Now they are clearing land for oats and digging ditches. A load of supplies, which arrived at Troy, was brought to the plantation, but Mairs is waiting for road conditions to improve before bringing the rest of the supplies from Troy to the plantation. The livestock are doing well but the winter range is in poor condition. Mairs hopes for large cotton, corn, and "polk"¹ crops this year. Clothes are being made for the slaves.

Mairs reports that Raben and Cowin² bought forty acres of Polk's land that had been sold for taxes. Robert Campbell, Jr., however, was unable "to settle it," and Raben subsequently sued for the land. Mairs will defer further action until he hears from Polk or Campbell. The land is less valuable than Raben had believed; the purchase did not, as Raben had assumed, include Polk's cotton gin. John T. Leigh³ has promised to write to Polk concerning the matter.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received March 2, 1847; "Relates to my plantation affairs in Mississippi."

1. Poke, or pokeweed, is a common crop with edible leaves. Polk's supporters wore its leaf when he campaigned for the Democrats in 1840 and during his own presidential bid in 1844.

2. Mairs may refer to William Raboun of Monroe County, Miss., and either David Cowen of Yalobusha County or South Carolina-born farmer E. P. Cowan (c. 1804–1860s?), who was living in Oakland, Yalobusha County, by 1860.

3. Leigh (1786–1850), a native of Amelia County, Va., served as clerk of the superior and county courts there, 1810–38, before moving to Yalobusha County in 1838. There he owned a plantation near Polk's.

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir

No[x]ubee¹ Ct Miss Feb 8th 1847

I received your of the 5th January countermanding former Instructions. I have drawn two drafts on Picket Perkins & Co. one for \$300. 7th January 1846 the other \$1327, 65. cents which closes the whole account up. I gave you a full statement when I returned from your plantation of all the acts. up to that date. I have Just returned from Neworleans & Mobile & I though propper not to buy on account of high prices young women are selling at \$700. & young men at \$800. I left your money in the hands of your Merchants expecting to sell Neworleans drafts when I returned to Tennessee where I expected to purchase four more hands and send them down with two or three muels to your plantation. I instructed Mr Mairs to pitch a crop for that many more & I would have them their in time to work, it.

I will now instruct Mr Mairs not to plant more than he can cultivate with the hands that he has on the plantation. I will have to send two more Muels down to the plantation when I return to Ten, which will be in a few days. I will wright to Mr Mairs to day but Mail rout being a cross rout & the waters verry high I will wright to him again from Columbia.

It was a fortunate occurence that I did not buy Negroes in Neworlean or Mobile as the Steam Boat (Wm R King) sank in 5. minutes after coming in contact with another boat 40. miles above Mobile several lives lost.² I lost every thing I had aboard saved my self by swimming out a verry cold night. I afterwards returned to the reck & procured my Saddle Bags by wading in to my state room by means of a hooch raked them out from under my Birth. I procured all of your papers & mine but verry mutch damaged. I shall not make any movements for you until I hear from you. Direct your letters to Columbia Ten as I will be their during the latter part of this month & the month of March. Any commands of yours that I am capible of attending to shall be strictly obeyed by your friend & Relitive.

ROBT CAMPBELL JR

NB Your Cotton all landed safe & was sold at \$10 & 3/8. pr cent. & your rope Baggin twine salt &c, was sent to Troy Miss. Mr Picket³ told me that he had received pay from the Steam Boat for the salt of 1845. that never came to hand.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received February 19, 1847; "Col. Robert Campbell jr My agent. . . . Relates to my private business at my plantation in Mississippi."

1. Letter inserted to complete meaning.
2. Two passengers died when the steamboats *William R. King* and *Winona* collided on February 5, 1847.
3. William S. Pickett married Polk's niece, Mary Eliza Walker, in 1842.

FROM JONATHAN R. TORBERT¹

Dear Sir,

George Town [Del.]² Feby 8th 1847

Do not consider me presumptuous or forward in making this communication to you, the object of which is to make a moderate demand on your liberality. We are about erecting a new Methodist Episcopal Church in this place, and the idea has been suggested to my mind that an application to you for a Bell for said church or a donation for that purpose would be an appropriate application at this time. Almost the entire male and female members of our church here were and still are strong advocates and defenders of James K. Polk as President of these United States and feel an anxious desire that they may have a donation from your Excellency of a donation sufficient to put a Bell weighing some Three hundred pounds—in the steeple of said church with a suitable insignia on said bell as a present from your Excellency. My residence is in this place. My office in the church is that of a Local preacher and also Teller in the Branch of the Farmers Bank of the State of Delaware in this place, and that you may be assured that this communication is not an imposition you may enquire of my cousin James Torbert³ who is, and has been for a number of years employed in the Treasury department. I visited Washington twice after your election to get an introduction to your Excellency. The first time you were on a visit with your lady to Mount Vernon. At my second visit I had an introduction to you by Mr Seymour present Mayor of Washington while visiting the national fair.⁴

I hope Sir that you will feel it in your heart to comply with the wishes of this community and our church in particular in the donation they asked for, and continue to receive the prayers and well wishes of a large majority of the people for your happiness and prosperity in private life and for your success and prosperity in the administration of which you are now chief and may all matters work together for good both as it respects the present and the future.

JONA. R. TORBERT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Jonathan R. Torbert was a farmer, minister, and banker from Georgetown, Del. A promoter of social reforms, he served as Sussex County superintendent of education.

2. State identified from postmark and through content analysis.

3. A native of Delaware, James M. Torbert (c. 1802?–c. 1870?) had worked as a clerk in the First Auditor's Office of the Treasury Department since 1831.

4. Torbert likely misidentifies William W. Seaton (1785–1866), a well-known Whig journalist. Born in Virginia, Seaton edited several newspapers there and in North Carolina before becoming co-owner and coeditor, with Joseph Gales, Jr., of the *Washington National Intelligencer* in 1812. He remained with the *Intelligencer* until 1864 (Gales died in 1860). Seaton served as Washington City mayor, 1840–51.

FROM TOWNSEND N. UNDERHILL¹

Dear Sir

New York Feb. 8th 1847

In anticipation of the issue of \$28,000,000.—of Treasury notes,² the people in our Atlantic Cities are preparing to enact the scenes of 1846 & 7. The country will follow this pernicious example, and the consequences of this enormous inflation of the currency will be again to make us a “nation of Bankrupts.”³ Our Merchants fail regularly fifteen out of twenty every ten years, and we are in disgrace at home and abroad by our want of stability of character. Great expansions of paper money will produce fictitious value and a corresponding revulsion.

TOWNSEND N. UNDERHILL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Underhill (1823–1904) was a New York City cotton commission agent.

2. Underhill erroneously refers to the twenty-three million dollars in treasury notes authorized by the loan bill of January 28, 1847. See letter and notes in Polk to George Bancroft, January 30, 1847.

3. Underhill's source for this quotation, if any, is unidentified, but the phrase has been used since the eighteenth century.

FROM BENJAMIN B. FRENCH¹

Dear Sir,

Office Ho Reps., U.S. Feby. 9. 1847

It is due to myself to explain to you an apparent neglect of that courtesy which is always observed in communications between the President & the House of Representatives.

On Saturday evening a resolution was adopted by the House requesting you not to suspend the sales of the reserved mineral lands advertised for sale at Dubuque Iowa, unless you were requested so to do by the settlers thereon.

That resolution was adopted amid a hurry of business and much confusion, & immediately after the House adjourned Hon. Mr. Morris² of Ohio came to me & notified me that he should move a reconsideration of the vote on Monday (yesterday) & requested me not to present the resolution to you until he could have an opportunity to make that motion.

In conformity with this request, & the invariable custom, I suffered the copy intended for you to be on my table during the day, yesterday. The House adjourned late, but, as no motion was made to reconsider, I intended to wait upon you this morning with the resolution. Upon seeking for it I was informed by my Chief Clerk³ that Mr. Walker,⁴ your private Secretary called & took the resolution, after the adjournment last evening, & that it would not be necessary for me to go personally with another copy.

I hope this is a sufficient apology for any apparent neglect on my part.

B. B. FRENCH

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. A lawyer, journalist, and Democrat from New Hampshire, French (1800–1870) served as an assistant clerk of the U.S. House, 1833–45, and then as clerk of the House, 1845–47.

2. Joseph Morris (1795–1854), a native of Pennsylvania, represented Ohio as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–47.

3. Daniel Gold (?–1849), a lawyer and Democrat from New York, served many years as an assistant clerk of the U.S. House before becoming chief assistant clerk, 1845–49.

4. Joseph Knox Walker.

FROM OWEN CONNOLLY¹

Washington City, February 10, 1847

Connolly accuses three men of being “spies” for Simon Cameron. Two of them, William L. Marcy’s messenger Thomas Wallace² and U.S. Senate messenger John G. Schott,³ said they would ask Cameron to fight Andrew Beaumont’s⁴ nomination in the Senate. They did so because they knew Cameron opposed Polk’s administration. The third, Henry Gaither,⁵ who received his appointment from Beaumont, discussed the nomination with Cameron. Gaither thus offered “to betray” Polk less than three months after getting a job at Polk’s request. Connolly claims he can prove these accusations.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed locally and marked “Private & confidential” on the cover. From Hampton C. Williams’s AE: “This is entitled to no consideration. Connelly is a dangerous man.”

1. The owner of the Farmer's Hotel in Washington City, Democrat and Ireland native Connolly (c. 1804–1855) had operated several Washington City hotels successively since 1833 and a livery stable since 1841. His property was seized around the time he wrote this letter to pay a debt he had endorsed, but he retained the Hotel and in 1848 sought an entrepreneur to lease and operate its tavern. He served as a police officer at the U.S. Capitol, 1846–49. (Volumes 9 and 11 of this series erroneously identify Connolly as Owen Connelly.)

2. A Democrat from Pennsylvania, Wallace served as a messenger for the War Department during Polk's administration.

3. A Pennsylvania native, Schott served as a Senate messenger most years from 1845 to 1860.

4. Born in Connecticut, Democrat Beaumont (1790–1853) served in the Pennsylvania House, 1821–22, 1826, and 1849, and in the U.S. House, 1833–37. Appointed by Polk as commissioner of public buildings in Washington City, he served from November 5, 1846, until the Senate rejected his nomination on March 3, 1847.

5. A Maryland native and a supporter of Henry Clay in the early 1830s, Gaither served as a police officer at the U.S. Capitol from November 1846 until 1849.

FROM JAMES THOMPSON¹

My Dear President

Washington Feby 11th 1847

I am so much impressed with the importance to success of the \$3000000 bill,² of your giving to Congress, a message, I must again suggest it to you. Do you but hoist the standard, & we will stand [round]³ it, let it stand or fall. We are breaking into factions—you can alone save us by giving a rallying point & rallying signal. Ask for speedy action and if possible unrestricted action on the bill, explaining its objects as fully as practicable. It will save the party in New York & Pennsylvania. No Democrat will withhold his support from the measure, when it is made distinctly an important measure of the democratic administration. Objection as to the *Wilmot proviso* the matter now stands is considered concession to the south, as it is not well understood, as being very important. Extraordinary times give use & sanction to extraordinary measures—although the propriety of arguing the question in [extended] may be doubted—but enough may be said to prevent the acceptance of the ridiculous & useless proviso—save us from fragmenting. You can do it.

JAMES THOMPSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Democrat and lawyer Thompson (1806–74) served as U.S. representative from Pennsylvania, 1845–51; associate justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, 1857–66; and chief justice of that court, 1866–72.

2. "An Act making further Appropriation to bring the existing War with Mexico to a speedy and honorable Conclusion." *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 50. Owing to the amount it authorized for the war, this bill, which became law on March 3, 1847, was commonly referred to as the "Three Million Dollar Bill."

3. Word here and below uncertain.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON¹

Sir.

Washington. Feby. 13th 1847

In the month of October last, I received from my friend the Hon. Henry A. Wise, a letter dated at Rio Janiero on the 1st day of August, 1846. Agreeably to his request, I submitted it to your inspection, and called your attention, to a paragraph in these words, "He (meaning the President) has already manifested such a sense of justice towards me, as not only to have disarmed & dispelled the least feeling of hostility, but to make it my duty and my desire to assist him as a friend. I, therefore, authorize you, to say to him, in my name, that I beg him to consider my request for leave to return home as already made, whenever he may desire to nominate and appoint my successor."

I have received from Mr. Wise, a letter dated at Rio, on the 23d November, in which he says, "Mr Polk, when he became President, found me the Minister of the U.S. at this Court. I deemed that duty both to myself and my Country forbade that I should resign my public station for reason of any mere personal consideration; at all events, that there were no reasons founded on my personal relations to the President, which required my resignation. These views were submitted to the most responsible of our mutual friends whom I chose to consult, and, as you informed me, were approved by them. Mr. Polk, on his part, acted with justice, and magnanimity towards me, and, under a high sense of public duty, in disregard of personal considerations, retained me in the place of confidence and trust where he found me, notwithstanding, that his motives were subjected to the harshest and, most unjust imputations. As soon as I was informed of these, it became my part to relieve the position of the President, from all embarrassment, in respect to my recall, and I transmitted through you, a tender of my request to retire at his discretion, whenever in his opinion, the benefit of the Country or his administration should require the exercise of that discretion, *my own request* was ready to relieve him from all imputations as to the motives of my recall. This request was absolute and unqualified, and unlimited as to time."

In this last letter, Mr. Wise, refers, with proper feeling, to a recent occurrence, growing out of the imprisonment of an officer & three men,

of the U.S. Sloop of War *Saratoga*, and requests, that you will act on the his request for his recall, in just reference to this affair.² As I am aware, that you have come under some commitment as to the appointment of Mr. Wise's successor, after I communicated to you the contents of his letter of the 1st of August, and before the occurrence referred to, and as I feel assured, that you will not exercise the discretion given you by him, without a due regard to his honor, I do not qualify the assurance which I have, in the name of Mr. Wise, heretofore given you. You are at liberty, to regard Mr. Wise's request to be recalled, unlimited, and unqualified as to time, and I shall write him to this effect.

Having submitted Mr. Wise's letters³ to your perusal, I deem it proper both to him & yourself to place in your hands, in this form, the substance of what has passed between us on the subject, not doubting, in the slightest degree, that my course will meet the approbation of Mr. Wise.

J. Y. MASON

ALS. DLC-JKP. From Polk's AE: "accompanying the letter of *Mr Mason* are several letters from *Mr Wise* to him, which see enclosed. This letter & the accompanying papers were delivered to me by *Mr Mason*, this day, though the information which they contain, was made known to me, some weeks ago. March 25th 1847." See also L, copy. PHi-JB. Enclosed in Polk to James Buchanan, March 25, 1847.

1. A Virginia native, Mason (1799–1859) became secretary of the navy in 1846 after George Bancroft resigned that office to become minister to the United Kingdom. Previously, Mason had served as congressman from Virginia, 1831–37; U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, 1837–44; secretary of the navy, 1844–45; and U.S. attorney general, 1845–46.

2. See letter and notes in George Bancroft to Polk, February 3, 1847.

3. Letters not found.

FROM CHARLES J. INGERSOLL¹

Dear Sir

[Washington City]² Feb. 14. 47

My objects in moving as I did yesterday the several references of your message were

1. After giving the finance and military committees respectively appropriate possession of these facts

2. To superadd that of foreign affairs so that if deemed useful a short animated substitute³ of your appeal may come from it to show that the house of representatives coincides

3. And—what does not appear in the Union⁴ but took place—Genl Dromghoole⁵ suggested & I accepted an amendment of my resolution

referring the land graduation part as a measure of finance to the committee of ways and means so that one and the same bill may be reported for that and for tea and coffee, which Genl. D. considers a stroke of good parliamentary tactics.

I heard accidentally last night that a committee of the Penns delegation were to wait on you concerning appointments in the ten regiments.⁶ I never heard of the caucus if there was one as I suppose, and perhaps the reason was that I had said I will not attend such a caucus.

But that is only because my being the sole democratic representative of the four Philad districts causes much to be expected of me for them and I do not think proper to go only one into caucus. I trust that you will not settle the Philad. selections without letting me know.

Mr. Cam⁷ peremptorily referred these suggestions which at your instance I submitted to him.

C. J. INGERSOLL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received February 14, 1847.

1. Pennsylvania lawyer and Democrat Ingersoll (1782–1862), a second cousin of Ralph I. Ingersoll, served as congressman, 1813–15 and 1841–49; U.S. attorney for Pennsylvania, 1815–29; Pennsylvania assemblyman, 1830; and secretary of legation to Prussia, 1837. In 1847, Polk appointed him minister to France but the Senate, on March 3, rejected the nomination, 22 to 21.

2. Place identified through content analysis.

3. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

4. Ingersoll differs with the Washington *Union's* depiction of his actions in the U.S. House, ostensibly in support of proposals made by Polk in his Second Annual Message to Congress.

5. George C. Dromgoole (also spelled Dromghoole) (1797–1847) was a Virginia lawyer, politician, and militia general who served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1835–41 and 1843–47.

6. Polk signed the Ten Regiment Bill into law on February 11, 1847.

7. Simon Cameron.

FROM EDWARD HARDEN¹

City of Washington Cherokee Commission² office.

Sir:

15th February 1847

The Cherokee commission commenced its sittings, soon after the 20th day of August last; but having decided several enormous claims adversely to the claimants, they at once ceased to file them. We then advertised in Washington, North Carolina, and in the Cherokee country, that we would not receive claims, unless upon cause shewed, after the

25th, of december last, and up to that time only about thirty five, had been filed; all of which we had decided, except such as written applications had been made, requesting that we should not act upon them. Now there are more than eight hundred claims on the docket, and we are informed upon good authority, that above two thousand are behind involving in the whole the sum of at least, four millions of dollars, which will not be filed, under the belief that the term of the commission will expire before their claims can be reached. Those kept back are mostly from the west.

As far as we have gone, we have allowed only about 5 dollars in the hundred of the claims preferred, and I am afraid that we have passed even at that rate, more than we ought to have done. Judge then how much nerve and determination it requires to withstand the clamors of the claimants, and their attorneys, together with that of all those to whom they are indebted in Washington, for board, lodging, and washing, including also their brokers, tailors, shoemakers, &c, &c, &c. amounting in the whole to a little army. And we are blamed for not making decisions to enable them to pay their debts, by many, when infact they are living by the delay, and have filed requests that their claims should not be acted upon.

Congress have refused to extend the time of the commission, and have not even appropriated a sum sufficient to carry it thro' the year, so that these unsettled claims will continue to hang upon and annoy the government perhaps, for many years yet to come. We do not wish to spin out the time of the commission. (a lie) Mr. Brewster³ is willing to quit it at any moment, and the secretary⁴ and myself are not wedded to it, but we feel that we have a great trust to perform, and wish to discharge it with honor to ourselves, and usefulness to the country. I may be permitted to assert that the government never had a more faithful or industrious commission, one more searching in its inquiries, less operated upon by extraneous influences, or more determined and inflexible in its course. I speak egotistically, but authoritatively and boldly, because I defy contradiction, and invite scrutiny. The board began by recording its decisions at length upon every case, to serve as a perpetual memorial, that would settle this troublesome business for ever. But we will have to leave it incomplete, or finished in such a manner, for want of time, as will be unsatisfactory not only to the commission, but to all concerned.

The records are beautifully kept by the Secretary, who is admirably fitted to the purpose, executing every part of his duty with unrivalled ability; and really we would feel proud to be enabled to end this complex and perplexed affair in such a manner as would justify us in all of our conduct, but I fear that we shall have to leave it unperfected, so that the

claimants will yet be crying out for justice, which they will say has been withheld from them. I have thought it not improper that I should make these disclosures to your Excellency hoping that it will be received in the spirit in which it is made.

EDWARD HARDEN

ALS, copy. NcD. Appended to Edward Harden to Mary Ann Elizabeth Randolph Harden, March 6, 1847. ALS. NcD.

1. Harden (1784–1849), a Georgia planter, was customs collector at Savannah in the mid-1840s and became appraiser there shortly before his death.

2. In July 1846, Polk commissioned Harden and Benjamin H. Brewster to evaluate claims by individuals against the federal government for alleged damages arising from implementation of the 1835 treaty, signed at New Echota, Ga., between the federal government and the Cherokee Indians. The treaty relocated the Cherokee from Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee to designated lands west of the Mississippi River. Under the treaty's terms, the U.S. government would pay the Cherokee's debts from money owed by the United States to the Cherokee. The Commission legally expired on July 22, 1847, and filed its final report, which rejected most of the claims, the next day. See House Executive Document No. 63, 30th Congress, 1st Session.

3. Brewster (1816–88), a New Jersey lawyer, later served as U.S. attorney general during the presidency of Republican Chester A. Arthur, 1881–85.

4. Washington D. Miller (1814–66), secretary of the Cherokee Commission, was a South Carolina native and a lawyer. After moving to the Republic of Texas (1836–45) in 1837, he served in its Congress, 1840–41; as private secretary to Pres. Sam Houston, 1842; and as secretary to the Senate, 1842–43. After Texas entered the Union, he served as its secretary of state, 1845–48. In 1844, he cofounded the *National Register*, a newspaper in Washington-on-the-Brazos that favored the Republic's continued independence.

FROM JAMES THOMPSON

Dear Sir—

Washington Feby 15th 1847

We are voting on the Proviso.¹ We are doing all we can to defeat it in committee²—if we cannot do this we shall vote against it in the house if our votes will prevent the passage of it. If not most of us may feel it best to vote in the affirmative, so as to enable us to stand right if rejected in senate.³

JAMES THOMPSON

[P.S.] The vote has been taken. My colleagues became alarmed & to some extent left us. I did not vote until I should under these circumstances see whether my vote could effect any thing—feeling I could not defeat the bill I was forced to vote for it. Should we be able to have it

rejected in senate we can caucus here. I have been so unwell as to be unable to speak on it. JT.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Thompson refers to the Wilmot Proviso, which the U.S. House passed on the day of this letter's composition, 115 to 106.

2. House Judiciary Committee.

3. The political machinations Thompson describes arose from his and Polk's opposition to the Wilmot Proviso but support for the Three Million Dollar Bill, to which the former had been added as an amendment.

FROM JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT¹

My Dear Sir, [Washington City] Tuesday 16th February. [1847]²

There is a very brave young man named Charles Taplin,³ of education & respectable family, who was with Mr Frémont⁴ throughout his second expedition⁵ & only returned from the present one when there was nothing left to be done. He is very anxious to go to Mexico and a 2d Lieutenancy would not only gratify him, but both Mr. Frémont & myself extremely. Father told me he intended asking for it for him, but he is so busy that I am afraid you will say "too late" when he gets leisure to think of him. Mr Westcott⁶ says patronage is only used for bribery but with me you can be purely disinterested as my good wishes are all I have to give in return & they are already yours. Unlike other applicants I shall not hate you if I fail, for Mr Taplin does not entertain much hope of succeeding & disappointments of many kinds are familiar to me. Still I hope to succeed.

JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT

ALS. DLC–JCFJBF. Published in Pamela Herr and Mary Lee Spence, eds., *The Letters of Jessie Benton Frémont* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 29–30.

1. Jessie Benton Frémont (1824–1902) was the wife of John C. Frémont, the daughter of Thomas H. Benton, and author of several books. Due to her father's career in the U.S. Senate, she spent much of her childhood in Washington City, and the family often socialized among Senator Benton's government colleagues. Thus, Jessie had known Polk since her childhood. After her marriage in 1841, she became a fierce champion of her husband and often acted as his advocate in political matters.

2. Place and year identified through content analysis.

3. Charles V. L. Taplin (1819?–1855) of St. Louis acquired the commission requested by Jessie Frémont. He resigned the lieutenancy, however, in early 1848, shortly after John Frémont's court-martial conviction in January of that year.

4. Under the auspices of the army's Corps of Topographical Engineers, John C. Frémont (1813–90), the era's principal explorer of the American West, led three surveys of the region in the 1840s. His published accounts of the trips and maps produced from them popularized what soon became known as the Oregon Trail and prompted the first mass migration by U.S. citizens into the Far West. In 1846, Frémont's exploring party, regularized into U.S. soldiers, became involved in the Mexican War and the eventual U.S. conquest of California. In the wake of that victory, Frémont, acting as a military commander over occupied California, became the object of accusations of mutiny and other acts of military indiscipline that eventually led to his court martial and resignation (see letter and notes in William L. Marcy to Polk, May 6, 1847). In 1856, Frémont became the first presidential nominee of the Republican party, but lost the election to Democrat James Buchanan. During the Civil War, he served as a Union general.

5. John Frémont's "Second Expedition" was conducted May 1843–August 1844.

6. James D. Westcott, Jr.

FROM WILLIAM L. HELFENSTEIN

My Dear Sir,

Astor House.¹ Feb. 16. 47

Altho obscure & humble in my position I cannot refrain from troubling you again, to say to you, how little the late action of the Senate in relation to the St. of the Union meets with a favourable response. In this City, as it will be throughout the whole Union, in the Democratic Party, there will be but one feeling of strong disapprobation.² It will react powerfully in Mr Richies favour.³

The People are strongly with you in a vigorous & energetic prosecution of the War, as the only successful & speedy means of conquering a Peace. All opposition to yr proposed measures will recoil upon its originators. I deeply regret the course pursued by Mr Calhoun.⁴ It is working against him with most fatal effect.

I trust you will be encouraged & sustained in a most vigorous prosecution of the War, & that yr patriotic efforts will be crown'd with the abundant success.

WM. L. HELFENSTEIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "Private" on the cover and "*Private*" at the top of the letter.

1. The Astor House, which had opened in 1836, was a prominent hotel in nineteenth-century Manhattan.

2. Helfenstein refers to Polk's Second Annual Message to Congress, but the Senate action prompted by the Message cannot be identified.

3. Helfenstein predicts that the Senate's failure to embrace Polk's legislative agenda is creating popular resentments that the Washington *Union*, edited by Polk ally Thomas Ritchie, will champion.

4. John C. Calhoun opposed the U.S. war in Mexico.

FROM ANDREW T. McREYNOLDS¹

Sir,

Detroit Feb 16th 1847

Aware as I am of the extraordinary, and momentous duties which necessarily crowd upon the consideration of your Excellency at this time, nothing but a sense of duty to myself and a desire that the public voice should not be entirely unheeded could induce me to obtrude upon your time and reflections. These considerations above, must be my apology in the present instance.

Your Excellency is no doubt aware that I am a candidate for an appointment as a field officer of one of the Regiments under the Law of Congress increasing the Army²; I have just learned that it is your pleasure to give to Michigan two field appointments and a number of temporary officers, and also learned with deep mortification that our representatives in Congress have determined on recommending the names of Genl Brown & Col Howard,³ the former as Col. and the latter as Major. Against these Gentlemen it would not become me to offer any objections. I have no doubt they would each discharge this duty faithfully to the flag of their country, but I with great deference submit that this is not the only consideration to be consulted. Under the requisition of your Excellency in our State for a regiment of Volunteers, our Governor⁴ appointed Genl Brown as Col. and Col. Howard as Lt Col. I was an applicant for the latter appointment. Governor Felch, moved by considerations of expediency conferred it on Col H. on the ground that he was a Whig, and that with the view to secure the prompt supply of rank and file irrespective of party, it was necessary to make such a disposition. The necessity however for such a course of policy, I humbly submit does not now exist, and most certainly there is nothing in the course pursued by that party towards the administration in the prosecution of the existing War that entitles them to partiality.

It is well known to all who know anything about the matter, that I was the choice of the Volunteer Regiment of this State, so far as an expression was had, for the office which I now seek, and indeed of 3 entire companies for that of Col. As your Excellency has no doubt been apprised, my application has been seconded by both branches of our Legislature without exception and irrespective of party; they have in all cases declined any expression in favour of any other candidate for a similar office. In addition to this I learn that our Governor and United

States Senator elect,⁵ from a conviction of duty no doubt—certainly not at my instance, or that of any friend of mine—addressed your Excellency on the same subject. I had supposed that such an expression would have had sufficient influence on our representatives in Congress to forbid their foisting upon us one of their peculiar choice in direct violation of such a public demonstration. My object therefore is to direct the attention of your Excellency to this matter and ask for the Legislative expression such consideration as to you may seem proper. The Legislature of no State in the Union represents a constituency more devoted to the honor of our flag, and the success of our army than that of Michigan. The ballot box, pending the present War, has nobly vindicated the course of your administration, and the Senate, of which I am a member, passed by a vote of 19 Dems. to 3 Whigs a series of resolutions which I had the honor to introduce and advocate, responding to the expression of our people in this particular; I take the liberty of sending you herewith a copy of the resolutions as they passed the senate⁶; I do simply because, they were some what mutilated and in one case an important addition was made in the House of representatives owing to a conservative feeling which actuated some Democrats fomented by Whigs in that body. The addition to which I refer is in reference to additional slave Territory, against the policy and propriety of which under existing circumstances I argued, but to no purpose. These resolutions have no doubt been placed before you ere this.

Touching my qualifications it may not be altogether amis to add, that I have been commissioned, equipped and have done duty continuously for the last Ten years, first as Major, second as Lt. Col, and for the last four years as Col, of the Detroit Regiment, which office I now hold; at much trouble and expense I organised the first company that volunteered in this State under the requisition of your Excellency—"The Montgomery Guards"⁷—it may be supposed that I have given some attention to the schools of the soldiers company and Battalion.

Were I an applicant for a civil appointment, I might subject myself to the charge of being thus actuated by sinister motives, when it is borne in mind, that in the present instance I propose to withdraw myself from a lucrative profession, from a noble constituency, and, for the time, sever those ties which bind me to a devoted family and a fond home, for the purpose of sealing my fidelity to the flag of my adopted country by induring the fatigues of the camp and participating in the glories of the field. I may be pardoned for the position which is here assumed by me.

ANDW. T. McREYNOLDS

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Hampton C. Williams's AE: received February 25, 1847; McReynolds "encloses resolutions introduced by him sustaining the administration"; "a strong & amiable letter."

1. A native of Ireland, McReynolds (1807–98) emigrated to the United States, then served several terms in the Michigan legislature. Subsequent to this letter, Polk commissioned him a captain in the army, where he won plaudits for heroism during August 1847's Battle of Churubusco.

2. Ten Regiment Bill.

3. Joseph W. Brown and Joshua Howard. Pennsylvania native Brown (1793–1880) served in the New York militia and as a Michigan Territory judge before joining that territory's militia in 1829. He served in the Black Hawk War and rose to major general in the militia and brigadier general in the Michigan State Guard; he became an examiner at the U.S. Military Academy in 1840, though he never received an army command. He accepted an Ohio judgeship in 1848. Massachusetts-born Howard (1793–1868), a former army officer, U.S. marshal, and Michigan legislator, was appointed lieutenant colonel for the Fifteenth Infantry Regiment and reached Veracruz in June 1847. The following September, he was brevetted to the rank of colonel for heroism during that month's U.S. conquest of Mexico City.

4. Lawyer and politician Alpheus Felch (1804–96), a Maine native, moved to Michigan in 1833. He held several offices there, before and after statehood, including legislator; state bank commissioner; supreme court judge; and governor, 1846–47. A Democrat, he served in the U.S. Senate, 1847–53.

5. Felch resigned as governor in March 1847 to serve in the U.S. Senate.

6. Enclosure not found.

7. This unit was organized in 1843 with McReynolds as captain. He, however, left the company in 1846, before it fought in the Mexican War.

FROM SAMUEL R. ANDERSON¹

Dear Sir,

Tampico² Feby 17th 1847

While at Monterey, and just before we left for this place, the impression prevailed that Brigadier Gen'l. Pillow³ had returned to N. Orleans, and perhaps to Tennessee on account of bad health, and it was thought that he would likely resign his command. In view of those circumstances, I addressed you, a letter requesting the appointment to fill his place. I was very much gratified on reaching Victoria⁴ to find that the Genl. was still on the field in command, and that his health was very much improved.

We are now quartered near Tampico, and are kept busy drilling preparatory to a move upon Vera Cruz. Genl. Pillow is using every exertion to have us well prepared for this move. He is on the field of drill every day taking great interest in our improvement.

As you have been advised of the move of the army from "authority" no doubt I shall not now speak of it. The utmost enthusiasm prevails throughout the volunteer regts.

Mexican rumor this morning says that a battle has been fought between Santa Anna and Genl. Taylor and that the former was repulsed

with great loss⁵—we hope it may be true, though we shall have to wait with patience for its confirmation.

I beg leave now to bring to your consideration an other subject. I have now been in service with the 1st Tennessee regt near nine months. Our time of service will soon expire. In taking the position in the regt. I did, I had to abandon my private business, so that when my term of service shall expire I shall be out of employment, and have suffered very heavy pecuniary loss, so that if you can give me any appointment in the army not below a Col. or any civil appointment that would give me employment I should feel myself under many obligations to you.

I feel well assured that it is useless for me to use long speeches in this matter. You have known me long, and you know what sacrifices I have made. They are before you. If in view of this all you can give me the favour spoken of above, and in doing it, feel that you have done your duty, you will have conferred a lasting favour upon a devoted friend.

S. R. ANDERSON

NB. Be pleased to notify me at Genl. Scotts head quarters.⁶

ALS. DLC—JKP. Hampton C. Williams's AE: "Lt. Col S. R. Anderson Tennessee Volunteers asks to be continued in the service as Colonel after the expiration of the 12 mo's &c. March 14, 1847."

1. Anderson (1804–83), a Tennessee merchant and banker and a Polk supporter, served as a lieutenant colonel in the First Tennessee Infantry Regiment during the Mexican War and as a brigadier general in the Confederate army during the Civil War.

2. This Mexican port was seized by the U.S. Navy in November 1846 and occupied by U.S. forces for the war's duration.

3. Polk's longtime friend Gideon J. Pillow (1806–78) had known the president since both were lawyers in Columbia, Tenn. Pillow never held public office, but served Polk as a political advisor and surrogate and, in 1844, played a key role in securing Polk's presidential nomination as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Baltimore. He joined the U.S. war effort in Mexico upon receiving a commission as brigadier general in July 1846. Polk promoted him to major general the following April. During the Civil War, he served as a Confederate general.

4. Victoria, Tex.

5. Anderson alludes to an apparently false rumor about engagements leading to the Battle of Buena Vista (February 22–23, 1847), in which General Taylor's forces defeated those of General Santa Anna. The battle took place and takes its name from a village in a mountain pass seven miles south of the town of Saltillo.

6. Winfield Scott's headquarters at the time of this letter lay at Brazos Santiago, Tex., near the mouth of the Rio Grande.

Sir Executive Department Austin Texas Feb 18th 1847

I fear that the Indians upon our frontier will ere long give us some trouble. They have lately been committing some depredations in a bold way. I have lately sent Major Neighbors³ high up on the Colorado river to ascertain as far as he can the numbers intentions &c &c of the Comanchies & new tribes lately settled in that region.⁴ He has not yet reported. Coln. J. C. Hays⁵ who is the bearer of this is charged fully to enlarge upon & more fully explain to your Excellency the several matters touched upon in this communication. I recently addressed the Secy of War upon the necessity of placing the several ranging Companies now stationed upon our frontier for its protection against the Indians under the immediate controal & direction of the Executive of the State. I do not think they can be so efficient under the direction of an officer who cannot have a perfect knowledge of the topography of the country as they can under the command of an officer of the state whose immediate duty is to understand these things.

ALS. Tx. Delivered by John C. Hays.

1. Soldier, lawyer, and politician Henderson (1808–58) served the Republic of Texas as attorney general, as secretary of state, and in several diplomatic posts. After Texas became a U.S. state in 1845, he served as its first governor, 1846–47, and as major general of its volunteer regiments during the Mexican War. He served in the U.S. Senate as a Democrat, 1857–58.

2. William L. Marcy.

3. A veteran of the Texas republic's army, Robert S. Neighbors (1815–59) also served as an Indian agent for that government and, later, the U.S. government.

4. The Texas republic and then the state of Texas—the latter until 1850—asserted that the northern and western boundary of Texas extended to the headwaters of the Rio Grande, in today's state of New Mexico. The Comanche and other Indian tribes frequently clashed with whites in the region.

5. John C. Hays (1817–83) was a renowned soldier and officer during the war for Texas independence and the Mexican War. By the 1850s he had relocated to California, where he became active in politics and business.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir:

Washington City Feby 19th 1847

I received to day, your letter of the 8th Instant, written in Noxubee County Mississippi, and am glad to learn that you had not purchased any more property for me when you received my letter countermanding former instructions.¹ I have drawn to day on *Pickett Perkins & Co.* for the balance in their hands, to send it for my purposes here. Of course you will not draw on them for any further sum. You state that I will need two more mules on my plantation, which you will buy and deliver. I wish you to do so. I do not know the state of my account with *James H. Thomas Esqr.*, but wish you to call on him, and if he has that amt. in his hands, request him to pay it over to you, with which you can pay for the mules. If he has not that amount of my money in his hands, I wish you to purchase the mules at all events write to me their price, and I will remit the money to you. I am greatly obliged to you for your attention to my business. But for your attention, I do not know what would become of my interests at my plantation.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked “(Private).”

1. Polk to Campbell, January 5, 1847.

FROM ROBERT GRAY¹

My Dear Sir.

Raleigh [N.C.]² Feb. 22nd 1847

For God's sake send me out to Ireland in one of the ships laden with Provisions for the Relief of my suffering countrymen.³ Send me as Supercargo, as your Agent, as your anything, only let me be the Bearer of Glad Tidings to the Starving, and a Messenger of joy to those whom my heart for years have yearned to see, before the cold hand of Death may be laid on them and they become the victims, probably, of the awful Famine that devastates the fair Land of my Birth. I have no money—I am in other words an unfortunate Schoolmaster, Principal of the N.C.

Military Academy in Raleigh, and have taught the Classics &c in the city of New York and here for the last 12 years; but Fortune, although my labors have been incessant and severe almost beyond endurance, has not smiled on me as yet.

God has ever blessed me, however, with a good wife and two beautiful and healthy children, and I am in the bloom of manhood and activity, with only 30 years on my shoulders—desiring, praying for one blessing above all others that this earth can bestow—the unspeakable comfort of going home once more. This has been my aim since I came to America, and this boon I now implore you to grant me, for the sake of a dear aged mother and father who are struggling at this moment with inexorable poverty and whose hearts would be unutterably rejoiced and years lengthened by one sight of their beloved “boy.”

Do, I implore you, permit the light of heaven to shine through their sad hearts, avert the black gloom that hovers around their hopes, and make their passage easy to the melancholy grave.

I wish I could see you once in your own house at Washington. I wish you could hear me sing one Irish Song, embodying some simple tale of wo or joy of a son or daughter of sweet Erin, the darling Isle of the Ocean. If I could succeed in having one Interview with you, although my efforts might be in vain, I would at least have the satisfaction of having done all I could do, and falling in a good cause.

Forgive a total stranger for thus unceremoniously addressing you, and accept as his only apology the irresistible feelings of a throbbing heart and a full confidence in your goodness.

ROBERT GRAY

P.S. There is no gentleman in Raleigh that would not furnish you with the most satisfactory Testimonials of my Character, Ability &c. &c. R. Gray

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Hampton C. Williams’s AE: received February 25, 1847. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 140–41.

1. Irish-born Gray—not to be confused with Rhode Island-born American merchant sea captain Robert Gray—served, 1844–46, as one of two principals at the North Carolina Literary, Scientific and Military Academy in Raleigh, which operated 1844–47. A search of primary and secondary sources produced no indication as to whether Gray obtained the requested assignment.

2. State identified through content analysis.

3. In early 1847, as Gray was writing to Polk, Congress was debating measures to provide relief for victims of the Irish potato famine. Much discussion focused on the use of public funds to defray costs for the shipping to Ireland of foodstuffs provided by private charities. Measures were enacted in March

to place two naval ships, the USS *Jamestown* and the USS *Macedonian*, into civilian hands for that purpose. "A Resolution authorizing the employment of the United States Ships *Macedonian* and *Jamestown* in transporting Provisions for the famishing Poor of Ireland and Scotland." *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Number 10.

TO JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Feby. 22nd 1847

I have received your letter of the 12th Inst. transmitting to me your statement as requested, of my account with you, but am at this moment so much occupied with my public duties, which are unusually pressing, that I have been unable to do more than glance at it. I have not even had time to refer to my papers, to ascertain whether I brought your receipt with me or not. I may have left it with my other valuable papers in Tennessee. This is however not material, at present. I had wholly forgotten that I had an outstanding note, payable to Saml. P. Walker¹ for \$144.30, which you state you hold, and cannot now call to mind the transaction out of which it grew. The note will however speak for itself. You state that you desire to draw on me for the amt. of the note. You can do so, first writing across the face of the note, that it is paid, & enclosing it to me, at the same time that you draw on me for its amount.

My object in requesting a statement of my account was merely to know how it stood. When I return the business between will be readily settled.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. Samuel P. Walker (1814–70), Polk's nephew, was a Memphis lawyer and businessman. With William S. Pickett and William M. Perkins, he ran the New Orleans and Memphis cotton brokerage house of Pickett, Perkins & Co.

FROM MARY BERKLEY CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Williamson county [Tenn.]¹ Feb 23th 1847

I received your letter² on the 22 instant and I am very sorry to inform you that James³ has got out of the notion of going to West Point. When he first received the appointment he commenced going to school and was studying very hard until some of his friends persuaded him to study medicine. The Doctor says he is doing very well. I am in hopes that you will tell Thomas⁴ what you think is best for him. I feel myself under many obligations to you for your kind advise to my sons and am very sorry that James did not continue his studies to prepare for West point.

Give my love to cousin Sarah⁵ and accept a part for yourself. You must—this letter as I am not in the habit of writing much. I remain . . .

MARY CHILDRESS

L in author's or John W. Martin's hand. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received March 8, 1847.

1. State identified from postmark of Good Spring, Tenn.

2. Polk to Childress, January 29, 1847.

3. William James Childress.

4. Thomas B. Childress.

5. Sarah Childress Polk.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Sir: Navy Department February 25. 1847

I deem it to be my duty to express to you my opinion, that the interests of the public service require that there shall be established a Navy Agency at New Orleans, and one on the North West coast of North America. The duties of purchasing, inspecting and preserving supplies for the Squadrons, will be much more advantageously performed by Navy Agents at the points indicated, than by any officers of the Squadrons. Economy will be promoted and the loss of time averted, by the establishment of these agencies. The services of the Agents will also be eminently useful in taking care of supplies of provisions, coals and other articles to be placed in depot, in anticipation of the wants of the Squadrons, which require personal superintendence.

I submit for your nomination—John M. Bell, of New Orleans for that port. Thomas O Larkin for the North West coast.¹

J. Y. MASON

L, copy. DNA—RG 45.

1. Polk nominated both Bell—not to be confused with Tennessee congressman John Bell—and Larkin to the posts recommended by Mason on February 26. The Senate confirmed their nominations on March 2. Bell (?–1859), a Tennessee native and New Orleans cotton broker, resigned his post the following January. A Democrat, he served in 1848 in the Louisiana Senate and on the Democratic State Central Committee. Larkin (1802–58) served as consul at Monterey, 1844–48, before and after that Pacific port, which had belonged to Mexico, fell to U.S. forces in July 1846. During that stint he served as the U.S. government's chief agent for business and political affairs in California and participated in intrigues intended to vanquish Mexico's dominion there.

FROM WILLIAM ANDERSON¹

Dr Sir

Ann Arbor Michigan 26th Febr'y 47

I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance & notwithstanding I am a plain rustic farmer formerly from Orange Co N.Y I take a lively interest in the affairs of the country the proceedings of congress the War &c.

I would respectfully beg leave to suggest a thought to you relative to Mr Robt Mc Clelland² Representative from this district in Congress. Certain circumstances last fall gave this gentleman a nomination the second time to his present seat. The democracy³ of the District voted for him rather than see a federalist occupy that place but in voting for him went much against the grain. He is in fact more of an abolitionist than a democrat a double faced man in whom little assurance can be placed. When the admission of Texas came first before congress he voted against it & the same session you will find his votes seconded on several occasions with Giddings & J Q Adams⁴ in minorities of 21 to 25 on questions bearing on slavery & he would have voted eventually against the admission of Texas had we not in a large number of letters from this District to him called upon him to carry out the principals for which he was Elected or resign. This Gentleman we know to be decidedly opposed to your administration. In his letter to me the early part of this session he says you have thrown yourself into the arms of Benton & his aim seems to be to urge the people & join him in disapprove of your administration knowing as he does that we all dislike the management of Mr Benton, Calhoun & others who hold the ballence of power in their hand & who behaved so badly in shackling you in the Orrigon negociation. I would barely hint that the less you have to do with those ballence of power men the better the people will like you & support you in all the measures of the war if vigorously prosecuted your plans so far as we know them are approved. But the people disapprove sending a handful of men only to retard & spill the blood of our citizens. Send on a sufficient force to carry every thing before them & Mexico will soon sue for peace.

My main object in writing is to say that we have learnt that Mr Robert Mc Clelland is seeking an appointment in the Navy. If so beware remember the husbandman & the snake in the fable.⁵

Mr Turneys speech in the senate⁶ has caused great rejoicing here. It is worth a million of Dollars to the country. It will pain the eyes of the people to the double dealing & intrigue that is practised by members of congress. We all see this Ballence of power business in the Origon question but the senate chamber was the place to expose it. Mr Calhoun may wince & deny seeking the Presidency but it will take the people a

long time to believe him sincere. He may run as an anti cacus candidate to defeat the democratic nominee but neither Mr Benton nor him ever can be regularly nominated or Elected by the people.

We approve the decided & manly stand of the Editor of the Union.⁷ He deserves the gratitude of the people & no doubt they will ably support him in exposing the miserable treacherous conduct of the federalists as well as some of our own friends where better things were expected [than]⁸ living upon the people money & using that as a weapon to disgrace the people & the country. I hope in your next Message to congress you will recomend a reduction of mileage & pr diam to \$6.00 would have a powerful effect in stopping intrigues for office & making long useless speeches in congress.

One word more & I am done. The masses of the people here who does business at this Post office long since held public meetings & did other acts for the removil of George Danforth⁹ PM of this place. The PM Genl¹⁰ passes all those things by unheeded disregards our efforts. Those doing busines at the office does not care who the man is if he only be respectable & honest. Danforth is neither. Our letter & public document documents sent us by members of congress are packed & do not come to our hands. Danforth is a drinking man & very neglecful of his duty. Notwithstanding people call often letters frequently lye in the office untill they are advertised. When letters is called for he frequently replies there is none. Too lazey to rise from his seat to look. All letters of importance & many on business are sent to Detroit to be mailed. In a word it is a greivous source of vexsations to the greater part of those doing business at the office. Our county officers unwittingly lent themselves to retain Danforth in office & for that act the people rose in thier might turned them out of office & Elected others in thier places. Danforth & three or four of his friends here contrived to get letters from gentlemen out of this county to write to the PM Gen'l in his favour. We thing¹¹ this PM business a local concern that gentlemen at a distance who know nothing of our difficulties should not meddle with local concerns. We hope & trust something will be done to relieve us from This Tyler¹² faction. Danforth was appointed by Tyler & one of the getters up of the Tyler convention to nominate a third candidate for the Presidency & him & his faction has been a curse to the democratic party of this county ever since. This county has formerly carried 4 to 500 democratic majority but in consequence of this obnoxious Tyler faction dropping into our hand & set themselves up as commanders in chief of the democratic party striving to appropriate the offices to themselves broke down our party for the past two years & the whigs now have a majority of some 200. Had Danforth been removed at the commencement of your administration as he should have been these misfortunes or reverse of fortune

would not have taken place. The whigs will hold the ascendancy in this county just as long as Danforth retains the Post office.

WM. ANDERSON

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

1. Anderson (c. 1789–1860s?) was a farmer in Ann Arbor.

2. A Pennsylvania native, teacher and lawyer Robert McClelland (1807–80) moved to Michigan in 1833 and served on the convention that ultimately secured statehood in 1837. He served in the state legislature, 1837, 1839, and 1843; in the U.S. House, 1843–49; as Michigan governor, 1851–53; and as secretary of the interior, 1853–57, under Pres. Franklin Pierce.

3. Democratic party.

4. Joshua R. Giddings and John Quincy Adams. Lawyer Adams (1767–1848), at this time, was serving as a Whig congressman from his native Massachusetts. The son of Pres. John Adams, he had occupied various diplomatic posts and served in the U.S. Senate, 1803–8, and as secretary of state under Pres. James Monroe, 1817–25, before becoming president, 1825–29. After his defeat for reelection by Andrew Jackson, he served in the U.S. House from 1831 until his death in 1848. Adams belonged to the Federalist party early in his public career; he became a Whig in 1834. For Polk, Adams proved an implacable adversary, opposing the annexation of Texas as well as the spread of slavery.

5. Reference is possibly to Aesop's "Countryman and the Snake" fable.

6. Hopkins L. Turney (1797–1858), a Tennessee lawyer and Democrat, served in the U.S. House, 1837–43, and Senate, 1845–51. On February 12 he criticized senators who voted with either Democrats or Whigs to control outcomes.

7. Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Washington *Union*.

8. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

9. Danforth (c. 1810–1860s?), a lawyer and Democrat from Massachusetts, was postmaster at Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County.

10. Cave Johnson.

11. Anderson probably meant to write "think."

12. Virginia-born politician and lawyer John Tyler (1790–1862) served in the U.S. House, 1816–21; as Virginia governor, 1825–27; and in the U.S. Senate, 1827–36. Elected vice president on the Whig ticket in 1840, he succeeded to the presidency in April 1841 upon the death of Pres. William Henry Harrison, and served until Polk's inauguration in 1845. A Democrat for much of his career, although by 1840 nominally a Whig, Tyler, as president, won widespread scorn among Whigs by supporting the annexation of Texas. He launched a third-party candidacy for reelection in 1844 but withdrew before the election.

FROM URIAH P. LEVY¹

Respected Sir

New york Feby. 27' 1847

I perceive that a Bill appropriating five hundred thousand dollars for the relief of the famishing Poor of Irland & Scotland, under your

directions to be transported in a National Vessel, will become a Law.² I therefore Very respectfully Solicit as a great favour that you will order me to that command; Having already some days past intimated to the Irish Committee³ my willingness to devote *All My Pay during the performance* of this Service in Aid of the benevolent object in View. I have wrote the Secy of the Navy⁴ on the Subject and beg you to advocate my application.

U P LEVY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Levy (1792–1862) became, in 1860, the first Jewish American to achieve the naval rank of commodore. In earlier years the target of widespread anti-Semitism that then plagued the navy, Levy was court martialled six times, demoted from the rank of captain, and twice dismissed from the service; in both cases, he was soon reinstated. Levy's opposition to what he regarded as excessively harsh punishment for sailors led Congress in 1862 to outlaw the practice of flogging aboard naval ships.

2. On February 27, 1847, the Senate passed a bill offering relief to the famine victims of Ireland and Scotland. The famine had been caused by the potato blight then ravaging those two countries. The House failed to act on the measure, which would have appropriated \$500,000 for relief efforts. In his diary entry of March 2, however, Polk indicated that even if the effort had won House approval, he would have vetoed it, believing the use of public funds to support charities to be unconstitutional. No reply from Polk to this letter has been found, but Levy apparently did not receive the command he sought. Nor, apparently, did Levy sail aboard either of the two naval relief ships dispatched in March 1847 to Ireland. See also letter and notes in Robert Gray to Polk, February 22, 1847.

3. Levy presumably refers to the Irish famine relief committee of New York City. By 1846 such committees, coordinating their charitable activities with the Society of Friends' Central Relief Committee in Dublin, had been established in numerous U.S. cities.

4. John Y. Mason.

FROM CORNELIUS P. VAN NESS

Dear Sir

Washington Feby 28/47

I accidentally heard yesterday that a man by the name Samuel L. Gouverneur,¹ who was very improperly appointed to an important clerkship in the department of State by Mr Calhoun, was endeavouring to induce some persons from Newyork to call upon you, and to say, that the public was surprised that the grandson of President Monroe (his son)² had not been able to obtain the appoint. of Lieutenant in the Army from you. Now, Sir, if the son of that man has not yet been appointed to

some place, I most sincerely hope he will not be, since I consider that the father has already been abundantly paid for having married the daughter of Mr Monroe.³ It ought to be remembered too, that this man, Gouverneur, searched the old papers of Mr Monroe some 2 or 3 years ago to find certain letters of General Jackson, written some 26 or 27 years ago, contradicting what he recently said, in regard to the importance of having Texas annexed to this country, and that the letters alledged to contain such contradictions were furnished by him to the federal papers,⁴ and published therein. But, independently of this, the man⁵ is, in my opinion, wholly unworthy of the favour of the Government, not only as viewing his personal character, but on account of his former pecuniary transactions with the government, as Post Master of Newyork. Please excuse the liberty I have taken, and believe me to be, . . .

C. P. VAN NESS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Samuel L. Gouverneur, Sr.

2. Samuel L. Gouverneur, Jr.

3. In 1820, at the White House, Samuel L. Gouverneur, Sr., married Maria Hester Monroe (1803 or 1804–1850), daughter of Pres. James Monroe and Elizabeth Kortright Monroe.

4. Whig newspapers.

5. Samuel L. Gouverneur, Sr.

MARCH

FROM JACOB LATTING¹

Respected Friend Latting Town LI [N.Y.] 1st 3rd mo² 1847

Thou art situated to do more good than any man on the globe. Call on the people of the UNS³ to hold a day of fasting & prayer that the Lord god the Great Jehovah our heavenly Father may be pleased to stop the progress of the plague, pestilence & famine now progressing over the world & name a day at some distant period that all officers missionaries &c may ask all natives societies & Sects to Join with us in prayer to the Loving God. I am 83 years of age & my proportion of the French s[p]ol[i]ation⁴ will Cause my heart to leap for Joy & pray that happiness may attend thee through Life.

JACOB LATTING

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. A farmer and a Quaker, Latting (c. 1763–c. late 1840s) resided in the village of Lattingtown in what is now the town of Oyster Bay on Long Island (“LI”) in New York. In 1846, he wrote to Polk proposing improvements to military equipment for the Mexican War. (Volume 11 of this series in one instance erroneously identifies Latting as Jacob Lattin.)

2. March 1. See letter and notes in Anonymous to Polk, January 1, 1847.

3. Probably “United States.”

4. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning. Apparently Latting refers to a French spoliation claim from which he anticipates a monetary award. French spoliation claims were lawsuits filed by U.S. citizens against the governments of France, Spain, and the Netherlands in compensation for lost cargoes and ships taken by privateers sanctioned by those states before September 30,

1800. Most of the seizures occurred during the Quasi-War (1797–1801) between the United States and France and turned on disagreements over American assertions of neutrality in European wars. Successive treaties attempting to resolve the claims—and litigation by heirs of the original litigants—continued throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.

FROM HENRY SIMPSON¹

Dear Sir,

Philada. March 1st 1847

Providence in his all wise dispensations always brings trouble upon the ungrateful and disobedient children of men. I never had an enemy that was not made to suffer—both in public estimation and private opinion. I worked as hard as any man living to secure your election. I have been disappointed after spending my time, money and talents to elevate you. Your race will soon be run, for you have not taken care of your friends, but allowed them to be *proscribed* by some one of your Secretaries.² Vice-President Dallas and General Dix,³ both waited upon you in my behalf, yet you gave them no satisfaction as to my obtain—any appointment from you. I could have done more to sustain you for a *second term* than any other man, yet you disregarded my claims & appointed men neither “*honest or capable*” and this will haunt you, I fear, long after you retire to private life. Next year another will be elected to take your place, and should he not be a Democratic Republican, who will be to blame? With the best feelings for you, I am . . .

HENRY SIMPSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*private*” on the cover. Postmarked Philadelphia, May 29. From Polk’s AE: received June 6, 1847.

1. Simpson (1790–1868) served as an alderman in Philadelphia and as a member of the state legislature. He held the post of appraiser for the port of Philadelphia in the late 1830s but lost that position in 1841.

2. Probably Secretary of State James Buchanan, a Pennsylvanian.

3. George M. Dallas and John A. Dix. A prominent member of the “Family” party in Pennsylvania, Dallas counted himself for many years a staunch Van Burenite; his revival of the “Old Hickory Club” in 1843 had helped remove James Buchanan’s name from the list of potential presidential nominees. Dix (1797–1879), a soldier, lawyer, and railroad president, served as adjutant general of New York, 1831–33; in the New York House, 1842; and, as a Democrat, in the U.S. Senate, 1845–49. He ran unsuccessfully in 1848 as the gubernatorial candidate of the Free Soil party. He later became secretary of the Treasury under President Buchanan, 1861; Union general, 1861–65; and New York governor, 1873–74.

FROM JOHN W. TIBBATTS¹

Sir/

Hou. of Rep. 1 March 1847

Near two months since you of your own motion & as you informed me without consultation with any human being & without solicitation from me or any friend of mine voluntarily informed me that you designed to place me at the head of one of the ten regiments. On several occasions since the passage of the law you have said to me that you still hold to your intention & that one of the regiments would be reserved for me & that my nomination would be sent to the Senate on the 3 March, when in effect I should have ended my term of service as a member of Congress. Under these circumstances I could not doubt for a moment that you would carry out your intention & that in two days I would be at the head of a Regiment, a thing which I have much desired.

I have opposed the measure before Congress proposing a tax upon Tea & Coffee—I have believed & still believe that tax unfair in its operation. I have not thought it necessary—in this last I may be mistaken. I have considered that should I be mistaken & the credit of the government suffer & the war not be sustained for want of money, that great disasters may result to our army now in a foreign country & that thereby attempting to prevent a minor & temporary evil I may cause a great, lasting & irredeemable calamity. I wish to go for every measure necessary to sustain the war & to act with my friends. If I do leave now & should receive the appointment of which I feel no doubt, the world not knowing the facts might place a misconstruction upon my conduct. I have then no course left but to sacrifice my hopes & wishes in relation to the army. I therefore, thanking you for your kind intentions in relation to myself, respectfully decline the appointment you intend to give me & request that you will confer it upon my friend Col. Rowan.²

JOHN W. TIBBATTS

ALS. DLC—JKP. From Polk's AE: "this letter . . . was not delivered to me until the 6th March 1847, by *Col. Tibbatts* in person. When delivered Col. T. had been appointed a Col."

1. A lawyer from Newport, Ky., Tibbatts (1802–52) served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–47. This letter notwithstanding, he served as a colonel in the Mexican War and resumed his law practice in Kentucky after the war.

2. Tibbatts likely refers to John Rowan, Jr., (1807–55) a Kentucky Democrat who served in the Kentucky House in 1839. Polk appointed him *chargé d'affaires* to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1848.

FROM SAMUEL R. CURTIS¹

Sir

Head quarters [Camargo]² Mar 2 1847

All communication with the army in advance of this place has been cut off for Several days.³

The last official intelligence from Genl. Taylors Head quarters⁴ was dated on the 21st Ultio. From the nature of the orders then sent and the unofficial communications received by the same mail; and from the reports of Mexicans and circumstances surrounding this place: I am convinced that General Taylor is attacked in front by a large force and circumvented by a very considerable force of cavalry which has cut off all communication. Should General Taylor repel the force of Santa Anna in front, still it will as I believe require a large force to scatter the cavalry on this side of the mountains and to render his victory available the enemy should be followed to the city of Mexico.

A [powerful effort at this moment]⁵ The bearer⁶ will inform you of the slen[der . . .]⁷ on this line and the whole nature [. . .].

[. . .] therefore respectfully solicit a [. . .] sufficient not only to make the Generals Success available, but also to provide for any disaster that may arrive and have at the same time the ulterior effect of striking a decissive blow. Under every view of the subject I therefore would estimate the force required at 50000 men; and I request the President to call out six month volunteers if existing laws will justify such a call; as this force can be soonest raised.

The President will perceive the delicate & painful duty devolves on me of speaking on matters of vast importance to the army and to my country.

Before doing So I have considered and consulted with the most distinguished learned and experienced officers that are now at this post.

If events should render the amount of force unnecessary, it will be ascertained in time to prevent their departure from the United States, and they can in that event be recalled.

In the mean time the *morale* will produce the greatest [. . . yet].⁸

SAML R CURTIS

ALS. CU-BANC. Probably addressed to Washington City; delivered by Nathan S. Jarvis on March 23, 1847.

1. Born near Champlain, N.Y., Curtis (1805–66) was an 1831 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. He served as an officer in the Mexican War and in the Civil War. Before and after the former conflict, he practiced law in Ohio and later in Iowa. As a Republican, Curtis represented an Iowa district in the U.S. House, 1857–61.

2. Place identified through content analysis. The occupied town of Camargo, Mexico, was the site of a large U.S. Army depot of which Curtis served as commandant. On February 18, 1847, forces under Curtis held Camargo against Mexican soldiers commanded by Gen. José de Urrea.

3. Zachary Taylor's army, having won the Battle of Buena Vista the month before, remained south of Monterrey.

4. Monterrey.

5. Curtis struck out the bracketed text in this sentence.

6. Nathan S. Jarvis (1801–62) of New York was an army surgeon who held the rank of major.

7. Text here and below missing, tear.

8. Word on edge of tear uncertain.

FROM JAMES THOMPSON

Dear Sir

Washington March 3, 1847

I beg of you if possible approve the harbor bill.¹ It is sensible & I think every particle of it has received the sanction of our Democratic Presidents. The people in the north & west ask but little & at this time of all others it would be good policy if compatible with duty to sanction the appropriation. May I hope this may be received & considered as intended with the strongest wishes not only for the sake of your administration but for the good of the country.

JAMES THOMPSON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received March 1847 (day illegible, ink blot).

1. Polk in 1846 had vetoed a similar bill to fund improvements for rivers and harbors. The Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill to which this writer alludes passed the House on February 20, 1847, and the Senate on the day this letter was written. Polk again refused to sign the bill and sent his reasons to Congress on December 15.

FROM OWEN CONNOLLY

Washington City, March 4, 1847

Connolly complains about the Whigs and Democrats who joined together to defeat Andrew Beaumont's nomination. He lists eleven men who, he believes, celebrated in the Capitol Rotunda. James Wilson¹ claimed that the nomination failed because Beaumont refused to promise to keep him as gatekeeper and that Wilson's friends will protect him from anything. Connolly believes that, owing to Congress's recent appropriations, many of Polk's friends and enemies will besiege Beaumont's successor. He discusses several other enemies of Beaumont, including Whig John T. Sullivan,² who worked hard against his confirmation,

and Simon Cameron, who spoke against it. He mentions James Maher's³ strong allegiance to Henry Clay.⁴ Connolly wrote to Beaumont at Harrisburg after his rejection and will give him more details to pass on to Polk on Beaumont's return to Washington City.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Wilson (c. 1785–?), a Maryland native, served as gatekeeper at the U.S. Capitol in the 1840s and 1850s.

2. Philadelphian Sullivan (c. 1784–1863) served as a director of the Bank of the United States, 1831–33, but the Senate rejected Andrew Jackson's 1833 and 1834 nominations for his reappointment. Jackson then nominated him for an army paymastership, but the Senate rejected that nomination, as well. He remained in Washington City thereafter.

3. Appointed by Andrew Jackson, Ireland native Maher (c. 1792–1859) served as public gardener in Washington City, 1833–59.

4. Clay (1777–1852), a Kentucky lawyer and politician born in Virginia, began his federal career as a Democratic Republican and concluded it as a prominent Whig. He served in the U.S. Senate, 1806–7, 1810–11, 1831–42, and 1849–52, and in the U.S. House, 1811–14, 1815–21, and 1823–25. He was House Speaker, 1811–14, 1815–21, and 1823–25, and secretary of state under Pres. John Quincy Adams, 1825–29. He ran for president successively as the nominee of three parties: the Democratic Republicans (1824), the National Republicans (1832), and the Whigs (1844). He lost the 1844 race to Polk. Early in his career, Clay was associated with the War Hawks, expansionist congressmen who, leading up to the War of 1812, favored war with the United Kingdom; in 1814, he was a member of the U.S. delegation that negotiated the Treaty of Ghent that ended that conflict. By the 1820s, Clay was identified with the "American System," a panoply of legislation that called for high tariffs to protect domestic industries and federal support for transportation infrastructure improvements. He passionately opposed many of Polk's presidential policies, including the Mexican War.

FROM DAVID S. KAUFMAN ET AL.¹

Washington City—March 4th 1847

The undersigned Senators and Representatives respectfully represent unto your Excellency that the Bill for incorporating the naval officers of Texas into the Navy of the united States did Not receive the favorable consideration of Congress during the Session just terminated. The Report of the Secretary of the Navy to the Naval Committee² disinclined many to take it up. Now Sir we feel as the Representatives of Texas a deep interest in this matter. Without Executive aid we feel that difficulties insurmountable will impede the progress of this just Measure. We beg leave respectfully to remind your Excellency of your promise to recommend this Measure in your last annual Message.

Believing with your Excellency that the Measure is just and that the faith of the united States is pledged to its consummation we intend to urge the Measure at the next Congress and would earnestly and respectfully request your Excellency to make it the subject of your favorable notice in your Next Annual message.

DAVID S. KAUFMAN

ANS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Letter written by Kaufman and signed by him, Thomas J. Rusk, Sam Houston, and Timothy Pilsbury. Kaufman (1813–51), a native of Pennsylvania, practiced law in Louisiana before moving to Texas. There he served in the Texas republic's Congress, 1839–45, and as a diplomat representing that republic in Washington City, 1845. After Texas gained U.S. statehood, he served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1846–51. Lawyer Rusk (1803–57) was a political and military founder of the Texas republic. He served as its first secretary of war, 1836; in its Congress, 1837–38; and on its Supreme Court, 1838–40. He served as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, 1846–57. Politician, soldier, and lawyer Houston (1793–1863) led the independence forces that, in 1836, founded the Texas republic. He subsequently served as its first president, 1836–38; in its Congress, 1838–40; and again as president, 1841–44. After Texas gained U.S. statehood, Houston served in the U.S. Senate as a Democrat, 1846–55, and as an American party member, 1855–59. Lawyer, merchant, and sailor Pilsbury (1789–1858) served in the Texas republic's Congress, 1840–42 and 1845, and, as a Democrat, in the U.S. House, 1846–49.

2. In his annual report to the president of December 5, 1846, forwarded to Congress, John Y. Mason reported that the Texas republic's naval vessels had been incorporated into the U.S. Navy, but that Texan officers "could not be paid as officers of the navy of the United States." He did "make them compensation for taking care of the property of the United States." House Document No. 4, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 383.

FROM THOMAS H. BENTON

Sir:

Washington city, March 6, 1847

Without waiting for the formality of being presented with the commission of major general in the army of the United States, I think it right to inform you at once that my acceptance, or refusal, of that high appointment will depend entirely upon public and national considerations, of which you, yourself, will be the judge. Personally, I can have no wish for this office; but if you believe that I can be of service to the country, I am willing to forgo all private considerations—separate myself from my family, under painful circumstances; resign my place in the Senate, which is so dear to me—and proceed immediately to the theatre of war. My only stipulation would be for the powers which I

deem necessary to success; and these would be both military and diplomatic—the command of the army, and authority to sign preliminaries of peace, based upon terms previously approved by you.

I beg you to believe, sir, that nothing selfish, or personal, dictates this proposed stipulation. There is no such thing in it. It proceeds from a thorough conviction that, with a subordinate command, I could do no good in the army: on the contrary, that my presence there would be improper and mischievous: for I am known, from my public speeches, to disapprove the plans, both of the late, and of the present commander—(the defensive policy of one, and the San Juan of Ulua attack of the other)¹—and this being known, my presence would operate as an implied censure on the two generals, and might make me, in spite of myself, the nucleus of discontent and insubordination. The command of the army, therefore, is the only military position which I could hold in it.

Authority to conclude a peace, or at least to sign the preliminaries of peace, I deem highly essential to success, as it would enable the commander-in-chief to take instant advantage of all passing events, military or political, to close the war.

Furnished with these powers, I am willing to make the sacrifices, and to incur the responsibilities of this high command: but I leave it to you, sir, for your free and final decision; considering it as a national question, and a new one, on which there is no commitment, on either side, in anything that has passed.

Whatever may be the decision, my thanks and gratitude will not be the less to you for your unsolicited nomination of me to this high appointment, nor to the Senate for its instant and unanimous confirmation of it, nor the House of Representatives for its three times virtual election of me to be the commander-in-chief of the army in Mexico.²

THOMAS H. BENTON

PL. Published in *Washington Daily Union*, March 11, 1847. Also published in *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, March 12, 1847, and other newspapers.

1. On January 25, 1847, Benton delivered a speech in the Senate on the prospect of a lieutenant generalship. In that speech, he expressed disapproval of both Zachary Taylor's late 1846 plan of holding a defensive line in northern Mexico and Winfield Scott's current attack on the Castle of San Juan de Ulúa. Newspapers published the speech in late January and early February.

2. Benton exaggerates the House's endorsement of his appointment. On January 5 and 6, 1847, it considered a committee report on Polk's proposal of appointing a general officer to command the forces in Mexico. The House, however, took no action on the report. On January 9, it approved an amend-

ment to the Ten Regiment Bill permitting the president to appoint a lieutenant general, but then replaced the bill with a substitute and rejected a similar amendment to the substitute. See also letter and notes in Andrew Lane to Polk, January 1, 1847.

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear sir

Columbia Ten. March the 6th 1847

Enclosed I send you Mr Jno A Mairs letter¹ stating that he had heard that suit was brought for the 40. acre Block of land sold for taxes.

It is rather a new Idia to me for a suit to be brought and no process served on you nor your agents to defend. Perhaps Mr Leigh² has written to you on the subject as he has not to me. I there fore wish to know of you what to do, or I would mutch prefer (as my wife³ is in verry bad health & I have been absent three months) you would wright to some friend their to attend to the case if suit has been commenced which I have my doubts about.

I expect I have received all of your letters. Not having them before [me]⁴ I can not give the dates of each. I saw Mr J. H. Thomas.⁵ He told me that he had sent you a statement of yours & his act.⁶ & that you had fallen in his debt.

I have not bought the muels yet. They are scarce & high. I will buy the first chance. If I can buy in a week I can send them down by Jerome Pillow.⁷

ROBT CAMPBELL JR

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received March 15, 1847; "Relates to my Private business . . . Wrote to J. T. Leigh Esqr. in relation to 40. acres of my land, which has been sold for taxes: March 15th 1847."

1. Mairs to Campbell, February 22, 1847. ALS. DLC-JKP.

2. John T. Leigh.

3. Elizabeth Polk Campbell (1796–1856), probably born in the Greenbrier District of western Virginia, was a second cousin of both Polk and her husband Robert Campbell, Jr.

4. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

5. James H. Thomas.

6. AD. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in Thomas to Polk, February 12, 1847.

7. Jerome B. Pillow (1809–91) was a farmer in Maury County, Tenn. Like his brother Gideon J. Pillow, he purchased extensive lands in Phillips County, Ark.

FROM ROBERT C. GRIER¹

Dear Sir

Washington Saturday night March 6, 1847

Could not you find a place for Mr George Porter in this new batch of second lieutenants.² He is out of business and better qualified for this than any thing else. His appointment would not only give me satisfaction, as the friend of his father³ & of the family but would relieve me from much *annoyance & importunity—which I am compelled to transfer to you*. Will you accept this as my apology for importuning you, in a matter of such small importance except to the person interested.

I have felt anxious to have a conversation with you on the subject of *men and things in Pennsylvania*, which it wd. be too tedious to inflict on you in the shape of letter. But I found your time so occupied to day that I thought it wd be most rude to annoy you, and I must depart early on Monday morning.

I would only now make a suggestion on one subject. Our friend Judge Woodward⁴ by the rejection of his nomination has been much abused and injured. After being [porluyed]⁵ out of both senatorship & judgeship by his shrewd adversary, his friends, who, in our great political stronghold in the northern counties *are very numerous* think that the *administration here should do something* for Mr Woodward to shew that he still has their confidence and that of the party. They complain that Mr Cameron⁶ (as they suppose) wields an influence here to the exclusion of Woodward & his friends, while (as the late nomination of governor *demonstrates*)⁷ with all his activity, his (Cameron's) friends in Pennsylvania, are comparatively *but a corporals guard*.⁸ The coming election in Pennsylvania is of great importance, to the success of the democratic party & principles in the union, and it would have an injurious effect if the notion should become current, that the *faction* to whom we owe our defeat last fall, & to whom it will be attributed if *you be defeated next fall*, have influence and partake of the government patronage here. It would tend much to dispel this idea and to set the administration right in the eyes of many of its best friends in Penna. if something were done for Woodward that would tend to show he was not forgotten, nor cast off & his enemies triumphant every where.

Will you excuse me for annoying you with this matter and meddling with matters which perhaps you may think, *do not concern me* or are not proper for one in my station.

R. C. GRIER

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received March 15, 1847.

1. A Pennsylvanian, Grier (1794–1870) was appointed judge of the district court of Allegheny County in 1833. In 1846, Polk nominated him as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and the Senate confirmed his nomination.

2. George W. Porter (1825–1902?), a native of Philadelphia, received a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1851 and became postmaster at Harrisburg in 1857. No indication can be found that he received an appointment from Polk. On the law creating the lieutenancies, see letter and notes in Polk to Gideon J. Pillow, April 14, 1847.

3. The father of George W. Porter, David R. Porter (1788–1867) was a lawyer, iron manufacturer, and politician. He served in the Pennsylvania House, 1819–21 and 1822–23; in the Pennsylvania Senate, 1836–39; and as governor, 1839–45. A Democrat, David Porter in 1840 appointed Grier president judge of Allegheny County's district court.

4. A lawyer from Wilkes-Barre, Penn., George W. Woodward (1809–75) presided over Pennsylvania's Fourth Judicial District court, 1841–51. In 1845, Polk nominated him to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the Senate rejected the nomination, 20 to 29.

5. Word uncertain; Grier may have meant to write "purloined."

6. Simon Cameron.

7. Incumbent Francis R. Shunk (1788–1848) won the nomination of the Democratic party of Pennsylvania for governor over Nathaniel B. Eldred by a vote of 93 to 30 on March 4. A former teacher, lawyer, and soldier, Shunk had served as clerk of the Pennsylvania House, 1822–29; Pennsylvania secretary of state, 1838–42; and governor, 1845–48.

8. Colloquialism for "a group affording minimal protection to its protected"; literally "a small detachment under the command of a corporal."

FROM JOHN ADDISON THOMAS

Dear sir,

New York March 8, 1847

My strong desire that an honorable peace should be concluded must be my apology for asking you to consider the following plan to facilitate that important object. An eminent physician now of this city,¹ but who was for many years the *family physician* of the principal men now in power in Mexico, has assured me that he knows the Mexican Govt. will not receive a Minister to negotiate till our troops are withdrawn. This of course we cannot do. At the same time he is fully satisfied that the Government of that country would be glad to accept the terms which ours would be willing to grant, provided, their honor could be saved before the world. Now this gentleman's intimacy with Santa Anna, Almonte² & other men of distinction there would enable him to make arrangements that would secure the reception of our Minister. If for instance he should induce Santa Anna to address a note to our Minister say, at Tampico, guaranteeing his reception and the terms that would be

accepted, (those agreed upon) our Minister might then issue an order for the raising of the Blockade & the gradual withdrawal of the troops and proceed to consummate the treaty and render the matter official. This he thinks is the only way to secure the reception of a minister and he feels certain that he could accomplish it were he authorized. There is no one so well qualified to do this as this Gentleman. He is an Englishman who has resided here five years or more, and whose wife's Brother³ is now Aid de Camp to Santa Anna with the rank of Colonel of Cavalry. This renders him extremely anxious for peace. Dr. Beales is the gentleman to whom I am alluding, and if you could cause enquiries to be made of Mr. Packenham⁴ the British minister concerning him you would find all that I have said fully confirmed. They were in Mexico at the same time & became very intimate there. I would beg to add that he is no adventurer⁵ wishing to make money out of our Government for his practice is worth ten thousand dollars a year to him and he would not leave unless he were largely paid for doing so. He feels certain that he can accomplish the object and it does appear to me that he would enjoy advantages which no one else would possess. Dr. Beales is the same gentleman whose name was mentioned to you some time ago by Mr. James Lee⁶ of this city.

I forbear to go further into the plan, believing that you will see my object & take such measures as these suggestions may deserve.

JOHN ADDISON THOMAS

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received March 10, 1847.

1. Born and educated in England, John C. Beales (1803–78) became a surgeon for a British-backed mining company in Mexico in 1826. After the company ended its operations in 1828, he entered private practice in Mexico City and later worked in hospitals there. In 1833, he became involved as an investor—as an *empresario*—in efforts to develop colonies of Anglo settlers in Texas, then still part of Mexico. (Settlers abandoned those colonies after the onset, in 1835, of the Texas independence movement). Also in 1833, Beales moved to New York City; there, with William Barrow, he resumed the private practice of medicine.

2. A general in the Mexican army and an old friend of Santa Anna's, Juan Nepomuceno Almonte (1803–69) had served as Mexican minister to the United States, 1842–45, until being recalled following the U.S. annexation of Texas.

3. In 1830, Beales married María Dolores Soto y Saldaña (c. 1805–1873), the widow of English merchant and land speculator Richard Exter. Her brother, Fortunato Soto, granted land to Beales's group of Anglos in 1834 as commissioner for the state of Coahuila and Texas at their colony of Dolores. Soto had achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel of cavalry in the Mexican army by 1839 and colonel by 1846; he participated in the defense of Chapultepec in September

1847. Another colonel of cavalry, Juan Soto Ramos, served as Santa Anna's aide-de-camp in 1840 and was governor of Veracruz at the time this letter was written. Juan's relationship to María, however, cannot be confirmed, nor can either Fortunato or Juan Soto's service as aide-de-camp in 1847.

4. Sir Richard Pakenham (1797–1868), as British envoy in Washington City, 1843–47, negotiated with Secretary of State James Buchanan the 1846 treaty that resolved conflicting claims by the United States and the United Kingdom in the Oregon Country.

5. "Adventurer," during the antebellum years, was another term for "filibuster." Both terms denoted individuals, usually from the United States and in pursuit of monetary gain, land, political office, or a combination thereof, who plotted intrigues—"filibusters"—designed to overthrow non-U.S. governments in the Western hemisphere, in most cases those of Latin American countries.

6. Lee (1796–1874) was a New York City merchant.

TO JOHN TYLER

My dear Sir:

Washington City March 8th 1847

I transmit to you herewith a letter of appointment for your son *John Tyler Jr* as a Captain in the army.¹ When I received your letter of the 2nd Instant,² which gave me the first intimation of you son's desire to enter the army, all the officers to command the troops which have been called for, from Virginia had been appointed. Upon a re-consideration of the apportionment of the force authorized to be raised by Congress, among the several States, which had been made by the Secretary of War,³ it gave me sincere pleasure to be enabled to accept an additional company from Virginia. In doing this it became necessary to separate the company—from the Virginia Regiment, and to attach it to the Regiment to be raised in Georgia, Alabama & Florida, and hence *Capt. Tyler*, as you will [. . .].⁴ The subaltern officers who will belong to Capt T's company have not yet been appointed. I learn however from the Secretary of War, that they will probably be, the following, viz, *Geo. W. Clutter* of Wheeling 1st Lieut. ____ *Seddon* of Richmond 2nd Lieut. & *M. Page Hunter* an additional or 3rd Lieut.⁵

I am happy My Dear Sir: to have had it in my power to gratify the patriotic wishes of your son, and have the utmost confidence that he will do honor to himself and to the service.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Charles City Court House, Va.

1. Enclosure not found. John Tyler, Jr., (1819–96) was appointed a captain on March 6, 1847, but resigned the appointment on May 28, 1847.

2. Letter not found.
3. References are to the Ten Regiment Bill and William L. Marcy.
4. Nearly two lines illegible, light ink transfer.
5. George W. Clutter, John Seddon, and Mann Page Hunter. Clutter (1817–57) was appointed a first lieutenant on March 3, 1847, and was mustered out on July 15, 1848. Polk appointed him deputy postmaster at Wheeling in 1849. Seddon (c. 1827?–c. 1864) was appointed a second lieutenant on March 8, 1847, and resigned his position on May 13, 1847. Hunter (c. 1816–1880s?) was appointed a second lieutenant on March 8, 1847, and was mustered out on July 15, 1848.

TO THOMAS H. BENTON

Sir: Washington City March 9th 1847

I have given to your letter of the 6th Instant, the consideration which its importance demands. In tendering to you the appointment of Major General of the army, I earnestly desired that the country should have the advantage of your considrd ability and military knowledge, your intimate acquaintance with the Mexican character, and your familiarity with their language and political condition.

Immediately after your nomination as Major General, had been unanimously confirmed by the Senate, I carefully examined the question, whether I possessed the power, to designate you—a junior Major General, to the chief command of the army in the field. The result of this examination is, I am constrained to say, as settled conviction in my mind, that such power has not been conferred upon me by the existing laws.

I am fully sensible of the exalted patriotism which could alone have induced you, to make the personal sacrifices, to which you would be subjected, in assuming now the chief command of the army in Mexico, and I duly appreciate the reasons you have assigned, and which may I fear prevent you from accepting your appointment as Major General. If on further reflection such should be your decision, I shall learn it with deep regret.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Indicating a commission that Benton had yet to accept, the president optimistically addressed the letter “To Maj. Gen. Thomas H. Benton, Washington City.” See also ALS, draft; two Ls, drafts, in James Buchanan’s hand; and L, draft, in John Y. Mason’s hand. DLC–JKP. Published in *Washington Daily Union*, March 11, 1847; *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, March 12, 1847; and other newspapers.

FROM THOMAS H. BENTON

Sir, Washington, Tuesday evening, March, 9. 1847

Your letter of this day's date is just received; and seeing no room for further reflection, and wishing to avoid all delay in officering the army, I have written a note to the adjutant General,¹ to be delivered at his office in the morning, declining to accept the appointment of Major General in the army, so kindly offered to me by you, and so honorably confirmed by the Senate.

THOMAS H. BENTON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AEI: received March 10, 1847; "I will for the present suspend accepting the declination tendered." Published in *Washington Daily Union*, March 11, 1847; *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, March 12, 1847; and other newspapers.

1. A native of Virginia, Roger Jones (1788–1852) served as adjutant general from 1825 until his death.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY, JR.¹

U.S. Sloop "Germantown"²;
Esteemed Friend, Off Norfolk, Va., March 10th 1847

I suppose you are not aware of the reception of my orders to the Germantown, now lying at the Navy Yard, in this place; and I take this opportunity of letting you know of my whereabouts.

Our vessel will sail on the 13th of this month. The former Commander of the Naval School, at Annapolis, Md. Capt. Buchanan,³ is the Captain of the "Germantown." My outfit, will cost over a hundred dollars, and I have already spent every dollar I had, and necessity compels me to ask the favour of you to lend me a hundred dollars until I will be able to replace it, which I think will be very soon. As we sail in 3 days, I would be very much obliged to you if you would answer per return mail. I am in a serious predicament, as no person can leave without being free of debts, and I am compelled to ask the favour of some kind friend to help me.

FELIX GRUNDY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received March 16, 1847. From Polk's AE: "I did not receive this letter until after the Vessel had sailed."

1. A grandson of Felix Grundy and son of James P. Grundy, Felix Grundy, Jr., lost his grandfather in 1840 and his father in 1844. Polk, eager to help the boy, appointed him to the U.S. Naval Academy in 1845. As a midshipman, Grundy served on the USS *Germantown*, aboard which he saw action in June 1847 near

the Mexican port of Tabasco. In 1848, he served in the Pacific Squadron on the sloop *St. Mary's*.

2. The USS *Germantown*—a sloop of war, 150-foot length with a 36-foot beam—belonged to the navy's Home Squadron. Commissioned March 9, 1847, the ship participated in the second expedition against Tabasco, June 13–16, 1847, and in blockade service against Mexico, 1847–48.

3. Maryland native Franklin Buchanan (1800–1874) entered the navy in 1815 and attained the rank of commander in 1841. He developed plans for the U.S. Naval Academy and became its first superintendent, 1845–47. During his extensive service in the Mexican War, he commanded the *Germantown*. In 1853, he commanded the flagship of Cdre. Oliver Hazard Perry's expedition that opened relations between the U.S. and Japan. He joined the Confederate navy in 1861 and became its first and only admiral in 1862.

FROM JOHN P. HELFENSTEIN¹

Sir Milwaukee [Wisc. Terr.]² 10th March 1847

Throughout this Territory the people are much agitated in the subject of acception or rejection of our Constitution as form'd by the Convention.³ Great and powerful exersions are making by the Whigs and some selfish Democrats to have the constitution rejected. Measures have been adopted by the Democratic party to meet this opposition. As things now appear, we shall get the vote of the people by a handsome majority—every day brings us news from different parts of the Territory that adds life and energy to the Democratic party here on this great and interesting question.

I can assure you with confidence, that Wisconsin will add two Members to the United States [Senate],⁴ *good and True*. This will help to fill up the place of those who have acted contrary to the wishes of the people, and who by their late acts are unworthy of the confidence of the Executive and its friends.

It will be well to guard against the appointment of men to Office after our Constitution is confirmed by the people, who have aided the Whigs to defeat it, either for Wisconsin or for the new Territory,⁵ should the latter be selected from the Citizens of the former.

JOHN P HELFENSTEIN

PS. Our german Citizens go en Mass for the Constitution. We have about 6000 voters of this Class in the Territory, & about 4 to 500 in this City.

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

1. Helfenstein (c. 1777–1860s?), a Pennsylvania native and a Democrat, relocated to Milwaukee in 1843. He rose to become an insurance company executive, a prominent citizen, and a key supporter of Wisconsin statehood.

2. Wisconsin Territory had been organized in 1836 and covered, at times, the entirety of today's states of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, as well as parts of North Dakota and South Dakota east of the Missouri River.

3. In late 1846, a convention dominated by Democrats met in Madison and framed a state constitution that included measures concerning banks, suffrage, and slavery deemed too liberal by conservatives, including some Democrats. Subsequent popular opposition led to its defeat in a referendum vote in April 1847. Another convention met in Madison for seven weeks in 1847–48 and framed a more conservative constitution. That second constitution was, in March 1848, approved by voters. Wisconsin, bounded by its present borders, gained official statehood the following May.

4. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

5. Reference is to Minnesota Territory, which existed 1849–58 and comprised areas of the former Wisconsin Territory not included in the state of Wisconsin.

TO WILLIAM O. BUTLER¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City March 11th 1847

I learn from a dispatch received at the War Department, from *Genl. Taylor's* Head Quarters,² dated on the 8th ultimo, that in consequence of "being disabled by your wound," you had "leave of absence for the benefit of your health," and from the New Orleans papers,³ that you had arrived in that City. I hope My Dear Sir: that being relieved from the exposure, and arduous service to which you have been subjected for several months past, your wound may be speedily healed and your health restored. Should you find yourself in a condition to head to Washington, without too much suffering or inconvenience to yourself, I should be much pleased to see you. I am satisfied that a personal interview with you, would result in a more perfect understanding of the military operations in Mexico, past and prospective, than can be derived from any correspondence between the commanding General⁴ and the War Department. A full and free conference with you, may result in important advantages to the country. Much as I desire to see you, however, if you find it to be inconvenient, or your health is such as to render it imprudent for you to attempt to make the journey to Washington, I shall not expect you to do so.

With my sincere prayers for your speedy restoration to health: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Having no information whether it was your intention to remain in New Orleans or repair to your residence in Kentucky, I have addressed at both places. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New Orleans and marked “(Unofficial).” See also copy addressed to Carrollton, Ky. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

1. Butler (1791–1880), a Kentucky lawyer, served in the War of 1812 and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1839–43. Rejoining the army in June 1846 as a major general of volunteers, he served as second-in-command to Zachary Taylor. After recovering from wounds suffered during the Battle of Monterrey, he returned to Mexico in February 1848 and succeeded Winfield Scott as chief commander of the U.S. forces. In May 1848, he resigned from the army and accepted the vice-presidential nomination of the Democratic party alongside presidential nominee Lewis Cass.

2. Monterrey.

3. On New Orleans’s newspapers and their role in Mexican War coverage, see letters and notes in James Buchanan to Polk, May 28, 1847; Joseph Knox Walker to Polk, June 23, 1847; Walker to Polk, June 27, 1847; and Walker to Polk, June 28, 1847.

4. Winfield Scott.

FROM FRANKLIN PIERCE¹

My Dear Sir,

Concord N.H. March 11, 1847

Glory enough! There was never fought such a political battle in New England, in any one of our states, as that through which we have just passed. Gallantly fought and most gallantly won! Portsmouth has just sent in the *crowning* result. The victory is complete. Democratic Gov elected by from 1200 to 2000 over the “allied forces.”²

20 majority in the House of Reps—8 of the 12 Senators, 3 of the 5 Councillors. The “allies” made the war [an]³ issue and we met it everywhere upon the stump. I fear my health is some what impaired by exposure and almost constant speaking to immense gatherings of the people. We shall raise the New England Regt. promptly and prepare for the field with all practicable dispatch.

In much hast. With the highest consideration . . .

FRANK. PIERCE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received March 15, 1847.

1. A New Hampshire lawyer and Democrat, Pierce (1804–69) served in the state house, 1829–33 (1832–33 as Speaker); in the U.S. House, 1833–37; in the U.S. Senate, 1837–42; and as U.S. attorney for New Hampshire, 1845–47. After

declining an appointment from his friend Polk as attorney general in 1846, he accepted a commission as brigadier general in March 1847. He was wounded in August 1847 during the battle of Contreras, but continued his military service until the following March after the conclusion of hostilities. In 1852, Pierce defeated Whig nominee Winfield Scott to become president.

2. New Hampshire held its elections on March 9, 1847. Democrats won two of the state's four U.S. House seats but lost the other two in a runoff election on July 8. Democrat Jared W. Williams defeated Anthony Colby and Nathaniel S. Berry for the governorship. Williams (1796–1864), a Lancaster lawyer, served in the state house, 1830–31 and 1835–36; in the state senate, 1832–34; in the U.S. House, 1837–41; as governor, 1847–49; and in the U.S. Senate, 1853–54.

3. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

FROM KENNETH RAYNER¹

My Dear Sir,

Raleigh No. Ca. March 12th 1847

I learn from various sources that it is your purpose to pay a visit to your *Alma Mater* Chapel-Hill² at the next approaching annual commencement early in June next. I hope nothing will interpose to prevent your carrying your design into execution.

As Raleigh will be in your most direct and convenient route, I presume you will of course pass through this place, and spend a day or two in resting and recruiting after the fatigue of the Journey.

The object of this is to tender to you the hospitalities of my house and home, when in this place. I occupy the old family mansion, where the late Col. William Polk,³ your friend and kinsman lived and died. Here I learn, many of your youthful days were passed, and around this place no doubt linger associations, that can not but be interesting to you.

Mrs Rayner⁴ requests to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Polk, and unites with me in earnestly requesting that Mrs. Polk will favor her with her company, in case she should accompany you.

K. RAYNER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received March 14, 1847; answered April 6, 1847. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 142–43.

1. A lawyer and Whig from Hertford County, N.C., Rayner (1808–84) served in the North Carolina House, 1835–39 and 1846–51; the North Carolina Senate, 1854–55; and the U.S. House, 1839–45. A close friend of Zachary Taylor, Rayner lost a caucus decision of Whigs by one vote to Millard Fillmore for the party's nomination for vice president in 1848. Polk wrote in his diary on June 4, 1847, that Rayner "is a bitter political opponent, but has acted exceedingly well on the occasion of my visit to N. Carolina."

2. Rayner refers to the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Chartered in 1789, it became the first state university in the country to open in 1795. Polk, after qualifying for admission as a sophomore, entered the University in January 1816 and graduated in May 1818.

3. A nephew of Ezekiel Polk, William Polk (1758–1834) of Raleigh, N.C., served as a colonel in the Revolutionary War and later became a successful businessman and a member of the North Carolina House, 1785–87 and 1790.

4. Susan Spratt Polk (1822–1909), William Polk's daughter, married Kenneth Rayner in 1842 and died in Texas.

TO WILLIAM M. GREEN¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City March 15th 1847

I am gratified to have had it my power to appoint your young friend Jas. F. Waddell² of whom you wrote to me, a 2nd Lieutenant in the army. He will be attached to one of the N. Carolina companies, probably to Capt. Clarke's,³ though this is a matter of detail, which will be under the discretion of the Secretary of War.⁴ You informed me in your letter,⁵ that he was now a private in one of the Volunteer companies from N.C. now in Mexico. His commission will be forwarded to him. Will you furnish me with the name of his *Captain* or some other officer, to whose care it should be addressed. As he is a private and of course unknown in the army, except to [those]⁶ officers of his company, and those with whom he is immediately associated, the commission if addressed to himself may not reach him.

Several of our old college friends have requested Judge Mason⁷ and myself to visit the University⁸ at the next commencement. If the State of public affairs at the time, will permit us to be absent from the seat of Government, for a few days, the Judge and myself have it in contemplation to do so. Will you make my respects to *Professor Mitchell*⁹ who is the only person connected with the college—except yourself, with whom I have a personal acquaintance.

In the midst of my official duties I write of course in haste.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Chapel Hill, N.C.

1. Green (1798–1887), valedictorian of Polk's 1818 graduating class at the University of North Carolina, was ordained an Episcopal clergyman in 1821. He accepted the chaplaincy of the University of North Carolina in 1837 and was elected the first Episcopal bishop of Mississippi in 1849.

2. James F. Waddell (1826–92), a North Carolina native, served during the Mexican War in Company I of the Twelfth Infantry Regiment, created by the Ten Regiment Bill. He was appointed consul at Matamoros, Mexico, in 1849.

3. William J. Clarke (c. 1821–1886), a North Carolina native and lawyer, graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1841. He volunteered for service in the Mexican War and was captain of Company I—and later promoted to major—in the Twelfth Infantry Regiment.

4. William L. Marcy.

5. Green to Polk, January 25, 1847.

6. Word uncertain, blurred ink transfer.

7. John Y. Mason.

8. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Polk's and Mason's alma mater.

9. Elisha Mitchell (1793–1857) was the Yale College-trained mathematics professor at the University of North Carolina under whom Polk studied. He was ordained a minister in 1821 and began teaching chemistry at the University in 1825.

TO JOHN T. LEIGH

My Dear Sir:

Washington City March 15th 1847

I learn from my manager *Mr Mairs*,¹ that a 40. acre block of land, being part of my plantation tract, was sold for the taxes of 1844, and that the purchaser at Sheriff's sale refuses to permit it to be reclaimed, and has brought suit for it. In the absence of my agent *Col Campbell*,² I will esteem it an especial favour, if you will enquire into the matter, and if suit has been brought, have it properly defended for me. If this small part of my tract was not returned with the balance of my land for the taxes, it was without my knowledge or consent, and must have proceeded from the ignorance or inattention of *Mr Dismukes*,³ whilst he was my manager. If under the circumstances the purchaser at Sheriff's sale, chooses to take advantage of any unintended omission, and to assert his title, his claim must be resisted. If the land was sold for taxes in my name as I think, it probable it was, it will be found I think that the purchaser at Sheriff's sale, has acquired no valid title to it. This block of 40. acres was entered originally, about the year 1835 or 1836, by my brother in law *Dr. Silas M. Caldwell* in his own name. As he and I at that time owned the balance of the plantation jointly, this block was intended for our joint benefit. *Dr. Caldwell* about the year 1837, sold and conveyed his whole undivided interest in the plantation, including this block of 40. acres, to my brother *Wm. H. Polk*.⁴ My brother shortly before I left Tennessee in January 1845, sold and conveyed to me, all his remaining interest in the plantation, having [previously]⁵ conveyed to me our undivided [unity] of the same. These deeds of conveyance from *Caldwell* to *Wm. H. Polk* and from the latter to me you will find recorded in the proper office in Yalobusha County. If therefore the 40 acre block of land was reported & sold for the taxes of 1844, as the property of

Caldwell the sale is void, because *Caldwell* had ceased to own it long before that time. If it was reported and sold in my name, the sale is void, because I had not become the owner of the whole of *Wm. H. Polk's* interest, until January 1845. I place you in possession of these facts, only for the purpose of saying, that if the purchaser at Sheriff's sale, should be unreasonable, and not be willing to act justly, he may be defeated in his attempt to recover the land.

The 40. acre block in question lies between my cabins and the gin-house, and includes the greater part of the large hill of weed-land, south of my houses, but does not include any of the improved or open land. [...] it is worth nothing to any one but myself. The purchaser at Sheriff's sale may suppose that it would be inconvenient to me for any one else to own it, and may therefore calculate to make a speculation by extracting from me a price for it, far beyond its value. This My Dear Sir: is one of those small matters about which I dislike to trouble you, but my manager you know is not a man of education sufficient to enable him to understand it, and therefore I hope you will excuse me for requesting your attention to it. I have never in my life been engaged in litigation in the Courts with anyone, and dislike now to be so, about so small a matter. You are therefore fully authorized to make any reasonable compromise, you may think proper with the purchaser. Do as you would for yourself and I will be satisfied. Though my conviction is that the purchaser has acquired no valid title, still I would prefer paying him a full indemnity for all he has paid and for his trouble if he has had any, and to do even more than this, rather than have the annoyance of a law-suit. May I ask the favour of you, after you have investigated the subject to write to me.

Our old friend *Wm S. Archer*⁶ called to see me, a few days ago, and made known to me, your desire to obtain a midshipman's warrant for the son of your neighbour, *Mr Egleston*.⁷ I have seen the Secretary of the Navy⁸ on the subject, and hope to have it in my power to gratify your wishes soon. *Mr Archer* informed me that he would set out in the course of two or three weeks, to visit his plantation in Mississippi, and expected to be at your House.

With the kind regards of Mrs. Polk & myself to *Mrs. Leigh*:

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. John A. Mairs.

2. Robert Campbell, Jr. The purchaser was John K. Rayburn.

3. Virginia native Isaac H. Dismukes (c. 1815–?) was the overseer of Polk's Mississippi plantation, 1841–45. By 1850, he had thirteen slaves of his own in Yalobusha County.

4. Polk's only surviving brother, Columbia lawyer William H. Polk (1815–62), served in the Tennessee House, 1841–45 and 1857–59, and in the U.S. House, 1851–53. In January 1845, President Tyler appointed him *chargé d'affaires* to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, but William declined the nomination. Renominated by his brother, the new president, William won Senate confirmation on March 13, 1845, and served as minister at Naples until 1847. In 1838, in a case prosecuted by James H. Thomas, William H. Polk was convicted on a charge of assault and battery that resulted from his killing of attorney Richard H. Hays in a duel. See notes in Polk to Vernon K. Stevenson, January 11, 1847.

5. Word here and below uncertain or illegible, blurred ink transfer.

6. William S. Archer (1789–1855), a Virginia lawyer and Whig, served in the U.S. House, 1820–35, and the U.S. Senate, 1841–47. In 1844 he supported demands of Native Americans for changes in naturalization laws and introduced a number of their petitions and memorials.

7. William Eggleston was born in Amelia County, Va. Between 1833 and 1840, he moved his family from there to Holmes County, Miss. His son John R. (c. 1832?–1880s or 1890s?) was appointed a midshipman in the navy on August 2, 1847. John departed New York City on the sloop *Albany*, part of the Home Squadron, on October 10. He remained in the navy until 1861.

8. John Y. Mason.

TO CHARLES E. SHOBER ET AL.¹

Gentlemen:

Washington City March 15th 1847

My official duties have prevented an earlier acknowledgement, of the receipt of your letter of the 7th ultimo, in which you inform me that you have been appointed, a "committee of the Dialectic Society,"² of the University of North Carolina, "to take steps for procuring" my "portrait," to be "suspended in their debating hall."³

I remember with pleasure my association with "our common and hallowed fraternity, the Dialectic Society," and though nearly twenty nine years have elapsed since I closed my connection with it, I am deeply sensible of the great value of the institution, which I derived from attending its exercises, and my early affection for it, remains unabated. Fully appreciating the honour which you have done me, I beg you to assure the Society, that it will give me pleasure to comply with the request, which you make in their behalf, and that I can sit for the artist, at any period during the present recess of Congress, which may be designated by yourselves.

Thanking you, and the members of the Society whom you represent, for the distinguished evidence of regard, which you have conveyed to me: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NcU. Addressed to the University of North Carolina. See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

1. Letter addressed to Shober, William M. Howerton, and Victor C. Barringer. Shober and Howerton were members of the University of North Carolina's class of 1847. Shober (c. 1828–1880s or 1890s?), a native of Salem, N.C., later became a lawyer, a banker, the owner of a paper mill, and a Whig. Howerton (c. 1826–1870s), from Virginia, later became a lawyer, sheriff, and Democrat. Barringer (1827–96), from Cabarrus County, N.C., was in the University's class of 1848. He later became a lawyer, a judge, and a professor at Davidson College near Charlotte, N.C.

2. A debating society at the University of North Carolina to which Polk as a student belonged, the Dialectic Society had been founded in 1795. As of 2013, the organization remains functioning as the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies.

3. The Dialectic Society often commissioned portraits of prominent former members. In Polk's case, the club selected Philadelphia artist Thomas Sully for the job. Polk sat for the artist at the White House at various hours on May 20–22, 1847. Sully (1783–1872), born in England, had relocated with his parents as a child to the United States. After studying with portraitist Gilbert Stuart in his late teens, Sully became a professional painter and soon won acclaim for his portraits of celebrated figures of his era, including Queen Victoria, Thomas Jefferson, and John Quincy Adams.

FROM JOHN TYLER, JR.

Sir: Williamsburg Va. March 16. 1847

I have had the honor of receiving at your hands an appointment as Captain in the united states army.

I return you my most sincere & grateful thanks for this mark of your favour and confidence.

I shall endeavour to perform my duties with fidelity to the country and honour to myself; And trust, I may never give you cause to regret the generosity you have evinced towards me.

JOHN TYLER, JR.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received March 20, 1847.

FROM EDMUND BURKE¹

Sir, Patent Office March, 17th, 1847

I have the honor to send here with a small box of India Rubber fabrics, entrusted to my charge by Charles Goodyear Esq.,² a distinguished inventor and manufacturer of that description of goods, which he begs

you will do him the honor to accept.³ In his letter to me he says, "Should the shoes not fit the President, I would esteem it a favor to know the size he wears of leather—or of any others of his family who would be pleased to wear an article of the kind."

EDMUND BURKE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by hand on March 17, 1847, with Goodyear to Polk, March 17, 1847.

1. A native of Vermont and an attorney and newspaper editor, Burke (1809–82) represented a New Hampshire district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1839–45, and served as commissioner of patents during Polk's presidency.

2. Goodyear (1800–1860) was a native of New Haven, Conn. His business ventures often landed him in debt and in prison. In 1839, he developed a process of vulcanizing rubber that allowed the material to retain its elasticity at all temperatures; he patented the process in 1844. Goodyear sent a similar gift to Pres. Andrew Jackson in 1837. See Jackson to Goodyear, March 8, 1837, in Robert K. Peirce, *Trials of an Inventor: Life and Discoveries of Charles Goodyear* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1866), p. 79.

3. Goodyear to Polk, March 17, 1847.

FROM CHARLES GOODYEAR

Dear Sir

Washington March 17th 1847

Permit me to send to you through the Hon Edmund Burke a few little articles of my gum Elastic manufacturers. On my return to N York in a short time, I shall with your permission forward some other specimens in the same way. Your acceptance of them will confer a favor on the Inventor.

CHARLES GOODYEAR

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by Edmund Burke on March 17, 1847, with Burke to Polk, March 17, 1847. From Polk's AE: answered March 29, 1847.

TO WILLIAM S. PICKETT

My Dear Sir:

Washington City March 17th 1847

I commend to the kind attention of yourself and *Mrs Pickett*,¹ your Representative in Congress *Mr La Sere*,² whom I am proud to number among my best personal and political friends. Though you doubtless know him as your Representative in Congress, he informs me that he has not made your personal acquaintance. He was not aware until I

informed him, that your wife was my niece. I request that you will introduce him to *Mary Eliza*, and I know that it will gain you pleasure to do so. *Mr La Sere* is one of the soundest Democrats in Congress, and one of the most unvarying supporters of my administration. He returns to New Orleans in company with your late *Senator Mr Soulei*,³ of whom I have formed a very high opinion, and hope if you do not know him, that you will avail yourself of the first convenient opportunity to make his acquaintance and introduce him to your wife. Though *Mr Soulei's* service in the Senate has been very brief, he made an enviable reputation, as a member of a high order of talents and of sound political philosophy, and all his friends here regret that he is not to return to a [. . .],⁴ in which his services could not fail to be eminently useful to his country.

With the kind regards of Mrs Polk and myself to *Mary Eliza*: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to New Orleans and probably delivered by Emile La Sére.

1. Mary Eliza Walker (1823–1900), the daughter of James and Jane Maria Polk Walker, married William S. Pickett in 1842.

2. Emile La Sére (1802–82), born on the island of Santo Domingo, spent his early youth in New Orleans. In 1840, he was elected sheriff of Orleans Parish. He served in the U.S. House, 1846–51.

3. Polk misspelled the name of Pierre Soulé (1801–70), who had been a lawyer and journalist in his native France. Imprisoned for anti-monarchical writings, he escaped to England in 1825 and that same year traveled to Haiti and then New Orleans. He practiced law there and served as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, 1847 and 1849–53, until he resigned to become minister to Spain. In 1854, while holding that post, he authored the controversial Ostend Manifesto, which proposed means by which the United States might acquire Cuba.

4. Word illegible, blurred ink transfer.

TO ALFRED FLOURNOY¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City March 20th 1847

I received your letter of the 10th of June—last—some months ago and should have answered it earlier but that it was out of my power until recently to gratify your wishes. I now transmit to you a letter of appointment, of your son, William Flournoy, as a Lieutenant in the Regular army.² Upon the receipt of his acceptance at the adjutant general's³ office, his commission will be issued. In the meantime, if he accepts, he will not wait for his commission, but will immediately Report to the commanding officer of the 1st Regiment of Infantry,⁴ now serving in Mexico. It would have given me pleasure to have appointed your son, to

a higher rank in one of the Regiments recently authorized to be raised in Congress, but as these Regiments are to be disbanded at the close of the War with Mexico, & as I understand from your letter that your son desires a permanent position in the army the rank of 2nd Lieutenant, was the highest which it was in my power to confer upon him. From my knowledge of him, I have no doubt he will do honour to himself and to the service. I agree with you my Dear Sir: that having received a wound in the service of your country, which has disabled you for life, you had a proper claim to have your son, placed in the same rank which you held, when you received it. Regretting that my public engagements prevent me from adding much more which I would desire to say to you as an old and esteemed friend, I can only add my request to be presented kindly to *Mrs Flournoy*⁵ and to subscribe myself— . . .

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Upon receiving your son's acceptance, his commission will be forwarded to the commander of his Regiment in Mexico, to be delivered to him. In the meantime he will be entitled to his rank and commands, by virtue of the enclosed letter of appointment from the Secretary of War.⁶ J.K.P.

[P.S.] If your son is still absent in Mexico, you can signify his acceptance for me, & forward to him letter of appointment. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Shreveport, La.

1. Born in Virginia and trained as a physician in Philadelphia, Alfred Flournoy (1796–1873) became a friend and protégé of Andrew Jackson before moving to Giles County, Tenn., and later to Greenwood, La. In those places he was also a planter. He was a lifelong Polk supporter and friend.

2. Enclosure not found. Born in Giles County, William Flournoy (1822 or 1823–1873) had served as a second lieutenant of volunteers in the Fifth Louisiana Infantry Regiment, since disbanded, during the summer of 1846. Despite Polk's appointment, he did not serve in the regular army. After the war, he worked as a merchant in Greenwood.

3. Roger Jones.

4. William Davenport, a North Carolinian, had served in the army since 1812. Promoted to colonel in 1842, he commanded the First Infantry Regiment, 1843–50.

5. Maria Ward Camp Flournoy (1815–48) and Alfred Flournoy were each other's second spouses.

6. William L. Marcy.

FROM FREDERICK P. STANTON¹

Dear Sir

Memphis 20th March 1847

I take advantage of your suggestion at the moment of my leaving Washington, to trouble you with a letter containing, as a matter of course, an application for office.

Although I have been here only a few days, I have been able to ascertain that the best spirit prevails among the Democrats, and that they do not think of the possibility of being defeated in the approaching contest. I feel very certain that there will be no want of energy and enthusiasm among them, for even at this early period they are acting promptly and with spirit. Coe² is entirely silent and prudent; and though he may not be warm in the canvass, he will not give "aid and comfort" to the enemy.

I have no opponent as yet. It is probable, Edwin M. Yerger Esq.³ will be the Whig candidate. The Whigs do not expect to beat me—as many of them acknowledge—yet they will give me as hard a fight as they can.

Dr. Jos. N. Bybee⁴ desires to be appointed Surgeon in the new Regiments. He is a highly accomplished physician, has been Professor of Surgery and anatomy in the Medical College here, and has distinguished himself here by great success in performing many critical operations. Educated in the schools of this Country, he has visited the schools of France for the purpose of perfecting the knowledge of his profession; and in that greatest and best of all schools, actual experience, he has acquired much reputation. He is a thorough going Democrat, and if it is in your power to appoint him, I am sure he will do honor to your selection.

He has a fine practice in this place; and only for peculiar reasons, and perhaps for a wider theatre for the practice of surgery he desires to go to Mexico. I told him I feared you had already made selections—though I hope it may not be too late for his application.

FRED. P. STANTON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received April 3, 1847.

1. A Memphis lawyer, Stanton (1814–94) served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1845–55, and as governor of Kansas Territory, 1858–61.

2. A Democrat and lawyer, Levin H. Coe (c. 1807–1850) served in the Tennessee Senate, 1837–41. As early as 1842, he was promoting Polk for national office. In 1846, Polk offered Coe, who had served as inspector general for the Tennessee militia, the rank of major as army quartermaster. Coe, expecting a generalship, declined the appointment. He was considered for the vice-presidential nomination in 1848.

3. A highly successful Memphis lawyer and a Whig, Yerger (c. 1819–1871 or 1872) eventually, in 1853, opposed Stanton for a House seat. Yerger lost by six votes.

4. A Memphis physician, Joseph N. Bybee helped found the Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis in 1844 and acted as its clerk. He taught at the Memphis Medical College, established in 1846.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir,

Nashville, Tenn. 21" March 1847

Our members¹ all went through Connors² home last week, but I saw none of them. Andw. Johnson was in town yesterday and I saw him for a moment at the Inn. He seemed close and reserved. Catron³ got home yesterday but I had no conversation with him. The papers shew that you have done every thing for Benton that he could ask, and that you stand entitled to the cordial support of him & his special friends. Your correspondence would indicate that he declines with as kind feelings as he can entertain towards any one. He certainly could not have expected, with his junior Commission, to operate in the same field with Scott & take command of him. His intolerance of every thing not originating with, or specially approved by, himself would make it difficult for him to act in concert with any colleagues in a diplomatic sphere in Mexico; whilst we must admit that his great fund of historical knowledge in Mexican & Spanish affairs might have been highly useful in the event of treaty conference.

The prosecution & satisfactory termination of the War is the all-absorbing focus of your attention. The Whigs generally are obliged to be more covert in their thwarting schemes than were the Federalists in 1813 & 14, but their malignity is more rancorous, and their leaders now, exalt more vindictively over any threatened or apparent embarrassment of the administration. Every resource should now be availed of, to *conquer a peace* within your term, and in the selection of co-operators, civil or military, it is of the utmost importance that you should employ men, (other qualifications being equal) whoever you know to be faithful to your administration specially and personally. This idea suggests itself just now, in view of the appointmt. of commissioner should a way be opened for a treaty of Peace. The untoward attitude of the two chief officers in command⁴ presents some difficulty in the selection of a confidential depository of the views of the Government on any & every fit occasion for meeting or advancing overtures. I have no hope or confidence that either of these officers would take much pains to protect the interests of the nation nor the reputation of the administration further than as reflecting back upon their individual glory, or as tending to the

purposes domestic faction. Your arrangements for preliminary steps must be managed as best you can from the materials on hand, but for final & grave diplomacy you owe it to the Country & yourself to look out for good men & true. At the head of such men I would place Mr Mason, and it would require stronger excuses than I am aware of, to justify him in refusing, if it should be deemed expedient to place him on such a commission.

Within the last twelve months Cass⁵ has grown upon our regards here and so far as we can see "*out of doors*"⁶ he is behaving well. If he has views to the succession we will still set down his demonstrations for *as much as they are worth*, but he is confining his horizon to the legitimate boundary of a Senator, we accord much credit to him. What do you learn of the *heart religion* of Van B., Wright, & Butler?⁷ I believe that the great Carolinian⁸ has exhausted my last drop of patience. I adhered to him longer than a man should adhere to any other Than a particular personal friend. Elmore⁹ had gone to Washigton when we came through charleston, and I did not leave your letter to him,¹⁰ not knowing but there might be some change in his views & feelings, which would make it unnecessary that should have any late, or confidential letter from you. It was thought at charleston that he had gone to seek office although he had declined going to France.

All our Congressmen except Cullom, Martin & Ewing¹¹ are understood to be up again. In Culloms place Turney, Hill & Savage¹² were running a while pell mell, but on meeting at Gainesboro circuit Court they agreed to leave it to a direct vote of the democratic party at precinct elections to be held next month. We have not heard how Savages appointment may affect the contest, nor whether he accepts. J H Thomas & B Gordon¹³ are the candidates for nomination in Martins place. Thomas thought he would be sure of the nomination if he got the Giles delegation, & I see that the County meeting at Pulaski have so Resolved. We hear that Wm Cullom swears he will not back out for Barrow¹⁴ in this district, but he will have finally to do so. The Whigs will nominate their Governor this week. Foster¹⁵ says that Neil S Brown will succeed & he is very cosy with Browns friends here, but Gust Henry¹⁶ desires it much & will be hard to drive off. Bell¹⁷ is sometimes much spoken of, but his manner of electioneering has always required much money, and he & Foster have both managed so badly as to be much embarrassed in their money concerns when they have little else to rely on. Our Brown¹⁸ goes into the contest too reluctantly, but he should have seen all along that there was no other way. He has permitted his reluctance to be so much known that it may have some unfavourable affect. When Congress was

in Session I would not divert your attention even to a short letter. This one has been spun out longer than I expected when I began.

DANIEL GRAHAM

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “Private” on the cover. From Polk’s AE: received March 31, 1847.

1. Key Democrats of Tennessee.

2. Cornelius Connor (c. 1803–1850s?), a Pennsylvania native, was a Nashville businessman and Democrat.

3. John Catron (1786–1865), a Democrat and a close ally of Polk, was raised in Virginia and served under Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812. In 1815 he began a law practice in Sparta, Tenn.; he also served as state attorney at Sparta. He relocated to Nashville in 1818, then served as chief justice of the state supreme court, 1824–37. Named to the U.S. Supreme Court by Jackson on his final full day as president in 1837, Catron sat on that court until his death.

4. Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor, both Whigs.

5. Democrat and lawyer Lewis Cass (1782–1866), a New Hampshire native, served in the Ohio House, 1806; in the army, 1813–14; as governor of Michigan Territory, 1813–31; as secretary of war under President Jackson, 1831–36; as minister to France, 1836–42; as U.S. senator from Michigan, 1845–48 and 1849–57; and as secretary of state under Pres. James Buchanan, 1857–60. He was the Democratic nominee for president in 1848 but lost to Whig Zachary Taylor.

6. Besides its most common and literal usage as a synonym for “outside,” the phrase “out of doors” also referred during that era—and apparently in this case—to speech or acts conducted publicly, as opposed to those transacted among intimates. In a still earlier usage, stretching back to colonial America and, in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Great Britain, used during the emergence of that country’s Whig party, the phrase described actions undertaken outside of legally established political institutions.

7. Martin Van Buren, Silas Wright, Jr., and Benjamin F. Butler. These men were leading members of the Albany Regency. New York lawyer Van Buren (1782–1862) was a frequent rival to Polk. In 1844, he lost the Democratic presidential nomination to Polk and declined to serve as Polk’s running mate. In 1848, Van Buren again unsuccessfully ran for president as the Free Soil party’s candidate. To those contests he brought a formidable record: New York state senator, 1812–20; state attorney general, 1816–19; U.S. senator, 1821–28; New York governor, 1829; U.S. secretary of state, 1829–31; vice president under Pres. Andrew Jackson, 1833–37; and president, 1837–41. Butler (1795–1858)—not to be confused with Massachusetts congressman Benjamin F. Butler—was a law partner of Van Buren. He served as U.S. attorney general under Jackson and Van Buren, 1833–38, and U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, 1838–41 and 1845–48.

8. John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina.

9. A South Carolina lawyer and Calhoun supporter, Democrat Franklin H. Elmore (1799–1850) sat in the U.S. House, 1836–39; presided over the Bank of the State of South Carolina, 1839–50; and sat in the U.S. Senate, 1850.

10. Letter not found.

11. Alvan Cullom, Barclay Martin, and Edwin H. Ewing. A lawyer and Democrat from Overton County, Cullom (1797–1877) served in the Tennessee House, 1835–37, and the U.S. House, 1843–47. A Columbia lawyer and Democrat, Martin (1802–90) served in the Tennessee House, 1839–41, 1847–49, and 1851–53; the Tennessee Senate, 1841–43; and the U.S. House, 1845–47. Ewing (1809–1902), a lawyer from Nashville, served as a Whig in the Tennessee House, 1841–43, and the U.S. House, 1845–47.

12. Samuel Turney, Hugh L. W. Hill, and John H. Savage. Hill (1810–92), a Warren County farmer and Democrat, served in the Tennessee House, 1837–43, and the U.S. House, 1847–49; he did not seek renomination in 1848. Savage (1815–1904), a Smithville lawyer and Democrat, served as attorney general for Tennessee's fourth district, 1841–47, and in the U.S. House, 1849–53 and 1855–59. He was a presidential elector for Polk in 1844 and a major in the army during the Mexican War.

13. James H. Thomas and Boling (or Bolling) Gordon. Gordon (1800–1890) was a Hickman County planter who served in the Tennessee House, 1829–35, and the Tennessee Senate, 1835–37 and 1843–45. In 1836 and 1840, he served as a presidential elector, supporting Martin Van Buren. In 1847, he ran unsuccessfully for Congress.

14. A lawyer from Tennessee and briefly a resident of Mississippi, Washington Barrow (1807–66) served as chargé d'affaires to Portugal, 1841–44; edited the *Nashville Republican Banner*, 1845–47; and won election to the U.S. House as a Whig, 1847–49.

15. Ephraim H. Foster.

16. Gustavus A. Henry.

17. John Bell.

18. Aaron V. Brown.

TO ELIAS N. CONWAY¹

Dear Sir:

Washington City March 22nd 1847

I have received your letter of the 18th ultimo, and thank you for your kind attention in redeeming my lands which had been sold for taxes in your State. Those lands as well as others embraced in the enclosed memorandum, taken from the records of the General Land Office,² were entered for my brother³ and myself through the agency of *Gov. Yell*⁴ some years ago. I had relied on the governor to see that the taxes were paid, but I suppose in the multiplicity of his other engagements he neglected to do so. You will perceive from this memorandum, that in addition to the lands which you have redeemed for me, I own the "East Half o[f]⁵ Section 35. and Fraction of Section 36 in Township 9. North of Range 30-West (abrest of the Arkansas River)." These latter lands as *Gov. Yell* informed me, lie near the mouth of Frog Bayou, a few

miles below the town of Van-Buren. As *Gov. Yell* omitted to pay the taxes on the lands in Johnson County, I fear he may have failed to pay them on that near Van-Buren also. May I ask this favour of you, to ascertain whether these lands have been sold for the taxes also, and whether any taxes may be now due on them, and in either event to pay whatever sum may be due. If you can do so conveniently and will state to me the amount, I will remit it to you without delay.

When I placed funds in *Gov. Yell's* hands to purchase lands in Arkansas, my sole object was to procure a tract in the Southern or cotton-growing region of the State, for my own cultivation. His agent as he afterwards informed me misunderstood him, and made the locations in the North, where for my purposes the lands have been wholly useless to me. The Governor represented the lands to be of excellent quality, and thought they could be readily sold. I desire to sell them, & will take for them, such price as in your judgement they may be worth. If you will not consider it too inconvenient or troublesome, I would esteem it a personal favour, if you will undertake [the]⁶ agency and dispose of them for me. I would not ask that, but in conversation with my friend *Col. Lewis*,⁷ during the late session of Congress, he said to me, that he had no doubt you would take pleasure in doing so, if I desired it. For that purpose I enclose to you here with a Power of attorney.⁸ If you sell on time, have the payments well secured, & write a Land fee-title—by general warranty deed, to be executed when the purchase money is paid. I will become bound to make to the purchaser a general warranty title—for the lands entered in the name of my Brother as well as those entered in my own name.

It is but rarely that I have time to give the slightest attention to my private business, but I have to day seized a leisure moment to address you this letter.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I leave it entirely to your discretion to sell for money or on time, and as I have no [sort] of use for the lands, am willing to take a low price for them. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Little Rock, Ark.

1. Conway (1812–92), a Tennessee native whose family relocated to Arkansas when he was a child, owned land there and held various positions in Arkansas's territorial government. After statehood, he served as the state's first auditor, 1836–49 (except for six weeks in 1841). In 1843 he was nominated by the state's Democratic party for governor, but withdrew from the race. He later ran successfully for the governor's office and served 1852–60.

2. Enclosure not found.

3. William H. Polk.
4. Archibald Yell.
5. Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.
6. Word here and below uncertain, light or blurred ink transfer.
7. Democrat and lawyer Dixon H. Lewis (1802–48) was a U.S. senator from Alabama, 1844–48. Born and educated in South Carolina, he moved to Montgomery, Ala., to begin a law practice. He served in the Alabama legislature, 1826–29; the U.S. House, 1829–44; and the U.S. Senate.
8. Enclosure not found.

TO WEST H. HUMPHREYS¹

Washington City, March 22, 1847

Polk explains that he had been waiting to hear that Tennessee had organized companies under the Ten Regiment Bill before appointing officers, but could wait no longer. In response to Humphreys's letter,² Polk appointed Nelson McClanahan³ of Jackson a first lieutenant under Capt. Joseph W. Perkins⁴ of Haywood County and Humphreys's brother Robert⁵ a first lieutenant under Capt. Creed T. Huddleston⁶ of Overton County. Polk and the War Department do not know Robert's location or if he has raised a company; his letter of appointment will be sent to West. Polk lists five other military appointments from Tennessee.

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

1. A lawyer and Democrat from Somerville, West H. Humphreys (1806–82) served in Tennessee's constitutional convention, 1834; in the Tennessee House, 1835–37; as the state's attorney general, 1839–51; and as reporter of the Tennessee Supreme Court, 1839–51.

2. Humphreys to Polk, c. January 24, 1847.

3. Born in South Carolina, McClanahan (1821–51) was appointed a first lieutenant on March 3, 1847, and joined the Fourteenth Infantry Regiment on April 9. He served until July 25, 1848.

4. A Nashville lawyer, Perkins (?–1847) served as an alderman of that city in 1839. Appointed a captain on February 23, 1847, he joined the Fourteenth Infantry Regiment on April 9 and died in Mexico City on October 22.

5. Born in Tennessee, Robert Humphreys (c. 1820–?) lived in Mississippi in 1846 but was appointed a first lieutenant from Tennessee on March 20, 1847. He joined the Fourteenth Infantry Regiment on April 9 and served until July 25, 1848.

6. A farmer and Democrat from Byrdstown, Huddleston (1811–47) represented Overton County in the Tennessee House, 1843–47. He raised a company in 1847, which after his appointment as captain on March 22 became Company K of the Fourteenth Infantry Regiment on April 9. The company suffered heavy losses. Huddleston himself fell ill in Veracruz and died in Mexico City on October 1.

FROM HENRY HORN

Dear Sir

Philadelphia 24th March 1847

The frank and friendly relations which have so long subsisted between us seem to justify me in giving you a hasty sketch of the feelings which exist here in reference to the posture of our affairs with Mexico.

The last accounts which have reached us from that quarter have produced a great sensation in the minds of many in regard to the fate of General Taylor and his gallant little army. I must confess I do not participate to any great extent in the gloomy apprehensions which seem to pervade the mass of the people, political friends as well as opponents upon that subject, and I endeavour sedulously in my intercourse with my fellow Citizens both in public and private places to inspire a just confidence in the plans and measures of your administration in relation to the existing war with Mexico as well as in the skill and intrepidity of our gallant officers and soldiers who are now in the field. There are many however who express a belief that more energy and decision should be infused into the action of our administration. The people infact are beginning now seriously to think and feel that there is no hope of an honorable peace but in a bold and vigorous prosecution of the war and they are willing and anxious to sustain you to the last extremity in maintaining the honor and character of the nation by a course of the most prompt and effective measures, such as they believe are imperiously demanded by the present exigencies of our country. There are many who complain of the manner in which the war has been hitherto conducted. That we have treated the Mexicans with the forbearance and tenderness of bretheren rather than as an insidious cruel and relentless enemy. That we have through a misplaced liberality failed to pursue the advantages which we have from time to time gained over them. That instead of quartering upon the enemy and making him feel the effects of the war to the end that he would have been forced to sue for peace, we have become his valuable customers by purchasing our supplies of him at exorbitant prices, that in the excess of our clemency or generosity we have failed to retain prisoners enough when it was in our power to do so to serve as exchanges or hostages to secure us against those outrages which a relentless and dishonorable enemy has and may again commit upon such of our soldiers as the fortune of war may place in his power. These are some of the arguments used with effect by many of our honest and well meaning citizens on both sides of the political question. There are it is true some so reckless and destitute of principle and patriotism I may say so tainted with treason

that they would sacrifice the honor and interest of their country to gain some political or private ends. Such miscreants would hoist blue lights to advise the enemy of the position of our army or navy or conduct him through some unguarded pass to the heart of our camp.¹ But for the honor of humanity be it said there are but few of these, though some of them have reached high places. The great body of the people of all political complexions are sound and patriotic and when the honor of our country is in danger are ready and willing to pour out their blood and treasure in sustaining it. An honorable peace it is believed can only be obtained of Mexico through the medium of a successful war, it cannot be bought. The valour of our arms must achieve it. An inglorious peace would be a much greater calamity than a protracted war. The people would much prefer submitting to the latter than the former.

I trust however that in your hands the honor of the country is safe and that the war will be vigorously and successfully prosecuted until a peace can be obtained at the solicitation of the enemy which shall be strictly compatible with the nicest principles of national honor.

HENRY HORN

ALS. DLC-JKP. Marked "*Private*" on the cover and at the top of the letter. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received March 26, 1847.

1. Horn refers to the Blue Light Federalists who allegedly cooperated with the British in the War of 1812. Allegedly, they illuminated harbors along the New England coast with blue lights to allow British ships to safely navigate at night.

TO JAMES BUCHANAN

Dear Sir:

Washington March 25th 1847

I transmit to you herewith a copy of a letter from the *Hon. John Y. Mason* Secretary of the Navy,¹ communicating to me, the request of the *Hon. Henry A. Wise*, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Brazil, to be recalled from that Court. I send you the copy, that it may as you suggested to me, to day, be placed on the files of your Department, and that you may refer to it, in the despatch which you propose to address to *Mr Wise*.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. PHi-JB. Probably addressed locally. See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

1. Mason to Polk, February 13, 1847. L, copy. PHi-JB.

FROM EDMUND P. GAINES

Hd. Qus. Eastern Division
City of New York, March 25" 1847

Dear Sir

Believing it to be in my power to render the Country some service, in this critical juncture of our Military affairs in Mexico; and that it is my bounden duty upon this occasion directly to address the President of the United States, my constitutional Commander-in-chief—to whom I owe, and to whom it has ever been my constant desire to devote implicit obedience—to solicit orders to repair promptly to the theatre of action; with authority such as he may see fit to confide to me, to raise, organize, prepare for action and command, such volunteers as I may find willing to accompany me, and such other troops as I may find disposable to fly to the rescue of our Slender forces within and beyond the Rio Grande.

I can at any time leave this city in twelve hours after the receipt of the desired orders. But if authorised to raise a Division of Volunteers—more or less—I might facilitate the accomplishment of the great object of my movement by sending to Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Louisville Ky, Memphis, Vicksburg and New Orleans, notice of the day of my arrival at each place—inviting such of my young friends and countrymen constituting the chivalry of the west and south to meet me at those places ready for action. And in the mean while myself to make sure of a Supply of Ordnance, Rifles, and other Arms and ordnance Stores.

It occurs to me now that if I am expressly *permitted* by the President to say to my young friends that should they be disposed to enroll themselves for and during the War with Mexico, or for one year, that the President will recommend to Congress the disbandment of all who may desire it at the end of the present year. In this case I cannot but think it highly probable that I may be able, in the month of April, next month, to obtain from twenty to twenty five thousand first rate volunteers, and arrive with that force at the theatre of the war in Mexico, or the western border of Texas by the memorable 8th or 9th of May next, the anniversary of our first triumphs over Mexico.¹

Upon this subject however you will hear from me tomorrow, should no cheering intelligence arrive, to relieve me of the painful anxiety in which I now write.

EDMUND PENDLETON GAINES

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. American forces under Zachary Taylor defeated Mexicans at Palo Alto on May 8, 1846, and at Resaca de la Palma the next day.

FROM CHARLES J. INGERSOLL

Dear Sir

Philad. March 25, 1847

When I took leave of you in Washington, the 4th of this month, besides that there were several persons present, my mind had been so disturbed by several days and nights of labor and anxiety, ending with my rejection by the Senate, that I really had none for calm consideration, which since my quiet settlement at home has produced the expression of a wounded spirit that I deem right to lay before you.

Calm consideration forbids my flattering myself that so great an indignity as rejection by the Senate can fail to *fix* a stigma on my character. Those among whom I was born and have spent a long life having uplifted me nine times of the ten when tried by their suffrages encourage the trust that popular redress may yet be in store from Senatorial and Executive injustice, as it came in large measure when I was defrauded of Elections. But your affirmance of the dishonor put on me by our common reviler Mr Webster, the more I ponder it distresses me more than all because it renders much more difficult and doubtful my restoration to unblemished reputation. His malice I think I could get the better of; but for your I must say ungenerous concurrence.

To complain is generally weakness and to ask for explanation of little avail, in such a case. I do neither by this appeal. But contending for character outraged as mine has been by a faction, impotent if you had not reinforced them with all the power of the Chief Magistrate is a struggle in which a life may be well spent: and resolved as I am on the effort, it would be uncandid if I did not fairly apprise you of my discontent, which may become part of my resort for public vindication.

No sooner was I accidentally rejected by a Senate which you had yourself told me was a faction, when another Senate, or even that one, if I had been informed of the stab struck on me in the dark, might readily have been brought to make reparation, in the best way if not the only effectual way, by confirming me on a renomination for the same place, no sooner was I thus rejected than without sending one word, hard-by as I was, but consulting my own dignity, by keeping aloof from both Senate and President—than you made a castaway of me by instantly nominating another. It does not mend the matter at all that Mr Rush¹ is personally a gratifying selection to me. You knew, as you told me, that Dr. Martin² is all sufficient for the station at present. You knew that I desiring the mission for no trivial or vain enjoyment, but great national objects, which require time to mature, so that some months or more postponement would be no objection to my going to France, but an advantage. Yet when I was sacrificed, that your impeacher and

my reviler might be transmuted by Senatorial alchymy from culprit to presidential candidate, when thus assassinated in the dark you did not merely pushed my degraded body away, but you made another nomination which announced officially and emphatically not only that my Senatorial stigma was confirmed by the President, but that as far as your Administration can prevent, it never shall be removed.

When you talked to me of obstacles, long hindering your wish to select me for that post, you ascribed them to New York. Yet when you made another nomination it was not only from Pennsylvania but from my corner of this State; and that you might effectually preclude me while sir you are the appointing power, you superadded still another Pennsylvania mission, from my corner of my State, Mr Clay,³ accumulating four foreign appointments upon Pennsylvania.

When last August you promised me the French mission, if I would relinquish the Russian, which you had proffered, unsolicited, undesired, and I was glad to give up, you protested and I trusted that you were my personal and political friend. As Chief Magistrate there would have been no wrong in doing me the justice of a renomination. As friend was not a pause due to me? Might you not have sent me word in the House of Representatives where I was fighting your battles, if not to ask what you should do, at least to let me know what you would do? When your pride was offended by Mr Horn's rejection you renominated him against the wish of his own state.⁴ When Mr Van Buren, Mr Taney, Mr Stevenson, Mr Gilpin were rejected and others by angry Senates, they found inflexible friends in illustrious presidents.⁵ Whereas how can I appeal to popular redress for the Senate's blow while the Presidents supporters whom I am to call on for succour cannot help me with out virtually condemning him?

Postponed as I was to Mr Bancroft, Mr Benton and I am well assured several other objects of your regard, to whom promises in advance or proffers were given, from the moment when the poor Russian mission was first suspended over my head till you deserted my repudiated nomination for the desirable French, my feelings were tormented, and at last my character has been struck down always with your apparent instrumentality, by the deadliest blow ever inflicted not only on character but prospects and future course.

For I confess that I am perplexed what to do for its restoration. To quarrel with your administration will be both awkward and irksome, though I believe it will not be difficult to mark the difference between contending for place and contending for good name. And without vaunting a life with some claims to public respect, may I not suppose that I have even rights especially to your regard? In the twenty eighth

Congress mine was a painful predicament, from the risk I ventured beyond any other prominent Pennsylvanian to make you President. During the twenty ninth Congress, my responsibilities, labors and anxieties to sustain your administration—can you name any other member undertaking more? Yet in aggravation of your abandonment of me to the ruthless faction in the Senate, can you mention one, including myself, that has ever received your support because I desired it?

Under these circumstances painful, discouraging perplexing, when the thirtieth Congress assembles with its majority of some half dozen, not more, and no one can foresee on which side it will be, is my thankless servitude to be renewed? Deeply sensible of what I owe to a constituency as steadfast as I have found Senates and Presidents otherwise, and even more sensible of the disparagement which their combined injustice has put on me, perhaps a long cherished plan of literary retirement cannot yet be indulged. At all events whether in or out of public life I assume and with Gods blessing will accomplish the task of clearing from stain a name soon to be left to those who are to inherit it.

C J INGERSOLL

LS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by James Buchanan after being enclosed in Ingersoll to Buchanan, March 25, 1847. ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE: received March 1847; answered April 28, 1847; "letter must have been written in a paroxysm of excitement . . . It is highly exceptionable."

1. Lawyer and newspaper editor Richard Rush (1780–1859), son of Founding Father Benjamin Rush, served as minister to France, 1847–51. Earlier, he had been comptroller of the Treasury, 1811–14; U.S. attorney general, 1814–17; minister to the United Kingdom, 1818–25; and Treasury secretary, 1825–29. In 1828, he ran as vice president on the ticket led by John Quincy Adams, as Adams sought, without success, a second term in office.

2. North Carolina physician Jacob L. Martin (?–1848) was legation secretary to France, 1844–48. Earlier he had served as chief clerk of the State Department, 1840–41. For two weeks before his death, he was chargé d'affaires at the newly established ministry to the Papal States; Congress that year had approved Polk's initiative to elevate the mission to the Papal States from consular to ministerial status.

3. Philadelphia native John Randolph Clay (1808–85), the godson of Roanoke, Va., politician and diplomat John Randolph, attended Randolph as legation secretary when Randolph was named minister to Russia in 1830. Randolph died that year but Clay stayed in St. Petersburg as secretary and served, 1836–37, as chargé d'affaires. He later served as chargé d'affaires to Peru, 1847–53; promoted, he remained in the Lima mission as minister until 1860.

4. See notes in Henry Horn to Polk, January 5, 1847.

5. Andrew Jackson during his presidency won a reputation for dogged persistence when faced with Senate rejection of his nominees. Emblematic of

that, in 1832 the U.S. Senate rejected Jackson's choice of Martin Van Buren as minister to the United Kingdom. The deciding Senate vote against Van Buren was cast by Vice President John C. Calhoun. In retaliation, Jackson, in his successful 1832 campaign for reelection, replaced Calhoun with Van Buren as his running mate. Roger B. Taney (1777–1864) began his public career as a lawyer and Maryland state legislator, 1799–1800. Originally a Federalist, he broke with that party over its opposition to the War of 1812; in 1824, he supported Jackson's first and unsuccessful run for the presidency. Taney later served as attorney general for Maryland, 1827–31, and U.S. attorney general, 1831–33. In 1833, Jackson selected him as Treasury secretary. Taney assumed the new post, but when the Senate convened the following year, it rejected the appointment. In 1835, Taney faced a second rebuff when the Senate refused to confirm his selection by Jackson to become an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1836, however, he won Senate confirmation as chief justice of the Supreme Court. He sat on the court from 1836 until his death. Andrew Stevenson (1784–1857) began his career in politics as a National Republican and concluded it as a Democrat. A native of Virginia, he represented a district from that state in the U.S. House, 1821–34, and was Speaker, 1827–34. In 1834, Jackson selected him as minister to the United Kingdom. The Senate rejected but then subsequently confirmed the nomination; he served 1836–41. Author, educator, and attorney Henry D. Gilpin (1801–60) edited the *Atlantic Souvenir*, among the first literary magazines published in the United States, 1826–32. He served as U.S. attorney at Philadelphia, 1831–37; during that period, he also served as a director of the Bank of the United States. When President Jackson sought to renew that latter appointment and also to appoint Gilpin territorial governor of Michigan, the Senate—due to Gilpin's support of Jackson's anti-bank policies—in each case declined to confirm him. In response, Jackson nominated Gilpin for another term as U.S. attorney at Philadelphia, which the Senate confirmed. Gilpin subsequently served as solicitor of the Treasury, 1837, and U.S. attorney general under President Van Buren, 1840–41.

FROM JOEL TURRILL¹

Dear Sir

Honolulu March 25th 1847

Shortly after writing you last Dec² an effort was made by certain individuals to bring about a compromise in the case of Ladd & co.³ When the matter came before the King⁴ and Council, they refused to entertain the proposition, until the commissioner⁵ should either withdraw or make good certain charges made by him against this Government and which had been printed in the proceedings of the Arbitration.⁶ Some correspondence ensued, and the proposition was finally entertained, or rather rec'd, but it is matter of doubt whether any compromise will be effected.

I was informed by one of the Kings Ministers the latter part of last month that the Commissioner, had, a few days previous to that time

submitted a draft of a treaty. He enquired of me whether I had seen it, to which I answered in the negative, adding that I was not aware that any draft had been prepared. He stated to me that, he had ascertained that the draft had been in the hands of three or four individuals, naming them, several weeks before it was submitted and that in his opinion and in the opinion of his associates many of the provisions contained in it, were either drawn up, or suggested by some one or all of them. The persons named by him are the most prominent and active leaders in the controversy with this Government. He expressed much surprise and regret at the whole proceeding, and after he had communicated to me, the contents of the treaty I remarked to him that this whole matter was peculiarly, and if he chose so to consider it, exclusively within the province of the Commissioner,⁷ and that I did not feel myself authorised to interfere in this matter or to express any opinion in relation to the same, farther than to assure him, that the US were always disposed to deal liberally with all and especially with the Hawian Governt &tc.

Although for obvious reasons, not disposed to express an opinion to the Minister, I have no hesitation in saying to you that I regret, that such a draft, has been submitted as in my judgment it neither reflects credit on its author or the United States. I have not space in a letter to notice even in a brief manner the objectionable parts of this proposed treaty, which consists of between twenty and thirty long Articles.

By the local laws, a sailor, discharged from a vessel must obtain permission to remain on shore and give security to leave the Islands in Sixty days. For good reasons, this time, is often extended, and when an individual proves himself a worthy member of society, without limit. In case sailors desert, they are apprehended and put into prison there to remain until they [...] ⁸ ship or give security to leave. It is the policy of ths Govt. not to allow sailors to remain permanently on the Islands, having learned from sad experience that they make bad citizens, disseminating vice and disease among the Natives. I do not believe that the U.S. wish to force such a population upon this, or any other community—besides ths place is so inviting to sailors and the whaling business so unpopular with them, that but for these local laws, it would be impossible to keep the whole fleet maned.⁹

A Danish officer arrived here a few months since, and proceeded in a frank straightforward way to negotiate a treaty,¹⁰ which he found no difficulty in accomplishing during his brief stay here; the treaty consisted of a few short articles, and was entirely satisfactory to both parties upon whom the whole proceedings made a most favorable impression. I was in hopes the U.S. would have taken the same course. I do not believe that any good will result from our attempt to encircle this Government with

a long treaty, resembling a penal statute. The American Missionaries,¹¹ a body of men possessing unblemished characters and a large fund of practical good sense are located in different parts of the Islands and have great influence with the Natives. The Atty General¹² is from the U.S. also Judge Andrews¹³ who came to the Islands some 15 or 20 years since as a Missionary, a man whose character for integrity is above suspicion. Judge Lee¹⁴ the other Judge was from the state of, N.Y. He is a young man every way well qualified for his important office, having been in successful practice as a lawyer, in the highest courts in that State. The Editor of the Government paper is a Bostonian,¹⁵ and Doct Jud¹⁶ Minister of Finance and who has more influence than any other individual on the Island is a native of the state of N.Y. After making this statement, I deem any argument to shew that the U.S. has a due share of influence here, unnecessary. It is true that a number of American residents have been dissatisfied with the existing state of things here, and are waging war upon this Government.¹⁷ I deem their course suicidal. Is it asked what shall be done? I answer, have, at no time, agents of the U.S. at this place, who will directly or indirectly countenance this war. If you have such agents it is more than probable that Navy officers and others visiting these Islands, will be drawn into the controversy and induced to take up the cudgel in favor of the "American side." This controversy ought to have been and I believe would have been terminated long ago, had the agents of the U.S. take the right course in relation to it.

I write you this confidential letter in order that you may understand the situation of things here, and regret that neither time nor space will permit me to allude to many other important matters. I mark it confidential because I do not wish to have my name used in connexion with this matter, as I am obliged to write in great haste and have not room to explain fully.

J TURRILL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "(confidential)." From Washington Curran Whitthorne's¹⁸ AE: received September 15, 1847.

1. A Vermont native and a Democrat, attorney Turrill (1794–1859) served as U.S. representative from New York, 1833–37, and as U.S. consul to the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1845–50.

2. Turrill to Polk, December 21, 1846.

3. Ladd and Co., a mercantile firm, in 1835 founded Hawaii's first commercially successful sugar cane plantation.

4. Kamehameha III (1813–54), king of Hawaii from 1825 until his death, was the kingdom's longest reigning monarch. During his reign, Hawaii evolved from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy.

5. Anthony Ten Eyck (1810–67), a Detroit Democrat, was appointed by Polk as commissioner to Hawaii in 1845 and served until 1849.

6. Arbitration sought to redress grievances and resolve lawsuits filed by Ladd and Co. against confiscatory actions taken by the Kingdom of Hawaii in November 1844. The company argued that the Kingdom's actions were illegal.

7. Commissioner Ten Eyck had been instructed by Polk and Buchanan to negotiate a treaty by which the United States formally recognized the Kingdom of Hawaii in exchange for recognition of rights of U.S. citizens living on the islands. Owing to delays, the treaty was not signed until December 1849, during the administration of Pres. Zachary Taylor.

8. Word or words illegible, ink smudge.

9. Hawaii during that era became an important port for whaling ships—mainly U.S. vessels—bound for the western Arctic, the Japanese coast, and the South Pacific. Many would stop twice a year to purchase provisions, recruit new crew-members, or transfer whale cargoes to other ships. About one hundred ships stopped in Hawaii in 1824; by 1846, that number had swelled to over seven hundred.

10. Capt. Steen A. Bille (1797–1883) of the Danish navy went to Hawaii in 1846, commanding the corvette *Galathea*. On October 19, 1846, he and Hawaiian foreign minister Robert C. Wyllie signed a treaty between the two countries that, among other stipulations, accorded Danes residing in Hawaii all rights guaranteed to other foreigners as well as native subjects.

11. Christian missionaries, many of them New England Congregationalists, had been arriving in Hawaii since the early nineteenth century.

12. New Jersey-born lawyer John Ricord (1812 or 1813–1861) arrived in Hawaii in 1844 and served as attorney general for the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1844–47. Prior to that, he had, in 1836, relocated from Buffalo, N.Y., to the Texas republic, where, among other public offices, he served as chief clerk in the republic's state department and as a district attorney. In 1837 he left Texas, never to return, and spent the rest of his life moving among far-flung locales such as Florida, Arizona, California, New York, Oregon, and Hawaii.

13. Connecticut native Lorrin Andrews (1795–1868) sailed for Hawaii in 1827 and spent his first few years there performing missionary work. In 1831, he founded the Lahainaluna Seminary, part of which later evolved into the University of Hawaii. He also founded Hawaii's first newspaper, translated portions of the Bible into Hawaiian, wrote several books on Hawaiian antiquities, and compiled a Hawaiian-English dictionary. In 1845, he was appointed a judge by the Hawaiian government.

14. William L. Lee (1821–57), a lawyer from New York, arrived in Hawaii in 1846. That same year, he was appointed a judge. In 1847, he became chief justice of what eventually became Hawaii's Supreme Court.

15. Boston native James Jackson Jarves (1818–88) sailed for Hawaii in 1838. In 1840, he established the Honolulu *Polynesian*, a weekly newspaper that in 1844 was designated the official organ of the Hawaiian government. In 1849 he returned to the United States and for several years served as a commissioner for the Hawaiian government during treaty negotiations with

the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. Jarves was also a noted author and art collector.

16. A native of New York, physician Gerrit P. Judd (1803–73) sailed for Hawaii in 1827. He served as a missionary physician in Honolulu before becoming, in 1842, an advisor in several posts and a translator for Kamehameha III. In 1841, he helped to found a school in Honolulu that later evolved into the Punahou School, a noted college preparatory school whose alumni include Barack Obama, elected in 2008 as the forty-fourth U.S. president.

17. The term “war,” so far as can be determined, is not literal but rather refers to discontents among Americans engaged in commercial enterprises in Hawaii.

18. Tennessee-born Whitthorne (1825–91) was a clerk, during Polk’s presidency, in the office of the auditor of the Post Office Department. As in the circumstance that occasioned his AE on this letter, he often filled in as Polk’s private secretary when Joseph Knox Walker was away. Whitthorne had read law in Polk’s law office in Columbia; after Polk’s presidency, he returned to Columbia and established his own law practice. He later served, as a Democrat, in the state senate, 1855–58; the state house, 1859–61; the U.S. House, 1871–83 and 1887–91; and the U.S. Senate, 1886–87.

FROM EDMUND P. GAINES

Dear Sir

Hd. Qus. Eastern Division
City of New York March 26th 1847

I yesterday took leave to solicit orders to repair promptly to the theatre of the War, with authority such as you may deem proper to confide to me, to raise, organize, Equip, and prepare for action, and to command such volunteers as may be willing to join and serve under me, with such other troops as I may find disposable, and with them fly to the rescue of our Slender forces within and beyond the valley of the Rio Grande.

Should my application be approved, I desire to have attached to my command an experienced officer of each branch of the General Staff of the Army, Such as may be most conveniently disposable at this time, and for the present emergency, *without regard to Rank*. These officers, but more especially the *Quarter Master*, the *Commissary of Subsistence*, and the *Ordnance Officer*, I am anxious to See and confer with as soon as may be convenient, and that they may be prepared to furnish every requisite supply.

These Supplies I wish to take with me from Pittsburg, Cincinnati, New Port Ky, Louisville, Memphis, Vicksburg and Baton Rouge, so that I may while on board my Steam Boats in the course of the voyage upon the Rivers, Organize, Subsist, Arm, Clothe, and instruct all, or as many of the volunteers as I Shall be able to obtain at the places here des-

ignated. In this way I can learn them more useful knowledge of the elementary principles and essential duties of Soldiers, while upon the voyage (provided I keep them on board the river Steamers until I am ready *at Fort Jackson* to embark on board Sea-vessels for Point Isabel,¹) than many volunteers ever learn in the first month or two of their first tour of Service: for example—I will learn them how to *cook*, and to *eat*, and *Sleep*, so as to be *comfortable* and to *preserve their health*, without which they never can be able to render *efficient Service*; and I Shall moreover learn many of them to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors, and all to *take care of their Arms, keep their Powder dry*, and convince them of the importance of with holding their fire when they go into action until they can take good Aim, and thus every man make sure of bringing down, or crippling his foe.

I should be glad to have Colonel E. A. Hitchcock, and Colonel E. G. W. Butler² with me, the one as Inspector General and the other as Adjutant General. They have both Served with me in my Staff, and I know them to be of unsurpassed chivalry, experience and talent, for the Staff, or for any, the highest command in the Army. I also desire to have with me that best of Engineers of his age, Major Chase,³ & also that best of volunteer commanders General Wm. DeBuys,⁴ and Colonel William Preston⁵ the trusted and Sound military member of Governor Owsleys⁶ Staff, who a year ago took measures in obedience to the orders of his patriotic Governor, to cooperate with the chivalric citizens of Louisville Ky in raising and organizing the first fine corps which Kentucky Sent to the Rio Grande. These are mostly acclimated officers, and I know none more highly qualified to Sustain me in the hour of Battle, and (what I am bound to keep in view as not improbable,) in the event of my fall to carry out my views for maintaining the Honor and Glory of the country in Battle, than the wise, the prudent, the chivalric Regular and volunteer officers here named. I wish them to be attached to my Staff in the event of my being detained on duty in Mexico beyond the time which the present emergency may require. But for the present emergency I wish it to be distinctly understood that I desire only those Staff officers who can be most conveniently attached to my Staff—nor do I wish to disturb any General officer in his immediate command in Mexico. I wish to *let every one alone* as long as there may be reasonable grounds to believe that they are likely to bring the war to a just and honorable conclusion. I would only solicit Such authority as the military law of the land clearly authorize the President of the U.S. to extend to me, and order that *I may be let alone*, and allowed to command according to my lawful commission won by me, by a Succession of triumphs against a foe at least

equal to any ever met or beaten by any of my Supposed rivals. I desire to go on as the President may See fit, with any force I can raise, and to remain in Mexico only until I Shall have the Satisfaction of relieving, or of knowing the fate of Taylor and his little Heroic Army.

EDMUND P GAINES

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Fort Jackson, constructed in 1822–32 and decommissioned after World War I, is a brick army fort in the lower Mississippi Delta, on the river's west bank, about 70 miles southeast of New Orleans. At Point Isabel, near the mouth of the Rio Grande in today's state of Texas, was a fortified army depot. The base was established in March 1846 by General Taylor. As he advanced with his main army to the Rio Grande, Taylor left a small garrison at the site; to honor the president, it soon was named Fort Polk.

2. Ethan Allen Hitchcock and Edward George Washington Butler. Hitchcock (1798–1870), a Vermont native, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1817 and later served as commandant of cadets there. He served under Gaines in the Second Seminole War and, during the Mexican War, won a brevet promotion to colonel for gallantry at the Battles of Contreras and Churubusco. He resigned his commission in 1855 but was promoted to major general of volunteers during the Civil War. Hitchcock published numerous books on topics ranging from William Shakespeare to the Gospels. Butler (1800–1888) was born on George Washington's birthday. His father and uncles fought in the Revolutionary War; after his father died in 1803, he became a ward of Andrew Jackson. After graduating from the U.S. Military Academy in 1820, he served in the army's artillery corps. He resigned in 1831 but resumed military service at the outbreak of the Mexican War. Butler operated a sugar plantation in Louisiana.

3. A Massachusetts native, William H. Chase (1798–1870) graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1815 and served his entire army career in the engineers corps, reaching the rank of major in 1838.

4. William Debuys was Speaker of the Louisiana House, 1839–41. In 1846 he was the Whig candidate for governor in Louisiana but lost to Democrat Isaac Johnson.

5. Harvard University graduate and Louisville, Ky., lawyer William Preston (1816–87) became a lieutenant colonel in the Fourth Kentucky Infantry Regiment during the Mexican War. He later served as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1852–55; as a Democrat as minister to Spain, 1859–61; and as a Confederate general and minister to Mexico during the Civil War.

6. Born in Virginia and raised in Kentucky, William Owsley (1782–1862) was admitted to the bar and served in the state house, 1809–11. He sat on the state's Court of Appeals, 1812–28; in the state senate, 1832–34; and as Kentucky secretary of state, 1834–36. After defeating Democrat William O. Butler in 1844, he served as Kentucky's Whig governor, 1844–48.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir:

Washington City March 29th 1847

I have received your letter of the 20th Instant, and will pay the check in relation to me, which you inform me, you have drawn on me for \$100.— to pay for two mules which you have purchased for me, and to defray the expenses of taking them to my plantation in Mississippi. You inform me that *Mr Evan Young*¹ has offered you \$3000. for my dwelling House and Stable,² that payable in one and two years, from the time of taking possession, without interest. I am unwilling to accept the offer. When *Mr A. O. P. Nicholson*³ was here about 10. days ago, he informed me that *Mr Young* wished to purchase the property; and I authorized *Mr Nicholson* to say to him, that he could have it at \$3.000— in cash, or at \$3.500— in one two and three years, without interest. You can make this same offer to him, and if he wishes to accept either proposal, you can close the contract with him, and give him a land fee title. It is proper that you should understand however, that before I left Tennessee, I rented the property to *Russell Houston*⁴ for four years at \$175.00 per year. I have no right therefore to dispossess the tenant in possession until the 1st of January 1849. If *Mr Young* purchases he must make an arrangement to get possession of it, with *Houston* or whoever else may occupy it, which I presume he can readily do. If it remain in this tenant he would be entitled to the rent from the day he closes the contract with you. The rent notes are in the hands of *James H. Thomas Esqr.* I consider the price at which I offer the property very *low*—but *Mr Young* will judge for himself. I [have learned]⁵ *Dr Hays*'s pecuniary embarrassments,⁶ and wish it was in my power to retain him. I have shown your letter to *J. Knox Walker* & he will write you in relation to the *Lewis* debt⁷ which you and others have had to pay.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I conclude to say, that if *Mr Young* will give \$3.000, for the property on one and two years term, bearing legal interest from the date of the contract, he can have it. This is the least I will take.

As I wrote to *James H. Thomas* last fall,⁸ and authorized him to sell the property, if he had a suitable offer, I suggest that you see him before you close any contract with *Mr Young* as it is barely possible that he may have made a contract to sell it. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. A Columbia, Tenn., businessman, Young (1797–1852) was one of the first trustees of that town's Columbia Female Institute.

2. Polk's house was on Market Street in Columbia. Columbia at the time did not have street numbers; the location is now 316 West 7th Street.

3. Alfred O. P. Nicholson.

4. Lawyer Russell M. Houston (1810–95) rented Polk's property in Columbia.

5. Words uncertain, blurred ink transfer.

6. John B. Hays (c. 1794–1850s?), a Columbia physician, was the husband of Ophelia Clarissa Polk Hays, Polk's youngest sister. Apparently owing to an imprudent lifestyle, Hays was having financial troubles by late 1846 and, as this letter was written, was planning to sell all his property to pay his bills.

7. Joseph Knox Walker, Campbell, and two others owed a debt to Green Lewis, apparently as a result of a court judgment. Lewis earlier had owned a farm next to Polk's on Little Bigby Creek in Maury County, Tenn., but may have sold it in 1840.

8. Polk to Thomas, October 29, 1846.

FROM THOMAS B. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir Naval School Annapolis Md. March 29th 1847

In conformity with the promise that I made you when I left your house, I write you a few lines informing you of my situation at this place. When I first entered this school I was very much pleased, and thought that I might improve myself. Therefore I determined to remain here until July when the examination will come off, but since that time I have frequently been attempted¹ to leave the School.

I find that the School is almost altogether in the hands of the Professors, and some of them—being men without principle, I find it very—difficult to get along with any satisfaction. I found Captain Buchanan² to be a very find man and I believe had he not been ordered to sea—things would have went on much better.

I find this to be a very tiresome place, there being nothing to revive our spirits. Should Cousin Sarah³ visit Tennessee this spring, she will please say to Ma⁴ that I am well and perhaps will return in August. *My love to Cousin Sarah.*

THOS. B. CHILDRESS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received March 30, 1847; "*Private.*"

1. Childress probably meant to write "tempted."

2. Franklin Buchanan.

3. Sarah Childress Polk.

4. Mary Berkley Childress.

TO CHARLES GOODYEAR

Sir:

Washington City March 29th 1847

I have had the honour to receive by the hands of *Edmund Burke Esqr.* of this city a small box, containing specimens of your, "Gum Elastic manufacture," and which in your letter of the 17th Instant, you present for my acceptance.

The degree of perfection which the manufacture of this substance has attained, and the many useful purposes to which it is being applied, is highly creditable to the skill and intelligence of the manufacturers.

Thanking you for the specimens of your manufacture, which accompanied your letter:

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to New York City.

FROM JEREMIAH GEORGE HARRIS

U.S ship Albany

My Dear Sir—

Sacrificios [Mexico] Mar 29. 1847

After 17 days investment and some ten days siege the city of Vera Cruz as well as the *impregnable* castle of San Juan d'Ulua have absolutely surrendered to our victorious arms. The Navy had a hand in it—having a heavy battery within 750 yards of the city walls. I was on service near it for two days and nights of course in a subordinate position. I need not give you details as your despatches are undoubtedly full.

Gen. Pillow¹ has done gallant service, as you know by official communication. Our Tennessee regiments have won new laurels. I think the entire army have won imperishable renown, and the Navy hopes it has done something towards retrieving its losses at Alvarado.²

Now this great blow is struck, and that Alvarado will fall into our hands in a week or two, I have one request to make—since the war so far as the Navy is concerned is virtually over. My letters from my wife³ bring me intelligence which leads me to fear that she is seriously threatened with consumption,⁴ a disease by which many of her family have died. Of course I am most anxious to visit my home—and if the Albany is to be continued on this station may I not ask to be relieved by another Purser, and placed on leave or waiting orders? If the Albany returns in a month or two, I shall need no relief—if she does not return but goes to a foreign station from here or remains here through the summer, I trust you will give me *a relief*. Purser Welsh⁵ could be glad to relieve me, for he told me so a few days ago. I have taken full notes of

all the incidents of this campaign—some of which may be interesting in the future.

To-morrow at ten a.m. the Mexicans march out of the city and *ground* their arms⁶ before our army.

We are full of pride for our great and glorious victory; it will make a crown of brilliant gems for those who have conducted it.

I pray you give ear to my request, for “leave” in the event our ship does not return.

J GEO. HARRIS

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Gideon J. Pillow.

2. This coastal town in the Mexican state of Veracruz was captured by U.S. forces on March 31, 1847.

3. Lucinda McGavock (1817–47) of Nashville married Jeremiah George Harris in 1842.

4. Tuberculosis.

5. Pennsylvania native and Missouri resident Aristides Welch (c. 1811–1890) served as a navy purser, 1846–56. In 1847 he served on the steamer *Princeton* in the Home Squadron. He later became a prominent horse breeder in Pennsylvania.

6. Lay on the ground and thereby surrender weapons.

TO WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother:

Washington City March 29th 1847

I have been so incessantly confined for the last two days—that I have but a moment to write to you, before the [steamer]¹ in answer to your letter of the 5th of January,² this being the last day in which letters can leave this City in time for the next steamer for Europe.

Leave of absence has been asked successively by *Donelson*, *Rencher & Wickliffe*,³ which have been refused. As however nothing important, requiring your attention—at the Court to which you are associated, will probably arise, during the short absence which you ask, and as the age and infirmity of your mother⁴ may render in your case an exception to the general rule, usually observed in such cases, *Mr Buchanan*, has addressed to you an official letter—yielding to your wishes. Your leave of absence for the short time—you ask, is however granted upon the express condition, *first* that when you return you will do so quietly and without parade, and *secondly*, that you must not calculate on remaining longer than the time you have indicated. *Messrs Donelson, Rencher & Wickliffe* might be dissatisfied if it were otherwise, though the grounds of their application were as I understand not the same as yours. Perhaps

the applications of *Mr Rencher & Mr Wickliffe* were to enable them to travel & not to return to their own Country. I do not distinctly remember how this was. You have however leave to return for *three months and no longer* from the time you leave *Naples* until you reach your post. If you come & return in a Steamer you will have more than a month to remain in the U.S. *Mr Buchanan* has shown me his official letter to you. The peculiar domestic matters upon which he bases the grant of leave of absence, relate to the age of your mother, and her state of health. I informed him of this fact & he embodied it in his letter. Mother's general health is not worse than usual, except that she had an attack recently, and at her age must be declining daily.

The mail will close in 10. minutes and I have no time to write more.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Naples and marked "*Private.*"

1. Word uncertain, blurred ink transfer.

2. Letter not found.

3. Andrew J. Donelson, Abraham Rencher, and Robert Wickliffe, Jr. Nashville-born Donelson (1799–1871), lost his father as a boy and moved into the home of an aunt, Rachel Donelson Jackson, and her husband, Andrew Jackson. An 1819 U.S. Military Academy graduate, he served as an aide-de-camp to General Jackson, 1820–22, and private secretary to President Jackson, 1829–37. Admitted to the bar in 1823, he also had careers as a planter, journalist, and diplomat. Polk appointed him minister to Prussia in 1846 and to Germany in 1848. North Carolina native and lawyer Rencher (1798–1883) served two terms in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1829–33, and four terms as a Whig, 1833–39 and 1841–43. He served as minister to Portugal, 1843–47, and later as governor of New Mexico Territory, 1857–61. Wickliffe (c. 1816–1850) was a native of Kentucky who served as *chargé d'affaires* to Sardinia, 1843–48.

4. Jane Knox Polk.

FROM LEWIS SANDERS, JR.¹

Dear Sir,

Grass Hills Ky. 29th Mar. 1847

I addressed a letter to day to the President, recommending Mr Rowan,² to be the successor of Mr. R. Wickliff Jur.³ I hope it may be convenient and agreeable to the Administration to give Mr. R. the appointment.

I congratulate you, upon getting *free* from Coln. Benton,⁴ *let him go*, the Democrats owe him nothing.

Mr. Calhoun is, where he was, in 1831⁵—striving to put down a democratic administration, foolishly thinking to put himself up—he makes no impression out of South C. unless it may be a district or two in Va.

The next representation in Con. from Ky. will be no better than the last, may be we will loose one.

In Trumbos,⁶ late French's⁷ there is a small democratic majority. In this district I think we will succeed.

Martin's⁸ district is decidedly Whig and we ought not to count on success there.

Tibbotts⁹ district is so nearly balanced, that a popular candidate on either side may succeed, neither party has Such at present—the probability is that young Stevenson¹⁰ of Kenton will be the Democratic candidate. I put this district down as doubtful.

In Bell's¹¹ district there will be no change. Majr. Caldwell,¹² could have beaten B. but the Democrats have no other man that could, (Caldwell is in the Army.)

There is a whig majority of 400 in Thomassons¹³ district, no change in it.

Lynn Boyds¹⁴ is the only sure district.

I respectfully suggest to you, that in making appointments, select young men when you can.

LEWIS SANDERS

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

1. Sanders (1781–1861) was a Virginia native and, later, a Kentucky entrepreneur and cattle and horse breeder. He was a vigorous supporter of Texas annexation and of Polk.

2. In 1848 Polk appointed John Rowan, Jr., *chargé d'affaires* to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, not to Sardinia.

3. Robert Wickliffe, Jr.

4. Thomas H. Benton.

5. The reference to 1831 and subsequent comment allude to the Nullification Crisis. In a standoff that stretched over five years, John C. Calhoun, vice president in 1831, clashed with Pres. Andrew Jackson over the right, claimed by Calhoun, of individual states to nullify laws deemed by state leaders to violate the U.S. Constitution. The confrontation turned on tariff bills signed into law by Jackson in 1828 and 1832. In 1833, Congress passed and Jackson signed into law a force act requiring South Carolina's compliance. Tensions escalated when Jackson also dispatched war ships to Charleston Harbor and South Carolina's government passed legislation that presumed to nullify Congress's force act. The matter was eventually resolved by compromise federal legislation in 1833 that modified the tariffs that had sparked the confrontation.

6. Kentucky native, attorney, and Whig Andrew A. Trumbo (1797–1871) represented a Kentucky district in the U.S. House, 1845–47. In 1848, he served as a presidential elector for that year's Democratic nominee, Lewis Cass.

7. Attorney Richard French (1792–1854) served three terms in the U.S. House as a Democrat from Kentucky, 1835–37, 1843–45, and 1847–49. In 1840, he unsuccessfully sought election to the Kentucky governorship.

8. A native of Virginia, Democrat John P. Martin (1811–62) served in the Kentucky legislature, 1841–43, and in the U.S. House, 1845–47.

9. John W. Tibbatts.

10. Virginia native, attorney, and Democrat John W. Stevenson (1812–86) was the son of former U.S. House Speaker Andrew Stevenson. He moved to Kentucky in 1841 and represented Kenton County in the state house, 1845–49. He later served in the U.S. House, 1857–61; as lieutenant governor, 1867; as governor, 1867–71; and in the U.S. Senate, 1871–77.

11. Joshua F. Bell (1811–70), a Kentucky Whig, served in the U.S. House, 1845–47, and as Kentucky secretary of state, 1849.

12. George A. Caldwell (1814–66) served two terms in the U.S. House as a Democrat from Kentucky, 1843–45 and 1849–51. He served in the Mexican War and won a brevet promotion to lieutenant colonel for heroism at the Battle of Chapultepec.

13. William P. Thomasson (1797–1882) served two terms in the U.S. House as a Whig from Kentucky, 1843–47, but declined his party's renomination for a third term.

14. Linn Boyd (1800–1859), a Democrat from Kentucky, served in the U.S. House, 1835–37 and 1839–55. He was Speaker of the House, 1851–55.

FROM EDMUND P. GAINES

Hd. Qus. Eastern Division
City of New York March 30th 1847

Dear Sir

Referring to my letters of the 25th and 26th instant soliciting orders to take measures for the relief of our slender forces beyond the Rio Grande, I can find but little in the news brought to this city since the last mentioned date, to change the then gloomy aspect of our affairs in that quarter.

Should General Taylor have concentrated his principal forces at Monteray, I am convinced he will be able to sustain himself with the main body of his troops at that Post as long as he can find ammunition and subsistence—even bread, corn, or mule meat, until troops can be raised and marched to his relief. But without such commanders as we have had in the person of Towson, and Wood, and Croghan and Morgan,¹ in the years 1813 and 1814, there is reason to apprehend the fall of Camargo and Matamoros and other places of minor importance, with military Stores of great value, before the Garrisons of these Posts can possibly be reinforced.

The seven years war of the Revolution, while our union was in Embryo, as well as the war of 1812 to 1815, when just emerging from national infancy—both *defensive wars*—waged against us by the most powerful monarchy of the known world, aided by many nations of Indians, exhibited unerring evidence of capacity on our part for *defen-*

sive war, and consequently for self Government. But happily for us we have never until the last year had any collision with any respectable civilized nation, calculated to develop our native resources of military mind and talent for vigorous offensive war. It was not extraordinary therefore that but few, if any of us, had devoted sufficient attention to the *theory* of this, to us novel species of war, to be able at once to comprehend all the preparatory measures, and other various duties which its successful prosecution necessarily demanded of us.

Without ever having permitted the humble faculties of my mind to be corroded by any exciting subject disconnected with my professional obligations, or of having my attention in any way diverted from the plain path of *duty* prescribed by law, and by my oath [of]² office—itself a provision of law—requiring me to serve the United States (the whole people of the United States) honestly and faithfully—and to obey the orders of the President of the United States according to the Rules and Articles of War, a plain path of duty described in a few words—namely: “*in peace to prepare for war*” and *in war “to repel invasion”*—and *vigorously to pursue and conquer the invader*; I have constantly directed my attention to the essential principles of the Art of War *as it is*, and *as it was in the last century*—when all the world was ignorant of the possibility of the discovery of any power whereby a large Army could be moved over a rocky surface by land three hundred (300) miles in one day, or over thirty miles in one day; a power by which a large Navy could possibly be propelled against head winds and a strong current like that of the Mississippi river three hundred (300) miles in one day, or over ten miles in one day. The actual discovery by our own citizens of such a power, comprehending a new principle applicable to war, by land and by sea, I have long considered as having produced an entire revolution in everything connected with offensive, as well as defensive war, emphatically suggesting to every Statesman, soldier and Seaman of the union the absolute necessity of much more care in preparing for war, and much more vigilance in its prosecution than the old Systems ever required. And moreover, that it is now more than ever the dictate of wisdom that Nations situated as we are, should abstain as much as possible from every description of offensive war; and when it becomes unavoidable, to lose no time in making preparations for its vigorous prosecution and consequently speedy termination; and above all, to embark in no such war without first securing every possible advantage which a bounteous providence has placed within our reach, of moving our men and military stores to the theatre of action by the *time saving, money-Saving and health-saving* process of *Steam power*. It was for this purpose that I have for some years past urged the propriety of

Rail Roads being constructed from Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri and Arkansas to the vital points of our national frontier, with war Steamers to strengthen our means of vigorous operations by Sea as well as by land. A Rail Road from Memphis to the Eastern border of Mexico, and another from St. Louis Mo. to Santa Fe at an expense of ten millions of dollars each, with twenty war Steamers such as we could have obtained from the best of western ship builders for one hundred and forty thousand dollars each, with sixty thousand volunteers such as we could obtain in two months, *instructed volunteers*, would have enabled us, aided by our small Regular Army, to terminate the war with Mexico in six months, and at an expense of much less than it has already cost, and probably for one tenth of what it may yet cost.

That I have found myself almost alone in many of these views, has been to me a source of deep regret, which for a time [. . .]³ only to prompt me to a more rigid Scrutiny of every aspect of the whole Subject, so that I might rather by a calm review of all its various bearings and tendencies correct my own errors, and place myself in a right position, than to put others in the wrong. And if in my late fervent investigation of the subject I have ever uttered a word of censure or complaint against the high public functionaries in and about the War Department for their extraordinary opposition, or for withholding from me that support which the interests of the Service obviously demanded, I take this occasion to say to the President of the United States, that the error on my part has been more the result of unfeigned regret to See our great public interests endangered by these apparent neglects or omissions, than from the deliberate—the weak or wicked attempt to denounce me as *insane*, and thus to destroy the credid of an age of incessant labor to establish my professional views, which though manifestly right, were wholly unsupported by Statesmen and others who in most other respects I had deemed to be the wisest and best men of the country.

EDMUND P. GAINES

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Nathan Towson, Eleazer Wood, George Croghan, and Ludowick Morgan. Maryland native Towson (1784–1854), a captain of artillery during the War of 1812, received two brevet promotions for gallantry during that war. He was appointed paymaster general for the army in 1819, earned a brevet promotion to brigadier general in 1834, and earned another to major general in 1849 for his service during the Mexican War. Massachusetts native Wood (1783–1814) graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1806. During the War of 1812 he served on the staff of Gen. William Henry Harrison in the northern frontier and as an engineer for Gen. Jacob Brown in the Niagara Frontier. He won brevet promotions to major and, for his actions at the Battle of Lundy's Lane,

to lieutenant colonel. Wood was killed on September 17, 1814, while leading an attack on British positions at Fort Erie. Kentucky native Croghan (1791–1849) became an aide-de-camp to Harrison shortly before the War of 1812's Battle of Tippecanoe (November 1811). Afterwards he obtained a commission as a captain in the regular army. Other promotions followed and, in 1846, he participated in Zachary Taylor's invasion of northern Mexico. Morgan (?–1814) served as a major during the War of 1812. His tactical shrewdness in August 1814 prevented the British from capturing Buffalo, N.Y., and the Fort Erie garrison.

2. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

3. Word illegible, faded ink.

FROM JOHN M. PATTON¹

My Dear Sir

[Richmond, Va. c. March 30, 1847]²

I beg leave to express to my you my thanks for the appointment conferred by you on my son³ and especially my gratification in learning from him the manifestations of personal kindness towards myself evinced by you in declaring your intention to appoint him.

I trust if he have an opportunity of doing so he will do himself credit and the country good service in the subordinate sphere in which he will be called on to act.

Allow me to congratulate you upon the Brilliant successes of the American arms in Mexico—of which we received information this Morning.⁴ A salute in honor of our Victory is now being fired by order of our Governor.⁵

While I have my pen in hand on the only occasion on which I have written to you since the commencement of your administration I avail myself of it, to say to you, what I have frequently expressed to otheers—that in my opinion no administration in my time has been more steady in a faithful adherence to the principles it professed when seeking power—none which has more uniformly and firmly maintained the sound and salutary do doctrines of the States rights republican school.

As one of the people I tender you therefore the homage of my thanks.

Allow me to offer to Mrs. Polk my most respectful compliments—and to assure you that I am with the highest respect.

JNO. M. PATTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Marked “*not official*” on the cover. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received April 3, 1847.

1. A Virginia Democrat and attorney, John M. Patton (1797–1858) served in the U.S. House, 1830–38, and as acting governor of Virginia, 1841.

2. Place and approximate date identified from postmark and through content analysis.

3. Polk appointed Isaac W. Patton (1828–90) a second lieutenant of infantry on March 8, 1847. Resigning from the army in 1855, he relocated to Louisiana, where he became a sugar and cotton planter and held various public offices, including mayor of New Orleans, 1878–80.

4. Reference is to the Battle of Buena Vista.

5. Virginia-born Democrat and lawyer William “Extra Billy” Smith (1797–1887) was that state’s governor, 1846–49 and 1864–65. He represented a Virginia district in the U.S. House, 1841–43 and 1853–61. In 1844 he served as a presidential elector for the Polk ticket.

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

Dear Sir

[Washington City] Marh 31. [1847]¹

I was up very late last night and recommenced early this mornng. Five clerks hard at work—will be with you at most by half past three—*this* day. My report being read to you yesterday is dated the 30th.²

I presume you can prepare your order to Secretares of war & na[v]y³ so as to send to them this day. You shall have my report at half past [. . .].⁴

R. J. WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk’s AE: received March 31, 1847.

1. Place identified through content analysis; year identified from Polk’s AE.

2. Reference is to a report Polk had requested from Walker concerning the collection of U.S. duties at Mexican ports occupied by U.S. forces. The president, according to his diary entries of March 27 and 30, 1847, was dissatisfied with Walker’s original version of March 27 and asked him to prepare a revision. See the revised report in *CMPP*, pp. 524–29.

3. Letter inserted to complete probable meaning. Reference is to orders that Polk planned to submit to the army and navy secretaries, William L. Marcy and John Y. Mason, implementing policies enunciated in Walker’s aforementioned report. See the orders of March 31 in *CMPP*, pp. 529–30.

4. Character obliterated, ink blot.

APRIL

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir,

Nashville, Tenn. 3^d Ap 1847

The contest of the season has fairly opened, and the Browns, Aaron & Neil¹ addressed the people in the Court House yard today. I was very much engaged elsewhere but I heard a part of the Governors² speech in which he evidently got the better of his adversary. Neil S. opened the debate and amongst other things assailed the War as the President's war, brought on by his claiming to the Rio Grande, which was a false claim. The Governor in reply asserted that there was not an *American* of common place information, who had not pushed the claim to the same extent when speaking or acting on the subject: enumerated Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Adams, Clay, Webster, Calhoun,³ and then with much address, marshalled all these authorities against the unprotected assertion of the gentleman.

Neil, like every other Whig came badly out of an attempt to discriminate between the War and "Old Rough & Ready,"⁴ whom he announced as his man for the Presidency.

After the speaking, all the democrats seemed really satisfied. I saw but two Whigs, one of them said that Neil S. had improved in speaking, the other said that all such speaking was nonsense and he would hear no more of it.

Gust. Henry,⁵ as I expected, was very anxious for the nomination and it is said, that he is greatly dissatisfied with Foster⁶ to whom he charges his defeat, as he probably may.

What think you of your old crony John Bell⁷ in the lower house of our assembly where you began many years ago. He thereby gets the advantage of Foster, with their own party. Foster had written a foolish letter in which he had intended to be very smart, declining the place, alleging that he had long since passed that point. His object was to conciliate the young men who desired the place, but Bell outdema-gogues him by claiming that no man has passed or got beyond being a Representative of the people where they may choose to employ him.

Meigs⁸ will be the most harmless man of talents they could have selected for the Senate. I only fear they may yet rule him off.

Bolling Gordon, as was apprehended, has repudiated the Lawrenceburg Convention⁹ and is running on an independent ticket after having canvassed the district with a view to the Convention and participated in the [partisain]¹⁰ cries.

Our accounts to this morning are up to the 13' Ult from Vera Cruz when our people had invested the city. We have unauthentic though reliable accts of the repulse of Santa-Ana on the 22' & 23' Feby.¹¹ The aspect of affairs at this moment is better than since Palo Alto, and if we conquer a Peace before the 1 July we will effectually have demolished internal & external traitors.

DANIEL GRAHAM

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private" on the cover. From Polk's AE: received April 12, 1847.

1. Aaron V. Brown and Neill S. Brown. During the 1830s and 1840s, Tennessee-born lawyer Neill S. Brown (1810–86) helped to lead the Whig party in his native state. In August 1847, he ran against and defeated incumbent Democratic governor Aaron V. Brown. In 1849, Neill Brown lost a reelection bid for that office to Democrat William S. Trousdale. In 1850, Whig president Zachary Taylor appointed Neill Brown minister to Russia, where he served until 1853.

2. Aaron V. Brown.

3. Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John C. Calhoun.

4. Zachary Taylor. His troops gave him this epithet during his command, 1837–40, in the Second Seminole War.

5. Gustavus A. Henry (1804–88).

6. Ephraim H. Foster (1794–1854), a Nashville lawyer, was one of the early leaders of the Whig party in Tennessee. Appointed to the U.S. Senate after the resignation of Felix Grundy in 1838, he won election to a full term that commenced in March 1839 but resigned the following November amid disagreements with the state legislature's Democratic majority. He later served an interim term in the Senate, 1843–45.

7. Tennessee lawyer John Bell (1797–1869) was successively a member of the Jacksonian, Anti-Jacksonian, Whig, American, and Constitutional Union parties. He served in the U.S. House, 1827–41, and the U.S. Senate, 1847–59; he was Speaker of the House, 1834–35, but lost his bid for reelection to that post to Polk. After heading Hugh L. White's 1836 presidential campaign in Tennessee, Bell became one of the state's most powerful Whigs. In 1860, he ran unsuccessfully for president on the Constitutional Union ticket.

8. Return J. Meigs III (1801–91), a Davidson county lawyer, was court reporter for the state of Tennessee in 1839. He was appointed U.S. attorney for Middle Tennessee in 1841 and represented Davidson County as a Whig in the Tennessee Senate, 1847–49.

9. On March 29, 1847, Lawrenceburg, Tenn., was the site of the state Democratic convention.

10. Word uncertain, ink blot.

11. Battle of Buena Vista.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Sir: Navy Department, April 3d 1847

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 31st of March ult. with the papers which accompanied it,¹ and respectfully inform you, that after consultation with the Secretary of War,² I have addressed to the officers commanding the Naval Forces of the United States in the Pacific Ocean and in the Gulf of Mexico, respectively, letters of instructions conforming to your directions, of which I herewith enclose a copy.³

J Y. MASON

L, copy. DNA–RG 45.

1. Mason refers to Polk's orders regarding tariffs at occupied Mexican ports, with which Polk enclosed Robert J. Walker's report of March 30 on the subject and Polk's instructions to Walker for that report. See all these documents in *CMPP*, pp. 523–30. See also letter and notes in Walker to Polk, March 31, 1847.

2. William L. Marcy.

3. Enclosure not found. Mason refers to James Biddle of the Pacific Squadron and Matthew C. Perry of the Home Squadron. Philadelphia native Biddle (1783–1848) joined the navy in 1800; negotiated treaties with Turkey, 1829–30, and China, 1845; and commanded the Pacific Squadron, March–July 1847.

FROM ARCHIBALD ATKINSON¹

Sir, Portsmouth Va Apl 4. 1847

I had the honor to receive by my worthy friend Dr. Collins,² your very kind & respectful remembrance of me,³ and thank you for your wishes for my success in the Congressional canvass in which I am now

engaged. I expect to beat my opponent, and will do so from 150 to 200 votes. There was so dissatisfaction prevailing among some in this town growing out of their not succeeding in some of their wishes about places &c &c. but my frd. Collins who has great influence here has come in good time & aided me in putting down the clamour. He is a strong man of our party & has the esteem and confidence of the working men. I regard it a favor on your part to grant him leave of absence. Whiggery must not succeed in the 1st District. I beg you Sir to accept assurances of my high regard.

A ATKINSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received April 10, 1847; “Private.”

1. Virginia attorney Atkinson (1792–1872) fought in the War of 1812. He practiced law and served in the Virginia legislature before serving as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–49. In 1847, Atkinson defeated Whig lawyer Samuel Watts 2,238 to 2,166 votes—a 72 vote margin.

2. A native of Virginia, physician William Collins (c. 1804–1855) served as first auditor of the Treasury, 1844–49.

3. Letter not found.

FROM JOHN J. CRITTENDEN

Sir,

Frankfort [Ky.]¹—April 6th 1847

I am informed that it is probable Mr. Wickliffe² will shortly return from his mission to Sardinia. In that event I beg leave respectfully to recommend for his successor Mr. John Rowan,³ of Bardstown, Kenty. I do not intend to write a eulogy of him, but I must say, that, in my judgment, he is entirely competent to, & worthy of that station. He is a gentleman of talent & intelligence, & of a very high & chivalrous tone of feeling & character, with a deportment, & manners, dignified & polished.

Mr Rowan has always been an active & influential opponent of the political party to which I have been attached, but I value & esteem him as a gentleman, & personal friend, and it gives me pleasure to bear testimony to his many high & noble qualities.

I cherish the earnest hope that you will find it agreeable to your feelings & your sense of duty to confer upon him this office whenever it may be vacated by Mr. Wickliffe.

J. J. CRITTENDEN

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

1. State identified through content analysis.

2. Robert Wickliffe, Jr.
3. John Rowan, Jr.

TO KENNETH RAYNER

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 6th 1847

My public engagements have prevented an earlier answer to your kind letter of the 12th ultimo. I thank you for the invitation you give me to accept the hospitalities of your house, in passing Raleigh, on the occasion of my contemplated visit to my *Alma mater*, at the next Commencement. *Judge Mason*¹ and myself at the solicitation of several friends, have promised to visit the University² at that time, and will do so, unless the state of public affairs should be such as to render it improper to leave the seat of Government, which we do not anticipate. If I do so, I must be absent for the shortest practicable period, and it is not probable that I will be able to spend even a single day in Raleigh. In declining therefore your kind invitation, I am sure my Dear Sir: that you will properly appreciate—the considerations, which may compel me to do so. In passing Raleigh it will give me sincere pleasure to see Mrs. Rayner³ and yourself, and should it be compatible with your convenience, I shall be much gratified to have the pleasure of your company to Chapel Hill. *Mrs. Polk* speaks of accompanying me, and will probably do so. She joins me in desiring to be kindly presented to *Mrs. Rayner* whom we both remember with sincere regard.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NcU. Addressed to Raleigh, N.C. See also ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP.

1. John Y. Mason.
2. University of North Carolina.
3. Susan Spratt Polk Rayner.

FROM JAMES S. SMITH¹

Dear Friend,

Stewartsboro Ten. April 7, 1847

I would not trespass upon your time untill now, and not now, if I thought you pressed—by day and by night with solicitation for Office. I write as an old *Friend* and not as an office seeker. I am able by my own energies to provide all things Needful for Me and Mine.

I Congratulate you Dear Sir upon the eminent Success of your Administration So far. I would not If I Could have the prosperity of our whole Country any better than it now is. Indeed I know not how it be greater. Every branch of Industry is moore Richly Rewarding the Labourer than at any time heretofore. While the unexampled resources

of our Country under our wise and happy Revenue Tariff are Not only astonishing our own Citizens, but the whole civilized *World*. Much of this happy state of things the Country owes to you. From your long acquaintance with me, I know you will not accuse me of flattering you in any thing I may say. Of this I trust I am incapable. Then I do think your popularity was never so great at any time as at the present time.

We will Carry this state by a larger Democratic vote next august than we ever have done Since the Birth of young Whigery. Of my own County My loved Rutherford—I will hope even against appearances. We will have a Ticket: and I have some hope of its success. But the whigs have a settled and confirmed Majority—which we have hewn down from three Hundred to 150—and we will cut it down still lower—Mind this.

I know with your voluminous Correspondence short letters are the most acceptable—but I cannot close this without A Word on our Mexican War. Our Arms have Triumphed. Our Soldiers have covered themselves with Glory. But the war still Continues. It must be closed and closed right. Can Taylor do it. I fear not. He is a Capital Fighter—but I do not think him capable of Managing the War, or of closing it. He cant get a sufficient number of *mules* at the Right time—nor Waggon enough—Just when they are Needed. In a word—He lacks that keen foresight which always *has* every thing readdy. Then Can Scot do up the thing right. Ah that hasty “plate of soup.”² He is not the Man in my Judgement. Benton is the man for the *accasion*; But congress set him aside—virtually. Then what is to done?

You My Dear sir Are the Constitutional Commander of all our Armies. Then my Calm—my considerate—My mature advice is that you take Command in Person.³ You have moore energy Moore Sagacity and moore promptness, than any man I ever knew. Whatever you have undertaken—has been aided by an energy & zeal unrivald—and the thought at first may but amuse you of becoming a Military Hero. Yet you are the Man. My sugjestions would be, see how this campaign ends & if it does not end well—in the month of october call for Volunteers. There would be one universal Rush to your standard, and the end would be—by Briliant series of moovements and attacks a dictation of the terms of Peace in the Citty of Mexico. In this event I would claim the right of accompaning you. I am not jesting. Dallas⁴ can act as President ad Interim—and there is nothing of pressing importance to confine you in Washington. You have the Constitional or Phisical & Mental ability will you use them. However much you may be amused at my sugjestion I hope you will find leasure to drop me a line as an old Friend &c.

Give my best Respects to Mrs Polk.

JAMES S SMITH

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received April 16, 1847.

1. North Carolina physician James S. Smith (1790–1859) served as a Democratic Republican in the U.S. House, 1817–21; in the state house, 1821–22; and as a delegate to the state constitutional convention of 1835.

2. Winfield Scott used this phrase in a May 1846 letter to War Secretary William L. Marcy. Responding to a letter from Marcy concerning Mexican War matters, Scott wrote that Marcy's letter was "received at about 6 pm, as I sat down to a hasty plate of soup." Scott's letter, with its oddly imperious gastro-nomic reference, was leaked to newspapers by Polk operatives. The turn of phrase reaffirmed a reputation for vanity that had long dogged a commander already tagged with the sobriquet "Old Fuss and Feathers."

3. In offering this suggestion, Smith perhaps had in mind events of October 1794, in which Pres. George Washington traveled to western Pennsylvania and reviewed troops dispatched there to suppress the short-lived "Whiskey Rebellion." The insurgency had been mounted by grain farmers, protesting a newly enacted excise tax on domestically produced spirits. The action constituted the only instance in which a sitting president personally commanded troops in a military theater.

4. George M. Dallas.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Dear Sir

Bolivar T. Apl 8. 1847

Enclosed I hand you my annual statement of receipts & disbursements.¹ The rents for last year are all collected & the lands rented for the present Year. The Nett income from rents for the present year will be, \$250.00 not quite so much as last year, owing to the lands being much worn by constant culture, & I have had more land put in small grain this year than usual.

You will percive in my acct that I have given you credit by five Dollars to be paid to the Editors of the Washington Union. Bills & McNeal² are now subscribers to the Tri-Weekly Union³—please have it [directed]⁴ to them & charged to my individual address & the payment to reach back to the end of the year Bills and McNeal paid for, which I think closed in February.

I have not yet heard from, or found, Mr Acton⁵ late Editor of the Jackson Republican whom you requested me to pay Twelve Dollars to.

Your letter of the 13th Ult has been received, & your request will be complied with. From the enclosed a/c you see I have in my hands of your own Means \$226.18. I have not heard from Mr Brown⁶ since his return home, whatever amnt he may want on your acct I will furnish. Should any thing occur to prevet him from calling on me, & you are advised of it, you can then direct what I shall do with the \$226.18 which I shall hold for further instructions unless applied for by Mr Brown.

E. P. McNEAL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received April 18, 1847; McNeal enclosed account for 1846 "containing a statement of monies collected for rent & disbursements made, on acct. of M. T. Polk's Heirs. . . . Amt. due M. T. Polk's Heirs—\$269.50. Amt. pd. for S. W. Polk's estate—taxes—\$3.50."

1. ADS. DLC-JKP.

2. Thomas Ritchie was the Washington *Union's* editor; John P. Heiss (c. 1810–1865), its business manager. A merchant and postmaster at Bolivar, Tenn., John H. Bills (1800–1871) married, in 1839, Ezekiel P. McNeal's sister, Prudence Tate McNeal. John Bills and Ezekiel McNeal had formed a business partnership in Bolivar in the late 1820s.

3. Washington *Union*. "Tri-Weekly" here refers to publication frequency; the Washington City newspaper was also, at the time, published in a daily edition.

4. Word uncertain.

5. Thomas M. Acton.

6. Aaron V. Brown

TO WILLIAM D. MOSELEY¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 9th 1847

I have received several letters from you within the last few months,² and have read them with interest, as I always do every thing which proceeds from you. If I have not answered them I am sure you will attribute the failure to the true cause. Such has been the constant pressure of my public engagements for months past, that it is very rarely that I can seize even a short interval from business, to attend to the correspondence of my friends. I write now simply to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letters, and to thank you for them; and to add, that *Judge Mason*³ and myself at the solicitation for several friends, have [planned]⁴ to visit our *Alma Mater* at the next Commencement, which takes place, I believe on the first thursday in June, and to express the sincere gratification it would afford me to meet you there on that occasion. I should [like]⁵ to visit with you, the scenes of our early youth. Many pleasing reminiscences would be brought to mind. Would you not like to visit the old chapel, the recitation hall, and especially the room we occupied together for so many months. We should meet too—*William M. Green*, *Hugh D. Waddell*, *Robt. H. Morrison*,⁶ and probably others of our class, who still survive. Our friend *Walker Anderson*⁷ called to see me, a few days ago, and I was pleased to learn from him, that you spoke of visiting the University at that time. I hope you may find it convenient to do so.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Tallahassee, Fla.

1. Moseley (1795–1863) was Polk’s classmate—and apparently for some period his roommate—at the University of North Carolina. He served in the North Carolina Senate, 1829–37, but lost his gubernatorial race in 1835. He subsequently moved to Florida, where he served in the territorial legislature; in 1845 he won election as the first governor of the state of Florida.

2. Moseley to Polk, July 15, 1846; Moseley to Polk, August 1846.

3. John Y. Mason.

4. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.

5. Word uncertain.

6. Green, Waddell, and Morrison were members of Polk’s graduating class at the University of North Carolina in 1818. Waddell (1799–1878) served as a Whig in the North Carolina House, 1828–29 and 1835, and Senate, 1836–37, 1840–41, and 1844–48; he was elected Speaker during his first senatorial term. Morrison (1798–1889) became a Presbyterian minister and the first president of Davidson College, 1836–40.

7. A native of Virginia, Anderson (1801–57) studied law in North Carolina and briefly taught history and literature at the University of North Carolina, 1831–32. Polk appointed him naval agent at Pensacola, Fla., a post he held 1845–49. Anderson served as chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court, 1851–53.

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

Dear Sir

[Washington City]¹ Apl 9. 1847

I was besieged all day yesterday by an army of Bankers and Brokers from the great cities on th subject of the loan,² and they have renewed the attack this morning. It is my duty to see them and give them one & all encouragement to bid at a premium for the loan & to say all that I truthfully can say in its favor. I shall kept thus engaged all this day & tomorrow. At an early hour this morning I saw Gen M’Calla.³ He is to see me *again* to day or tomorrow desiring time for reflection. Should he call on you & as is the truth you express to him to him *your strong desire* to place your friend Mr Graham⁴ in the 2d auditor’s office informing him of his *very peculiar* qualifications for the office & *place it on that ground* he will probably agree to the change especially if you should manifest a strong desire on the subject. I have done my best & have I think made some impression upon him.

R J WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk’s AE: received April 9, 1847.

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. On the loan bill, see letter and notes in Polk to George Bancroft, January 30, 1847.

3. A native of Kentucky, John M. McCalla (1793–1873) became a brigadier general during the War of 1812. He served as U.S. marshal for Kentucky during the Jackson and Van Buren administrations. Having campaigned for Polk in 1844, he was appointed second auditor of the Treasury by Polk in 1845.

4. Daniel Graham.

FROM JOHN M. BASS

Dr Sir

Nashville Apl 10 1847

At the request of Gov'r Brown¹ & in explanation of a draft at 3 days sight² drawn by him on you in favour of W W Masterson³ for \$166.25 I forward you the enclosed two papers.⁴ The shingles were contracted for by me for re-covering the house before the sale to you & by the contract with Gov'r B. were to be taken by you. The present roof leaks a good deal & I think it would be a matter of importance to have the house recovered at once or as soon as the weather becomes settled. The shingles are in possession of Vannoy & Turbeville⁵ & securely planked up to prevent their being stolen. Mrs Catron⁶ informs me that Mrs Polk contemplates a visit to the state this spring & will while here make a Reconnoissance of the premises, it will afford me pleasure to act as her aide de camp on so important an occasion. Please present me respectfully to her & I would add the respects of Mrs Bass⁷ but that she is in N Orleans.

JNO M BASS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received April 18, 1847; answered April 19, 1847.

1. Aaron V. Brown.

2. The date on which a bill or draft is payable.

3. William W. Masterson (c. 1811–1860s), a farmer, became postmaster at Green Hill, Wilson County, Tenn., in 1841. He married Maria G. Grundy, Felix Grundy's daughter, in 1838.

4. Bass enclosed an autograph receipt signed by Masterson and dated March 29, 1847, for the shingles; a statement signed "Vannoy & Turbiville" and dated March 29 of the shingles' value; and an undated and autograph signed description by Brown of the shingles' purchase and location. DLC–JKP.

5. Mason Vannoy (c. 1795–1860s?), a Nashville carpenter born in Kentucky, apparently owned a shop with either Miller Turbeville (?–late 1840s?) of Nashville or carpenter and Tennessee native Calvin Turbeville (c. 1827–1850s?) of Nashville.

6. Matilda Childress Catron (1802–72), first cousin and confidant of Sarah Childress Polk, was the wife of John Catron.

7. Malvina Chenault Grundy (1809–63), Felix Grundy's daughter, married John M. Bass in 1829.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir:

Washington City April 12th 1847

I wrote to you on the 29th ultimo, stating the terms on which you were authorized to sell my house and lot to *Mr Young*.¹ If he accepts either of my offers, I wish to apply the proceeds of the sale, towards the payment of the *Grundy-house*² at Nashville, which I have bought. If *Mr Young* pays any money, in hand, I wish you to hand it over to *Mr V. K. Stevenson*³ of Nashville—who is my agent. If you sell on time, you can hand over the note, to *Mr Stevenson*. In either event you will of course take *Stevenson's* receipt. I think I have offered the property very low, and calculate from what *Mr Nicholson*⁴ told me, when he was here, that he will probably take it. I offered it at the price I did, because having purchased a residence at Nashville, I will have no use for it when I return. Had I accepted *Mr Young's* offer of \$3.000— on one and two years time, I should of course have lost the rent for the next two years—which is \$350.—and this would have made the property bring me only \$2650, which is too low. If *Young* should make a better offer, but not quite equal to mine I would not miss the opportunity to sell for a difference of a trifling amount. I would for instance, be willing to take his offer at one & two years, without interest, provided I retained the rent notes of *Houston*,⁵ and let *Mr Young* make his own bargain for obtaining possession of the property, before the expiration of the term for which it is rented, which will be on the 1st of January 1849. If he could get possession for less—than the rent I receive, he would make that much. I will only add that I wish to sell the property—as I will need the proceeds—but am not in a condition to make it necessary for me to sell at a sacrifice. If *Mr Young* has not accepted either of my offers, I wish you to write to me, the best offer he may have made, and give me your opinion whether I ought to take it or not. It may be that property is not estimated now, as it was when I left Columbia, and of this you will be able to form a better judgment than I can, at this instance. I request that you will write to me your opinion on the subject.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked “Private.”

1. Evan Young.
2. Felix Grundy.
3. Vernon K. Stevenson.

4. Alfred O. P. Nicholson.
5. Russell M. Houston.

TO JAMES HAMILTON, JR.¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 12th 1847

I received some days ago your two letters of the 19th and 23rd ultimo,² written at New Orleans. They gave me the first intimation I had received from you, that you would be willing to accept any situation in the army. I have delayed [. . . was because]³ I have been embarrassed on the subject. I hear that you have been informed in the [. . .] of your opinions by none but highly patriotic considerations. I deem it unnecessary to state the circumstances, under which I find myself placed, in reference to the Maj'r. Generalship, which you indicate a willingness to accept, but am sure if you knew them, you would properly appreciate them. Saying to you that they are such, as must prevent me from conferring on you the office of Maj'r. Genl., I shall esteem it, My Dear Sir: a favor to receive from you, your views of the operations which in your judgment would be proper in the further prosecution of the War. These you are kind enough to say, in one of your letters you will give me if I desire it. I hope that after the recent successes of your army there may be a prospect of obtaining a speedy peace, though of this I have no assurance. While we are compelled, by the stubborn refusal of the enemy, to open negotiations, or even to [start] preparations for peace to prosecute the war,⁴ my policy will continue to be what it has heretofore been. This war must be prosecuted with the utmost possible vigour. In haste . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Russell County, Ala., and marked “(Private).”

1. South Carolina lawyer and planter Hamilton (1786–1857) entered politics as a Democratic Republican and later became a Jacksonian, serving in the U.S House, 1822–29, and as South Carolina governor, 1830–32. During the Nullification Crisis his enthusiasm for Jackson and free trade waned. As early as 1836, he became a supporter of the Texas republic and was wooed by its government to assume various roles. He declined military commissions but, relocating to Texas, accepted a series of financial and diplomatic posts—most of which involved securing funds for the young government's treasury from foreign sources.

2. Letters not found.

3. Words here and below illegible or uncertain, light and blurred ink transfer.

4. Polk probably intended to place “to prosecute the war,” which he inserted with a caret, between the commas.

FROM ALFRED O. P. NICHOLSON

Dear Sir:

Nashville Apl. 13. 1847

I promised to give you the name of a young man in Williamson County for one of the Lieutenancies but when I got home I heard he was a candidate for the Legislature and therefore doubted whether he could accept. I have now seen him and he desires to get the appointmt—his name is Lewis C. Wagener.¹ Our friends in Williamson will be pleased at his appointmt for several reasons. The canvas is fairly opened in Tennessee and it never opened with brighter prospects. I have heard the two candidates for Govnr on two occasions and I assure you our own Brown makes a plain case of it.² The war is almost the sole question of discussion. Neil Brown takes strong ground against you and rides Old Rough and Ready³ as his candidate all the time. He is making no headway however. The indications are stronger for us than I have seen them since 1835. Tell Mr. Buchanan that I go him a bucket of champagne that Tennessee does this work better than Pennsylvania. We will carry our Govnor and Legislature—that you may write down as a fixed fact. Bell⁴ is running for the Legislature but be not surprised if he is either run off the track or beaten—the Foster⁵ forces are sore and grumbling. We have a beautiful race between Barrow and Calhoun⁶—dog eat dog—the present signs are so strongly in favor of Calhoun—he is out hot & strong for the war: Be assure that our party is in the right trim for a splendid fight and set Tennessee down as right side up. We intend to gain a victory worth bragging about—indeed we are resolved to take the place of the Old Keystone until she rights herself up again. If it occurs to you, tell Cave Johnson I have not heard from him on the case of Price and White.⁷ Present my respects to Mrs. Polk.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “(Private).” From Polk’s AE: received April 21, 1847.

1. Lewis C. Wagener, or Waggoner, (c. 1819–1880s or 1890s?) of Williamson County, Tenn., had become a Humphreys County schoolteacher by 1850 and Franklin, Tenn., postmaster by 1855.

2. The two candidates for governor were Democrat Aaron V. Brown and Whig Neill S. Brown.

3. Zachary Taylor.

4. John Bell.

5. Ephraim H. Foster.

6. Washington Barrow and William Calhoun. A Whig, Calhoun lost a race for a seat in the U.S. House in 1849 by only seventy-eight votes.

7. A congressional joint resolution of March 3, 1847, directed the postmaster general to settle the account of M. A. Price and E. A. White for transportation

of mail in Tennessee in 1837. "Joint Resolution for the Relief of M. A. Price and E. A. White." *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Number 15. Johnson calculated the government's debt to them and ordered their payment on April 6.

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir

Columbia [Tenn.]¹ [April]² the 14th 1847

I have recd yours of the 29th March, with special instructions about sale of your house & lot & stable lot. I have sold them with a small change which I think will suit you (in my opinion) as well as the terms you propose. I have sold to Evan Young for three thousand dollars \$20,00.³ cash the first of January next & \$1000 in one year with Interest or at his option to pay the \$3000. down when he gets possession, which he is to get the 1st of January next. According to your letter of Instructions to me I can give possession the first of any year by giving R M Houston⁴ timely Notice which I have done. He has Mooved to Nashville & is renting it out, to other persons. And I do not think their will be any difficulty on that score. We will go in to rightings⁵ in a few days or as soon as we hear from R. M. Houston. . . .

ROBT. CAMPBELL JR

N.B. You get this years rent which is nearly eaquel to the Interest. RC.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received and answered April 22, 1847.

1. State identified through content analysis.
2. Campbell erroneously wrote "March." Correct month identified through content analysis.
3. Campbell probably meant to write "\$2,000."
4. Russell M. Houston.
5. The amending of a document, such as a contract or account, with correct information.

TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 14th 1847

I avail myself of the departure on tomorrow, of a bearer of dispatches to the army,¹ to write you hastily, and to say to you that he will convey to you, a commission as Majr General—of the army—in place of *Genl Benton* declined. By a late act of Congress I was authorized to appoint two *Majr Generals*, to command the forces recently authorized to be raised, who are to serve during the war with Mexico.² On the last night of the late Session I nominated *Col. Benton* of Mo. & *Col Cumming*³ of Georgia, for these important commands. Since the adjournment of

Congress, they have both declined to accept. You succeed *Genl. Benton* who ranked *Genl. Cumming*. Your commission, was made out and signed on yesterday the 13th Instant.⁴ To day I have appointed *Genl. Quitman*⁵ a Majr Genl. to succeed *Genl Cumming*. His commission was dated on this day (the 14th), so that as you ranked *Genl. Quitman* as a Brigadier of Volunteers, so you will now rank him as a Majr General. In conferring on you this high command, I have taken it for granted that it was your desire—to continue in the service during the War. Your form will require that, you should see the contest closed, and I have said to the Secrtary of War,⁶ that I had no doubt you would distinguish yourself if an opportunity should occur. I have appointed *Col. Cushing*⁷ who commands the Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers, to be a Brigadier General to fill one of the places, which will be vacated by the promotion of *Genl. Quitman* and *yourself*. He is a man of fine [. . .]⁸ and deserves well of the country, for his great exertions in raising a Regiment of Volunteers in Massachusetts, against the influence of the wealth & of the aristocracy of that Federal State.

Before this reaches you you will have heard from a general order—issued from the War Department and forwarded to the Head Quarters of the army, that in pursuance of authority conferred on me by a late act of Congress, I propose to accept the services of such of the volunteers now in service as may at the expiration of their present time, be engaged to serve during the War.⁹ I hope a considerable number of them may do so. All who do, will be entitled to a double bounty—in land or money as they may prefer. Each soldier will be entitled to 160 acres of land or \$100., as he may prefer, in Treasury scrip bearing an interest of 6 pr ct. for the 12. months service, and if he re-volunteers for the war, will be entitled to a second bounty of equal amount in land or money besides the \$12. he will receive on being recalled into service. I am anxious to secure the services of as many of them as practicable, and mention the fact of the double bounty, lest it should not be understood. In the course of two or three days, I shall probably make a requisition on the States for six or eight additional Regiments of volunteers for the War. My plan is to make *Genl. Scott's*, column about 20.000 strong of effective men, and to have about half that number with *Genl. Taylor* on the Rio Grande frontier. I have some anxiety that the number who are now, in the field, & who may re-volunteer may be as large as possible, and therefore I call your special attention to the subject.

I have no reliable information, as to what the disposition of the Mexican rulers may be, towards peace, since the late successes of our arms. If they still refuse to negotiate, for peace, you may rely upon my fixed purpose to prosecute the War, with the utmost possible vigour. Nothing shall be wanting on the part of the Government to secure, this

end. I hope the military contributions, which I have lately ordered to be levied, may have a good effect upon the population of Mexico, and some influence in inducing their rulers to make a speedy & honorable peace.

Mr Trist who goes, to the army as the bearer of important dispatches, is a gentleman of high character and possesses my entire confidence. He married the Grand-daughter of *Mr Jefferson*,¹⁰ was for some years consul at Havanna, and is now the chief clerk of the Department of State. He has repeatedly discharged the duties of Secretary of State during the temporary absence of *Mr Buchanan* from the seat of Government. I have said to him that you were my personal friend and that he could confer freely and *confidentially* with you. *Genl. Scott* will of course be informed of the object of his mission, to the Head Quarters of the army, but it is deemed important that this should not be known, in the army, at least for a season, & until the course of the Mexican Government in reference to it shall be made known. I have said to him, that he had my permission to communicate it *confidentially* to you.

Though I am at this distance from the army I give much of my time, in directing the orders, many of them, of details, in making the necessary provision for its successful operations. In truth the war is now the all-absorbing question of my administration. The country is prosperous in a degree almost without an example, and if the war can be brought to a successful termination, a long course of prosperity is before us, and I shall retire at the close of my term, with the satisfaction of believing that I have rendered my country some service.

Wishing you continued health and a large share of, military glory, in your arduous service: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I received a letter from your brother¹¹ in Tennessee, a few days ago, stating the fact, that your hemp-establishment had been consumed by fire, and asking indulgence from the Government, in filling the contract which it seems you had made, before you entered the army. The matter has been referred to the Secretary of the Navy,¹² and proper attention will be given to it. Your loss I infer was not a serious one. They mention nothing of your family, from which I presume they were in mild health. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Mexico and delivered by Nicholas P. Trist to the care of Henry Wilson at Veracruz; marked "(Private & unofficial)."

1. Born in Virginia and raised in Louisiana, lawyer and planter Nicholas P. Trist (1800–1874) attended the U.S. Military Academy but did not graduate. He read law in Thomas Jefferson's office and, in 1824, married

Jefferson's granddaughter Virginia Jefferson Randolph. After stints as Jefferson's private secretary, State Department clerk, and Pres. Andrew Jackson's private secretary, he became consul at Havana, Cuba, in 1833. He became chief clerk in the State Department in 1845. Due to his fluency in Spanish and experience in Latin American affairs, he was sent to Mexico as a State Department special agent in spring 1847 to negotiate an end to the Mexican War. Trist had a tumultuous relationship with Polk and other U.S. civil and military leaders during that assignment. Even so, Polk accepted the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the peace compact that Trist and his Mexican counterparts signed on February 2, 1848.

2. Polk signed the law on March 3. "An Act making Provision for an additional Number of general Officers, and for other Purposes." *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 61.

3. Georgia-born planter William Cumming (1788–1863) was twice wounded in the War of 1812 and concluded that service in 1815 at the rank of colonel. In 1818, he declined an appointment as army quartermaster general at the rank of brigadier general. Three decades later, in March 1847, he declined an appointment as major general tendered by Polk.

4. Polk enclosed the commission, not found, with this letter.

5. New York native and Natchez, Miss., lawyer John A. Quitman (1799–1858) served in the Mississippi House, 1826–27; as state chancellor, 1828–35; and as acting governor, 1835–36. Polk appointed him a brigadier general of volunteers in July 1846 and a major general in the regular army in April 1847. He won plaudits for his leadership in several battles of the Mexican War, including the U.S. captures of Veracruz and Mexico City. He left the army in July 1848. He again served as Mississippi governor, 1850–51, resigning the post in the wake of federal charges brought against him for involvement in Narciso López's Cuba filibuster conspiracy.

6. William L. Marcy.

7. Caleb Cushing.

8. Word here and below illegible, blurred ink transfer.

9. General Orders, No. 14, issued March 27, 1847, followed the law of March 3. Winfield Scott established his headquarters at Veracruz after entering that city on March 29.

10. Virginia Jefferson Randolph (1801–82), born at grandfather Thomas Jefferson's estate of Monticello, was the sixth child of Thomas M. Randolph and Martha Jefferson Randolph. She married Nicholas P. Trist in 1824 at Monticello.

11. No letter from either of Pillow's two surviving brothers, Granville A. Pillow and Jerome B. Pillow, has been found.

12. John Y. Mason.

TO CALEB CUSHING

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 15th 1847

A bearer of despatches to *Vera Cruz*¹—will leave Washington on tomorrow. The Secretary of War² will transmit to you, by him, to be

forwarded to you on the Rio Grande, a commission as Brigadier General of Volunteers, which I conferred on you, on yesterday. In selecting you for this high command, I have been influenced, alone by public considerations. I duly appreciate your merit as a citizen and an officer. Your patriotic effort to raise the Regiment which you now command are worthy all praise. You had great obstacles to encounter, but finally succeeded, though opposed by all [. . .]³ means, by the wealth & aristocracy of the Federalists of Massachusetts. I address this hasty and unofficial note, to you to express to you, the pleasure it has afforded me, to promote you to this distinguished command.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Mexico; probably conveyed to Veracruz by Nicholas P. Trist and forwarded to the Rio Grande; marked “(*Private & unofficial*).”

1. Nicholas P. Trist.
2. William L. Marcy.
3. Word illegible, blurred ink transfer.

TO EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Washington City, April 15, 1847

Polk explains that William H. Polk, who owed money primarily due to endorsing others' loans, made a deed of trust “three or four years ago” to Joseph Knox Walker for some lands to pay Walker's creditors. In January 1846, at the creditors' behest, Walker sold the lands through agent Robert J. Chester¹ of Jackson, Tenn. Chester successfully bid on two of the tracts, both in Dyer County, Tenn., then offered his bid to William's friends. James K. Polk took the bid.

Polk asks McNeal to pay the taxes on these tracts and to try to sell them. He speculates about their possible value but instructs McNeal to “take a low price.” He notes that the chancery court at Columbia, in 1845, had a bill to divide one of the tracts. Polk will ask James H. Thomas to tell McNeal whether the bill was dismissed, but wishes to sell his interest either way. If McNeal cannot easily go to Dyer County, he should ask Chester, who travels there as U.S. marshal, to help with the sale.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Bolivar, Tenn.

1. Chester (c. 1794–1892), Andrew Jackson's son-in-law, was born in Pennsylvania but lived most of his life in Tennessee. A merchant and speculator, he served as surveyor of Smith County, 1822; postmaster at Jackson, 1825–33 and 1836–37; and U.S. marshal for the state's western district, 1838–49 and 1853–57. He farmed in Texas, 1835–36, and raised a regiment for its war for independence but not in time to join the fighting.

TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir:

Washington, April 15th 1847

Mr Trist will be unavoidably detained in his departure from Washington until tomorrow. With my letter of yesterday which he will bear to you, you will receive your commission as Majr. General. I have conferred with the Secretary of War¹ to day. He will instruct you upon receiving it, to Report to *Genl. Scott* and will explain to Genl. S., that it is not desired or intended by your promotion to withdraw from your command the Tennessee Brigade as long as they shall continue in the service. On the contrary it is desired that you should continue to command your Brigade & such other troops as may be attached to your Division. The same remark may be made in regard to *Genl. Quitman*,² and the Brigade which he at present commands. The ten Regiments, authorized to be raised by a late Act of Congress, and which will ultimately constitute the two Divisions, are being recruited very rapidly, and I calculate will be full before the start of next month. Between two and three thousand of them are already *en rout* for the seat of War. Five were ordered to the Rio Grande, at a moment when it was supposed *Genl. Taylor* would require re-inforcement. It is now however ascertained that he is relieved from the critical position in which he was placed, when the order was given. Brigadier General *Cadwallader*³ was ordered to the Rio Grande, to take command of them. The balance of the ten Regiments will probably be ordered to re-inforce *Genl. Scott's* column. Among the Regiments which will probably constitute your Division, will be the *voltigeurs*⁴ commanded by *Col. Andrews*⁵ an experienced officer of the Regular army. From the conference which I had with the Secretary of War to day, I think you may calculate on continuing in service, with the present column of the army.

*Majr. Genl. Butler*⁶ visited Washington a short time ago, and I deeply regret to say, that he is still suffering severely from his wound. He cannot move without the aid of crutches. He is very anxious to return to the army, and is resolved at any hazard to do so. He will probably however, before he does so, submit to surgical operation by which he hopes to be relieved.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Mexico and delivered by Nicholas P. Trist to the care of Henry Wilson at Veracruz; marked "(Private & unofficial)."

1. William L. Marcy.
2. John A. Quitman.
3. George Cadwalader.

4. Authorized by the Ten Regiment Bill and organized in March 1847, the voltigeurs were an army regiment armed with rifles instead of the usual smoothbore muskets.

5. Born in Ireland, Timothy Andrews (1794–1868) fought for the United States in the War of 1812. He became an army paymaster in 1822. During the Mexican War, he received a brevet promotion to brigadier general for gallantry at the Battle of Chapultepec.

6. William O. Butler.

FROM JAMES K. POLK AND JAMES BUCHANAN
TO NICHOLAS P. TRIST

To Nicholas P. Trist, Greeting! [Washington City, April 15, 1847]

Reposing special trust in your Integrity, Prudence, and Ability, I do hereby appoint you Commissioner of the United States of America to Mexico, with authority to meet a Commissioner or Commissioners or other person or persons having like authority from the Government of Mexico, and with him or them to negotiate and conclude a settlement of the subsisting differences, and a lasting Treaty of peace and friendship, between the United States and that Power; and also to do and perform all such matters and things as to the said place or office doth appertain, or as may be duly given you in charge hereafter: and the said office to hold and exercise during the pleasure of the President of the United States for the time being.

In testimony whereof, I have caused the seal of the United States¹ to be hereunto affixed. Given under my hand at the city of Washington, the fifteenth day of April, A.D. one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, and of the Independence of the said States the seventy-first.

JAMES K. POLK
JAMES BUCHANAN

L, copy. DLC–FP.

1. “Great Seal of the U.S.” written and circled in the margin.

FROM JOHN D. HAWKINS ET AL.¹

Dear Sir Henderson Granville County No. Ca. April 17th 1847

The Newspapers have announced that you have accepted invitations to visit the University of No. Ca at next commencement to be had at that institution in June next. And your fellow Citizens hail with delight the coming among us of the chief Magistrate of the Nation, and the more especially as you are a Native of the state and a graduate of our University. Influenced by these considerations, the Citizens of

Franklin, Granville and Warren² have held a meeting at Henderson without distinction of parties, and appointed the Undersigned a committee to receive you at Gaston which is near the border of the state, to tender to you the Hospitalities of the state, and to attend you in your progress to the University. With the best feelings we approach you through the medium of this communication, and ask you to inform us at what time you will reach Gaston, that we may know when we may have the pleasure to meet you there. The Mail Train coming south leaves Gaston in the night. But the Train which will receive you and your suite will not leave Gaston till next morning after breakfast suited to your pleasure and which will carry you on to Raleigh by day light. Hoping to hear from you and to be notified of your contemplated movements, . . .

JNO. D. HAWKINS

ANS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received April 20, 1847; answered April 28, 1847; proceedings of the meeting enclosed, see D, copy. DLC-JKP. See also ANS; AN; and AN, draft. NcU. Published in *Raleigh Register*, and *North-Carolina Gazette*, May 11, 1847; in other newspapers; and in ULNCP-A, pp. 144-45.

1. Letter written by Hawkins, who signed his own name and those of nineteen others. North Carolina lawyer, jurist, and planter Hawkins (1781-1858), a Democrat, represented Franklin County in the state senate, 1834-35 and 1836-41. He was prominent in North Carolina politics and business and an ardent booster of railroads.

2. Counties in North Carolina.

FROM ANONYMOUS

Sir— [Cambridge, Ohio c. April 19, 1847]¹

You will find enclosed, a *leather Medal*,² which you will please accept as a token of regard for your *christian* conduct. Oh, you bloody hound of hell! You scorpion of the regions of the damned! How do you expect to escape the devil's claws! Yes, he will get you, just as sure as your name is J. K. Polk. And when you are writhing in all agonies of that accursed place, for the thousands you have sent prematurely there, the devil will wear one of his most bland smiles as he punches your damned guts out with a sharp stick! Yes, I, the Devil, do hereby proclaim unto you that hell will be prolonged 15.000 years longer than eternally to ride you on red-hot wheelbarrows, so far in solid red-hot hell that Jesus Christ will never dream of you! The spirits of those you have murdered will eternally ho[v]er³ round you in this world, and when I get you to my regions, they shall each punch you for 24 hours with the Mexican bayonets! I here enclose a counterfeit \$25:00 bill⁴ to defray your expenses to hell, so that you will not be at any expense.

If you were to commence to prepare for death now, it would take you till 3 days after Jesus dies to repent of the sins you will have to answer for! No! My dear James, you need not think of repenting, for I now have a mortgage on you, which you will never be able to redeem!

You will hear from me frequently.

THE DEVIL

L. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received April 23, 1847; "an anonymous blackguard." Polk's AE: "I will preserve this infamous tirade. Possibly its author may be some-day discovered. The Post Mark indicates his residence."

1. Place and approximate date identified from postmark.
2. The enclosed handwritten medal names Polk "the great American Caesar" and cites "his bloody conquests in Mexico." It recognizes him "For all the widowhood and orphanage, homes desolated, husbands murdered—and for the murder of the 2,000 defenseless women and children at the siege of Vera Cruz." D. DLC-JKP.
3. Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.
4. The author enclosed a counterfeit bill of "CITIZENS BANK." PD. DLC-JKP.

TO JOHN M. BASS

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 19th 1847

I have received your letter of the 10th Instant. The draft for \$166.25, which you give me notice, had been drawn on me by Governor Brown,¹ will be paid on presentation. The explanation which you give of the draft is satisfactory. I do not contemplate making any repairs or improvements of the House, and grounds until the next year. At that time I intended among other things, to have the house recovered. I prefer either a slate or copper roof—to one of wood as being both liable to resistants from fire. *Mrs Polk* will visit her friends in Tennessee in June, and will at that time—in consultation with *yourself*, *Mr Stevenson*² and *Judge Catron*,³ determine upon the improvements to be ordered. In the meantime—the shingles, to pay for which *Gov. Brown's* Bill was drawn will remain with *Messrs Vannoy & Turbiville*⁴ in whose possession you inform me they now are.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Aaron V. Brown.
2. Vernon K. Stevenson.
3. John Catron.
4. Mason Vannoy and Miller or Calvin Turbeville.

FROM FREDERICK W. HORN¹

Dear Sir Mequon River, Washington Co. Wis. Ter. Apr. 19. 47

As a member of the great democratic family and a true supporter of the present government, I have taken the liberty of addressing a few lines to you in relation to the late vote on the proposed constitution of this Territory and the main causes of the defeat of that instrument. The whole whig party, which is very numerous in this Territory, opposed the constitution to almost a man; this opposition however we would have easily overcome if it had not been for the aid given to them by some of our own party and I am sorry to say it, by men who have heretofore and now hold some of the best places under the administration. If we had carried the constitution we would, *beyond doubt*, have elected two Representatives and the 2 U.S. Senators of the right stamp, that would have stood by the present government in time of need. As your friends in this Territory are well aware, that your Excellency's government needs all the strength the party can muster in the U.S. Senate, we were therefore anxious in using all proper means, to bring these miscalled Democrats to their senses and told them *all* the consequences in case the constitution should not be adopted—but all in vain. These men preferred the fat of their offices, given to them by you and your predecessors, to the welfare and support of that same government, which raised them high in office. At the head of that class stands the Post master at Milwaukee J. A. Noonan² whose office was the head quarters of the combined forces that worked against the constitution. The Secretary of the Territory³ also took a very prominent part in the defeat of that instrument. In fact, as far as I know, every officer of the United States in the Territory with the exception of the Register & Receiver at Milwaukee,⁴ were either openly or secretly closely allied with the whigs for the purpose of keeping us out of state government. It is the policy of the whigs here and openly avowed by them to keep us out of the Union long enough to lose our vote for the next President and to keep our 2 U.S. Senators out of the Senate as long as possible. In case they should fail in this, they at least intend to throw the Dem. party in such disorder, that we shall be in the same fix as Iowa.⁵ As the county I live in, and have been living since its first settlement is the only one, that has given a large majority of true Democratic votes on the Constitution, and as I am perfectly independent of these cliques in the Territory, and do not look to your Excellency for office (otherwise some might say as a reward of my denunciation)—for, if any I wanted, I always hail it by the voice of the people and I now hold by reelection the best office in the county—considering all this—I have deemed in my duty to give

your Excellency the reason why, and by whose instrumentality alone the administration has been deprived of four true democratic votes in the next Congress.

I am a personal friend of most of the Territorial officers and especially have no private feelings against Mr. Noonan or Catlin—to the contrary, last fall when Mr. Noonan solicited my influence, if any I have, with our Delegate in Congress I did all I could for him, that he might retain his office, in as much as a strong effort was made by a large portion of the Democratic party to have him removed. I am now well satisfied that his removal is called for by 5/6 of the Democrats of Milwaukee. If your Excellency deems it worth a while to pay to this communication any attention you will, by farther inquiry, learn the truth of my statements. If however Gov. Dodge⁶ could be induced *immediately* to call an extra session of the Legislature to provide for a new convention, we are almost *sure* of sending next winter 2 strong U.S. Senators of the right stamp as before mentioned. Mr. Dodge's intention, as to calling an extra session is not known although numerous petitions to that effect are coming in; *it is doubted* by many an *honest democrat* that he will do so. Mr. Noonan especially and his allies are opposing it with all their might. Perhaps a timely hint of your Excellency to Gov. Dodge would make him pursue the right course in the matter. If I could have addressed your Excellency in the language of my native country (Prussia) I would have been able to write a better letter; but laboring under that disadvantage, I must beg your Excellency's pardon as well for the liberty I have taken in addressing you as for the many faults I may have committed in the language, pleading as my only excuse the sincere wish to support your Excellency and the government—even if it should be but a wish. . . .

FRED. W. HORN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received April 29, 1847.

1. Born in Prussia, Horn (1815–93) emigrated to the United States in 1836 and arrived in Wisconsin four years later. He was appointed a justice of the peace for Washington County in 1842 and subsequently held other public offices, including both postmaster at Mequon and register of deeds at the time he wrote this letter. He served in the first state senate, 1848–50, and later served numerous terms in the state house. Horn began his public career as an independent but soon became a Democrat.

2. Josiah A. Noonan (1813–82) moved from New York to Wisconsin in 1836 and founded the Madison *Wisconsin Enquirer* in 1838. In 1841, he relocated the paper to Milwaukee and renamed it the *Courier*. He was postmaster at Milwaukee, 1843–49 and 1853–57. He played a key, frequently divisive, role in Wisconsin's early political life and was often associated with controversial litigation. Though nominally a Democrat, he often was accused of party disloyalty.

3. Vermont native John Catlin (1803–74) moved to Wisconsin in 1836. His public offices included clerk of the Wisconsin Territory Supreme Court, 1838, and chief clerk of the territorial house, 1837–44. Appointed by Polk, he served as secretary of Wisconsin Territory, February 1846–March 1849.

4. George H. Walker and J. Albert Helfenstein. Born in Virginia, Walker (1811–66) went west in 1825 and settled in Milwaukee as an Indian trader in 1834. A Democrat, he served in the territorial house, 1842–45; in the state house, 1851; and as Milwaukee mayor, 1851 and 1853. He was register of the Milwaukee land office, 1845–49. Helfenstein (1806–82), a Pennsylvania native and the son of John P. Helfenstein, became a Milwaukee insurance executive. He served as receiver of public monies at Milwaukee, 1844–49, after holding the same post at Dixon, Ill.

5. Iowa Territory was created by Congress in July 1838. Efforts to win statehood commenced soon thereafter, but due to delays resulting from partisan politics, the issue of slavery, and other disputes, Iowa did not achieve statehood until December 1846.

6. Indiana native Henry Dodge (1782–1867) fought as an officer in the Black Hawk War and other Indian wars. Appointed by Presidents Jackson, Van Buren, and Polk, he served as governor of Wisconsin Territory, 1836–41 and 1845–48. As a Democrat, he served as a non-voting delegate to the U.S. House, 1841–45. After Wisconsin gained statehood in May 1848, Dodge was selected as one of two Democrats to represent the new state in the U.S. Senate and served until 1857.

FROM SAMUEL INGHAM¹

Dear sir

Saybrook Connt. April 19, AD 1847

You have received the result of our late Election of State officers and members of Congress. It may be ascribed in a great measure, if not entirely, to the War with Mexico, and a union of the abolitionists and whigs. The whigs have had, for all party purposes, the entire deligation in Congress which has enabled them to throw in to the state during the past winter vast quantities of the vile speeches lately made at Washington and which have produced considerable effect, while on our part no such [. . .]² and vigorous effort was made as the occasion and circumstances seem to have required.

I was a candidate for Congress, much against my will,³ for I saw no prospect of success in this District, now represented by Mr. Hubbard,⁴ and which has for some time past been much the strongest whig District in the state. He is elected by about six hundred plurality, nearly all of which was given in New Haven. Two years ago his plurality was about thirteen hundred. I was never opposed with so much violence at any time before, and though beaten we have gained largely in the District from last year, and I have run handsomely a head of any other one on our ticket. Had the other Destricts done as well as this they would all

have elected their candidates. But a peace with Mexico which we shall have in due time, will give us a smoother sea, when the state will again be democratic.

But my object in addressing you relates more particularly to myself, and to say what I never before said, and which is, that I should be glad to obtain some respectable place in the government service. I have long been anxious to leave my profession for some other employment, and now that our state and courts are, and are to be whig, I am the more so. I do not ask for a high or low appointment, but some medium yet respectable one—nor do I desire any place unless it is entirely consistent with your views and inclinations. There are many persons holding responsible and lucrative offices under your administration whose claims to say the most of them, are I think, in no respect better than my own, and you will I trust, excuse me for saying that, there has never been in this state a more zealous and hearty supporter of your administration, nor had you ever a more sincere and unwavering personal friend than myself, and it is this which in unreserved frankness inspires me with confidence to address you as I do on this subject. Any testimonials that may be requisite I can probably furnish, but as you have some knowledge of me and of my reputation and standing I have deemed it most advisable to adopt this cause and which I hope will meet your approbation.

I shall be in Washington in about six weeks, and will venture to express the hope that in the mean time no appointment will be made from this section of the country that shall have an unfavourable influence on my application.

SAMUEL INGHAM

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “*Private*” on the cover and “*private*” at the top of the letter. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received April 24, 1847; “private—wants an office.”

1. A Connecticut Democrat and lawyer, Ingham (1793–1881)—not to be confused with Samuel D. Ingham, Treasury secretary under Pres. Andrew Jackson—held several state offices and served in the U.S. House, 1835–39.

2. Word illegible.

3. Ingham refers to the election of 1835.

4. A graduate of Yale College, Samuel D. Hubbard (1799–1855) served in the U.S. House as a Whig, 1845–49, and as postmaster general, 1852–53.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Sir:

Washington April 19th 1847

By the act of the 26th of June last, the President is [“]authorized¹ to organize into Brigades, & Division, such of the volunteer forces as

have been or may be called into the Service of the United States.”² The volunteer forces which were called into service, in pursuance of the requisition made upon several of the States in November last, have not, yet been organized into Brigades and Divisions. I call your attention to the subject, and desire that you will report to me such organization as in your judgement may seem proper.

As a portion of the *ten* additional Regiments authorized to be raised, by the act of the 11th February, last,³ are now en route for the seat of War, and the remainder, it is anticipated will shortly be in the field, it becomes necessary to organize them also, into Brigades & Divisions. Authority for this purpose is given to the President by the act of the 3rd of March last.⁴ You are requested to report to me the organization of these [forces]⁵ which you may recommend.

The Brigadier & Majr. Generals of Volunteers now in service will be retained, as [our success] resides in [. . . a few] officers, of the [Regiments . . .]⁶ Departments, as the number of Volunteers kept in Service, may render proper. The Volunteer forces now in the field—and the additional number, which it has been determined to call out—may and probably will require the Services of all the Staff officers, in these Departments. Upon that point, I desire that you will report to me your opinion.

Your Report is requested at as early a point as your other pressing duties will permit.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Opening quotation mark missing.

2. “An Act to provide for the Organization of the Volunteer Forces, brought into the Service of the United States, into Brigades and Divisions, and for the Appointment of the necessary Number of General Officers to command the same.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 33.

3. Ten Regiment Bill.

4. “An Act making Provision for an additional Number of general Officers, and for other Purposes.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 41.

5. Word or words here and below uncertain or illegible, light or blurred ink transfer.

6. Three-fourths of a line illegible here, light ink transfer.

FROM JOHN H. SAVAGE

Dear Sir

Smithville Tenn April 19th 1847

I was at Mcminnville on Saturday last at the Speaking between Governor Brown and his opponent¹—and the democracy of Warren²

were out in large numbers and became so happy under the patriotic appeals of Governor Brown and his triumphant vindication of the policy of the Government that I was solicited to write you a letter stating how heartily they approved the measures of your administration and their high regard for thier [. . .]³ and talented Governor who so nobly defended them. And believing as I do that the triumph of our political principles is deeply interesting to you—and as necessary to our happiness and glory as the success of our arms—and hoping that you may find time from your arduous duties to look a moment upon the contest in Tennessee I have yielded to the request.

It would be impossible for me in the short space of a letter, to give even a sketch of the over powering arguments and soul-stirring appeals of Governor Brown. I never heard more said—or better said, in a shorter time—no man is better qualified to arouse and confirm the democrats—or conciliate and convince the whigs—to give the good parts of his speech I would have to give the whole of it—but as that cannot be done—I will merely give a few particulars.

His opponent complained very much of his preaching and crying—and indeed when the Governor addressed his whig friends and warned them from following after Webster, Adams, Giddings⁴ & others—exhorting them to rally around their President and the glorious “Stars and Stripes” that now waved in triumph upon the plains of California and the waters of the Pacific—from the fields of Buena Vista to the battlements of San Juan De Ulloa—and called upon the bones of their brethren to arise from the battlefield and bear witness that the whigs of Tennessee did not belong to this new party—*Neil S* might well liken it to preaching under which there were many weepers—the tears fell from the youthful eye—as well as from those that have long watched for their country.

His defence of the President for not appointing more whigs to office—showed that their leaders had prevented them from applying—that they had been taught to hate James K Polk—who had ever been true to his principles and constant in his labours—who had appointed such whigs as had applied, and deserved to be appointed—and had promoted Gen Taylor (the nations favorite) to the highest office in his power—that he had showed a proper self respect by not begging his opponents to hold office under him—and that while he had a voice or an arm he should defend him.

Again he said his competitor had declared the war *unnecessary*—and *unconstitutional* and a *war made to glorify James K Polks administration*. And he would like to know if his competitor would have whispered those words into the ears of the dying soldiers upon the field of

Monterey or Buena Vista—ought it now to be told to the widows & orphans mothers & fathers of the fallen brave in Tennessee—would he write it upon the monuments of glory to be raised in Tennessee—if so—let the light wings of heaven blast them. I do Governor Brown injustice in attempting to describe his arguments, upon these points—they were truly eloquent and effecting and I doubt not but that they will make him many votes.

But these were not the only things upon which Gov Brown moved upon the feelings of his audience—Polk—the Volunteers—the war—Rough & Ready⁵—there appeared to be magic in his words—it was one continued burst of patriotic feeling upon these subjects—he managed to give the much debated question of the Tariff, an appearance, of novelty—he said he was no longer dependant upon reason—or opposed by the prophecies of his opponents—time, the ocean, our Rivers, our mountains, and our vallies, were his witnesses.

The Bank was used up as a blow. The justice of the war demonstrated from general principles—and proved by Gen Taylor's proclamation⁶—the March to the Rio Grande vindicated—Santa Anna's permission to return fully and satisfactorily explained.⁷

Neil S. replied in a manner that did not make the democrats mad, or the whigs warm—his address was Stiff and dignified—with out warmth or enthusiasm—he talked about the potatoe rot⁸—but did not say that he was for the repeal of the Tariff of 46⁹—he abused the Swartouts & Boyds¹⁰ but did not say he wanted a Bank—his position upon the war would beat him if he had forty times the talents he exhibits—many of the whigs are becoming alarmed for fear they are placed in the predicament of the Federalists of 1812¹¹—democracy in my opinion has never had brighter prospects since I can recollect—and having written you a long letter, I will conclude it breifly by saying—that in my opinion Gov Brown will be relected by at least 5,000 votes and I should not be surprised if by [25,000].¹² The Ball is in motion and will continue to roll.

JOHN H SAVAGE

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received May 1, 1847.

1. Aaron V. Brown and Neill S. Brown.
2. Democratic party of Warren County, Tenn. (county seat McMinnville).
3. Word illegible.
4. Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, and Joshua Giddings.
5. Zachary Taylor.

6. On June 4, 1846, William L. Marcy sent Zachary Taylor orders to distribute and enforce a proclamation written in both Spanish and English. The proclamation announced and justified the war to the Mexicans and assured

them that the United States was waging war on Mexico's government, not its people. House Executive Document No. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 284–87.

7. In the summer of 1846, U.S. special messenger Alexander Slidell Mackenzie traveled to Havana, Cuba, to meet with the exiled Santa Anna. Mackenzie, carrying an order from Navy Secretary George Bancroft for the navy to permit Santa Anna's entry into Mexico, offered the United States' support for the Mexican leader's return to power in exchange for peace and territorial concessions. Santa Anna acceded and returned to Mexico in August, but did not uphold the agreement. Whigs in Congress sharply criticized Polk's action. Polk refused to submit records of Mackenzie's meeting in response to an information request from the House the following January.

8. Reference apparently is to the blight that had destroyed Ireland's potato crop.

9. Walker Tariff.

10. Samuel Swartwout and Jesse Hoyt. Swartwout (1783–1856), collector of customs at New York City, 1830–38, embezzled over one million dollars in Treasury funds and fled abroad. His successor, Hoyt (1792–1867), accepted the appointment as collector of customs in 1838 but three years later resigned following allegations that he had misappropriated over thirty thousand dollars in government funds.

11. See note on Blue Light Federalists in Henry Horn to Polk, March 24, 1847.

12. First digit uncertain, blurred ink.

TO JAMES BROWN¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 20th 1847

The enclosed letter is from *Judge Mason* the Secretary of the Navy.² Upon consultation with me, he has concluded that his interests will be prosecuted by purchasing a cotton plantation in Mississippi, if a good one can be obtained upon reasonable terms. I have said to him that I have great confidence in your judgment, and upon my advice he has addressed the letter to you, which I enclose. For the force which he proposes, to send out, he will want about two sections of land, more or less, as the opportunity of procuring a place may present itself. He will want an improved place. An unimproved he would not have at any price. He does not want a place North of *Yalobusha* & the trio of Counties in that parallel of Latitude. This point he decides upon, consultation with the *Hon. Robert [J.]³ Walker*. He would desire to be within reasonably convenient distance of navigation. I have been able to give him, [. . . advantage . . . salutary . . .]⁴ but have referred him to you, [. . .] to him, [that have bought place] in New Orleans [. . .] you, [. . .] *Mr J. T. Leigh*⁵ whose plantation [is . . .] is an old acquaintance of [. . .] other old acquaintance

who [is . . .]. I think if you could find me a place in that region, it would [be . . .] to him. He accepts it [. . .] establishment [and though it is not . . .] settle upon it himself, in [assessing it . . .] good place. I do not now remember [. . .] place in my immediate neighborhood that would suit him, unless [. . .] the head of [. . . my plantation] is situated [. . .] place I have no other knowledge, [and a plantation] passed through it. It is larger [. . .], but I fear the land is too [. . .] could judge after seeing it. [. . .] leading consideration with him [. . .] people in [. . .] this location. I [. . .] his letter to [you at his] request, and I have said to him that I would ask you, at your leisure, during the next two or three months, to ascertain whether such, a place as he desires can be procured, and to request you to write to him on the subject. I think it best that you should not close any contract, but if you find a place, that you think will suit him, that you write to him, giving a description of it, and the price & times of payment at which it can be had. I think this will be best. Upon receiving your letter, *Judge Mason*, can, if he chooses give you a regular Power of attorney to close the contract. I will only add that whatever you may do to serve *Judge Mason* in the matter I will esteem as a personal favour to myself. He is an excellent man in any sense, and is one of the best friends, personal political that I have in the world.

I received a letter from our friend *E. P. McNeal* of Bolivar⁶ a day or two ago. He informs me that he has \$226.50 of my money in his hands, which he is ready to pay over to you, when you may call for it, and also any additional sum you may desire, to invest in Mississippi bottom lands for me. As you remarked to me such an investment, may some-day answer the purpose of the Madison Papers,⁷ to me. I leave that entirely to your judgment whether to make the investment for me or not.

With my respectful salutations to *Mrs. Brown* and your daughters⁸:

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Oxford, Miss., and marked "(Private)."

1. James Brown (c. 1795–1870s?), a son of Joseph Brown of Maury County, Tenn., assisted Samuel Polk in surveying properties in western Tennessee. During the early 1830s, Brown lived in Jackson, Miss., and had a business partnership with James Walker. During the 1840s, he managed Polk's real estate holdings in Mississippi.

2. Letter not found.

3. Initial illegible, blurred ink transfer.

4. Illegible and uncertain words here and below represent most of one manuscript page, due to a light ink transfer.

5. John T. Leigh.

6. Ezekiel P. McNeal to Polk, April 8, 1847.

7. This is possibly a suggestion that investments could later be used to defray costs of publishing Polk's papers—an expenditure of private funds in contrast to recent proposals in Congress for a public outlay to pay for the purchase and publication of James Madison's papers. The Senate had passed a bill authorizing their purchase, but not publication, in February 1847. The House later passed it and the bill became law on March 31, 1848. "An Act to provide for the Purchase of the Manuscript Papers of the late James Madison, former President of the United States." *SL*, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 52.

8. Brown was married to Mary A. Brown (c. 1808–1860s). They had at least four daughters at this time: Mary F. (c. 1830–?), Ann W. (c. 1833–?), Julia M. (c. 1841–?), and Mary P. (c. 1845–?).

TO WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, JR.¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 20th 1847

*Judge Mason*² read to me on yesterday a letter which he had received from you. I entirely agree with you in the suggestions you make, in relation to my contemplated visit to the University at the next Commencement. I shall I am sure enjoy the visit very much, if I can avoid the embarrassments on the journey, to which you allude in your letter, and against which you kindly put me on my guard.³ The Commencement day is on thursday the 3rd of June. Will you inform me, if you can ascertain, at what time it is desired that I should reach Chapel Hill? Can I leave here on the monday preceeding and be in time? I will not, if I can avoid it, travel on the sabbath. I can if necessary, set out from here on saturday, and if you so advise I will do so. In that event I might spend the sabbath quietly at Raleigh, seeing no company, except yourself and perhaps, a few other friends. The Boat I learn leaves here at 9. O'Clock every day.⁴ Upon those points and indeed in all my movements I will be governed very much by your advice. *Mrs Polk*, *Miss Rucker*, *Col. Waker*,⁵ *Judge Mason* and his *daughter*⁶ will accompany me, and I shall be most happy My Dear Sir: if *Mrs. Haywood*, your *daughters*⁷ and *yourself* will join us at Raleigh and accompany us, to Chapel Hill. I do not expect to stop any where on the route, going or returning, unless, it may be at Raleigh waiting for the cars,⁸ on the afternoon of friday after the commencement.

May I ask the favour of you to write to me, on the receipt of this letter?

With the respectful salutations of *Mrs. Polk* and myself to *Mrs. Haywood* and your daughters: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Raleigh, N.C., and marked "(Private)."

1. William H. Haywood, Jr., (1801–52) a Democrat, represented North Carolina in the U.S. Senate, 1843–46. Thereafter he practiced law in Raleigh. Haywood and Polk were longstanding friends, with ties reaching back to shared student days at the University of North Carolina.

2. John Y. Mason.

3. Polk possibly refers to the risk of his visit's becoming political or partisan. See Polk to Haywood, April 29, 1847.

4. Polk, on May 28, took a boat from Washington City to the mouth of Aquia Creek on the Potomac River before continuing by rail to Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Petersburg, Va.

5. Sarah Childress Polk, Johanna L. Rucker, and Joseph Knox Walker.

6. Mason had six daughters, all born in Virginia: Elizabeth H. (c. 1829–?), Fanny A. (c. 1831–?), Mary A. (c. 1834–?), Sarah H. (c. 1837–?), Emma (1839–1900), and Susan (c. 1842–?).

7. Jane Frances Graham (c. 1806–1870s?) of New Bern, N.C., married William H. Haywood, Jr., in 1826. They had five daughters by the time of this letter, all born in North Carolina: Elizabeth G. (1826–97), Ann (c. 1829–?), Jane F., Jr., (c. 1833–?) Minerva G. (c. 1837–?), and Margaret N. (c. 1844–?).

8. Polk refers to the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, which had opened in 1840.

TO UNKNOWN

Sir:

Washington Apl 21st 1847

I transmit to you the enclosed letter from *Gov. Johnson* of Louisiana,¹ in behalf of *Dr. Booth*,² who informs me that he is familiar with the diseases of the South, & particularly Yellow fever or Vomito.³ He has served some time in the army, and has come directly from Tampico. I am not aware that there is at present any vacancy. Dr. Booth's professional services would no doubt be valuable to the army.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. Current location of sold letter unknown.

1. Letter not found. Attorney and Democrat Isaac Johnson (1803–53), after defeating Whig candidate William Dubuys in 1845, served as Louisiana governor, 1846–50. Johnson supported the Mexican War and recruited Louisiana volunteers into the conflict. Like Polk, he opposed the Wilmot Proviso. But he disappointed the president and other Democrats by appointing many Whigs to state posts and, in 1848, supporting his home state candidate, Whig Zachary Taylor, for president.

2. William A. Booth was a physician and reformer active in Louisiana during the 1840s in efforts to combat cholera and other diseases.

3. Vomito is a virulent form of yellow fever that usually produces black vomit.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 22nd 1847

I have received this morning your letter of the 14th Instant, informing me that you have contracted with *Mr Young*,¹ for the sale of my House and lot in Columbia. I am satisfied with the sale, and desire that will close it, by reducing it to writing. I will ratify it when made. The terms for sale are \$3.000— for the property, of which \$2.000 is to be paid on the 1st of January next, when possession is to be delivered, and \$1000— in one year thereafter bearing interest, from the 1st of Jan'y. next, or if he chooses he may pay the whole \$3000. when he gets possession. Those payments will suit me. An installment of my debt for the House I bought in Nashville, will fall due on the 1st of January next, and I desire to apply the payments to be made by *Mr Young* to its extinguishment. I suppose there can be no difficulty, in delivering possession, at that time. In that event the note for the last years rent will of course be given up to *Houston*.² Should there be any difficulty on this point you can probably arrange it with the person who has rented from Houston. I wish you to close the contract on the terms which you have stated. If *Mr Young* prefers it, I will execute my own title Bond to him, or will make him a Deed at once, if he wishes it. You will find a description of the House lot, in two Deeds executed to me by *Patrick Maguire* and recorded in the Register's office of the County. You will find a description of the Stable lot, in my father's Will,³ recorded in the County Court Clerk's⁴ office.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked “(Private).”

1. Evan Young.

2. Russell M. Houston.

3. Samuel Polk (1772–1827) moved his family in 1806 from Mecklenburg County, N.C., to Maury County, Tenn., where he accumulated wealth as a farmer, surveyor, and land speculator. He helped to establish the town of Columbia and became a county judge. In his will of 1826 he divided his estate between his wife Jane Knox Polk and their children. D, copy, in Joseph B. Porter's hand. DLC—JKP.

4. William E. Erwin (c. 1798–1880s or 1890s?) served as Maury County clerk, 1835–53. A Virginia native and a Whig, he served in the Tennessee House, 1853–55, and at some point as a judge.

TO JOHN T. LEIGH

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 24th 1847

I received this evening your kind letter of the 12th Instant,¹ in answer to mine of the 15th ultimo, and thank you for your attention to my business. You inform me that *Mr Rayburn* is the purchaser of the 40. acres of my farm which has been sold for taxes. If he be the same person I have seen at Coffeerville, I have a casual acquaintance with him,² and from the opinion I formed of him, I can scarcely think he will persevere in the suit he has brought, especially when he is informed that the failure to pay the taxes, if a failure has occurred, was owing altogether to the accidental omission of my overseer.³ I do not wish to be perplexed by a law-suit, about so small a matter. The 40 acres for which he has brought suit, is of no earthly value for cultivation, and I could readily direct my fences to be removed if he were to gain it, so as to exclude it from the balance of my farm. It would not be worth a cent an acre to any one but myself. To me it would be of some inconvenience, to part with it because, it would interfere somewhat, with the most convenient road from my houses to the Gin. Surely for so small a profit as *Mr Rayburn* could in the event of his success, acquire, he will not persevere in taking advantage of my absence and the accidental omission of my overseer, to return this small spot of land for the taxes.

You may shew this letter to him, and inform him how it happened that the land was sold for taxes. You are authorized to compromise with him, upon any terms you may think just and proper.

Your old friend Archer⁴ was here a few days ago, on his way to Mississippi, and informed me that he would certainly visit your house.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Will you do me the favour to write to me, after you have seen *Mr Rayburn*? J.K.P.

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

1. Letter not found.

2. Polk probably refers to Davidson M. Rayburn (c. 1809–1860s?), a Coffeerville, Miss., merchant who owned land in the area and had served as clerk of the Yalobusha County probate court—not John K. Rayburn, the purchaser of Polk's property and the plaintiff in this suit. See Leigh to Polk, July 22, 1847.

3. Isaac H. Dismukes, Polk's overseer from 1841 to 1845.

4. William S. Archer.

TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear Sir:

Washington City April 24th 1847

I learn from a letter recived from your neighbour *Mr Leigh*¹ to day, that all your people were in good health, and that you were getting on well with your business on the plantation. You have no doubt finished planting your crop before this time. I wish you to write to me, how many acres, you will cultivate this year, in cotton, how many in corn & how many in small grain. Of course you cannot tell precisely, but you can form a grand estimate. Let me know also, whether you have a good stand of cotton, and generally what your prospects for a crop are. I have never learned how much more land you have cleared and have in cultivation. *Col. Campbell* writes to me, that he has sent down two more mules, which he informs me were needed on the place.²

I wish you to write to me once every month and let me know the state of your business, and particularly your prospects for a good crop.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. John T. Leigh. Letter not found.

2. Robert Campbell, Jr., to Polk, March 20, 1847.

FROM DAVID L. SWAIN¹

Sir,

University of North Carolina 24th April 1847

I have heard with great pleasure of your contemplated visit to this institution at our approaching Commencement. It would be unnatural in one so nearly identified with the university as myself not to regard so decided a manifestation of grateful remembrance and filial affection on the part of the most eminent of her sons with feelings of kindness as well as pride. The latter emotion however, has been awakened in my bosom on this occasion, by considerations very different from those arising from mere eminence of station.

Although we have never met on any occasion, your whole course of life from the time you entered college has been known to me with a particularity that you would scarcely have anticipated even from a native of North Carolina, nurtured upon the borders of Tennessee, five and twenty years ago the room mate in college, and in after years the familiar friend and associate of your brother Marshall.² Under such circumstances, I feel that I have almost a right to consider myself an acquaintance and friend, and at all events venture to hope that in the course of a few weeks there will exist no reasonable doubt on either head.

Your stay at this place will unavoidably be brief, and it is reasonable to suppose that you will desire it (at night at least) to be quiet. To secure as great a degree of quiet and repose, as is attainable here, with our limited range of accommodation, amidst the hurry and bustle of Commencement week, I am not certain that even yourself and suit could desire more effective measures within the legitimate limits of constitutional authority than to take shelter under my roof.

I will reserve therefore until I learn your pleasure upon the subject a small chamber for the accommodation of Mrs. Polk and yourself, and another opening into the same passage for the Secretary of the Navy.³

D. L. SWAIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “(Private)” on the cover. From Polk’s AE: received April 27, 1847; answered April 29, 1847. See also L, copy. NcU. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 145–46.

1. Lawyer, politician, jurist, and educator Swain (1801–68), a Whig, served in the North Carolina legislature, 1824–27 and 1828–36; in the state superior court, 1831–32; and as North Carolina governor, 1832–35. In 1836 he became president of the University of North Carolina, an office he held until his death.

2. Marshall T. Polk (1805–31) was a younger brother of Polk and the father of Marshall T. Polk, Jr., who became close to his uncle.

3. John Y. Mason.

FROM BENJAMIN B. FRENCH

Sir, & Brother,

Washington, April 26. 1847

By direction of the Committee of Arrangements of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia,¹ for the laying of the corner stone of the Smithsonian Institution,² I have the honor to communicate to you the following resolution.

“Resolved, Unanimously, That the President of the United States be most respectfully requested to be present at the laying of the corner stone of the Smithsonian Institution, on the 1st day of May next, in masonic costume.”³

B. B. FRENCH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Mailed with French’s other letter of April 26, 1847; addressed to Washington City.

1. The Freemasons, or Masons, have been a popular fraternal order in America since the eighteenth century. The Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, founded in 1811, governs the constituent lodges of the District. Polk was initiated into the order in Columbia, Tenn., in 1820.

2. The Smithsonian Institution was established in Washington City, as a museum and research institute, with a bequest to the U.S. government of

the entire estate of British chemist James L. Smithson (1765–1829), born James L. Macie in France and naturalized as a child as a British subject.

3. Polk, Sarah Childress Polk, Vice President George M. Dallas, and cabinet members Cave Johnson, William L. Marcy, and John Y. Mason attended the ceremony, joining the procession thereto when it passed the White House. Dallas gave the oration. Though attendees included many Freemasons in regalia with banners and emblems, newspapers and Polk's diary do not specify whether he dressed as the Grand Lodge had requested.

TO DANIEL GRAHAM

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 26th 1847

After a greater delay, than I had anticipated, when I saw you in Washington in September, caused by circumstances, which I could not well control, I am at length enabled to tender to you a situation at Washington, for which you are eminently qualified, and which I hope it may be compatible, with your views of your own intents to accept. *Mr Gillett*¹ the present Register of the Treasury will shortly be transferred to another station, and the office which he now fills will be at my disposal. The office of Register of the Treasury, is one of high responsibility, but the duties of it, are not difficult to perform, especially to one [as]² familiar as you have been, with accounts and the keeping of office-books. I would think that your duties would not be more laborious or difficult, than those of Comptroller of the State, which you so long filled. *Mr Gillet* will leave the office on the 1st day of June next, and it is desirable that you should be here to take charge of it, at that time. If however you should not, think it convenient to be here so soon, a fortnight longer would not be very material, as *Mr Gillet* agrees, if necessary to discharge the duties for that much longer. Be here if you can, by the 1st of June, but if not, certainly by the Middle of July. It is barely possible, that one of the Auditorships may be also vacant by the time you reach here, and in that event I may find it convenient to place you in it, instead of the Register's office, and especially if you should prefer it. It is not known to the public here that the Register's office, is to be vacant, and I desire that it shall not be, until I receive your letter of acceptance, when I can say to the office-seekers, that the appointment is made, and thus save myself from infinite annoyance. I request that you will give me an immediate answer, or at least as early, as you can make up your mind & can do so conveniently.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I have informed *Mrs. Polk* of the assignment, who is much delighted with it. She says however that you must return with us to Tennessee, at the close of my term. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “(Private).”

1. Attorney Ransom H. Gillet (1800–1876) of upstate New York served in the U.S. House, 1833–37, and as register of the Treasury, April 1845–May 1847. He left the register post to become solicitor of the Treasury, a post he held until October 1849. He entered politics as a Jacksonian and, in later years, retained his allegiance to the Democratic party.

2. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.

FROM GEORGE S. HOUSTON¹

My dear Sir

Athens. [Ala.]² 26. apl. 1847

I presume your other duties so engross your attention that of course you have no time to give to a private correspondence, but there is a Matter about which you & I had a conversation to which I will call your attention. I am in the canvass for Congress & it bids to be very *excited* & probably *bitter*. Hubbard³ is makeing all of the issues I told you he would & is endeavoring to *gull* the common people. He *denounces* with the greatest Severity & considerable bitterness your reccommendation to tax *tea & coffee*, says it will *impoverish* the *people* & Soon bring them into the *condition* of the *Starveing millions* of Ireland. Together with many other Such Speeches he calls it a “*gross blunder*.” He also condemns the “*ten regiment bill*” goes for *volunteers &c &c*. He goes quite as far as he dare go to hold with him even the *tender democracy*,⁴ but goes far enough as is supposed to get the opposition. I have no fear that he will best me unless something very extraordinary turns up, yet he may do it. I have *peppered* him occasionally quite hard & it will be harder yet I expect. I fear the democracy in the Courtland part of Lawrence County are more divided than they Should be; I have not yet been amongst them only to pass thro the county &c. If Jas E Saunders⁵ could be induced to take a little part for me he could do much—*very much*—in that region of the county. He can write to some friends here & get them to work & they can do much in that way.

Genl. Taylor seems to be very prominent for the nomination for the Presidency. They are trying to make it appear that I voted to censure the old Genl. as well as the balance of the democrats, and your friend Hubbard is at it himself.⁶ If you have time write me.

GEO. S. HOUSTON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “—*Private*—” on the cover and “(*Private & Confidential*)” at the top of the letter. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received May 4, 1847; “*Private*.”

1. Tennessee-born Alabama lawyer Houston (1811–79), a Democrat, served in the Alabama House, 1832; in the U.S. House, 1841–49 and 1851–61; as Alabama governor, 1874–78; and in the U.S. Senate, in 1879 until his death.

2. State identified through content analysis.

3. Born in Virginia, David Hubbard (1792–1874) was a lawyer, merchant, and trader in former Chickasaw lands in Alabama. He served in the Alabama Senate, 1827–30, and House, 1842–43, 1845, 1853, and 1859, and, as a Democrat, in the U.S. House, 1839–41 and 1849–51. Despite later differences with the administration, Hubbard was a presidential elector on the Polk ticket in 1844. He was a cousin of Sam Houston.

4. Democratic party.

5. Virginia native and Moulton, Ala., lawyer James E. Saunders (1806–96) was elected to the Alabama legislature in 1840. He moved to Mobile in 1843. In 1845 after Polk appointed him customs collector there, a position he held for four years. Saunders began his political career as a Democratic Republican and by the era of Polk’s presidency was a Democrat.

6. Houston probably refers to Congress’s resolution of thanks to the officers and soldiers at Monterrey. The version that originally passed the House on January 30, 1847, included a proviso introduced by Democrat Jacob Thompson, denying congressional approval of the capitulation that Zachary Taylor accepted from Gen. Pedro de Ampudia. Houston voted both to add the proviso and to approve the amended resolution. The proviso, however, provoked opposition in the Senate. In the end, both houses passed a version of the resolution that made no mention of the capitulation. Polk signed it on March 2. “Resolutions giving the Thanks of Congress to Major-General Taylor, and the Officers and Men under his Command, in the late Military Operations at Monterey.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Number 5. Thompson (1810–85) taught at the University of North Carolina, 1831–32, before starting a law practice in Pontotoc, Miss., in 1835 and representing a Mississippi district in the U.S. House, 1839–51. He served as secretary of the interior under President Buchanan, 1857–61, and as Confederate governor of Mississippi, 1862–64.

TO LAWSON MOORE¹

Dear Sir:

Washington City April 27th 1847

I have received the enclosed letter from my lamented friend the late *Col. Yell*,² who fell so gallantly at the battle of *Buena Vista*. It is probable that it is the last which he ever wrote. He had been my friend for more than a quarter of a century, and none of his relatives can feel his loss more sensibly than I do.

You will perceive from his letter, that he transacted to me, for his children a draft for four Hundred Dollars. I have applied \$200. of the

amount to the payment of his son *Clinton's*³ tuition Bill at the College at Georgetown,⁴ and now remit to you a draft for \$200. for his little daughters⁵ who are with you as requested by him. My Private Secretary⁶ has procured from the college a statement of *Clinton's* Bill, up to this time, which I transmit to you for your information. As soon as I heard of the death of his father, I sent for *Clinton* and, kept him with me two or [three]⁷ days. He was of course much distressed; he is a fine promising boy, and I take much interest in his future welfare. With the concurrence [of his] relations I propose to appoint him a [cadet at] the Military Academy at West Point. I sent for him a second time, and consulted his wishes on the subject. He is perfectly willing to go to West Point or to do whatever I may advise. On enquiring into his progress in his studies, I doubt whether he was prepared to pass the preliminary examination in June next, and if he was, he is almost too young to enter the institution and maintain himself with credit. I propose with the concurrence of yourself, and that of his other relations, that *Clinton* remain at School here, and prepare himself to enter the Military Academy in June 1848. Not knowing the condition of *Col. Yell's* estate, or whether it is sufficient to defray his expenses at College here, for another year, I have become responsible for his expenses, from this time until he enters the Military Academy, in June 1848. I would be pleased to learn your views and wishes on the subject. I am sure that the best thing that can be done for *Clinton* will be to send him to West Point, where he can acquire an excellent education, and at the close of his Academic course will have a profession for life. He would of course be at liberty to resign, if he chose to do so, after remaining in the service for a limited [time].⁸ *Genl. William Moore*⁹ of Lincoln County Tennessee, the brother-in-law of *Col. Yell*, is an old and intimate friend of mine, and if I had time from my constant and pressing public engagements I would write him, on the subject of the son of our lamented friend.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Danville, Ky. See also L, typed copy. DLC-WLM.

1. Born in Virginia, Kentucky planter Lawson Moore (1771–1858) was the father of Archibald Yell's second wife, Nancy Jordan Moore Yell, who died at age thirty-three in October 1835.

2. Archibald Yell to Polk, February 20, 1847.

3. Dewitt Clinton Yell (1831–61) was the son of Archibald Yell. He became a lawyer in Fayetteville, Ark.

4. Georgetown College, a Catholic institution, was founded as an academy in 1789 and chartered by Congress as a college in 1815. Later renamed

Georgetown University, it is located in its namesake village in the District of Columbia, now a neighborhood in the city of Washington.

5. Archibald Yell had three daughters: Jane, Elizabeth (c. 1834–?), and Ardamisa (c. 1835–1853?). Jane and at least one other were with Lawson Moore in Danville, Ky. By 1850, Elizabeth and Ardamisa were living with William and Elizabeth Lawson Moore in Lincoln County, Tenn.

6. Joseph Knox Walker.

7. Unless noted otherwise, brackets indicate a word or words illegible in the ALS, press copy, due to a light ink transfer that have been transcribed from the L, typed copy.

8. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

9. Born in Kentucky, Tennessee soldier, legislator, and entrepreneur William Moore (c. 1786 or c. 1798–1871) was married to Elizabeth Lawson Moore, sister of Nancy Jordan Moore Yell and daughter of Lawson Moore. William Moore fought in the War of 1812 and the Creek War and served in the Tennessee House, 1825–29, and Senate, 1833–37. A Democrat, he was close to both Andrew Jackson and Polk. Governor Polk in 1840 appointed him Tennessee adjutant general. William Moore was guardian to Dewitt Clinton Yell and, out of deference to the late Archibald Yell's long opposition to the U.S. Military Academy, urged Clinton not to accept Polk's offer of an appointment there.

TO ROBERT ARMSTRONG

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 28th 1847

I have been kept so constantly engaged for several months past, in the performance of my accumulated and most responsible duties, that I have not written to you. In your letter of the 4th of January, as well as in that of previous date,¹ you repeat to me the desire, which you expressed to me when you were here last year,² to engage in the military service, in the War in Mexico. I did not encourage this patriotic desire on your part, because I hoped the war would be of short duration, and because I thought it would be a great sacrifice on your part, to give up your present office.³ Up to this time I have no reliable assurances that there will be a speedy peace with Mexico. After the recent successes of our arms, if we were at war with any other nation under the Sun, it would be but reasonable to expect, that a peace must soon follow.⁴ While the war continues however we have but one course to pursue, and that is, by a vigorous and crushing movement, with an adequate force to compel the enemy to sue for terms. With this aim the ten Regiments of Regular troops authorized to be raised by Congress, are being rapidly recruited, and removed to the seat of War. In addition to these I have recently called for 6.000 volunteers, to take the place of those whose term of service will expire in June and July next.

Knowing your burning desire to wield the sword, of Genl. Jackson⁵ in defense of your country's honour and rights, I conclude to say to you, with [yet]⁶ desiring you [will remain] the other that [if]⁷ you still desire to have a command, I may have it in my power to confer it upon you. There will be one vacancy of a Brigadier General of Volunteers, which must be filled by the time the second levy of Volunteers, will take the field. If upon receiving this letter you still desire to go into the Military service, you might if you chose, come immediately to the United States, without disclosing your object and without resigning your consulate. You should pursue this course for the reason, that it is possible, that before you arrivd, the war might be terminated by a treaty of peace, or the prospect might be that it soon would be. If when you got here, upon a survey of the whole ground you should conclude not to go into the Military service, you will only have had your voyage without profit, but as you have recently crossed the Atlantic so often, you will probably not regard this as a serious obstacle to your coming over. If you come I desire that you will by no means give any intimation that you may resign your consulate, for if such a rumour were to get abroad, I should be infinitely annoyed by applications for your place.

You will have seen from our newspapers that I have appointed *Brigadier Generals Pillow* and *Quitman*⁸ to be Majr. Generals, in place of Generals *Benton & Cumming*⁹ who declined to accept. Genl. *Pillow* distinguished himself at the seige of Vera Cruz, and *Genl. Quitman* at the battle of *Monterey*, and behaved well when at Vera Cruz.

If you conclude not to return to the United States, you must not fail to write to me, by the return Steamer, as by that time it will be necessary that I should make the appointment referred to. I have no time to any thing upon public matters as I would be pleased to do. Your little daughter¹⁰ was very well a few days ago.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Liverpool, England, and marked "(Private)."

1. Armstrong to Polk, November 4, 1846; Armstrong to Polk, November 14, 1846.

2. Armstrong visited Washington City in August, September, and October 1846.

3. Consul at Liverpool, England.

4. Polk refers to political disarray within Mexico and the resultant difficulty of U.S. envoys in finding officials vested with powers to negotiate peace terms.

5. Reference is to a favorite sword of Andrew Jackson that upon his death in 1845 had been willed to Armstrong.

6. Word or words here and below uncertain, blurred ink transfer.

7. Word uncertain.
8. Gideon J. Pillow and John A. Quitman.
9. Thomas H. Benton and William Cumming.
10. Rachel H. Armstrong, Robert's young daughter, often stayed with the Polks at the Executive Mansion.

TO JOHN D. HAWKINS ET AL.¹

Gentlemen:

Washington City April 28th 1847

I have had the honour to receive your communication of the 17th Instant, transmitting to me the proceedings of a public meeting held in *Henderson* North Carolina, on that day. I am duly gratified to my Fellow Citizens of the Counties of Franklin, Granville and Warren, who composed the meeting for the tender they made to me through you, of the hospitalities of my native State, on the occasion of my contemplated visit to the University of North Carolina at the next commencement. Should the state of public affairs be such, as to permit me to be absent, for a few days from the Seat of Government, I anticipate much pleasure in revisiting your University, where so many pleasant days of my youth were spent.

In answer to your inquiry, "at what time" I will probably "reach *Gaston* near the border of the State," I have to inform you that it is my present intention, to set out from this City, on the 27th of May, and travelling by the public conveyances, I learn that I will arrive at *Gaston* on the same evening, or early on the next morning. It will be a part of the arrangement of my journey to proceed to Raleigh on saturday, where I will remain until monday.

I beg you Gentlemen: to accept for yourselves & convey to those whom you represent, my profound acknowledgements for this mark of your regard.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Henderson, N.C. Published in *Raleigh Register*, and *North-Carolina Gazette*, May 11, 1847, and in other newspapers.

1. Letter addressed to Hawkins, Wiley W. Young, Weldon N. Edwards, "and others" on the committee created to tender Polk an official welcome to North Carolina. Young (c. 1815–?) was a carpenter in Granville County, N.C. Edwards (1788–1873), a friend of James Buchanan, was a lawyer and planter from Warren County, N.C. Early on a Democratic Republican and later a Jacksonian, he was a member of the state house, 1814–15; the U.S. House, 1816–27; and the state senate, 1833–45 and 1850–52.

TO CHARLES J. INGERSOLL

Sir:

Washington City April 28th 1847

I have delayed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo, until this time, in the confident belief that as soon as you had time for sober reflection, you must become satisfied of the great injustice you had done me. It is but too manifest upon its face, that so extraordinary a production must have been written, under feelings of high excitement and disappointment, caused by your rejection by the Senate as Minister to France. Indeed the whole tenor of your letter has excited my profound astonishment, and I should not now notice it, but that the same mind which dictated it, might draw false conclusions from my continued silence.

I abstain from entering into any detailed reply, and purposely omit to notice the strange inaccuracies into which you have fallen, in the Statement you make of the private and confidential conversation, which you sought and held with me, and simply remark that your memory in regard to them differs essentially from mine.

It seems that I have incurred your displeasure and given you offence. And have I done this? I had done all that was within my Constitutional power to confer on you the office, which upon more than one occasion you personally solicited from me, and which you were most anxious to receive. Believing as I then did, that you possessed the requisite qualifications for the Station, and that you would honourably and ably represent your country at the French Court, I nominated you to the Senate. In this act I gave you the strongest evidence of my confidence, and you must have so regarded it, but strange to say, after I had done this, and you were rejected by the Senate, you suddenly change the expressions of gratitude which you had made to me, when you learned from me, that I would nominate you to the Senate, as Minister to France, and charge me with having affirmed "the dishonour put on you," with my "ungenerous concurrence" in it, and that I had "re-inforced them" (your enemies in the Senate) "with all the power of the Chief Magistrate." And what adds to the injustice of these and other charges in your letter, which I feel bound to say are equally unfounded, is the fact that at the time I nominated you, I was not unaware of the peculiarity of your relations with some of the members of the Senate, from whom you yourself apprehended opposition, and yet I hoped, as you confidently expected, that you would be confirmed by a majority of that body. It turned out to be otherwise. Your nomination was rejected by the Senate. It was their act, not mine. I deeply regretted it, and so expressed myself at the time, to those who were near me,¹ but I possessed no power to reverse the

decision which had been made. When I received information of the fact of your rejection, scarcely an hour remained of the time, when as all knew, the constitutional term of the Session of that body would expire. I was much engaged as you must be aware, in performing other important duties, always incident to the close of a Session of Congress, and had no time to send for you, and to condole with you over your rejection; and it would have been useless to have done so, for no consultation with you, could have changed my convictions of my own duty.

Your complaints are first, that I did not re-nominate you to the same Senate, which had but a few minutes before rejected you; and secondly that I did not suffer the mission to remain unfilled, for your personal benefit, until the meeting of the next Session of the Senate in December next, when upon another nomination, you desired to have another chance to be confirmed. Had I nominated you second time to the same Senate, which had just rejected you, I should probably have subjected you, to still deeper mortification by a second rejection. At least I had no reason to believe otherwise. I am quite sure that no discreet friend of yours, under the circumstances, then well known to exist, would have counselled such a course.

To have suffered the mission to remain open, would have been a dereliction of public duty. In sending your nomination to the Senate, I had determined that question. By your nomination I had clearly shewn, that in my opinion, the mission to France ought to be filled at that Session of the Senate, and your rejection did not change this opinion, or my views of the important public interests involved. The French mission is at all times an important one, and is especially so, when our country is engaged in a Foreign war. It was incompatible with my sense of public duty, to permit it to remain vacant for the next nine months, or to be confided during that period to a Secretary of Legation,² however competent and worthy he might be. Upon your rejection therefore, I could not hesitate as to the propriety, and indeed the public duty on my part, of making another nomination to the Senate, of a minister of the first rank, and asking the advice and consent of that body, to the appointment, according to the requirements of the Constitution. I accordingly nominated *Mr Rush*,³ who was immediately confirmed, and as I was officially informed, by the unanimous vote of the Senate. It is this act of mine, which seems to have exasperated you, and induced you, as I still hope, in a moment of great excitement, to write your extraordinary letter, which I must say, is alike unjust to me, and unworthy of yourself.

In your letter you say that "to quarrel with your" (my) "administration will be both awkward and irksome," and yet you leave me distinctly to infer that you may do so. Your course in this respect, I cheerfully leave

to yourself, and if for such a cause, or rather without cause, you choose to quarrel with my administration, and to oppose its leading measures, which you have heretofore supported, I can have no abjection.

Acting representatively for the whole people, and looking alone to the public interests, I have done my duty, in nominating another for the French Mission, after you had been rejected. As a public functionary I shall regret it, if the measures of my administration, during the remaining period of my term, shall loose the support which your ability and experience in public affairs might give them; and as a citizen I shall regret it, because such opposition, will come from one, to whom I had given the strongest mark of honourable distinction in my power to give.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. PHi. Addressed to Philadelphia. From Ingersoll's AE: answered April 30, 1847. See also ALS, press copy; six ALs, drafts; and L, draft, in James Buchanan's hand with emendations in Polk's hand. DLC-JKP. Some drafts are dated between April 21 and April 23, 1847.

1. Polk wrote in his diary on March 3, the day the Senate rejected Ingersoll's nomination as minister to France that he "deeply regretted" the fact.

2. Jacob L. Martin.

3. Richard Rush.

TO ROBERT ARMSTRONG

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 29th 1847

Since my letter to you, of yesterday, I have seriously reflected, whether you ought to relinquish your present eligible situation, for a command in the army. In my letter I said to you that I would not advise you on the subject, but leave it to your own judgment to decide. As your personal friend, I think it my duty now to say that my judgement is against it. Your object must be, not only to serve the country but to acquire glory in the War. The [fighting]¹ I think is now pretty well over, unless it be of the guerrilla kind.

Later information than I possessed on yesterday was received by the last Southern mail from *Vera Cruz*. That information is, that the advance column of the army, would move from Vera Cruz, towards the City of Mexico on the 8th Instant. I learn further that the [long]² pass of the *National Bridge*,³ about 30 miles on the road to Mexico, where a strong resistance was anticipated, had been abandoned. The probability now is, that our army will meet with no serious resistance in its march into the interior, but if it should it will have occurred long before this letter can reach you. The column advancing into the country, is now

not less than 14.000 strong, and more than two thirds of this force are regulars. Re-inforcements are constantly being sent forward, and before the middle of June that column of the army will be at least 20.000 strong. This is a force which is perfectly irresistible, and the City of Mexico, will probably soon be in our possession. The column on the Rio Grande, and in that vicinity will by the same time be probably 12.000 strong. All resistance has [ceased]⁴ in that quarter. Our forces too, after some gallant fighting, are in full and undisturbed possession of New Mexico and California. In this state of things, with the Mexican army, routed, dispersed and [disappointed], with her internal Government torn & distracted by factions, with our army of more than 30.000 men upon her soil, with all her seaports in our possession, and with contributions levied upon her people, so as to require the enemy to defray to a great extent the expenses of the War, it [now . . .]⁵ seem to be impossible, that the important Powers in Mexico could hold out much longer, and refuse to treat for peace. Another [fact], I [. . .] write to you in the strictest confidence, and that is, that, [. . . requests, that] the General in chief [together] with Gen'l Gaines,⁶ will shortly be [. . .] Head-Quarters of the [enemy],⁷ ready to accept any propositions of peace, which I desire very much and to consider a definitive Treaty of peace. This [part] has not been disclosed here, for the reason, that if known, there are those among us, I regret to say, when judging them from their past conduct, [would] be ready and willing to [. . .] and defeat, even an honourable Treaty of peace, rather than suffer my administration to have the credit of closing the War advantageously to the country. In truth the unpatriotic course of some of the Federal newspapers and leading men in the United States, have done more to encourage the enemy and protract the War, than all other causes. Their articles & speeches, which amount to what *Mr Grundy*⁸ aptly called in the war of 1812, "moral [Treaty],"⁹ have been translated and the [. . .], circulated through the Mexican papers. By such means, the mass of the Mexican people have been made to believe, that they have a strong party in this country, who will soon come into power.

In reflecting on the subject of my letter to you of yesterday, I felt that it was proper, to present for your consideration these facts and views, that you might be the better enabled to determine on your own course. I was only induced to write to you because I know your ardent desire to engage in the War, if it was to be continued.

Having now given you a more full statement of facts, I have but discharged a duty which as your friend I felt bound to perform.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I have written this letter in great haste and in the midst of other pressing duties. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Liverpool, England, and marked "(Private and confidential)."

1. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.
2. Word here and below uncertain.
3. The National Bridge (Puente Nacional), thirty-five miles northwest of Veracruz, was, during the summer of 1847, the site of fierce fighting between U.S. and Mexican forces.
4. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.
5. Word or words here and below uncertain or illegible, tear and light ink transfer.
6. Winfield Scott and Edmund P. Gaines.
7. Word here and below uncertain, light or blurred ink transfer.
8. Felix Grundy.
9. Polk probably meant to (but did not) write "Treason," consistent with his quotation of Grundy in Polk to Hopkins L. Turney, May 15, 1847.

TO WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, JR.

My Dear Sir:

Washington City April 29th 1847

Not having heard from you since I wrote to you some days ago,¹ I have found it to be proper to decide definitely upon my movements, on the occasion of my contemplated visit to the University, at the approaching commencement. This has been rendered necessary, by letters received from *President Swain*, *Professors Green & Mitchell* & a committee of citizens of Franklin, Granville & Warren.² I have written to all of them that it is my intention to set out from this City on the 27th and reach Raleigh on the evening of Saturday the 28th of May, where I will remain on the sabbath, and proceed to Chapel Hill on Monday or tuesday, as may be preferred by my friends at the University.³ The committee of citizens of Franklin, Granville & Warren, informs me that they were appointed by a public meeting held at Henderson without distinction of party. They tender to me the hospitalities of the State, on my reaching *Gaston*, and inform me that a special train will be provided at that place to convey me to Raleigh. Under the circumstances I have of course accepted the invitations which they have offered, but I desire, and have so written to *Professor Green*, on reaching Raleigh, that my movements shall be exclusively under the control of my friends of the University. I will be careful to avoid making my visit, one of a partisan character. My visit is wholly unconnected with politics or politicians.

I go to my native State and to my Alma Mater, where I anticipate the pleasure of meeting after the lapse of more than a Quarter of a century⁴ many cherished & valued friends, with whom I spent so many pleasant days of my youth. As I remarked in my last letter we will be most happy to have the company of yourself, Mrs. Haywood and your daughters.⁵

I desired to have been placed in possession of your views, before I answered the several communications referred to, but having received those many days ago, I thought I could not with propriety [. . .]⁶ expressing [. . .]. [I hope] the arrangements [otherwise . . . you].

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Raleigh, N.C.

1. Polk to Haywood, April 20, 1847.

2. David L. Swain to Polk, April 24, 1847; William M. Green's letter to Polk of April 15, 1847, not found; Elisha Mitchell to Polk, April 21, 1847; John D. Hawkins et al. to Polk, April 17, 1847.

3. Polk to Green, April 29, 1847; Polk to Hawkins et al., April 28, 1847. Polk probably refers to Polk to Swain, April 29, 1847, and Polk to Mitchell, April 29, 1847, though those letters do not announce his dates of travel.

4. Polk's family moved from Mecklenburg County, N.C., to Maury County, Tenn., in 1806. He attended the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill from 1816 to 1818.

5. Jane Frances Graham Haywood and Elizabeth G., Ann, Jane F., Jr., Minerva G., and Margaret N. Haywood.

6. Words here and below illegible or uncertain, light ink transfer.

FROM CHARLES J. INGERSOLL

Sir philad. Apl. 30. '47

Your long deferred answer of the 28. inst to my letter of the 25. ult. requires no reply but in one particular, viz, that I sought private conversation and solicited the French mission. That assertion is both unfounded & uncandid. You tendered me the Russian mission unsolicited and undesired which I at once and always expressed my reluctance to accept. The French mission becoming vacant while the Russian was in my offer I called on you and suggested my preference of Paris to St Petersburg, which is what I presume you mean by seeking a private conversation and soliciting the French mission. Your answer to that intimation was that you had promised the French mission to another person. There matters rested for some time till you got me to give up the Russian by voluntarily suggesting the French instead. And again after many months more you sent for me to say that you were about to nominate me for France, for which I made acknowledgments as a gentleman would for any kindness.

From these facts you gratuitously extract my seeking private conversation, soliciting office, and expressing gratitude for it.

Private conversation with you is an honor which when admitted to I have been duly sensible of. Soliciting place you must excuse my saying is what my position made unnecessary. Gratitude for any such favor is a sentiment for which there has been no occasion.

C J INGERSOLL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received May 1, 1847; "he is guilty of stating, what he knows to be untrue. I am compelled to consider him an unprincipled man, and will therefore hold no further correspondence with him."

MAY

FROM ANONYMOUS¹

Sir

Camp Near Buena Vista. May 1st 1847

I have to state that in perusing one of the Northern papers I read these lines viz. "A motion or Resolution was made to inquire if there had been during the present war, any soldiers shot for desertion."

Now sir I had the honour to enlist at the age of seventeen in the Regular Army, and would merely refer you to the year '35, and the scenes subsequent² to show you that having been in Campaign service almost ever since I had earned the distinguished honour of saying that I have "seen service."

I will not tire your patience but merely add what I intended to remark, and let me here say that as "Our Good Heavenly Father" only knows how long the Mexican arms will spare me, I will speak naught but truth and soberness and that fearlessly too.

It is this, so long as the present system of Government is allowed to exist in our *Miserable Regular Army*, just so long will there be desertion, as yes it is a melancholy truth and I am ashamed to write it, too. I will add this much more sir, that, was the army of our noble country such as it should be there would be no desertion and as an old soldier I will say that there is not one of my Comrades but would say amen to the Condemnation that sentenced every deserter to be "shot." Why my dear sir to be shot is an *honourable death*, what soldier can ask for a happier death than by the means referred to. I do not mean to say that it is noble to be shot for desertion, far from it, but sir allow me to say that if you should ever become a soldier and misfortune should cause you to desert

your tyrants power, that you would upon the first opportunity of serving your Country with your life, Return and die fighting for your Country, that you might wipe off the *foul stain* upon your character.

And sir there are hundreds among our deserters who are mere boys, and driven to do what they have by the tyrants who pretend to rule their noble minds.

Do not understand me to condemn our Officers as a body far, very far from it, but there are a *few* of the commissioned and almost all of the non-Comd. who are not Americans but, you know what, that are not fit to live in, my dear sir they are not fit to inhabit the dark and silent shades of eternal night.

I hope you ask how shall we govern our armies so that there will be no desertion. I will tell you. Purge your army of those I have mentioned and make the penalty of desertion "*death*" "*and nothing else*," and you will have an Army of men and not "*slaves*."

AL. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked Brazos, Tex. May 29, 1847. Possibly enclosed in Charles J. Fox to Polk, June 3, 1847. From Polk's AE: received June 9, 1847.

1. The author was part of Zachary Taylor's army in Mexico, which had been at Buena Vista since February.

2. Reference is likely to the Second Seminole War, 1835–42. The First Seminole War occurred c. 1817–18; the Third Seminole War, 1855–58. The conflicts, between U.S. forces and various groups of Indians, resulted in U.S. dominion over Florida, which formally had already been ceded to the U.S. by Spain in 1821 under the terms of the the Adams-Onís Treaty (1819).

TO JOHN D. HAWKINS ET AL.¹

Gentlemen:

Washington City May 1st 1847

In my letter addressed to you on the 29th ultimo,² in answer to your communication of the 17th of the same month, an error in dates inadvertently occurred. Intending to set out from this City on *the friday* immediately preceding the commencement at the University,³ and being under the impression that, that day would be *the 27th* of May, I informed you that I would leave here on that day. I should have said, that I would leave here on *friday the 28th*, of May, and reach *Gaston* on the same evening or early on the next morning. I take the earliest moment, after the mistake was discovered to correct it. I will leave here on *friday the 28th* and proceed to Raleigh on saturday the 29th of May, and will remain at Raleigh until the monday following.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Henderson, N.C.

1. Letter addressed to Hawkins, Wiley W. Young, Weldon N. Edwards, “& others.”

2. Polk erroneously refers to Polk to Hawkins et al., April 28, 1847.

3. University of North Carolina.

FROM WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, JR.

My Dear Sir

Raleigh N.C. 1 May 1847

When your first letter¹ (& one from Mr Mason) reached here I was not at home but immediately after my return, I wrote to Mr Green² that I was ready to assist him in the matter referred to & at the same time I wrote three lines to Mr Mason to let him know (& of course to tell you) that as soon as matters were arranged you should be informed of it. I have to day rec'd your last letter³ and as Mr Swain⁴ expects to be here in a day or two the information it contains will be very serviceable to the Colledge Committee as a basis for their schemes &c. I think you act wisely in leaving W. City on Friday as that is the latest day when an accident to a Rail Road Car might not disappoint both you & the Colledge. I do not know what may be the notions of the Committee of Warren &c but I should myself feel quite humiliated if the President of the U States is not conveyed on one Rail Road in *the day time* and presuming that this is to be the case you will reach Gaston Friday night, and get to Raleigh Saturday afternoon. This arrangement is a very good one if it suits you & your public duties allow of a weeks absence from the City of W.

I will suggest to Mr Swain the propriety of sending to you or to Mr Mason for your use a full statement of particulars. The time you are to leave here & reach C. Hill.⁵ The speeches you will be expected to respond to &c. both at C. Hill & elsewhere, the duties & recreations of each day at University. That will put you in full possession of the subject and render your visit I hope precisely such as you would have it to be. I am duly sensible of the honour you do me by your request that I should join you with my family at this place & I regret that it will not be in my power to do so. My daughters⁶ are not at home and do not expect to be here again earlier than 15th June. They are upon a visit to their Grand mother⁷ and my business engagements will probably put it out of my power to go to the University at Commencement at all without a great sacrifice. Indeed I apprehend that I may be in the lower part of the State about the 1st of June, and the unhealthfulness of that region should deter a prudent man whose life is valuable to his family against postponing visits to it beyond the middle of June.⁸ I am sure however

that this cannot diminish the comfort of your traveling or the pleasure of your trip as experience will convince you that *room* is much more desirable than *company* at our University on such an occasion.

As soon as Mr Swain has completed his scheme for the exercises introducing therein the arrangements of the “fellows” for showing respect to the President I will write to you again and no great delay can occur as I shall be at home for a fortnight unless some unlooked for event draws me away, & then I will take care to apprise you of it.

I suppose the Presidents arrival at C Hill as early as Monday will be desirable as Monday night (under the new regime)⁹ is the time for the Farewell sermon to be delivered & as it is to me after the lapse of so many years so I presume will be to you a most interesting occasion & to which *your* presence would add great interest & novelty. One day must necessarily be given up to “re-unions,” for social intercourse & *presentations to the Prest of the US.*, another to the *Orators*, leaving Thursday for Commencement. Wherefore you will perceive that in expressing my concurrence in the time selected for your arrival there, I do not act in mere courtesy to a conclusion already formed. Besides upon the plan of your proposed movements should business or accident delay you a day it will not disappoint either you or the University as the loss may be recovered by travelling on Sunday, quietly and retired from a crowd along the Rail Road. Even that sort of Sunday travelling may be avoided if nothing occurs to prevent you from leaving W City on Friday & no accident stops you on the way.

The “Fellows” will no doubt do their part. I only regret that they have not arranged it for you to *eat* at Mrs. [*Broketts*]¹⁰ old house and to provide you with one of those delicious puddings that in olden times the good little woman manufactured from *soaked biscuits*! Perhaps it is as well however not to bring back too lively a recollection of “Betsy Ross” whom I suppose you remember though it has been more than a “quarter of a century” ago she used to be a belle of the village. As Mr Mason is a Philo¹¹ and Nancy Hillyerd¹² is of that clique and the only village belle left you ought to require him to escort her on reception days by all means. Do you recollect her note to the Librarian asking for “The Hungry Brothers.” Poor Nancy she little dreamed at that time that her destiny would be to *feed* the College all her days. November, the negro of Dr Caldwell¹³ who was so famous for his chicken suppers is the only remnant of his race “*November*.” No doubt he will be ready to serve a supper to you & Mr Mason for the old price, and I can have no better wish to make than that your 2 appetites may be as good for it as they used to be. Not a [shop], not a tree will you pass there that does not tell you of some buried friend, some broken chord, some vanished dream:

and unless one's being a President makes [a]¹⁴ difference your visit will be full of painful yet pleasant sadness. You return to your alma mater a greater man. May you leave it a better one. I am not your preacher however & must not moralize. I will be thankful to Mr Mason if he will receive this as a letter to him as well as to you and in a few more days I may have it in my power to report conclusions.

WILL. H. HAYWOOD JR

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 148–50.

1. Polk to Haywood, April 20, 1847.
2. William M. Green.
3. Polk to Haywood, April 29, 1847.
4. David L. Swain.
5. Chapel Hill, N.C., location of the University of North Carolina.
6. Elizabeth G., Ann, Jane F., Jr., Minerva G., and Margaret N. Haywood.
7. William H. Haywood, Jr.'s mother was Ann Shepard Haywood (c. 1776–1860s?) of Raleigh. His mother-in-law was Elizabeth Batchelor Graham (c. 1772–1850) of New Bern, N.C., a widow since 1833 and a native of Philadelphia.
8. The lowcountry of North Carolina, owing to heat and the proximity of marshes, was conducive to disease in summer and autumn.
9. Haywood probably refers to David L. Swain's presidency, which had begun in 1835.
10. Word here and below uncertain.
11. John Y. Mason had been a member of the Philanthropic Society, the University's other literary society besides the Dialectic Society to which Polk had belonged.
12. A native of Granville County, N.C., Ann S. Hilliard (1798–1873) moved to Chapel Hill with her parents in the 1810s. During the 1830s and 1840s, she operated the Hilliard Hotel, later known as the Eagle Hotel, where many University students boarded. She built an addition onto the lodging shortly before Polk's visit. Hilliard—whose surname appears in some records as Hillyard—also went by the given name Nancy; students called her "Miss Nancy" or "Greasy Monkey."
13. Joseph Caldwell (1773–1835), a New Jersey native and Presbyterian clergyman, became a tutor at the College of New Jersey in Princeton in 1795 and a mathematics professor at the University of North Carolina the next year. He served as presiding professor, 1796–97 and 1799–1804, and as president, 1804–12 and 1817–35. November Caldwell (1791–1872), Joseph's slave, previously had belonged to Joseph's wife. Copying the owner's title, people called the slave "Dr. November." He drove Joseph's carriage and served the University. He often boasted of his service to various high public officials, including to Polk as a waiter during the president's Chapel Hill visit.
14. Word uncertain, obscured by tape.

FROM MARCUS MORTON¹

Dear Sir;

Boston May 1, 1847

Having been informed that you propose to make an excursion as far North as New York, I take the liberty, most respectfully, to invite you to continue your journey into New England. I would not presume to found this request upon my personal desire, but in making it I but express the wishes of the community. Boston is only a few hours from New York; and, although not expressly authorized to speak for others, I may safely assure you that you would confer a great favor, as well upon the whole people, as the Democratic Party, by giving them an opportunity to show their respect not only to the President of the United States, but to the distinguished individual who fills the highest office in the world.

MARCUS MORTON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received May 3, 1847.

1. Morton (1784–1864), a Massachusetts lawyer, served in the U.S. House, 1817–21; as a justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, 1825–39; as governor, 1840–41 and 1843–44; and as customs collector at Boston, 1845–48. Originally a Democratic Republican and later a Democrat, he joined the Free Soil party in 1848.

FROM HENRY C. POPE¹

Dr Sir

Jalapa Mexico May 1st 1847

Lt Thomas Ewell² (Rgt Mtd Riflemen) having fallen in the recent battle of Cerro Gordo,³ I avail myself of the first opportunity that has since presented itself, of transmitting you the particulars of his death.

In the Action of the 17th ult (by far the severest of the two days engagement) Mr Ewell was so conspicuous for personal enterprise and intrepidity, as to elicit the admiration of every officer of the brigade, and secure for himself early the succeeding day, an independent command; whose daring reconnaissance of the enemys works, involved the highest responsibility and hazard.

After the successful accomplishment of this duty, he accompanied his Regiment unharmed through the destructive and exposed movement, into position, on the morning of the 18th. This movement executed with the most precise order, under the concentrated fire of all the enemies batteries and the musketry of 2000 of his [. . .]⁴ infantry, failed to gratify his impetuous chivalry and was, immediately followed by his advance against the principal height, at the head of a band of

followers, from the Regiment. Wi[t]h⁵ these he passed in succession the Charging parties of Infantry and Artillery, and gained the Citadel (or last entrenched work of the enemy) some minutes before any other officer or soldier. Here in a desperate personal Conflict with the last of the retreating foe, (and after killing two of them with his sabre) he fell mortally wounded by a musket ball, fired a few feet from him, passing through his bowells, and lodging in the extremity of the spine.

I was with him a few minutes after he fell and though my regiment left the height that evening, I remained with him until the consummation of the last offices, of duty & friendship. The severity of his wound caused him the extremity of mental anguish, which he bore throughout, with a soldiers fortitude. He survived it but *twelve* hours, and we buried him on the summit of Cerro Gordo, the arena of his heroism, and imperishable renown.

Gen Scott ascended the height soon after it was carried, and bending over him amidst the wan palpitations of victory, added his loud and eloquent tributes, to the unanimous acclaim his deeds had enlisted.

Since his annexation to my Company I have neglected no opportunity of contributing to his comfort and advancement, and felt myself more than rewarded, by the esteem & admiration you predicted he would inspire. Had he lived, he would have reflected the highest lustre upon the service, & will be remembered as it is, with pride and regret, by every gallant heart it contains.

During his intervals from pain, he requested me to communicate to your Excellency these sad particulars of his death; and add to them his prayers for your personal happiness, and the prosperous conclusion of your responsible trust.

In conclusion allow me the expression of a continued sense of your former kindness & warm solicitude for your every happiness.

H C POPE

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked New Orleans, May 18. From Polk's AE: received May 25, 1847.

1. Pope (1808–49) edited the Louisville (Ky.) *Advertiser* in 1843 and served as captain of Company D in the U.S. Mounted Rifle Regiment, May 1846–December 1847. He died in a duel.

2. A Jackson, Tenn., Democrat originally from Virginia, Ewell (1822–47) ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the Tennessee House in 1843. He was appointed first lieutenant of Pope's company in May 1846.

3. After the American capture of Veracruz on March 27, 1847, General Santa Anna, at Cerro Gordo, tried to halt the advance of Gen. Winfield Scott's army toward Mexico City. The Americans arrived at Cerro Gordo on April 17 and defeated the Mexicans the next day.

4. Word illegible.

5. Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir,

Near Nashville, Tenn 3' May 1847

We hear very little from Washington, but it must be a time of some anxiety with you. But accounts from New Orleans, today, say that Santa Ana has entrenched himself with some 15.000 troops in advance of Jalapa & has met Scott at his front division under Twiggs, and that a battle has been had.¹ We think it improbable that Twiggs would attack until more support had come up, but under any circumstance we have no fears of the result. The enemies of the administration deserve no sympathy in the awkward predicament to which they are driven for comfort in the reverses or disasters of our own army. They are really mortified at our success, except so far as it can be made to glorify particular individuals.

The Taylor business is a stumbling-block to every-body; at least, to all those of either party who have been taking an active part in the conduct of public affairs. The second-rate dissatisfied Editors & uninitiated Whigs seised upon it as the means of securing the success of their party. The democratic Editors, to prevent the *Stampede* from overwhelming them, have many of them, joined the chase, without being able to guess at the result of the experiment. Eastmans leading article on the subject² was written by him with great care. Nicholson³ fully approved of it. The water was too deep for my fathom, but I suggested a few modifications which Eastman readily adopted.

The two Browns have gone over the mountain and are today on the Border of Buncombe.⁴ The Governor⁵ has so much the advantage of the Gen⁶ on the old issues that they are not debated whilst Neil S. spends his time in acrimonious revilings of the War & its effects. He is not as adroit as Jimmy Jones⁷ in assuming false premises and arguing from them as [granted],⁸ but the chief annoyance he gives the Governor is in that way. He will assume that the Governor is for Wright⁹ for President, & ask him if he is not for Wright to come out like a man & say he is against him. Then triumphantly proclaim "I have no mental reservations, I am for Rough & Ready,¹⁰ if you are his friend, come out like a man & say so." The unfairness of such yea or nay propositions cannot always be comprehended in a crowd, even by a mans friends.

Upon the whole, however, still the Governors prospects seem brighter than they did two years ago.

Johnson, Crozier, Cocke, Gentry, Jones, Stanton & Chase¹¹ will be reelected to Congress. Cocke is at present opposed by his uncle the old General.¹² Gentry is opposed by a new man from Rutherford¹³; Stanton by Herrin¹⁴ of Memphis & Harris¹⁵ (former Senator) from Covington. Herrin will quit & Stanton will beat Harris. Milton Brown¹⁶ declines with a view to Turley's¹⁷ place on the Supreme bench. Kit Williams¹⁸ was to succeed him if Haskell¹⁹ did not return from the war in time, but Eldridge²⁰ who got in as a Whig from Weakley last year has taken the start of them & they will have to rule him off. Gardner²¹ intended to have run against Milton Brown. I do not know what he will do now. In this district Barrow & Cullom²² have fairly locked horns, and each thinks he will not give way even should the democrats bring out a candidate. The primary precinct elections in case of Sam Turney & Doct Hill²³ failed & they are both running. Turney will beat if they run alone, but there is much danger that they may both be beaten by a Whig.

This County²⁴ is perfectly quiet. Meigs & Bell²⁵ have not responded to their nominations and say they will not run against opposition from either party. The breach between Bell & Foster²⁶ has been widening for some time, and it is pretty certain that the occurrences in our County Court last week have made the gulf impassable. Foster was of Counsel for Judge Morgan Brown²⁷ in his strongly contested case of the guardianship of Doct M'Neils children.²⁸ Bells relative, Sam Crockett²⁹ was the complainant against Brown, and altho the case was in all its early stages managed without Bells interference he had finally to take sides & they occupied the constant attention of the quorum Court for the last two weeks. Foster made a loud frothy ranting speech about things in general & made some unfriendly allusions to Bell in particular, and when Bell came to sum up & close the case, which took him several hours, he did, in the estimation of every democrat, & of every whig that I have heard mention it, use up the ex-Senator most piteously. Bell made a decided hit. The result was, that poor Brown lost the place & Wm Nichol³⁰ was appointed in his stead. An appeal was made, but the decision will probably stand.

Doct Young,³¹ amongst other gossip, told me a day or two ago, that he was looking for a requisition from the War department, for another Regiment. In the absence of Gov. Brown it will take us unprepared, but we will do the best we can. It will be very desirable that the U.S. should have their own organizing officers here.

D. GRAHAM

[P.S.] I hope there will be no necessity for appointing a Quarter-master. If there should be, John L Brown³² wants the place. He has some of

the qualifications, and if old Cave,³³ who is connected with him, should desire it, it might be well enough.³⁴

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “Private” on the cover and “(Private)” at the top of the letter. From Polk’s AE: received May 12, 1847.

1. An army officer since 1812, Georgia native David E. Twiggs (1790–1862) became a colonel of dragoons in 1836. Promoted to brigadier general in June 1846, he was brevetted a major general three months later for gallantry at Monterrey. He commanded a division under Winfield Scott in 1847 and led the main attack on Cerro Gordo, the battle to which Graham refers here. Twiggs became governor of Veracruz in 1848.

2. The *National Union*, the weekly edition of Elbridge G. Eastman’s Nashville *Union*, published editorials about Taylor’s presidential prospects on April 14 and 28, 1847. Eastman argued that Taylor agreed more with the Democrats than with the Whigs. The Whigs, Eastman believed, would not support Taylor for president, but the Democrats might.

3. Alfred O. P. Nicholson.

4. Graham presumably means that the gubernatorial candidates had crossed the Great Smoky Mountains to Tennessee’s border with Buncombe County, N.C. They were not, in fact, that far east; they appeared together in Dandridge, Tenn., on May 3 and traveled northeast from there.

5. Aaron V. Brown

6. Neill S. Brown.

7. James C. “Lean Jimmy” Jones (1809–59), a Wilson County planter, served in the Tennessee House, 1839–41, and as a Whig presidential elector, 1840 and 1848. He defeated Polk for the governorship in both 1841 and 1843, serving 1841–45.

8. Word uncertain.

9. Silas Wright, Jr.

10. Zachary Taylor.

11. Andrew Johnson, John H. Crozier, William M. Cocke, Meredith P. Gentry, George W. Jones, Frederick P. Stanton, and Lucien B. Chase. Crozier (1812–89), a Knoxville lawyer and Whig, served in the Tennessee House, 1837–39, and the U.S. House, 1845–49. Cocke (1815–96), a Rutledge lawyer and Whig, served in the U.S. House, 1845–49. Jones (1806–84), a Virginia native, was a Fayetteville, Tenn., saddler, banker, and Democrat. He served in the Tennessee House, 1835–39; in the Tennessee Senate, 1839–41; as clerk of the Lincoln County Court, 1840–43; and in the U.S. House, 1843–59. Chase (1817–64), a Vermont native, was a lawyer and Democrat in Clarksville, Tenn. He represented a Tennessee district in the U.S. House, 1845–49, then moved to New York City, where he published his *History of the Polk Administration* in 1850.

12. John Cocke (1772–1854), William M. Cocke’s uncle, was a Virginia native and a lawyer and farmer. A major general in the Creek War, 1813, he served in the Tennessee House, 1796–99 and 1807–13; in the Tennessee Senate, 1799–

1801 and 1843–45; and in the U.S. House, 1819–27. During his career he was affiliated with the Democratic-Republican, Democratic, and Whig parties.

13. Radford G. Ellis (c. 1821–1860s?), a Whig, lost this congressional election to Gentry. A Murfreesboro lawyer in 1850, he later served in the Tennessee Senate as a member of the American party, 1855–57, and in the Tennessee House as a Confederate, 1861–63.

14. Graham may refer to Edwin O. Herrin, who was appointed naval agent at Memphis in October 1849.

15. John W. Harris (c. 1804–1870s?), a Tipton County lawyer and Whig, served in the Tennessee Senate, 1843–47.

16. Born in Ohio, Milton Brown (1804–83) studied law in Felix Grundy's office in Nashville, then practiced law in Paris and Jackson, Tenn. He served as judge of the chancery court of West Tennessee and then as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1841–47. Brown was also a promoter of railroads and of higher education.

17. Born in Virginia, William B. Turley (1800–1851) became a Clarksville, Tenn., lawyer. A Democrat, he served as a state judge on Tennessee's eleventh circuit, 1829–35, and on the Tennessee Supreme Court, 1835–50.

18. Christopher H. "Kit" Williams (1798–1857), a North Carolina native and a Henderson County, Tenn., lawyer, represented a Tennessee district as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1837–43 and 1849–53.

19. William T. Haskell (1818–59), a lawyer, Whig, and veteran of the Second Seminole War, served in the Tennessee House, 1841–43; as colonel of the Second Tennessee Infantry Regiment in the Mexican War, 1846–47; and in the U.S. House, 1847–49.

20. Graham mistakes the name of Emerson Etheridge (1819–1902), who represented Weakley County in the Tennessee House, 1845–47. A lawyer born in North Carolina, he also represented a Tennessee district in the U.S. House, 1853–57 and 1859–61, and served in the Tennessee Senate, 1869–71. During his political career he belonged to the Whig, American, and Republican parties.

21. John A. Gardner (1809–92) edited the Paris *West Tennessean*, 1827–28, before becoming a Dresden lawyer. A Democrat, he served in the Tennessee Senate, 1841–47, and the Tennessee House, 1879–81. Defeated for a Congressional seat by Haskell in 1847, he served as a presidential elector in 1848.

22. Washington Barrow and William Cullom. Cullom (1810–96), a Kentucky-born lawyer and Whig, lived in Carthage, Tenn. He served in the Tennessee Senate, 1843–47, and in the U.S. House, 1851–55.

23. Hugh L. W. Hill.

24. Davidson County, Tenn.

25. Return J. Meigs III and John Bell.

26. Ephraim H. Foster.

27. Lawyer Morgan W. Brown (1800–1853) of Nashville served as U.S. judge for the Middle District of Tennessee, 1834–53.

28. William McNeill I (1765–1844), a physician in Columbia for many years, married Mary Ryburn in 1804, Mary Sayers Crockett in 1833, and Sarah P.

Hardin in 1838. Widowed three times, he moved to Nashville shortly before his own death. With his second wife, who died in 1838, he had two children: Mary Ryburn McNeill (1834–1903), who later married Morgan W. Brown's son William L. Brown, and William McNeill II (1837–54).

29. Samuel Crockett, presumably a relative of Mary Sayers Crockett McNeill, was a prominent citizen of Nashville.

30. Nichol (1800–1878), a Virginia native, was a wealthy Nashville merchant and planter. He served as mayor from 1835 to about 1837, then became the first president of the Bank of Tennessee in 1838.

31. A Democrat born in Virginia, physician John S. Young (1804–57) served as Tennessee secretary of state, 1839–47.

32. A native of Georgia then living in Tennessee, John L. Brown was appointed a captain and assistant commissary on September 8, 1847, and served until July 20, 1848.

33. Cave Johnson.

34. Graham wrote his postscript in the left margin.

FROM BENJAMIN V. FRENCH¹

Dear Sir

Braintree [Mass.] May 4th 1847

While in the City on Saturday last, I had it intimated, that you contemplated visiting the City of New York early in July ensuing. If this be true, may I indulge the hope, the reasonable expectation and gratification, in common with my fellow Democrats, that you will extend your visit into the "New England States"? I will assure you, that you will receive a most warm and hospitable reception in Boston. Your visit alone and as I trust it will be coupled with the event of a peace with Mexico, will tend to harmonize the discordant sentiments that have existed between the "ins and outs." It will have a tendency to silence the high Tarriff Whiggs and to establish the Democracy² more permanently of this sextion of our Union, which is much to be desired. Trusting that the reasonable wishes of your Democratic friends may be gratified, . . .

BENJ. V. FRENCH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received May 20, 1847.

1. Born in Connecticut, French (1791–1860), early in life, worked in Boston as a merchant, bank director, and insurance office director. In 1836, he moved to Braintree to devote himself full-time to scientific agriculture. He was a founder of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in 1829 and served on the state's Executive Council in 1843.

2. Democratic party.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

My dear sir,

Near Nashville, Tenn. 4th May 1847

On going to town this morning I found your very satisfactory letter of the 26th ult in the Post office, and without having yet mentioned the subject to any one except my wife,¹ I promptly accept your kind offer. It is in fact the position which, of all others, I think I would prefer.² Mrs Graham has at once gone into calculations of the time & manner of going on, and has for some weeks been so full of the idea of being much with Mrs Polk here during the expected visit, that she does not know how to give it up. Her first proposition is, that I should go on by the first of June, that she will remain here until Mrs Polk makes her visit, & in the mean time, bring up some arrearages of domestic affairs which should be attended to, and then follow by the first good opportunity. All this, we will think of more fully tonight & in the morning. When I go in tomorrow I will speak to Nicholson,³ & to him only at first, as it will be necessary to provide for my succession here in the Bank,⁴ and I shall endeavour to shape things so as to be with you on the 4 June, and will keep you advised of any change from that calculation. This will leave precisely one year & three quarters to the 4 March '49.⁵

DANIEL GRAHAM

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "(Private)" on the cover and at the top of the letter. From Polk's AE: received May 13, 1847; answered May 15, 1847.

1. Maria M'Iver Graham.
2. Register of the Treasury.
3. Alfred O. P. Nicholson.
4. Bank of Tennessee.
5. Polk would conclude his presidency on this date.

TO LOUIS PHILIPPE

Great and Good Friend,¹

[Washington City, May 4, 1847]

I have made choice of Richard Rush, one of our distinguished citizens, to reside near your Majesty, in the quality of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America. He is well informed of the relative interests of the two countries, and of our sincere desire to cultivate and strengthen the friendship and good correspondence between us; and from a knowledge of his fidelity, probity and good conduct, I have entire confidence that he will render himself acceptable to Your Majesty by his constant endeavors to preserve and advance the interest and happiness of both Nations. I therefore request

Your Majesty to receive him favorably, and to give full credence to whatever he shall say on the part of the United States, and most of all when he shall assure Your Majesty of their friendship, and good wishes for your prosperity.

And I pray God to have Your Majesty in his safe and holy keeping.
Written at Washington this 4th day of May A.D. 1847.

JAMES K. POLK

L, copy, in Richard Rush's hand. NjP-RF. Countersigned "James Buchanan/ Secretary of State." See also L, copy. NjP-RF.

1. Presidents since James Monroe had introduced ministers with similar letters.

FROM ALFRED BALCH

Dear Sir,

Denmark [Tenn.]¹ 5th May, 47

I have been in the District for the last month attending to my private business, at various points. The masses throughout our whole state have been excited to an extraordinary degree by the recent victories at Buena Vista and Vera Cruz. The Whigs are making a preconcerted movement in every direction in favor of the election of General Taylor to the Presidency in 1848. It is confidently asserted by many that Taylor is decidedly Anti-Bank And Anti Tariff and of course for the sub-Treasury. Whether these people are right or wrong "*nous saurons*"² after a little. I perceive that the Itinerant Pedlars are vending cheap engravings of Taylors Battles and are nailing them up in the Bar rooms of the taverns and in all the grogeries of the small towns.

At present I should say that our gov^r³ will be re-elected: Altho the Whigs are endeavouring to identify Taylor and Neil Brown⁴ beleiving that this policy will enure to their advantage in the depending contest.

Stanton⁵ it would seem will be again successful by an increased majority.

I hope that the Mexicans will soon agree to negotiate. If they do you should grant them a *magnanimous* peace. It will become our greatness and superior power to treat these people semi barbarous as they are with liberality.

Every body in this quarter is pospering. The people are buying lands and negroes at rapidly advancing prices. Cotton, corn, and Bacon are all going off at high rates.

With respects to Mrs P I remain

ALFRED BALCH

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received May 20, 1847.

1. State identified from postmark.
2. French expression meaning "we will know."
3. Aaron V. Brown.
4. Neill S. Brown.
5. Frederick P. Stanton.

FROM ISAAC DAVIS¹

My Dear Sir—

Worcester Mass. May 5. 1847

Understanding that you intend soon to visit the City of New York, allow me to invite you to extend your [visit]² into New England. Although mass is under the domination of whig men & whig measures, yet there are many noble spirits who have not bowed the knee to the Baal³ of Federalism but have uniformly & zealously, advocated the great democratic principles of equal rights, equal Laws & equal priveleges—these men would give the cordial & warm grasp of the right hand & bid you welcome to New England. Worcester is an inland Town with a population of 15,000 on the direct route from New York to Boston. Should you find it convenient to extend your journey to Boston, Permit me to say that it will afford me very great pleasure to see you at my House in Worcester, & hope you make my House your home, while you would have an opportunity of seeing some of the best specimens of New England Farming & manufacturing.

ISAAC DAVIS

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received May 16, 1847.

1. A Worcester Democrat, lawyer, and bank and railroad executive, Davis (1799–1883) served in the Massachusetts Senate, 1843–54, and later as Worcester mayor, 1856, 1858, and 1861. He was a substitute delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1844 and was several times an unsuccessful candidate for Congress and for governor.

2. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

3. Baal was the chief god of the ancient Phoenicians and Canaanites. The term here thus refers to a false god.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

[Washington City]¹ 6 May 1847

Mrs. Fremont² is a good deal disturbed by rumors and ambiguous givings out in relation to the part taken by her husband³ in the difficulty between Commodore Stockton⁴ and General Kearny,⁵ and is very desirous to learn what is known at the Department in relation to that officer.⁶ Would there be any impropriety in showing to her (confidentially) the note of General K. to Lieut. Col. F. and the latter's reply to it?

These two notes contain all that is officially known in relation to Lieut. Col. F's course. Unless you see objections to it, I am disposed to let her see the two notes.

W L. MARCY

[Washington City, c. May 6, 1847]

I submit the matter entirely to yourself. If the notes referred to, are shown to Mrs. F. she should be informed that it is not desired to have the subject made one of public discussion, until after the final action of the Government shall have been had.

J K. P.

L, copy, and E, copy. DLC-WLM.

1. Place here and place and approximate date below identified through content analysis.

2. Jessie Benton Frémont.

3. John C. Frémont.

4. Robert F. Stockton.

5. New Jersey native Stephen W. Kearny (1794–1848) served in the War of 1812 and then at various frontier garrisons. Appointed a brigadier general with command of the Army of the West in the Mexican War, he captured Santa Fe in August 1846 and served as military governor of New Mexico, August–September 1846. He then led most of his forces to California, playing a major role in the U.S. conquest of that Mexican province; he became its military governor, March–May 1847. In spring 1848, he became military governor of Veracruz and Mexico City; in August, he received a brevet promotion to major general. He died of yellow fever.

6. In 1847, during the U.S. occupation of California, before U.S. civil authority had been firmly established over the former Mexican province, John C. Frémont became entangled in a rivalry between Stockton and Kearny over which of those two officers had ultimate authority over California. In September 1846, Frémont had been appointed military governor of California by Stockton. In January 1847, he refused to relinquish that post when Kearny, claiming direct authority from Polk, sought to appoint himself to the same post. Kearny won the struggle, and Frémont—in a court martial held in Washington City, November 1847–January 1848—was convicted on charges resulting from his alleged insubordination. He resigned his army commission.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Sir:

Navy Department May 6. 1847

I have the honor to enclose herewith reports from the Bureaux¹ and Chief Clerk of this Department,² for the month of May³; in compliance with your circular of April 11. 1845.⁴

J. Y. MASON

L, copy. DNA–RG 45.

1. Besides the Secretary's Office, the Navy Department consisted of five bureaus: the Bureau of Navy Yards and Docks; Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography; Bureau of Construction, Equipment, and Repair; Bureau of Provisions and Clothing; and Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

2. Born in Massachusetts, John Appleton (1815–64) practiced law in Maine and, in 1838, became editor of the Portland *Eastern Argus*. He served as chief clerk of the Navy Department (a post in the Secretary's Office), 1845–48; chief clerk of the State Department, 1848; minister to Bolivia, 1848–49; a Democratic member of the U.S. House, 1851–53; and minister to Russia, 1860–61. He was acting secretary of the navy in June 1847. As Polk's private secretary during the president's trip north in June and July 1847, Appleton kept a journal of the trip and read Polk's mail, hence his AEs on some letters in this volume.

3. Enclosures not found.

4. Polk to George Bancroft, April 11, 1845. See also Polk to James Buchanan, April 11, 1845.

TO WILLIAM W. CORCORAN¹

Dear Sir:

Washington City May 7th 1847

When I requested you early in March last, to purchase for me, three thousand Dollars of public stock, I informed you, that I desired to invest that sum, held by me as a trust fund. On the day following our conversation you transferred certificates of United States Stock to me in my own name, and not as Trustee for my ward,² for which I paid you a premium of one percent, on the sum of three thousand and thirty Dollars. I do not doubt my lawful right to make such investment, but in view of my official position, I deem it proper to relinquish the stock, by retransferring it to you, and invest the fund in some other mode. I desire therefore to transfer the stock to you, without premium or interest, and request that you will place to my credit, the [price]³ sum which I paid you for the stock.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–WWC. Addressed to Washington City. See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

1. Corcoran (1798–1888), a former dry goods merchant, managed the District of Columbia real estate of the Bank of the United States and the Bank of Columbia, 1828–36. He became a Washington City banker and broker in 1837 and began a partnership with George W. Riggs in 1840. Substantial loans from Corcoran & Riggs to the U.S. government helped to finance the Mexican War.

2. Marshall T. Polk, Jr.

3. Word uncertain.

TO JAMES BUCHANAN OR CAVE JOHNSON¹

Dear Sir:

[Washington City]² May 8th 1847

Since you left my office this morning, I have seen the Secretary of the Treasury,³ and in a conference with him, as also with the Secretaries of War & the Navy,⁴ I have concluded that there would be danger from *fire* in illuminating the public buildings to night, and especially as regards, the War, Navy & State Departments which are not *fire proof*.⁵ It would not be understood if some of the public buildings were illuminated & others not. I have decided therefore that none of them shall be illuminated, & you are requested to issue orders accordingly, so far as regards the Post office building.

I will light up the Presidential mansion, & I learn that each of the Heads of Departments will illuminate their private residencies, which I think will be proper.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Will you see *Mr Burke*⁶ whose office is near yours, and request him for these reasons, not to illuminate the patent office? J.K.P.

ALS. DLC. Probably addressed locally.

1. Name of recipient, if included, torn out of letter. Archival notation identifies Buchanan as recipient, but content analysis suggests Johnson.

2. Place identified through content analysis.

3. In his diary entry of May 8, 1847, Polk recounts visiting Secretary of the Treasury Robert J. Walker in the afternoon. Walker had been too ill to attend that day's cabinet meeting.

4. William L. Marcy and John Y. Mason.

5. Washington City designated the evening of May 8 to illuminate the city's public buildings in honor of victories by the army and navy in the war with Mexico. City Hall, the fire station, and many businesses and homes kept their lights on and placed artwork known as "transparencies" in their windows; the office of the *National Intelligencer* added what the paper described two days later as "a display of red-fire." The navy yard displayed rockets, fireworks, and a bonfire.

6. Edmund Burke.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir

Elizabethton [Tenn.] May 9th 1847

I have just reached this point from Jonesboro, Greenville &c. Yesterday was a glorious day at Jonesboro. Some of the Democrats said I beat *you* & so I felt like it was "glory enough for one day."¹ But to be serious I have been making a series of speeches far superior to any I

have ever made & productive of effects which I think must make my gains at the election decided & undoubted. I keep in good health & voice & am every where & by every body treated with the greatest respect & kindness.

My purpose however in writing you now is to call your attention to the question whether it would not be well to make Campbell & Anderson² of the 1st Regt. *Brevet* Brig Genls. I suppose they will both return & both having fought at Monterey & Vera. Cruz, it would seem that some honorary mark of promotion at least would be deserving—as to the Colonels of the other regiments who might expect a similar honor, the answer would be that it was not their good fortune to have been in the battle of Monterey. It would have in my opinion a good effect on the public mind in several respects. It would convince them that you were disposed to confer honor, whenever honor was due, whether on a Whig or a Democrat & would be a good counterpoise [to]³ any thing that might be said about Pillows promotion⁴ & no body's else. I want you to think of it & if your concur with me in opinion let it be done immediately & published *formost in the Union*⁵ & the commissions transmitted to them say at New Orleans so that they may have them before their return. Their time will be out the 1st of June so that if it is to be done, it must be done *quickly*.

I do not doubt myself that it would be both just & public to do so.

AARON V BROWN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received May 20, 1847.

1. Polk enjoyed a reputation as a talented stump speaker. The oft-cited sobriquet "Napoleon of the Stump," however, has not been located in any source written during his life. The first full biography of Polk describes the epithet as "generally awarded." See John S. Jenkins, *The Life of James Knox Polk, Later President of the United States* (Auburn, N.Y.: James M. Alden, 1850), pp. 50–51.

2. William B. Campbell and Samuel R. Anderson.

3. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

4. Polk promoted Gideon J. Pillow from brigadier general to major general on April 13, 1847.

5. Washington *Union*.

FROM WILLIAM M. LOWRY¹

Dear Sir

Greeneville Tenn May 9 1847

Knowing your grate anxiety for the Cause of Democratic principles I avail myself of a few moments leisure this evening to drop you a line. You are aware no doubt the candidates for Gov are now canvassing

the state. They spoke here on yesterday to a very large and attentive assembly. Gov Brown² made one of his best efforts and more than met the high expectations of his friends. His manly and independent defence of the Measures of the administration in all its leading measures, was truly grand and eloquent and when he came to the War Question he completely silenced the Slang of the opposition and convinced every body whose opinion was open to reason and Justice that, Justice and right was on our side. Genl Brown³ the Whig candidate falls far below the opinion I had formed of him from the whig newspaper accounts. He is not the man by long odds that Foster or Jones⁴ is and is no match for Gov Brown in debate. I never was, more sanguine in all my life than I am in the re Election of Gov Brown. Genl Brown assumes to rise more on the defects of his opponents than on his own whig principles. He attempts to be very severe on the administration makes many complaints all of which Gov Brown disperses to the four winds. He is trying hard to frighten the people at the expenses of the war that in a short time we will be owing some hundred Millions of Dollars near some 40 or 50 \$ per head of the voting population of the Union. When Gov Brown came to reply to this he was truly eloquent and turning to Genl Brown told him that he must certainly have forgot to whom he was speaking, that the freemen of Greene County and Tennessee did not allow Dollars and cents to enter the Calculation where the Honor and rights of this nation was concerned. I have rarely ever seen so much feeling pervade any assembly as when Gov Brown was addressing them. Till⁵ my old friend Ritchie⁶ that the old Dominion⁷ may halter hesitate and desert her ancient faith but that, Tennessee, the volunteer state⁸ the land of the immortal hero of N. Orleans⁹ will never in my humble opinion make any more whig Govs. Virginia is my own native state and for whom my attachment is unbounded and I hope she will soon wipe out, the disgrace that the late elections attached to her for the whigs throughout the Union will try to construe it as another indication from the people against the policy of the War in which the Country is now engaged.¹⁰ We have some little local divisions which I hope soon to see healed up, then you may look for a grand route of the whigs in August and no mistake my predication is We will carry the Gov, senate and representative Branch's of the Legislature, and you know that in time past I have been a pretty good proffitt. With my best wish for your health and prosperity I remain

WM M LOWRY

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received May 1847.

1. A Democrat and a close friend of Andrew Johnson, Virginia-born merchant Lowry (c. 1814–1860s?) served as postmaster at Greeneville, 1843–50.

2. Aaron V. Brown.

3. Neill S. Brown.

4. Ephraim H. Foster and James C. Jones.

5. Lowry probably meant to write “Tell.”

6. Thomas Ritchie.

7. Virginia’s nickname, “the Old Dominion,” was probably first used during the Revolutionary War. It most likely derives from Virginia’s status as among the earliest of England’s overseas colonies, also known, in various eras and circumstances, as “dominions.”

8. Tennessee’s nickname, “the Volunteer State,” derives from the large number of Tennesseans who volunteered in the War of 1812. The term increased in popularity during the Mexican War, when a large number of men from the state again volunteered.

9. Andrew Jackson.

10. Virginia, on April 22, 1847, elected ten Democrats and five Whigs to the U.S. House, a Whig gain of four seats.

FROM JOSEPH MORTIMER¹

[Woolwich, Kent, England] 10th May 1847

The humble petition of Joseph Mortimer now a Prisoner on board the Unite Hospital Ship² Woolwich—Kent England—Sheweth

That your petitioner being a Citizen of the United States, made in the Marine Court at New York, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eighth hundred and thirty one—

That your petitioner landed at Phaladelphia, in the year one thousand eighth hundred and forty one, or forty two, with a large amount of Jewellery which was seized, the same being alledged³ smuggled. Again a second seiziure was made at his private lodgings, where more was found and taken to the Custom House, at the same time, your-petitioner stating, he would call the next day and pay the Duty. When he called he was taken into Custody by the Deputy-Marshall,⁴ then in consequence of not giving Bail, was sent to the Debtors Prison where he remained for nearly three months on the scanty allowance of less than a pound of Bread per day which treatment greatly impaired your petitioners health.⁵

While in prison he entered an action at Law for the recovery of his property which he gained, being defended by George. M. Dalless,⁶ now the Vice President.

The day appointed for trial in the United States Court in the City of Philadelpha, his two Trunks of Jewellery was handed into the said

Court by the Custom House Officers, and the one Trunk was proved to be English Jewellery the other American.⁷

I then demanded my property. The Judge⁸ stated there was a point of Law to settle, at the same time giving orders to the Marshall⁹ to take charge of the said property & in a few days the Judge died without my obtaining any decisive answer, then in a few days the said Marshall took the benifet of the Insolvent Act,¹⁰ then I could not get my property out of his hands, without an order from Mr Spencer Secretary of the Treasury Department¹¹ which though I obtained from him, & on presenting the said order In place of receiving my Trunks I only received about ten dollars worth after receiving my receipt for the [whole].¹² At the time I gave the receipt a Jeweller was present who valued the property I received at ten dollars. The whol amount seized was about 6000 Dollars. The amount of Jewellery that was not condemned was valued at 15 hundred.

When I was set at liberty I got affidavits from my fellow prisoners respecting my treatment in prison. Them & my own I forwarded to President Taylor¹³ or to the Secretary of the Treasury at Washington.

Your petitioner prays to have the whole of the proceedings investigated by him the President or Vice President who was your petitioners Counsel at the time of his action.

And your petitioner as in duty bound will ever pray &c &c.

JOSEPH MORTIMER

[P.S.] I pray, on a sick bead for Justis for the treatement I recaved while in prison in the city of, philidelpha, and while in sade prison on my demanding rashins while in a State of starvation of the keeper¹⁴ he then and there sent me to the criminal prison where I wood have rashings. I, wass 3 dayes there the destrict a turney¹⁵ took me out ass the had no law to have me there and sent to my one prison. J.M.¹⁶

[P.S.] Iff my counchal may require any funs my brother John Mortimer octtineere no. 187 chatim sqere city of new york¹⁷ will sepley the same, and what ever damages I may recave, I pray my counchal to put the same to the use of my fore children now with out father or mother. My brother nose the partys that have my children in the united states. Josephh Mortimer

NS probably in Sir Alexander Nisbet's hand ("A. Nisbet" written above date) with autograph postscripts. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received June 19, 1847.

1. Joseph Mortimer (c. 1801-?), an Irish laborer, sailed to New York City in 1827, four years before the year when, according to this letter, he became

an American citizen. At the time of this letter he was an inmate of the British prison ship *Justitia* at Woolwich and was being accorded medical treatment on the *Unité*.

2. The British used the *Unité*, a frigate taken from the French, as a hospital ship for convicts.

3. The writer inserted "alledged" with a caret.

4. Jabez Burchard, a Pennsylvania native, served as U.S. deputy marshal at Philadelphia in the late 1830s and 1840s.

5. Mortimer describes events of 1841, when he imported goods from Liverpool, England, to Philadelphia on the packet *Shenandoah*. After Philadelphia Customs House officers charged Mortimer with not paying import duties, they seized the goods and imprisoned him until Pres. John Tyler ordered him released in October.

6. George M. Dallas.

7. On December 28, 1841, the jury convicted Joseph Mortimer of not paying import duties on the European-made goods but acquitted him with regard to the American-made ones.

8. Joseph Hopkinson (1770–1842) served as judge of the U.S. district court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1828–42. He earlier had practiced law in Philadelphia and represented Pennsylvania as a Federalist in the U.S. House, 1815–19. He then served in the New Jersey House, 1821–22, before returning to Philadelphia.

9. Isaac Otis (1788–1859) served as U.S. marshal for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1841–43. A New England native and a Whig, he worked at times as a sailor, farmer, manufacturer, canal builder, and banker. He served as postmaster at Otisville, N.Y., 1819–28; as justice of the peace for Orange County, N.Y., 1822–28; and on the Philadelphia Common Council, 1835–36 and 1839.

10. Pennsylvania's Insolvent Act of 1836 permitted the release of an insolvent debtor from prison.

11. Mortimer refers to John C. Spencer, who served as secretary of the Treasury in 1843–44, but presumably means Walter Forward, who filled that office in 1841–43. Spencer (1788–1855), a Canandaigua, N.Y., lawyer, served in the U.S. House as a Democratic Republican, 1817–19; in the New York House, 1820–21 and 1831–32; in the New York Senate, 1824–28; as New York secretary of state, 1839; and as secretary of war under President Tyler, 1841–43, before taking the Treasury post. Connecticut-born Forward (1786–1852), a Pittsburgh lawyer and editor of that city's *Tree of Liberty* newspaper, served in the U.S. House, 1822–25. Initially a Democratic Republican, he became a Whig and was appointed first comptroller of the Treasury by Pres. William Henry Harrison, 1841, then Treasury secretary by Tyler.

12. The writer struck out "whole" but did not replace it with another word.

13. The writer misspelled the name of John Tyler; Mortimer does not refer to future president Zachary Taylor.

14. The Philadelphia County Prison, also known as Moyamensing Prison, included separate sections that segregated debtors from other criminals. It employed several prison keepers.

15. William M. Meredith (1799–1873), a Philadelphia lawyer and Whig, served in the Pennsylvania House, 1824–28; as president of the Philadelphia Select Council, 1834–39; as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1841–42; and as secretary of the Treasury under President Taylor, 1849–50.

16. Mortimer wrote his first postscript in the left margin.

17. John Mortimer lived in Brooklyn and worked as an auctioneer at 187 Chatham Street (not Chatham Square).

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir:

Washington City May 11th 1847

I transmit to you herewith a *title-bond*¹ executed by me to *Mr Evan Young*, for my House & lot and stable lot, as you request me [to]² do, in your letter of the 1st Instant. In describing the boundaries of the lot [on]³ which my dwelling house stands, I have followed the description which you enclosed to me, and which I presume you copied from the record. The description of the stable lot made out by *Mr Bennett*⁴ which you enclosed, [. . .] I cannot understand. These are its precise terms, viz—“Beginning at the North West corner of *Matthew D. Cooper’s*⁵ Stable lot, and returning *three fourths degree West &c.*” Now whether it meant to run *South three fourths of one degree* [. . .] or *North three fourths of one degree West* or [what] is meant by the words “*three fourths degree*” [West] I cannot understand. I have however given a description of the lot in the bond, which will [be]⁶ sufficiently definite. When my father [passed . . .]⁷ me upon [his death] I had [a] stable upon it, [. . .]⁸ to have the new house placed [about where] the old one had stood. When I come to make the Deed I can describe the rents and bounds more particularly. When you deliver the bond to *Mr Young* I wish you to procure the notes given in consideration for it, which you state are in the hands of *Mr Frierson*,⁹ and hold them in your possession for me. Before either of these falls due, I will give directions what to do with the money when collected. As the contract is now complete, of course the property will be at *Mr Young’s* risk. I mean if by any accident the Houses or any of them, should be destroyed by fire, before the 1st of January next, it will be his loss. To the rent of this year I will be entitled. The rent note for 1848, is now in the hands of *James H. Thomas*: You can procure it from *Mr Thomas*, either now or at the end of the year, and either give it up to *Houston*,¹⁰ or make any use of it you think best, in arranging with *Mr Duncan*,¹¹ for delivering possession to *Mr Young*, on the 1st of January. You speak of selling my store house. Have you had any offer for it? What is it worth in your opinion? If you sell it, you must have in mind that there are a few feet of the back-ground on which the counting-room of

the Store-House built by *Adlai O. Harris*¹² stands, that I agreed with him verbally when he was building that he might have. These few feet of course should not be sold. When you have delivrd the Bond to *Mr Young* & received the notes, write to me and inform me of the fact that you have done so.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked “(Private).”

1. Enclosure not found.
2. Word either absent or illegible due to a light ink transfer.
3. Word here and below uncertain or illegible, light ink transfer.
4. Polk probably refers to Hendley S. Bennett (1807–91), a Tennessee native and Columbus, Miss., lawyer who served as a Mississippi circuit court judge, 1846–54, and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1855–57.
5. Born in South Carolina, Cooper (1792–1878) worked as a merchant in the towns of Franklin and Columbia, Tenn., and served many years as president of the Union Bank of Tennessee’s Columbia branch. He also operated a commission mercantile business in New Orleans, but continued to live and farm in Columbia.
6. Word either absent or illegible due to a light ink transfer.
7. Samuel Polk. Word or words here and below uncertain or illegible, light ink transfer.
8. Most of one line, or possibly multiple lines, illegible, light ink transfer.
9. Born in South Carolina, Columbia lawyer Samuel D. Frierson (1803–66) was once Marshall T. Polk’s law partner. By 1844 he had become a political opponent of James K. Polk. In 1854 he was appointed a chancery court judge.
10. Russell M. Houston.
11. Merchant Cicero B. Duncan (c. 1824–1860s?) first rented Polk’s Columbia house in 1845 for Duncan’s mother and subsequently lived there himself.
12. Harris (c. 1799–1861?), a Georgia native, married Polk’s sister Naomi Tate Polk in 1825. In the 1820s he was a business partner of James Walker; in 1834 he formed a New Orleans commission business with Madison Caruthers. After Naomi’s 1836 death, he moved to New Orleans and, in 1842, to Memphis. There, by 1848, he had become a director of the Memphis Insurance Company.

FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

My Dr Sir,

Berlin. May 11' 1847

Mr Ingersoll¹ reached here day before yesterday and soon after his arrival came the news of Genl Scotts brilliant victories at Vera Cruz. We had of course the pleasure of feasting upon events that promise a happy termination of the troubles with Mexico. I do not doubt that the subject will now be managed so as to disappoint the unreasonable pretensions

of the party that expected the war to overthrow the Democratic party. At a soirè last evening at Baron Canitz² many congratulations were offered to me upon the skill and bravery of our troops. Lord Westmoreland,³ the British Minister, said he heartily wished me joy, for he felt that we were the same people and were entitled to be victorious whenever we had a fair field. I am the more gratified as I must confess that I feared Scott would commit some mistake. His conduct when he was first offered the command betrayed so much indiscretion that I could not have trusted him so far from home.

Your brilliant victories will enable you to be magnanimous, and shame those of your enemies who ascribed the war to motives of conquest. They will even permit you, if Mexico is still obstinate, to limit your aggressive operations to the possession & occupation of the ports and the Territory necessary to us as an indemnity. At all events you can now with safety take your position as to the extent of Territory to be surrendered by Mexico. The less of this Territory, in my judgement, we take south of the line from Monterey⁴ on the Pacific to the Rio Grande, the better for the U States. The Mexican climate and soil are as inferior to ours as are her people, and we cannot engraft there either our Government or our labor. Our negroes may be refined into a capacity to take a chance with them some day hereafter in the experiment of self Government,⁵ but it is impossible for our citizens ever to descend to their level.

I have been alarmed at the dangers which were possible in our relations with Mexico. But I am now relieved. Even if the Whigs run a man into the Presidency, your principles must remain in the ascendent. You have vindicated the national honor. You have maintained what is right in the domestic policy: and you have given to the Democratic party grounds for Union, and causes of strength as great as they have ever had before.

Russia is the only European power that is not agitated by the evils of a crowded population. Her immense Territory gives her subjects varieties of soil & climate to fall back upon as ours do in the United States. On this account she is not only strong, but acquiring daily new re[a]ches,⁶ and becoming constantly a cause of dr[e]ad to her neighbors. But the great problem of safety in regard to her ambition, and of general European amelioration, is to be solved in the United States. Upon us is this deep responsibility. If we continue to maintain good order, to administer the Government without weakness, arising from the extent of the right of suffrage and the frequency of elections, our example will be to the politics of the world what christianity is to its religion. It will triumph without war—it will disarm the divine pretensions of Kings by the force of reason.

The assembly in session here⁷ does but little to interest us. The King & Queen⁸ have left Berlin for Pottsdam; but they leave behind them their marshals and ministers who are omnipotent yet in the deliberations of the assembly. But you must not infer that the infant efforts of Prussia to attain a Constitution⁹ are vain and unreal. My opinion is that in Twenty years Prussia will be as free as England.

Mr. Ingersolls health is pretty good. His son,¹⁰ a fine young man is with him. They will find the Emperor¹¹ at St. Petersburg.

My family join in kind regards to Mrs. P and Mr. & Mrs. Walker.¹²

A J DONELSON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Private*" on the cover. From Polk's AE: received June 5, 1847.

1. Ralph I. Ingersoll (1789–1872), a lawyer from New Haven, Conn., and a second cousin of Charles J. Ingersoll, served in the Connecticut House, 1820–25; in the U.S. House, 1825–33; and as minister to Russia, 1846–48. Though early on an Anti-Jacksonian, he supported President Jackson by the end of his career in Congress.

2. Karl Ernst Wilhelm Freiherr von Canitz und Dallwitz (1787–1850) was the Prussian minister of foreign affairs, 1845–48. A general, he had served as Prince William's adjutant in the 1820s and later as Prussian minister at Cassel, Hanover, and Vienna.

3. John Fane, Earl of Westmorland, (1784–1859) formerly Lord Burghersh, was the British minister at Berlin, 1841–51. A violinist and composer, he served in the British army during the 1800s and 1810s and represented the coastal town of Lyme Regis, England, in the House of Commons, 1806–16. Prior to his appointment at Berlin, he served as minister at Florence, Parma, Modena, and Lucca.

4. Monterey, California, not to be confused with Monterrey, in Mexico's northeastern interior.

5. As early as 1816, with the founding of the American Colonization Society, both apologists for and opponents of slavery sought to remove freed slaves in the United States to various foreign climes, usually Africa, where they would establish self-governing states. Even after emancipation, as late as 1871, Pres. Ulysses S. Grant envisioned U.S. annexation of the Dominican Republic for use as a haven for former U.S. slaves.

6. Letter inserted here and below to complete probable meanings.

7. In February 1847, King Frederick William IV called for the United Diet to be held at Berlin. This diet, which combined Prussia's eight provincial diets, met from April 11 to June 26 and primarily discussed Prussia's finances.

8. Frederick William IV (1795–1861) and Elisabeth Ludovika of Bavaria (1801–73) reigned as King and Queen of Prussia, 1840–61. The king declined an offer in 1849 to be named emperor of a united German confederation.

9. Although King Frederick William III (1770–1840), who reigned 1797–1840, had promised to give Prussia a written constitution in 1815, he had failed

to deliver on that promise. Frederick William IV's calling of the United Diet in 1847 raised hopes for a constitution, but he quickly dismissed the idea. Prussia finally got a constitution during the Revolution of 1848.

10. Lawyer Colin M. Ingersoll (1819–1903) was appointed secretary of legation at St. Petersburg by Polk in 1847 and became acting chargé d'affaires the next year. He represented a Connecticut district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1851–55.

11. Nicholas I (1796–1855) reigned as Emperor of Russia, 1825–55.

12. Joseph Knox Walker and Augusta Adams Tabb Walker.

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

Dear Sir,

Washington City May 11. 1847

Permit me to state a few reasons why in my opinion Jefferson Davis¹ should be appointed Brig. Genl.

- 1st He has always been a Democrat—in 1844 was democratic *elector* and traversed the State of Misspi. making speeches in favor of your election.
- 2nd He has great Military talents schooled at West Point & improved by subsequent service in the Army.
- 3d He distinguished himself greatly at Monterey & Buena Vista—it is conceded if at one time his Regiment (which lost nearly a third in killed & wounded) had given way, the battle was lost.
- 4th Severely wounded at the commencement of the battle he remained in command until the close encouraging & leading his men.
- 5th He is the idol of the democracy² of Mississippi, stronger now in that State than any man *ever was* and deep will be their disappointment if he is overlooked. My letters from the State look to it as a matter of course universally expected by every body.
- 6th It will be hailed with delight by the volunteers who have served in the war so many of whom are now returning home as citizens.
- 7th It will be popular with the democracy of *the whole Union*.
- 8th To overlook him would injure us every where, but in Mississippi, it would be most *disastrous*, its pernicious effect in our election to the legislature & Congress *this fall* no one can predict. A far smaller cause in regard to an appointment lost Genl. Jackson the State for many years, tho' he had received majorities in every County.³

9th If it is believed in the State that I did not press his appointme[nt]⁴ it would render me *so odious* there that it would destroy my usefulness as a public man for years to come.

10th Whilst to overlook him would in my opinion greatly injure the administration, his appointment would give it great strength & popularity.

Feeling the most profound interest in the success and approval by the nation of your administration, I have thought it my duty to place these facts before you.

[ROBERT J. WALKER]

L, copy. PPiU.

1. Kentucky native Davis (1808–89) graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1828 and served in the army until becoming a Mississippi cotton planter in 1835. A Democrat, he served in the U.S. House, 1845–46; in the U.S. Senate, 1847–51 and 1857–61; and as secretary of war under Pres. Franklin Pierce, 1853–57. He served as president of the Confederate States of America, 1861–65. Colonel Davis commanded the First Mississippi Rifle Regiment, 1846–47, but declined Polk's May 17, 1847, offer of a brigadier generalship on June 20.

2. Democratic party.

3. Walker probably refers to Tennessean Samuel Gwin (c. 1794–1837), whom Jackson thrice appointed but the Senate never confirmed as register of the Clinton, Miss., land office in 1832 and 1833. The appointment energized opposition to Jackson in Mississippi. Although Democrats nonetheless won the presidential vote there in 1832 and 1836, the Whigs won the governorship in 1835 before the Democrats regained it in 1837. Gwin, who had fought under Jackson in the Creek War and become a clerk in the Post Office Department in 1829, eventually was ensconced in the new land office at Chocchuma, Miss. He was cashier of the Union Bank of Mississippi at his death.

4. Letters obscured by letter-book binding.

FROM JOHN HOGAN¹

my dear sir

Utica New York May 12th/47

I regret deeply to see that Mr Walkers² health is in so precarious a state. Indeed for the last year I warned Mr W. that unless he observed more caution than he did that his health would suffer. His labours were too onerous for so delicate a constitution as he had. It now seems that my worst forbodings are more than realized. Still I hope he will recover. I know well that your kind & generous feelings as well as to Mrs Polk his illness is a deep pain for no man living was so devotedly attached to you than Mr. W. Notwithstanding his illness at present rest assured that I join you in deeply regretting his premature decease & I *fear ulti-*

mate death but we must hope for the best. I rejoice that Gen Scott has been so successful at Vera Cruze & at the national bridge for I know the embarrassment you were labouring under in relation to the Mexican War. The feelings in this part of the country is strongly in favour of having that War brought to an honourable close not by yielding one inch to the Mexicans but by treating those creatures as favourable as possible. I had almost forgotten to speak of Gen Shields & Col Yell.³ Two nobler spirits did not exist. They died in the service of their country. Poor Gen Shields wound is mortal I see by the papers. Therefore he cannot have survived it. The weather here until the last few days has been cold & but little vegetation as yet. I hope your health continues good. Be good enough to give my best wishes & respects to Mrs Polk & our [friend]⁴ Mr Buchanan & Judge Mason.⁵

JOHN HOGAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “*Private*” on the cover.

1. Born in Ireland, Hogan (c. 1805–1850s?) was a lawyer in Utica. From February to October 1845, he served as special agent to the Dominican Republic to evaluate that new country for possible recognition by the United States.

2. Robert J. Walker.

3. James Shields and Archibald Yell. Shields (1810–79), a lawyer and Democrat from Ireland, served in the Illinois House, 1836–37; as a judge of the Illinois Supreme Court, 1843–45; and as commissioner of the General Land Office, 1845–47. Commissioned a brigadier general in 1846, he earned the brevet rank of major general at Cerro Gordo, where he was shot through a lung. His wound was not fatal, though some newspapers in May reported and many speculated that it was. In 1848, Shields was appointed governor of Oregon Territory, a post he eventually declined. He later served in the U.S. Senate, representing Illinois, 1849–55; Minnesota, 1858–59; and Missouri, 1879. He remains the only person to have represented three states in that body.

4. Word uncertain.

5. Sarah Childress Polk, James Buchanan, and John Y. Mason.

TO ZACHARY TAYLOR

Sir

Washington City May 12th 1847

I communicate to you herewith an authenticated copy of “Resolutions giving the thanks of Congress to yourself and the officers and men under your command in the late military operations at Monterey.” Approved March 2d 1847.¹

Proper steps have been taken, to cause to be prepared the “gold medal” to be presented to yourself, and the “swords”² to be presented to Major General Butler, Major General Henderson, to Brigadier General

Twiggs, Brigadier General Worth, Brigadier General Quitman,³ and to the nearest male relation of the late Brigadier General Hamer.⁴ As soon as they shall be completed it will afford me sincere pleasure to present to you in a suitable and appropriate manner the “gold medal” voted to you by Congress.

JAMES K. POLK

LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker’s hand. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Mexico.

1. Enclosure not found. See letter and notes in George S. Houston to Polk, April 26, 1847.

2. The joint resolution called for “a gold medal with devices emblematical of this splendid achievement” for Taylor and “swords, with suitable devices” for the other men named.

3. William O. Butler, James Pinckney Henderson, David E. Twiggs, William J. Worth, and John A. Quitman. Worth (1794–1849), after working as a merchant in Hudson and Albany, N.Y., joined the army in 1813. He served as commandant of cadets at the U.S. Military Academy, 1820–28, and later in the Second Seminole War. In the Mexican War he commanded troops at Monterrey, Veracruz, and Mexico City. He was brevetted a brigadier general in 1842, and a major general in September 1846 for his service at Monterrey.

4. Pennsylvania native Thomas L. Hamer (1800–1846) was an Ohio teacher, lawyer, and Democrat. He served in the Ohio House, 1825 and 1828–29, and in the U.S. House, 1833–39. Appointed a brigadier general on July 1, 1846, he commanded a division at Monterrey; wounded in that battle, he died in December 1846. Thomas M. Hamer (c. 1831–1851), his eldest son, served as a midshipman on the USS *St. Mary’s* in the Pacific Squadron in 1848. After resigning from the navy in 1849, he studied law. He died of cholera in New Orleans while en route to Cuba with filibusters led by Narciso López. The filibusters aspired to wrest the island from Spain and annex it to the United States.

TO ROBERT ARMSTRONG

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 13th 1847

I addressed two letters to you on the 28th and 29th of the last month. Since that time our army has fought the battle of *Cerro Gordo*, which resulted in our triumphant success. You will see the details in the newspapers. The Tennessee Brigade was in the hottest of the fight, and behaved most gallantly, but suffered severely in killed and wounded. *Genl. Pillow*¹ was among the wounded, though not dangerously. Our young friend *Thomas Ewell* of Jackson Ten. 1st Lieut. of the Rifle Regiment was mortally wounded. Brigadier *Genl. Shields*² of the Illinois Brigade was wounded & is supposed mortally. *Col. Harney*³ of the Dragoons greatly distinguished himself, but you will see the details in the newspapers. An unofficial account was received by last night’s

mail that the army moved immediately forward after the battle, and that *Jaloppa* and *Perote*⁴ had surrendered without firing a gun. *Santa Anna* was so completely routed at *Cerro Gordo*, that there is no probability, that he will ever give another general battle. He fled from the field himself; his forces were utterly dispersed & several thousand of them taken prisoners, and the probability is that our forces are now or soon will be, in the City of Mexico. If any thing can induce the stubborn race with which we are at War to sue for peace, our successes must do it. If they still refuse to treat, they, can wage none other than a guerilla warfare.

In my two letters of the 28th and 29th of April I gave you my opinion, in relation to the propriety of gratifying your desire to enter the military service, and in the latter advised you against it. I need not repeat what I then said, further than to say that my views are unchanged. When I wrote the first of those letters, I was prompted solely by a sincere desire to gratify your wishes, if I could do so, with any propriety. Since that time embarrassments have arisen in relation to the Brigadier Generalship, to which I referred, which I had not anticipated. At that time I hoped I might be able to confer it on you, if you still desired to go into the military service, but now it is but [. . .],⁵ to say to you, that it would be very embarrassing to do so, and would probably subject me to violent assaults not only from the Federalists, but from many of my own political friends, not because of any objections to you personally, for all would admit your eminent qualifications, but upon other grounds. I am greatly pressed to select some one of the officers now in Mexico who have distinguished themselves. Among those most earnestly pressed is *Col. Jefferson Davis* of the Mississippi Regiment, who behaved most gallantly in the battles of *Monterey* and *Buena Vista*, was wounded severely in the latter engagement, and contributed largely to [. . .] the battle. The enthusiasm in his behalf is becoming very great. He is moreover a brave and gallant officer. *Col. Price*⁶ of Missouri who achieved a signal victory over superior numbers, in New Mexico, and *Col. Doniphan*⁷ of the same state, who achieved the splendid victory of *Sacramento* & captured *Chihuahua*⁸ against a force more than four-fold his own [number] are also pressed. Another consideration is, that of the recent call for Volunteers,⁹ none are from Tennessee. All the Tennessee troops are 12. months men, except [2] Companies of the 10. Regiments raised for the War. [From] Mississippi there is a Regiment & in Missouri two Regiments for the War. Other officers now in Mexico, from whose States there are troops for the War, are also pressed. These are embarrassments which I had not foreseen or appreciated, when I wrote to you and I avail myself of the Steamer which will leave on the 16th to state them to you. You will not I am sure misunderstand me. I am sincerely desirous to gratify your wishes, and supposed when I

wrote you, that I might have it in my power to do so; but since that time I have such evidences of the popular feeling before me that I am satisfied if I were to select any one, who has not hertofore engaged in the War, over officers who have seen a year's service, who have fought & some of them been wounded, it would produce a great clamour in the country, and would embarrass & weaken my administration. I make these statements to you with *pain*, because I fear they will give you *pain*. I lay the whole case before you. For you personally I would do any thing [. . .] with, that was reasonably in my power, but I know you would not desire to see my administration weakened or embarrassed [. . .]. That such would be the effect, of gratifying my personal desire to serve you, I am now fully convinced. I submit to you therefore whether you will desire it, [. . . in] the circumstances as I have stated them to you.

At my last advices, the *commissioner* clothed with Diplomatic powers & full authority, to conclude a Treaty of peace,¹⁰ had not joined the head quarters of the army,¹¹ but has doubtless done so, before this time. I shall wait with great anxiety to learn the result of his mission.

You have no conception *My Dear Sir*: of the vastly increased responsibilities and labours of my position since I saw you. I have not only to discharge the ordinary Executive duties, which are far from having diminished, but I have to conduct a Foreign War, and not only to [. . .] a foreign but a domestic enemy, in the bosom of my own country. The Federal press, and leading partisans, [. . .] and find fault with every thing that is done, and by the course they pursue oppose their own country, and give aid and comfort: to that country's enemies. This is the course which, the violent leading partisans of the same party, pursued in the war of 1812. Now they are if possible more vindictive than they then were. They make loud professions of patriotism, but then shew by their acts, they would rejoice to see our armies defeated and their country disgraced if they could thereby gain a party triumph. What they desire is the possession of power, that they may distribute the offices among themselves. I do not of course intend to apply these observations to the patriotic men of their party, who are in the field fighting our battles, or to a large portion of the masses who vote with them at Elections. I mean to apply, them, to many of their politicians & leading partisans. I have however an abiding confidence in the patriotism of the country. I shall pursue the course I have heretofore done firmly. Adopting the motto, often repeated by the Venerable & Patriotic Jackson, "I shall continue to take principle for my guide, the public good my end, and leave the rest to God and to the country."¹²

*Little Rachel*¹³ was very well a few days ago.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Liverpool, England, and marked “(Private & confidential).”

1. Gideon J. Pillow.

2. James Shields.

3. Born in Tennessee, William S. Harney (1800–1889) moved to Louisiana before joining the army in 1818. After participating in the Black Hawk and Second Seminole Wars, he went to Mexico as colonel of the Second Dragoon Regiment in 1846 and was brevetted a brigadier general for heroism during the Battle of Cerro Gordo.

4. After defeating Santa Anna at Cerro Gordo, Winfield Scott’s army entered Jalapa on April 19 and William J. Worth’s division entered the abandoned fortress of Perote on April 22.

5. Word or number here and below illegible or uncertain, light or blurred ink transfer.

6. Born in Virginia, lawyer and Democrat Sterling Price (1809–67) served in the Missouri House, 1840–44, and the U.S. House, 1845–46. In August 1846, he went to Mexico as colonel of the Second Missouri Cavalry Regiment. In July 1847, he was promoted to brigadier general. Price participated in both the invasion and the occupation of Mexico. Discharged in November 1848, he later served as Missouri governor, 1853–57.

7. A Kentucky native, lawyer Alexander W. Doniphan (1808–87) sat as a Whig in the Missouri House, 1836–37, 1840–41, and 1854–55. By 1838, he had risen to the rank of brigadier general in the Missouri militia. In 1846, he joined the army as colonel of the First Missouri Cavalry Regiment, which participated in numerous key actions in the Mexican War’s western theater.

8. Doniphan’s regiment was victorious on February 28, 1847, in the Battle of Sacramento in the mountains of the Mexican state of Chihuahua.

9. On the call, in late April 1847, for six thousand volunteers, see Polk to Armstrong, April 28, 1847.

10. Nicholas P. Trist.

11. Scott, after entering Jalapa, established his headquarters there.

12. This quotation, which Polk here and elsewhere cites in varying forms as Jackson’s “motto,” cannot be found in precisely this form in any of Jackson’s extant writings. Jackson, however, frequently claimed to hold “principle” as his “guide” and the “public good” as his “end,” and admonished others to do likewise, as he did, for example, in one of his last letters to Polk, March 6, 1845.

13. Rachel H. Armstrong.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Dear Sir:

[Washington City]¹ May 13th 1847

I enclose to you the resignation of Mr Seddon.² The young gentleman *Mr Shaw*, I have no doubt is a worthy young man, and as the recruits raised by *Mr Seddon* have not marched, I submit to you, whether it may

not be proper to depart in this instance from the general rule we had adopted, to appoint from those now in service, and appoint *Mr Shaw* at once. In this event he would return at once to Fredricksburg,³ take charge of the recruits, add to their number & be ready to move with them to the seat of War. I think that this would perhaps be best. I leave it however to yourself to determine.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–WLM. Probably addressed locally.

1. Place identified from other correspondence.
2. John Seddon. Enclosure not found.
3. Fredericksburg, Va.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Sir:

Navy Department May 13. 1847

I have the honor to inform you that, from the recent successes of our naval movements in the Gulf of Mexico, a portion of the Marine corps, now serving with the Navy may be detached without detriment to the public interests, and placed on duty with the army. If you shall deem it proper to direct, six companies of marines with the necessary field and company officers will be ordered to report, in pursuance of this suggestion, to the Secretary of War.¹

It is only just to the Marine corps to add that the opportunity of active service on land, would be embraced by its officers and men with the utmost alacrity and zeal.

J. Y. MASON

L, copy. DNA–RG 45.

1. William L. Marcy.

FROM ROSE SAVAGE

Dublin, May 13th 47

I really do not know how to address the President of the United States.

I mean, as to how to designate him, but certainly not as we are obliged to address our Queen,¹ Your Majesty. I hate such humbug, & nonsense. I dont like England, not its Goverment, I never did; but to make a long story short, I spent the best part of my life in the United States, & there buried all the world held dear to me.

The President will know the deplorable state of poor Ireland at *this time*, & that there is no such thing as earning a support in this poor Country. I am anxious to go to Boston or some of The States, where I would make a livelihood, but I have not the means of paying my way out. I have applied to our Queen for assistance *having no friends, who can* give me money, but she, lends a deaf ear to all such applications, having been, I believe, often deceived.²

If therefore The President will be good, & charitable enough to send me the means of going to Boston I will for ever bless, & pray for him, & The Almighty will reward him, if not here, hereafter.

My address, Miss Rose Savage, care of Edmund Armstrong Esqr.³ Ecclesiastical office, 25 Upper Merrian Street,⁴ Dublin, Ireland. Lest The President should think this an imposition, I will, on my arrival in America, if he wish it, go to his presence, & then, & there, I will tell him a tale which I will venture to say, will draw tears from his eyes. [Then],⁵ should I prove an Imposter, The loss will not be great to The President, it will be, as a drop in The Ocean, to what America, has done for our miserable Country.⁶

Now, all I will say further [is]⁷ that I trust The President w[ill] for The Almighty Gods sake, send me the relief I sue fo[r;] otherwise, I know not what I shall do. My Father was a clergyman of The church of England. I was brought up diff[er]ently from this, but I lost al[l] my little property by the death of a dear brother.

Our country is in a dreadful state at present, I may say, w[e] are all almost starving here, [. . .] every prospect, they say, of thing[s] being worse.

ROSE SAVAGE

[P.S.] I should be sorry to trouble The President could I do otherwise, but I am absolutely destitute of the means of support.⁸

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked Boston, June (day illegible). From Hampton C. Williams's AE: received June 5, 1847.

1. Queen Victoria.

2. Like other British leaders, Queen Victoria had ambivalences toward Ireland. As queen of a constitutional monarchy styled the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Victoria often supported measures to improve conditions in chronically impoverished Ireland. But, like most British leaders, she also feared anti-British political movements there. The potato crop failure of 1845 and the ensuing disaster in Ireland only exacerbated Victoria's ambivalences. In January 1847, and again later that year, she issued public letters asking the British public to make donations to the newly formed British Relief Association, a charity devoted to assisting Ireland's distressed. In the

wake of her first appeals letter, the queen donated two thousand pounds of her own money to the cause. But soon after making her donation, Victoria learned that the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Abdülmecid I, planned to make an Irish relief donation of ten thousand pounds—a gift fivefold greater than hers. Seeking to avoid a royal embarrassment, Victoria asked the Sultan to reduce his gift to one thousand pounds. The Sultan complied with the request. But, without informing the British government, he dispatched three food-laden ships to Ireland. Upon learning of the ships, British officials sought through the courts to block their arrival in Ireland, but those legal efforts proved unsuccessful. Ottoman sailors reached Ireland and unloaded their ships. Meanwhile, making matters worse for Victoria, rumors in Ireland soon reduced her gift of two thousand pounds to a miserly two pounds. Across the island, she bore a new sobriquet, “the Famine Queen.” Beyond that, Victoria’s abilities to assist Ireland were checked by a practical consideration: by the era of her reign, most powers in the United Kingdom to shape public policies were vested in Parliament.

3. Reference is possibly to Edmond Armstrong, Esq., who in 1824 owned land in Callowmore, Wheery Parish, County Meath, Ireland.

4. Slight variation from modern spelling of Dublin’s Upper Merrion Street.

5. Word uncertain.

6. On U.S. government and private contributions to Irish relief, see letters and notes in Robert Gray to Polk, February 22, 1847; Uriah P. Levy to Polk, February 27, 1847; and Jane Hickey Sealy to Polk, June 1, 1847.

7. Word or characters here and below either absent or cut off side of page.

8. Savage wrote her postscript sideways across the first page.

TO THOMAS M. HAMER

Sir:

Washington City May 14th 1847

Understanding that you are the eldest son of the late *Brigadier General Hamer*,¹ I transmit to you herewith an authenticated copy of “Resolutions giving the thanks of Congress, to Major *General Taylor*, and the officers and men under his command in the late Military operations at Monterey,” approved March 2nd 1847.²

By one of these Resolutions the President of the United States is requested to present a “sword,” with suitable devices,³ to the nearest male relative of your distinguished and patriotic ancestor, and to communicate to him “the deep regret which Congress feels, for the loss of a gallant man, whose name ought to live in the recollection and affection of a grateful country.”

Proper steps have been taken to execute these Resolutions of Congress, and as soon as the “sword,” designed for you, shall be completed, it will give me sincere pleasure to present it to you, in a suitable and appropriate manner.

I may truly add that none of the numerous friends of your lamented father, can regret his death more sincerely than I do. We were long associated together in public life; an intimate personal friendship existed between us; and knowing his worth, I fully appreciate the irreparable loss which his family and his country have sustained in his death.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Georgetown, Brown County, Ohio.

1. Thomas L. Hamer.

2. Enclosure not found. See letter and notes in George S. Houston to Polk, April 26, 1847.

3. "With suitable devices" here means "engraved with appropriate words."

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Sir:

Washington May 14th 1847

I have to request that you will cause the accompanying letters,¹ and authenticated copies of the Joint Resolution of Congress, "giving the thanks of Congress, to Major General Taylor, and the officers and men under his command in the late military operations at Monterey,"² be enveloped and addressed respectively to those officers. When enveloped return them to me, that I may place my frank upon them, before they are placed in the mail.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Polk to Zachary Taylor, May 12, 1847; Polk to William O. Butler, May 12, 1847; Polk to James Pinckney Henderson, May 12, 1847; Polk to John A. Quitman, May 12, 1847; Polk to David E. Twiggs, May 12, 1847; Polk to William J. Worth, May 12, 1847; and probably Polk to Thomas M. Hamer, May 14, 1847.

2. Enclosures not found. See letter and notes in George S. Houston to Polk, April 26, 1847.

FROM WILLIAM W. PAYNE¹

Sir

Eutaw [Ala.] 14th May 1847

I read a letter a day or two ago from Genl Brice² of Ohio, (written at the request, of Mrs Judge McLain³) desiring to know what has become of the Cadet Commission for her son.⁴

In obedience to your request I informed Mrs McClain of your intentions, to appoint her son. Since then she has heard nothing further upon the subject.

339.

Sir:

I have to request that you will cause
 the accompanying letter - and authentic
 copies of the printed resolutions of Congress - "going
 to the House of Congress - to Major General Taylor -
 and the officers and men under his command
 in the late Mexican operations at Monterey, be
 multiplied and addressed respectfully to those
 officers. - Then multiplied, return them to me, that
 I may place my hands upon them, before they
 pass to you, if you have cause them to be
 present on the field - or recorded in your report -

Yours &c. -
 James K. Polk

Washington May 14th 1847.

W. L. Marcy

E. H. Huntley

3

James K. Polk to William L. Marcy, May 14, 1847. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Papers of James K. Polk.

This I presume is the result of accident; owing to the very great pressure of public business claiming your attention.

Would it not be well to have the Comn forwarded to Mrs McLain, at Cincinnati Ohio?

You have no doubt seen by the papers, that under the operation of the 2/3 rule,⁵ I have been excluded from a race for Congress. The Calhoun⁶ disorganisers, in the Convention, as usual insisted upon the

right of choosing a representative, and the Majority were compelled to submit or divide the party. Under the Circumstances it was probably the best that could be done; but if we had a more certain prospect of Majority in the next Congress, the Democrats in convention would have cut loose from this faction, and risked the consequences—at another time, when so much will not be risked, we shall certainly do so.

W W PAYNE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received May 20, 1847.

1. Born in Virginia, Payne (1807–74) became a planter in Alabama. He served in the Alabama House, 1831, 1834–38, and 1840, and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1841–47. Later in 1847, he returned to Virginia.

2. Virginia-born lawyer Benjamin W. Brice (1809–92), a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, served in the army, 1829–32; as a Licking County, Ohio, judge, 1845; and as adjutant general of Ohio, 1846. He rejoined the army in March 1847 as a major, serving first as paymaster at Cincinnati and later in Mexico and Texas. Discharged in March 1849, he later returned to the army and became paymaster general, 1864–72.

3. Payne misspelled the surname of Sarah Bella Ludlow Garrard McLean (1802–82) of Cincinnati, the widow of Jephtha D. Garrard and, since 1843, the wife of U.S. Supreme Court justice John McLean.

4. Kenner Garrard (1827–79), Sarah McLean's son by her first marriage, entered the U.S. Military Academy on July 1, 1847. He became a brevet second lieutenant of artillery in 1851.

5. The Democratic Congressional Convention of Alabama's fourth district, held in Tuscaloosa on May 3, 1847, required a two-thirds vote to select a nominee for the U.S. House.

6. Probably John C. Calhoun.

FROM DANIEL BRYAN¹

Alexandria Va. May 15. 1847

The accompanying effusions² are respectfully tendered, as a pledge of the high consideration and patriotic devotion of . . .

DANL. BRYAN

ANS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Bryan (c. 1789–1866) was a Virginia lawyer and poet. His works include *The Mountain Muse. Comprising the Adventures of Daniel Boone; and the Power of Virtuous and refined Beauty* (1813). He was a correspondent of Edgar Allan Poe. A fervent opponent of slavery, Bryan served in the Virginia Senate, 1818–20, and as postmaster at Alexandria, 1821–53.

2. Bryan enclosed newspaper clippings—publication and dates unknown but reprinted from the *Alexandria Gazette*—of his poems “The Call for

Volunteers” and “The Volunteers.—A National Ode.” The latter poem bears the date December 23, 1846, presumably the date of its composition. DLC–JKP.

FROM GEORGE M. DALLAS

My Dear Sir.

[Philadelphia]¹ 15. May '47

Allow me to introduce to your personal welcome my most esteemed friend Mr. Thomas Sully, of this City, whose skill will I trust do equal justice to yourself, your friends at Chapel Hill, and his own established fame.

G. M. DALLAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and delivered by Thomas Sully.

1. Place identified through content analysis.

TO FRANCIS E. RIVES¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 15th 1847

I have just received your kind letter of the 13th Instant, inviting me to spend a night at your house, on my way to visit the University of N. Carolina. I regret that it is now too late to change the arrangement of my journey, as communicated to the committee of the Counties of Granville, Warren & Franklin.² They will expect me at *Gaston* at the time I have indicated, & will probably desire to detain me at *Henderson* for one or two hours. Can you not My Dear Sir: join me at Petersburg & accompany Judge Mason³ & myself to the University? We would be much pleased to have your company.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NcU. Addressed to Petersburg, Va. See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

1. A Virginia planter, railroad manager, and Democrat, Rives (1792–1861) served in the Virginia House, 1821–31; in the Virginia Senate, 1831–36 and 1848–51; in the U.S. House, 1837–41; and as mayor of Petersburg, 1847–48.

2. Polk to John D. Hawkins et al., April 28, 1847; Polk to Hawkins et al., May 1, 1847.

3. John Y. Mason.

TO HOPKINS L. TURNEY

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 15th 1847

I received your very acceptable letter¹ some days ago, but have been so constantly occupied with my public duties, that I have had no oppor-

tunity, to answer it earlier. It is highly gratifying to me to learn that the state of political opinion in Tennessee is so sound as you represent it to be. I have a very natural desire that my administration should be sustained by my own state. From what I hear from you, and from other friends in different parts of the state, I am led to hope and believe that there can be little, [if]² any doubt of the success of our principles in the approaching state elections. The only possible danger consists, in personal and local divisions & rivalries among some of our leading friends in some parts of the state. Every honorable exertion [should] be made to reconcile all such divisions. Every thing for principles and nothing for men, should be our motto.

You see that the administration are prosecuting the War with all possible vigour. After the late triumphant successes of our arms, if we were at War with any other people under the sun, it would seem that peace must speedily follow. Up to this time however I have no reliable information to induce the belief that the Mexican *authorities*, are any more disposed than heretofore to treat for peace. In this state of things my policy remains unchanged. *Genl Scott's* column, notwithstanding the expiration of the term of service of the 12. months volunteers, is being constantly reinforced, by the recruits for the 10. Regiments & the Volunteers recently called, and will probably amount to [20.000]³ men before the end of the month of June. With his present force & the reinforcements which are *en route* to the seat of War, & are daily adding to his strength—he will press forward with his column. All is now secure on the Rio Grande, and in the Northern Provinces held by the command under *Genl. Taylor*. The column under *Genl. Taylor's* command will probably amount to 12.500. men. Whilst the war is then terminated with energy, I shall be ready to consider a Treaty of Peace, whensoever the [defeated . . .]⁴ & [distracted] cowards—of Mexico, shall sue first or to treat with them whenever they shall signify their willingness, to open negotiations. We shall make no more direct overtures to them. I may however state to you a fact, which it has not been deemed expedient to proclaim to the public: and that is, that I have despatched a *Diplomatic Agent*,⁵ who is before this time with the *Head Quarters of the army*,⁶ & who is clothed with full Powers, either to conclude a Treaty of peace or enter into preliminaries with that aim. Upon his arrival, at the Head Quarters of the army, under *Genl. Scott*, the mexican authorities, will be informed, that such a person is, there, and it will be left to their own option, whether they will [. . .] to [. . . into] a conference with him, or continue the War. Our military operations will not be relaxed in the slightest degree, by his presence with the army, but will proceed until Mexico shall come to terms. If they conclude to treat with him, no protracted correspondence or discussions will be permitted but the

differences between the two nations [will] be settled speedily. I still entertain the hope that as our army marches towards the Capital⁷ the Mexicans will prefer to make peace, rather than see it in the occupation of our troops. I have preferred to invest a *civilian* with Diplomatic powers, rather than confer them upon the Commanding Genl.⁸ I have not made known the fact that a Diplomatic agent, has been sent to the army, for many reasons, and among others because it would have enabled the unpatriotic presses and political partisans, of our own country to thwart and embarrass the objects of his mission. In truth one of the chief obstacles in the way of making peace, consists in the violent and anti-american course which has been pursued by many of the leading Federal papers, and political partisans in the United States—against the Government of their own country, and in favour of the public enemies of that country. Their newspaper articles, amounting to what *Mr Grundy*⁹ designated “moral treason” in the war of 1812, have been translated & republished in Mexico, & there is good reason to believe, that, they are induced to think that there is a strong mexican party in the U.S., & that they have only to protract the war until this party shall come into power in the U. States, to obtain all they may desire. The course of the Violent partisans in our own country, has done more to protract the war, than any other cause. Many of them would be willing to see our armies defeated & their own country disgraced, if thereby they could get into power, and distribute the offices among themselves. We have a domestic as well as a foreign enemy to contend with in this war. I do not apply these observations to many gallant men who differ with me in general political opinion, & who are in the field, fighting our battles, or to large numbers of the masses who vote with my political opponents at elections; but I apply them to many of their leading newspapers and public men, who look to nothing beyond a party triumph & their own personal advancement. But whatever embarrassments are thrown in my way, my course is fixed and onward. I shall pursue it firmly, adopting the motto, which I have often heard repeated by the venerable and patriotic Jackson¹⁰—“Take principle for your guide, the public good your aim, and leave the rest to God and to the country.”

Though I have written you a long letter, I have done so in great haste. I have no time to revise it, nor is it necessary, as it is intended for yourself and not for the public.

I hope, you will write to me again as the canvass in the State progresses, and I cannot urge upon you too strongly, the importance of impressing upon our friends, the necessity of preserving harmony in their ranks, and of putting forth their whole strength at the coming elections.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Winchester, Tenn., and marked "(Private & confidential)."

1. Letter not found.
2. Word here and below uncertain, light ink transfer.
3. Second digit uncertain, blurred ink transfer. Polk cites twenty thousand troops as his goal for Scott's column in Polk to Gideon J. Pillow, April 14, 1847; Polk to Robert Armstrong, April 29, 1847; and Polk to Pillow, May 18, 1847.
4. Word or words here and below uncertain or illegible, light or blurred ink transfer.
5. Nicholas P. Trist.
6. Jalapa, Mexico.
7. Mexico City.
8. Winfield Scott.
9. Felix Grundy.
10. Andrew Jackson. See letter and notes in Polk to Armstrong, May 13, 1847.

TO STEPHEN ADAMS¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 17th 1847

Your letter of the 6th Instant² was received to day, but before its arrival I had resolved to appoint *Col. Jefferson Davis* a Brigadier General of Volunteers. The appointment has been made; and, will be announced in this morning's Union.³ He is a gallant officer and an excellent man. I would have promoted him some weeks ago, but have been embarrassed by causes, which if explained to his friends, would be satisfactory to them. I regret exceedingly, the death of our friend *Genl. Speight*.⁴ Your letter gave me the first reliable information of the fact. I would be pleased My Dear Sir: to say much to you in relation to public affairs, but you know that I am so constantly occupied in the performance of my public duties, that I have scarcely a moment to devote, to correspondence with my friends. I can only say, that if we were at War with any other Nation under the sun, after the recent successes of our arms, it would be reasonable to calculate, that a peace would soon follow. Such however is the disorganized and distracted condition of Mexico, that no certain calculation, upon any event in the future can be made. In great haste . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Aberdeen, Miss., and marked "(Private)."

1. Adams (1807-57) practiced law in Tennessee and served in the Tennessee Senate, 1833-34, before moving to Aberdeen, Miss., in 1834. He then served as a state circuit court judge, 1837-45, and as a Democrat in the U.S. House,

1845–47. He again became a Mississippi circuit court judge in 1848 and served in the Mississippi House, 1850, and the U.S. Senate, 1852–57.

2. Letter not found.

3. *Washington Daily Union*.

4. Jesse Speight (1795–1847) was, at his death, a U.S. senator from Mississippi. He earlier had served in the North Carolina House, 1822; in the North Carolina Senate, 1823–27; and in the U.S. House, representing a North Carolina district, 1829–37. After moving to Plymouth, Miss., he served in that state's house and senate before his term in the U.S. Senate, 1845–47.

TO WILLIAM M. GREEN

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 17th 1847

I have received your letter of the 13th Instant, together with the copy of the letter which you enclosed to me, addressed to the Intendant or Mayor of Raleigh.¹ I shall deeply regret it, if any difficulty, or misunderstanding shall exist between the committees of the University and my-fellow citizens of Raleigh, & Wake County, in regard to my reception, upon my arrival at the latter place, on my way to Chapel Hill.

My contemplated visit, from which I anticipate so much pleasure, is to my *Alma mater*, and is wholly unconnected with politics. It having been announced that I was to make the visit, my fellow citizens at several points on the way, have tenderd to me their hospitalities which I did not see that I could with propriety decline. Among other civilities which have been extended to me, the Intendant of the City of Raleigh transmitted to me a few days ago the proceedings of a public meeting held on the 8th Instant, and composed as the proceedings state of citizens "without distinction of party."² Though duly appreciating the honour done me by these proceedings, they did not upon their face seem to require an answer, nor did the letter of the Intendant request one, and none has been given. I understand them as meaning simply, that upon my arrival in Raleigh, the committee appointed by the meeting propose to welcome me to their City. This as I understand it, will not in the slightest manner interfere with the desire which I expressed to you in my letter of the 29th ultimo, that upon my arrival at Raleigh "my movements should be controlled exclusively by the wishes of my friends at the University."³ Such is still my desire, and I have no idea—that the proceedings of the meeting at Raleigh, upon which you seem to place a construction different from mine, can at all interfere with the wishes which you express. I repeat My Dear Sir: that I shall deeply regret it, if any embarrassment shall arise among my friends, upon a matter of *mere ceremony*, and must rely upon you as a personal friend, so to

arrange the matter as to prevent it. In truth I have never in my life, given much attention to matters of *mere ceremony*, and have always when it could be done with propriety avoided them. I write you as a personal friend, and beg you so to regard this letter, and not as addressed to you in your character as chairman of your committee.

In answer to the inquiry which you make, as regards the number of persons who will probably accompany me, I have to inform you, that my Private Secretary (*Col. Walker*) *Mrs. Polk* and her niece *Miss Rucker*,⁴ and two servants will constitute my immediate family. *Judge Mason*⁵ will have with him, his daughter,⁶ and a scientific and learned officer of the Navy, who is his personal friend,⁷ and one servant. Those will constitute our whole party, unless, some other friend should join us, and I have at present no knowledge that any such will do so. It has been suggested to me by a friend at Raleigh⁸ who writes under date of the 8th Instant, that he understood it to be your intention, accompanied by a committee of the "fellows," to meet me at Raleigh on my arrival there. Should such be your arrangement, it will give me sincere pleasure to meet you, there, and in that event I shall feel quite unembarrassed and easy, & will conform my movements, to any suggestions you may make. This letter has been written in great haste and in the midst of many public engagements. It conveys to you the information which you request, and is intended as a *Private* letter, addressed to a personal friend.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to the University of North Carolina and marked "(*Private*)."

1. Letter and enclosure not found. William Dallas Haywood (1810–94) was the intendant, or mayor, of Raleigh, N.C., and a justice of the peace. He later became an executive of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company.

2. William Dallas Haywood to Polk, May 8, 1847, and enclosure.

3. Slight paraphrase of Polk to Green, April 29, 1847: "on arriving at Raleigh, I desire that my movements shall be controlled exclusively by the wishes of my friends at the University."

4. Joseph Knox Walker, Sarah Childress Polk, and Johanna L. Rucker.

5. John Y. Mason.

6. Elizabeth H., Fanny A., Mary A., Sarah H., Emma, or Susan Mason.

7. Matthew F. Maury (1806–73), born in Virginia and raised in Tennessee, joined the navy in 1825 and became a lieutenant in 1836. He directed the Hydrographical Office, 1842–44, and the Naval Observatory, 1844–61, and was the author of the textbook *Navigation* (1834) and a series of articles in the *Southern Literary Messenger* (1840–41) that promoted naval reforms and led to the founding of the U.S. Naval Academy.

8. William H. Haywood, Jr.

FROM HENRY HUBBARD¹

Sir

Boston May 17h 1847

I congratulate you and I congratulate those associated with you in the administration of our National Government on the brilliant successes which have attended our military operations in Mexico. They can not fail to fill the heart of every american patriot with joy and gratitude. Having for a few days past been absent from Boston on a visit to my native village in New Hampshire, I was most happy to discover no diversity of sentiment as of feeling *among our people* in reference to the expediency of the War with Mexico or in reference to the manner of its prosecution and I can say with entire truth that all were prompt in their commendations of the Executive Branch of our government, for their judgement, patriotism, energy and perseverance. During the last winter and since I had become a resident citizen in Boston. I had been accustomed to hear very different language from men in and out of office, from men whose hearts were callous to every patriotic feeling and whose lips were constantly giving utterance to their treasonable feelings. In my own state, from our hardy yeomanry no thing but the purest and most devoted patriotism was made manifest. No one could feel a deeper pride than I did at the declaration of such sentiments and such feelings from the people of my native commonwealth.

They are evidence of a proper spirit, they tell well for the country, and give assurance that our free institutions are in no danger. They must be preserved, and they will be preserved, notwithstanding the violence of Massachusetts treason.

And Now, My Dear Sir, will you permit me as an old and true friend to tender to you an invitation to visit New-England in the course of the ensuing summer. Your friends would be most happy to see you and no one more than myself. Sure I am that you could not come among us under more favourable circumstances. I should feel a great pleasure to meet you in this city and a still greater pleasure to attend you to New Hampshire, and there to introduce to your acquaintance as many sincere and unwavering personal and political friends as you will find in any other commonwealth, with no greater population.

HENRY HUBBARD

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Published in *NU*, pp. 101-2.

1. Hubbard (1784-1857), a lawyer and judge from Charlestown, N.H., served in the New Hampshire House, 1812-15, 1819-20, and 1823-27; in the U.S. House, 1829-35; in the U.S. Senate, 1835-41; as New Hampshire governor, 1842-44; and as U.S. subtreasurer at Boston, 1846-49. Originally a Federalist, he later became a Democrat.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My dear Sir,

90 Eaton Square London. May 18. 1847

I am able today to announce to you a very great & decided change in the views of England with reference to our war with Mexico, to our finances, & generally to the position of the administration and the country. The last news from the United States was too great, too important, & too manifest to permit of being concealed or undervalued. "You are the Lords of Mexico!" said Lord Ashburton¹ to me. "How could you take the castle of Vera Cruz so soon?" said Lord Grey,² one of the secretaries of state; "You have been entirely successful" said Lord Clarendon³; "I hope your successes will lead to a peace." And even Lord Palmerston,⁴ who, more than any of them, has one system of politics for England and quite a different one for other countries, spoke to me in the very warmest language of the generosity of America towards the Irish,⁵ and of the immense superiority of the Anglosaxon race as displayed in our great number of victories over the Mexicans. The newspapers indulge a good deal in splenetic remarks; but they are of no meaning; & England is even preparing to hear of our negotiating for half, or two thirds, or even the whole of Mexico. No party thinks to make of the question a handle against its opponents. They see our growth to be certain; & they like publicly & officially to take as little note of it as possible. On the other hand they look very wistfully at the working of Mr. Walker's Tariff & congratulated themselves upon the increase of our revenue.

They have found out also, that America is growing rich. The slightest improvement in the rates of exchange was a few weeks announced by telegraph from Liverpool as the great event of the day; men speculated on how much more gold is likely to go to the United States; they own that the loan has not only been taken, but that more might have readily been borrowed; that the business concerns with us rest on a solid foundation; and they even go [so]⁶ far as sometimes to insinuate, that in the present time of scarcity & pressure the importations of breadstuffs from America should be made on American capital. This you will find substantially in the money articles of the *Morning Chronicle*.⁷

In the speech at the Lord Mayor's⁸ dinner on occasion of the Easter Holidays, Lord John Russell expressed very warmly his sense of the conduct of America on occasion of the present distress in Ireland. He was sincere. I believe him as safe a Prime minister for us, as there could well be. But he has been unsuccessful. He has no majority⁹; & as I think will have none in the next parliament. With a pure mind & good intentions, he has not been able to make any strong impression on the public mind. But on the other hand, the protectionists as the high Tories are called, will be quite as weak or weaker; so that the balance of

power will rest with Sir Robert Peel.¹⁰ But can Peel & Russell coalesce? Will England approve the union? Will Peel consent to it? If it comes to be done, & every day increases the number of those who expect it, Peel must be Prime Minister, & Lord John perhaps go to the Lords.

I beg my very best regards to Mrs Polk. And let me assure you that I esteem your administration singularly faithful to democratic principle, & successful in legislation, finance & war. If the whigs take advantage of the successes of the war which they opposed, to overturn your administration, the world will do you justice. The results of your career will never be obliterated & will not easily be equalled.

GEORGE BANCROFT

P.S. I forgot to say, that Lord Palmerston spoke to me a few days ago of new modes under which the American flag is used in connection with the Brazilian & African Slave trade. He requested me to call your attention to article IX in the treaty of Washington. He knew very well that it would not be proper for you, jointly with England, to make "becoming representations & remonstrances," to the Government of Brazil¹¹; but hoped you would instruct the new representation of the country at Rio Janeiro¹² to make some remonstrance on the subject. GB.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked Boston, June 6, but according to Polk's AE, received June 5, 1847. See also ALS, press copy. MHi.

1. Alexander Baring, Lord Ashburton, (1774–1848) the head of Baring Brothers & Co. since 1810, had been sent to America to negotiate the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842. Earlier he had served in the House of Commons, 1812–34, and as president of the Board of Trade and master of the Mint, 1834–35. He began his political career as a Whig but became a Conservative. He was raised to the peerage in 1835.

2. Henry George Grey, Lord Grey, (1802–94) formerly Lord Howick, was a Whig who served in the House of Commons, 1826–45; as under-secretary of state for the colonies, 1830–33; as under-secretary for home affairs, 1834; and as secretary at war, 1835–39. Raised to the peerage in 1845, he served as secretary of state for the colonies, 1846–52.

3. George William Frederick Villiers, Lord Clarendon, (1800–1870) served as minister at Madrid, 1833–39. Raised to the peerage in 1838, he served as lord privy seal, 1840–41; chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, 1840–41 and 1864–65; and president of the Board of Trade, 1846–47. He became lord-lieutenant of Ireland in May 1847, and remained in Ireland until 1852.

4. Henry John Temple, Lord Palmerston.

5. On U.S. government and private contributions to Irish relief, see letters and notes in Robert Gray to Polk, February 22, 1847; Uriah P. Levy to Polk, February 27, 1847; and Jane Hickey Sealy to Polk, June 1, 1847.

6. Word uncertain, blurred ink.

7. The London *Morning Chronicle* was a Whig newspaper that had been in print since 1769.

8. John K. Hooper (1791–1854), a London wine merchant, served as sheriff, 1842–43, and lord mayor of London, 1847–48.

9. Although Whig prime minister Russell enjoyed the support of his Conservative predecessor, Sir Robert Peel, Russell had difficulty maintaining a working majority in the House of Commons amid the splitting of Parliament's two parties into multiple factions.

10. Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850) was, at the time this letter was written, a Conservative supporter in the Commons of Russell's Whig government. Peel had resigned as prime minister in 1846. He first entered the Commons in 1809 and also served as secretary for the colonies, 1811–12; secretary for Ireland, 1812–18; home secretary, 1822–27 and 1828–30; and first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, 1834–35. He was prime minister, 1834–35 and 1841–46.

11. Article IX of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty observed "the fraudulent use of flags" in the Atlantic slave trade and called on the United States and United Kingdom to "unite in all becoming representations and remonstrances, with any and all Powers within whose dominions such markets [for slaves] are allowed to exist; and . . . urge upon all such Powers the propriety and duty of closing such markets."

12. David Tod (1805–68), a Warren, Ohio, lawyer, served as a Democrat in the Ohio Senate, 1838–39. Polk appointed him minister to Brazil on March 2, 1847, replacing Henry A. Wise. Tod served in that latter post until 1852. He lost an election for governor of Ohio in 1844, but later served in that office, 1862–64.

TO JAMES BROWN

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 18th 1847

I have received your letter of the 7th Instant, informing me that you had returned to *Majr. McNeal*¹ of Bolivar, the money which you had drawn from him on my account.

I must ask you to attend to a matter of business for me which, has become of some importance. Some months ago I learned that a block of 40. acres of my Yalobusha plantation, had been sold for the taxes of 1844. When *Col. Campbell* of Maury² was down in the winter, he tendered the redemption money to *Mr Rayburn*³ of Coffeerville purchaser at Sheriff's sale, who refused to receive it, and has since brought suit against my Overseer *Mr Mairs*⁴ for the land. From the enclosed letter from *Mr Leigh*⁵ a lawyer of Coffeerville I am informed that 30. acres more of the land have been sold for the taxes of 1843, and that suit was about being brought for it also. I had always directed my lands to be returned⁶ and the taxes paid, and had no doubt it had [been done].⁷ *Mr Mairs* wrote to me some time ago that he had all the receipts except

for the 40. acres.⁸ If there was any omission to return or pay the taxes on any part of the land, it proceeded from the inattention or ignorance of my overseer. I have no knowledge of the tax-laws of Mississippi, but from what I learn from a letter received from *Mr John T. Leigh* who resides near my plantation,⁹ there may be doubt, whether I will not lose the land. *Mr Leigh* writes to me that the trial will come on in August, and that he learns, that *Mr Rayburn*, if he loses the suit in the Court below, is determined to take the case to the supreme court of the State. He informs me that *Mr Rayburn* has made extensive purchases at tax sales, and has selected me, against whom to bring suit, to test the validity of his titles. It is annoying to me to have such a suit pending. *Mr Rayburn* probably calculated that in consequence of my absence the case may not be properly defended. If he is a man of character and has a proper sense of justice, he would surely upon an appeal being made to him, not persevere in prosecuting his suit. Should he do so however it must be properly defended. Young *Mr Leigh* the lawyer at Coffeerville, whom *Mr Mairs* has employed has just entered upon the practice of his profession, and I should be unwilling to entrust the management of the case to him alone. Should the suit be continued,¹⁰ an older & more experienced lawyer should be associated with him. As *Mr Mairs* has spoken to *Mr Leigh* I would still retain him. I enclose the letter of *Mr Leigh* (the lawyer) of the 28th ultimo, that you may see the view he takes of the subject. I am opposed to consolidating the suit already commenced, with that which *Mr Rayburn* threatens to initiate. If he chooses to commence another suit, let him do so, but let each rest upon its own merits. My tax receipts for 1843, are at my home in Tennessee, and I scarcely think it possible that they do not include all my land.

Now My Dear Sir: what I request you to do is, to visit Coffeerville & my plantation and investigate the whole matter for me: see what receipts *Mr Mairs* has, consult with *Mr John T. Leigh* whose plantation adjoins mine and to whom I have written on the subject; [. . .] *Mr Leigh* to shew my letters to him, to you, as I have gone more fully into some of the points, than I have now time to do with you. I have written to *Mr Leigh* and authorized him to make any compromise he may deem proper.¹¹ I now give you the same authority. Do as you would for yourself. I would rather *buy my peace*, than be harassed by a law-suit, putting my friends to trouble, paying lawyer's fees &c. If I were by any possibility to loose both the pieces of land, it would greatly injure, if not ruin my plantation. May I request the favour of you to go down at the earliest possible period you can conveniently do so, after you receive this letter. I will take pleasure in reciprocating the favour should an opportunity ever occur. I would much prefer that you should compromise the matter, even by paying much more than would be just, rather than have

a law-suit hanging up, for an indefinite period of time, and possibly uncertain in its results. Should there be any real danger of my loosing the land, your tax-laws must be singular indeed. If it has so happened, of which I know nothing, that my overseer at the time (*Mr Dismukes*)¹² has made a mistake in [dividing] the land when he returned it for taxes, or has inadvertently omitted to include the whole of it; all my personal property, was on my plantation out of which the collector could have made the taxes without selling the land. *Majr. Bobbitt*¹³ who lives near Coffeerville, was my agent, for some years, and attended to the payment of the taxes, but I do not remember now, whether his agency embraced the year 1843 or not. He is an intelligent man & can aid you in turning up the facts. I will write to Tennessee & have my tax receipts examined, and if I have the receipt for 1843, I will direct it to be enclosed, either to *Mr Mairs* or to *Mr John T. Leigh*. I repeat however that I prefer to compromise the matter & if you do so, you can draw on me or *Majr. McNeal* for the amount needed. When you are at my plantation write me how *Mr Mairs* is getting on: my prospects for a crop &C. I dislike to trouble you in a matter in which you have no intrest, but I know you will do the business better than any one else. When you go down I hope you may be able to settle the whole matter.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to La Fayette County, Miss., and marked "(Private)."

1. Ezekiel P. McNeal.

2. Robert Campbell, Jr., of Maury County, Tenn.

3. The purchaser was John K. Rayburn, but Polk evidently thought he was Davidson M. Rayburn. See letters and notes in Polk to John T. Leigh, April 24, 1847, and Polk to John T. Leigh, June 8, 1847, and calendar entry for John T. Leigh to Polk, July 22, 1847.

4. John A. Mairs.

5. Letter not found. Armistead C. Leigh (c. 1818-?), John T. Leigh's Virginia-born son, practiced law in Yalobusha County.

6. Polk uses the legal definition of "returned": "reported in response to an official request for information."

7. Word or words here and below uncertain or illegible, light or blurred ink transfer.

8. Letter not found.

9. Letter not found.

10. By "continued," Polk may mean either "carried forward" or, in the word's legal sense, "postponed by the presiding judge at the behest of one of the litigants."

11. Polk to John T. Leigh, March 15, 1847; Polk to John T. Leigh, April 14, 1847.

12. Isaac H. Dismukes.

13. North Carolina native William H. Bobbitt (1797–1860) lived in Maury County, Tenn., before moving to Coffeeville, Miss., by 1841. There he served as a business agent for Polk. He served as a major and commissary in the army, June–December 1846.

FROM ROBERT B. FORBES¹

Sir,

Boston May 18, 1847

I had the pleasure to receive by the steamer an address to your Excellency from the authorities of Dublin, with a request that I should forward it. I take the same occasion to forward a copy of one from the same place to myself.²

I have been requested by several delegations & by the People of Cork in particular, to transmit to your Excellency, the thanks of the people of Ireland for the loan of the Jamestown—it is a grateful duty, Sir to do this, & I would add for myself my unfeigned thanks for the great confidence reposed in me.

By the blessing of Providence I have accomplished my mission with dispatch & returned the ship in good order. I have the honor to be . . .

R B FORBES

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: "Transmits to me a letter of thanks from the Lord Mayor of Dublin."

1. Forbes (1804–89), a sea captain and a Boston merchant, began sailing to China in the 1810s and by the 1840s owned a fleet of ships trading among North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. He commanded the USS *Jamestown* on its voyage carrying privately donated supplies to Ireland in 1847.

2. Letters not found. Michael Staunton (1788–1870), whom Polk notes in his AE wrote at least one of the letters, had edited the Dublin *Freeman's Journal* and *Morning Register*. A supporter of greater Irish autonomy, he served as lord mayor of Dublin in 1847.

FROM GEORGE S. HOUSTON

My dear Sir

Athens [Ala.],¹ 18th May 1847

We are in rather a bad condition here politically speaking. A convention has set Payne aside, Bowdon has Calhoun² opposition—a very meagre convention has nominated Chapman³ for Govr. Martin is a candidate for re-election, Terrys friends it is feared will be dissatisfied⁴—&c &c, &c. Of my opponent you are already advised. Hubbard⁵ cuts your measures hard. I learn he has taken ground recently for Taylor & against yr. plan for a Lt. Genl.⁶ I dont mean that he is for Taylor for President, but he finds that Taylor is very strong with the people—very;

very Strong—all of the whigs and many democrats open and noisey for him for the Presidency and Hubbard therefore is rabid against the Lt. Genl. proposition and also the proviso to the resolution of thanks excepting from the operation of the resolution the capitulation. These things are injuring me & have injured me Seriously & not only me but the democratic party, whereas if the people properly understood them they would not. I think if Mr. Ritchie⁷ would give his attention to these things & write a candid, calm article Setting forth the facts & giving the reasons all would be right. It not be Said that you are hostile to Taylor. You & your administration being responsible for the war & differing with Genl Taylor &c as to the plan of the campaign had a right to ask for an officer who agreed with you &c & also at that time Taylor did not Seem to be prosecuting the war as rapidly as we all thought should be done.

As to the vote of censure by looking to it Mr Ritchie will See that nearly the entire democratic party voted to *suspend the rules* to let in the resolution of thanks when it was offered⁸ we thought its fair construction would make it endorse the Monterey capitulation & of course the armistice. You had revoked the latter & for us to approve it would have been censure to you, to condemn it to censure Taylor. We could do neither. We had not read the evidence which was to be found in the correspondence between Genl Taylor & the War Dept. It had not been published. We called for its publication & put on the negative proviso, intending to withhold an opinion on that subject & thereby censure neither you nor Taylor and when the Senate struck out the resolution & proviso & Sent back to us the one which had been passed by a unanimous vote at the session before & one too which had been offered by a democrat,⁹ we all voted for it & passed it unanimously thro the House.

One other thing. I voted for the *Oregon territorial* bill with the Slavery restriction in it.¹⁰ That is being used against me. By looking into the Subject Mr Ritchie would find that just such a bill passed the House two or three times before & one time every man voting for it—*unanimous*—no division. One other time only a few southern men, voting against it & they because it contained a provision directing the *notice to be given* to terminate the joint occupancy as called the last time. 32. Slave reps. for & 33 against the bill a division & in the 33. are all of the Calhoun men, & I can hardly be mistaken in the fact that it was a Calhoun move to cause the South to rally on him.¹¹ 1st then we owned the Oregon territory before the Missouri Compromise was agreed upon, and therefore we are in good faith bound to give it to the free States. That line is our Safety against a majority if they were other wise disposed to overrun us, and we should adhere to it & make the North do the same, that it is our true Southern policy to do as we

did, give up Oregon. The North gave us Texas as Slave territory which we did not own at the time. The line of 36.30 was agreed upon, & even if Oregon was not theirs by the Compromise we should give it to them because first slavery cant exist there any way¹²—2d they gave us Texas &c and thirdly we should do right, act liberally & justly & then we can with entire justice call on the north to divide such southern territory with us by the line of 36-30 as we may obtain from Mexico. If Mr. Ritchie or some one else would publish a good strongly written article or two (*Editorial by all means Editorial*) on these subjects in the union [our party would get the course points]¹³ & the country would get the points & approve our course. I think this a very important matter and should be very promptly attended to. By looking over the Oregon bills, which have passed the Senate, I presume every southern man but Mr Calhoun can be committed.

My election I think is very Safe. I know it is if the Taylor matters dont change it. Hubbard is yet abusive of yr. tea & coffee tax.

I have a very sick family & have written this in great haste & confusion.

GEO S HOUSTON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “—*Private*—” on the cover and “(*Private*)” at the top of the letter. From Polk’s AE: received May 24, 1847.

1. State identified through content analysis.

2. William W. Payne, Franklin W. Bowdon, and John C. Calhoun. Bowdon (1817–57), a Democrat, practiced law in Talladega, Ala., and served in the Alabama House, 1844–45, and in the U.S. House, 1846–51.

3. Born in Virginia, lawyer and Democrat Reuben Chapman (1799–1882) served in the Alabama Senate, 1832–35; in the U.S. House, 1835–47; as Alabama governor, 1847–49; and in the Alabama House, 1855.

4. Joshua L. Martin and Nathaniel Terry. Born in Tennessee, Martin (1799–1856) served in the Alabama House, 1822–25 and 1827; as a state solicitor, 1827–31; as a state circuit court judge, 1831–35; and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1835–39. In 1845, running as an independent, he defeated Terry for the Alabama governorship and served one two-year term. Terry (c. 1799–?) was a Virginia native and a Limestone County, Ala., planter who served in the Alabama Senate, 1836–45, and as that body’s president, 1841–45. He later relocated to Texas.

5. David Hubbard.

6. On Polk’s efforts to make Thomas H. Benton a lieutenant general, see letters and notes in Andrew Lane to Polk, January 1, 1847, and Benton to Polk, March 6, 1847.

7. Thomas Ritchie of the *Washington Union*.

8. New sentence may begin before or after “when . . . offered.”

9. The substitute resolution was introduced by Senator Daniel Webster, a Whig, but he based it upon a joint resolution introduced in May 1846 by Rep. William H. Brockenbrough, a Democrat. That resolution, passed unanimously by the House in May and by the Senate in July, had thanked the officers and soldiers for their services on the Rio Grande. "A joint Resolution presenting the Thanks of Congress to Major-General Taylor, his Officers and Men." *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Number 11. Brockenbrough (1812–50), a Tallahassee lawyer and judge, served in the Florida territorial house, 1837, and senate, 1840–44, and as U.S. attorney for the territory's western district, 1841–43. After Florida's admission as a state, he served in the U.S. House, 1846–47.

10. The House, after a lengthy debate regarding the extension of slavery, passed a bill creating a territorial government for Oregon with a provision banning slavery on January 16, 1847. The Senate never passed the ban and Polk did not sign a bill creating a territorial government until August 14, 1848.

11. The House previously had passed two Oregon territorial bills, on February 3 and August 6, 1846, both including amendments outlawing slavery. The Senate had passed neither.

12. Many during Polk's era assumed that, for reasons of topography and climate, the institution of slavery could not be established in the Trans-Mississippi West.

13. Houston struck out the bracketed text. The word "course" is uncertain.

TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 18th 1847

I have just received your letter of the 10th Instant, written at New Orleans.¹ The reasons assigned for your temporary absence from your command are satisfactory; still I think it unfortunate that it occurred at this juncture. It is most unfortunate that a special bearer of dispatches² who left this City on the morning of the 16th of April had not reached *Vera Cruz* before you sailed from that City, for had you received the communication, which I addressed to you in person by him,³ I am sure you would not have returned, unless the condition of your wound and the State of your health had rendered it absolutely necessary for you to do so. The person bearing this communication, and also important dispatches to *Genl. Scott* was unfortunately detained at New Orleans until the 28th of April and then had to take passage in a sail-vessel, and you doubtless passed him at sea. The reason you heard nothing of him at New Orleans, was that his mission was a *secret & confidential* one, and was not made known even to *Genl. Brooke*⁴ commanding in that City. He bore to you not only a long confidential letter from me, but also your commission as Major General. I will now communicate to you the nature of his mission, but you must regard it as *strictly confidential*, and make it known to no one. And first the messenger sent was *N. P. Trist Esqr.*, the

officer second in rank in the Department of State, an able and discreet man, and one who has repeatedly acted as Secretary of State, during the temporary absence of *Mr Buchanan* from the Seat of Government. He went out as a *commissioner* clothed with full Diplomatic Powers, to conclude a Treaty of peace. This was deemed better than to confide this important authority to the commanding General.⁵ He was authorized to make known to *Genl. Scott and yourself* his confidential instructions and I calculated much upon your sound discriminating good sense and discretion to aid him [. . .]⁶ accomplishing the important object of his mission, on honourable [terms].⁷ Though I have confidence in him I should feel much more secure if you were present to confer with him, and *Genl. Scott*. You will see My Dear Sir: the [great]⁸ importance which I attach to your services, with the Head Quarters of the army,⁹ at this important crisis, and if your wound does not disable you, I have to express the hope that you will not have a single day, in sitting out on your return to the army. I know this will interfere with the pleasure you would enjoy by remaining with your family for a few days longer, but you have entered the war as a soldier, and have been placed in the highest command in the power of your government. You have already distinguished yourself in battle & it is important to the public service as well as to your own enduring fame that you at [once] do so. I know it will cost you a sacrifice, to separate yourself so soon from your family, but still it is one that a gallant soldier will cheerfully submit to.

*Col. Walker*¹⁰ has prepared a statement of the [force] constituting [the]¹¹ Division which you are assigned to command, which I enclose to you herewith. The Third Brigade composed of a part of the two Regiments of Regulars raised for the War, under the command of Brigadier *Genl. Hopping*¹² of New York, have been ordered to join *Genl. Taylor's* column. Your Division has been ordered to join *Genl. Scott's* column, and are now *en-route* for *Vera Cruz*, and will reach that place before you can join them. Indeed a portion of them it is calculated are now at *Vera Cruz*. In addition to these two Brigades—a Battalion of 500. men of *Col. Butler's*¹³ 3rd Dragoons, have been ordered to proceed to *Vera Cruz* instead of the *Brazos* & will be under your command. Your two Brigadier Generals *Pierce* & *Cadwallader*¹⁴ who will be under your immediate command are noble men. *Genl. Pierce* is now the first man in New England. He is a man of fine talents. He is my personal friend and you may fully confide in him. He was with me in the House of Representatives for several years, and was afterwards in the Senate. *Genl. Cadwallader* is a gentleman of high character and decided military reputation. You may well be proud of such Genls. under your command. I am for the reasons stated, and for others which I have not now time to give desirous that you should as soon as practicable join & take

command of your Division. Your commission as Majr. Genl. bears date one day prior to that of Majr. *Genl. Quitman*¹⁵ so that you will rank him. The orders which have gone to *Genl. Scott* are, that you are to remain with Genl. Scott's column; and that *Genl. Quitman*, if *Genl. Scott* can spare him, is to join Taylor's column. If *Scott* chooses he may retain *Genl. Q.* also with him, but this cannot interfere with your command.

I happen to have lying on my table an estimate of the force which *Genl. Scott* will have with him by the end of June, prepared by the adjutant Genl.¹⁶ The estimate is of the force which will be left, after the discharge of the 12. Months volunteers. From this you will see that his force will be about 20.000 men.¹⁷ Taylor's column by the same time it is estimated will be about 12.000. men. In addition to *Scott's* force estimated by the adjutant Genl., a Battalion of Marines numbering 600. strong, have been ordered to the land service & to join *Genl. Scott*, and will probably be at *Vera Cruz* before you can reach there. I have written a long letter, but have written in great haste. I repeat that I hope nothing but *inability* from your wound will prevent your immediate return to the army. Upon your arrival at New Orleans you should procure an immediate passage if practicable and proceed on the voyage. I will write to you addressed to New Orleans, in a day or two. Let me hear from you on receipt of this letter.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Permit me as a personal friend to suggest to you, to avoid by all means, getting into any personal controversy with *Col. Foster*¹⁸ while you are at home. You should also decline accepting any public demonstration of respect which may be tendered to you. These suggestions I know you will properly appreciate. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "*Private & strictly confidential*."

1. Letter not found.
2. Nicholas P. Trist.
3. Polk to Pillow, April 14, 1847, and Polk to Pillow, April 15, 1847.
4. Born in Virginia, George M. Brooke (1785–1851) entered the army in 1808. He was brevetted a brigadier general in 1824 and a major general in 1848.
5. Winfield Scott.
6. Word illegible, light ink transfer.
7. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.
8. Word here and below uncertain, light or blurred ink transfer.
9. Jalapa, Mexico.
10. Joseph Knox Walker.
11. Enclosure not found. Word "force" uncertain, blurred ink transfer; "the" inserted to complete probable meaning.

12. Enos D. Hopping (c. 1805–1847), a New York Democrat, joined the army as a brigadier general on March 3, 1847. He died at Mier, Mexico, on September 1.

13. William O. Butler.

14. Franklin Pierce and George Cadwalader.

15. John A. Quitman.

16. Roger Jones.

17. Enclosure, if any, not found.

18. Ephraim H. Foster.

FROM JONATHAN D. STEVENSON¹

Sir. Pueblo de los Angeles (California) May 18th 1847²

With this You will receive my application for the Post of Governor of California whenever it shall become a part of the Territory of the U.S.³ You will no doubt have many candidates for the place who are occupying elevated positions in Public life. But I am induced to believe that for this Territory it requires a man possessing certain qualifications such as industrious business habits, prudence and discretion in the management of Public matters favourably known to the People of the Country,⁴ and who possesses some knowledge of their habits and customs. I hope I shall not be regarded as presuming if I say that I have been reared to habits of industry and business; and that I am not without some knowledge of the practical mode of conducting Public business and have been regarded by those who know me best as possessing a reasonable share of sound judgement and discretion. I am in the Country and have already had good opportunities of observing the peculiar customs and manners of the people, and I have no doubt but this knowledge will be greatly increased before the appointment I ask, can be made, by which time I also hope to possess quite a knowledge of their language. At all the Posts I have Commanded in the Country, it has been my good fortune to acquire the respect and confidence of the native as well as foreign population of the Country and by a correct, and conciliatory course to reconcile them to the change of Government. Such shall continue to be my course as a Soldier and I shall therefore find no difficulty in pursuing it in case I have the honor to receive the appointment I solicit at Your hands. In addition to the qualifications I may possess I trust I am not without some claim to your favourable consideration for the Post in question. I was among the first to volunteer for service in this Country. I raised and organized my Reg'm't. and had it mustered into the service of the U.S. at my own expense and without claiming one dollar of the Government. I have conducted it in safety to its point of destination, and I am now serving with credit in the Country

we are to become resident of after we shall be disbanded as Soldiers. In short Sir I have faithfully performed every promise I made you when you honored me with the Command of the 7th Regiment of New York Volunteers and therefore respectfully request that I may be remembered when the Territorial Government is to be organized.

J. D. STEVENSON

ALS. DLC–WLM. Marked “*Unofficial.*”

1. Since June 1846, Stevenson (1800–1894) had been colonel of the Seventh (later redesignated First) New York Volunteer Regiment. A former New York City merchant and state militia officer, he had served as a Democrat in New York’s legislature. Following Stevenson’s army appointment, William L. Marcy directed him to recruit unmarried men who would settle in or near California after their service. The regiment arrived in San Francisco in spring 1847, performed garrison duty, and was discharged in August 1848. Despite this letter, Polk did not appoint Stevenson territorial governor. California, then under military control, never had a territorial government before becoming a state in 1850. After the war, Stevenson wrote a law code for the California gold mines and engaged in real estate speculation around San Francisco.

2. U.S.–Mexico military hostilities in and around Los Angeles had ended in early January 1847.

3. Enclosure not found.

4. Here and in subsequent references to “the Country,” Stevenson is referring to California, not the United States.

TO JEFFERSON DAVIS

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 19th 1847

The Secretary of War¹ will transmit to you a commission as Brigadier General of the U.S. army. The Brigade which you will command will consist of Volunteers called out to serve during the war with Mexico. It gives me sincere pleasure to confer this important command upon you. Your Distinguished gallantry and military skill, while leading the noble Regiment under your command, and especially in the battles of *Monterey* and *Buena Vista* eminently entitle you to it. I hope that the severe wound which you received at the latter place, may soon be healed, and that your country may have the benefit of your valuable services, at the head of your new command.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Mexico. Published in Vicksburg (Miss.) *Weekly Sentinel*, October 6, 1847, and in *PJD*, pp. 175–76.

1. William L. Marcy.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

My Dear Sir: [Washington City] May 20th [1847]¹ 8. O.Clock P.M.

I am astonished to learn by a letter recived by to night's mail from Dr. *J. G. M. Ramsey*,² Post master at Mecklenberg Tennessee, that he has been removed from his office. He is one of the best men & most faithful public officers in the Union. Surely there must be some mistake about it. You certainly could have known nothing of it. I wish you to investigate the matter *immediately*. I enclose you his letter. He is an honest upright man & one of the best personal & political friends I have in the world. The error must be corrected *immediately*. I will see you to night if you can come up. I wish to answer his letter by the first mail.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I am so concerned about this matter, that I must see you to night if practicable.

ALS. GEU-S. Addressed locally; probably delivered by courier. Published in LJKPCJ, p. 255.

1. Place and year identified through content analysis.

2. James G. M. Ramsey. Letter not found.

FROM MARGARET M. LEAHY¹

[Ballyquirk, Newcastle, County Limerick, Ireland]

Mr. President,

[c. May 20, 1847]²

From the gloomy prospects of this country, for several years past, I take the liberty, of asking your advice on a subject of importance, not only to myself, but to a numerous class, similiarly circumstanced. The nature of my request I will try to explain, in as few words, as I can. Having a large family, of Boys, and Girls, with my Husband, and myself, all young, active, and industrious, had we field for our industry here. It is true we hold a large tract of land, but the rents and rates³ entailed on it at present, being so high, and very likely to continue so, totally prohibits, our being able to do more, than support our family. We therefore, with many others, look to the United States, as our future destiny, and consequently trespass on you, for that information, which a daughter should look to a parent for, and as such, we Irish Mr. President look on you. We are desirous of settling, in the State of Ohio, or Michigan, the former we should prefer, if terms suited our means, but being total strangers, to the eligibility of the localities, makes me trespass on you Sir, for that information, (which I feel, exalted as your position deservedly is, you will not deny to an anxious Mother[]).⁴ As

my children are educated, the elder in the best manner, I should wish to be located within at least ten miles of a city, or leading town, and on a farm of from two, to four hundred acres; more or less reclaimed, with Suitable House and offices. I trust you will excuse my taking this liberty. I feel it is a very great one. But anxious to interest you, in the welfare, of a large young family, and to secure information, from so pure a source. Moreover as we can take capital to the amount of two or three thousand pounds, and are perfectly conversant with the management, of a Dairy, and tillage farm and general buisiness, on these grounds Mr. President I hope I am not requiring too much. I expect at your earliest convenience that you will please give directions, to have this communication attended to. I have the Honor to remain Mr. President, . . .

MARGARET M. LEAHY

[P.S.] Please Sir, have the reply directed
Mrs. Daniel Thomas Leahy,
Bally Quirk Newcastle,
Co Limerick Ireland

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to the “United States, America.” Postmarked Newcastle, May 20, 1847; May 22, 1847, location illegible; May 23, no location; and Boston, date illegible. From Washington Curran Whitthorne’s AE: received June 19, 1847; “appear to be very respectable.”

1. In 1842, Margaret M. Leahy and husband Daniel Thomas Leahy occupied about 270 acres in Ballyquirk and nearby Ballyclovane. The land was valued at £266; they paid £251 4s. in rent. It is unknown whether they immigrated to the United States. The census of 1860 records a Margaret (c. 1817–?) and Daniel (c. 1820–?) Leahy, both from Ireland and the latter a laborer, living in Chicago, and another Margaret (c. 1815–?) and Daniel (c. 1815–?) Leahy, both from Ireland and the latter a mason and possibly cooper, living in New York City. The Chicago couple shared their home with a Dominick Leahy, possibly Daniel’s brother, but neither couple lived with any children.

2. Approximate date identified from postmark.

3. Rates, more properly known as poor rates, were taxes assessed on privately held land throughout the United Kingdom to defray costs of relief for the poor—principally, though not exclusively, the costs of operating work houses.

4. Closing parenthesis missing.

TO JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 20th 1847

I received your letter¹ after night this evening, and was greatly astonished at the announcement you make, that you have been removed from the office of Post master at Mecklenburg.² I lost not a moment’s

time in transmitting your letter to the Post Master General.³ Enclosed you will receive his note in reply.⁴ The removal intended I infer, must have been at some other office, possibly of the *same name*, and by some strange & unaccountable mistake has been applied to your office. Nothing great or small has occurred during my administration, which has given me more pain, than the announcemnt made to me in your letter. The mistake shall be corrected without a day's delay. It is at the time I am writing 10. O.Clock at night, and the matter cannot be investigated until tomorrow morning. All shall then be put right, and if it is found that an order has gone from the appointment bursar of the office,⁵ by mistake or otherwise, you shall be at once restored. In addition to this, I will investigate the conduct of any subordinate officer of the Department, who has either committed so unpardonable a blunder, or had any agency in perpetrating so great an outrage, not only upon you, but upon me as well as the public, and will hold any such to his strict responsibility. I am deeply mortified at the occurrence. I write you to night to save a day's mail, as the investigation cannot be made in the morning, before the hour for the Departure of the mail. I will write to you again on tomorrow.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Mecklenburg, Knox County, Tenn.

1. Letter not found.

2. Mecklenburg, Knox County, Tenn., not to be confused with Mecklenburg County, N.C., the county of Polk's birth.

3. Cave Johnson.

4. Letter not found.

5. William J. Brown (1805–57) was the second assistant postmaster general in charge of appointments, 1845–49. A lawyer born in Kentucky, he also served in the Indiana House, 1829–32 and 1841–43; as Indiana secretary of state, 1836–40; and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–45 and 1849–51.

TO WILLIAM DAVIDSON ET AL.¹

Gentlemen:

Washington City May 21st 1847

I had the honour to receive a few days ago, your letter of the 10th Instant, inviting me to extend the visit, which I contemplate making to the University of N. Carolina, at the annual commencement in June next, to my native county of Mecklenburg.

Though very young when my family emigrated to their new home in the West, I have ever cherished for the State of my birth a strong and natural attachment. After an absence of several years, I returned to

North Carolina, and was educated at her University. My native County of Mecklenburg is especially endeared to me, by many strong personal ties, and there still remain there, many pleasing and agreeable associations. There are still living within her borders, many aged persons, of whom I recognize some of your number, who were the associates and early friends of my ancestors. In her soil are interred the remains of many of my kindred. The County of Mecklenburg too is prominently connected with the history and achievements of the American Revolution. It was there, that our ancestors made the *first formal Declaration*, that was made in the colonies by a *public meeting* of citizens, that all allegiance to the British crown was forever dissolved.² The citizens of Mecklenburg firmly maintain to this day, the principles of liberty which their ancestors thus boldly announced.

I need scarcely assure you Gentlemen: of the peculiar pleasure it would afford me, to revisit the place of my birth, where so many interesting associations would be received, but in the present condition of public affairs, I regret that I cannot, with propriety, be absent from the seat of Government, beyond the short period I have allotted to myself to visit the University.

After my official term shall have expired, it may be in my power to do so, and in that event, the visit could not be otherwise than most agreeable to me.

With the tender of my thanks to the citizens, who, I am happy to learn from you, united in the meeting which you represent, "with out party distinction," and who have conveyed to me, though you, their kind invitation: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Charlotte, N.C. Published in Raleigh *North Carolina Standard*, June 23, 1847.

1. Letter addressed to Davidson and the five other members of the inviting committee appointed by a meeting of Mecklenburg County, N.C., citizens. A Charlotte planter, Davidson (1778–1857) served in the North Carolina Senate, 1813, 1815–18, 1825–26, and 1827–30, and, as a Federalist, in the U.S. House, 1818–21.

2. In May 1775, after learning of the battles at Lexington and Concord, Mass., a meeting of Mecklenburg County citizens adopted a series of anti-British resolutions. Many Americans in the nineteenth century believed that these resolutions had included a declaration of American independence. This belief stemmed from the 1819 publication of the purported Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, but is not supported by any contemporary evidence.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir: [Washington City]¹ Friday Morning May 21st 1847

The removal of *Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey*² as Post Master at *Mecklenburg Tennessee*, as announced to me in his letter³ which I transmitted to you last night, is the more I think of it, the more unaccountable. In your note⁴ in reply to mine of last night you state that no complaint had ever been made against him, and that you had never before heard a syllable on the subject of his removal. He is among the best men & most faithful officers in the Union. He is a man of high intelligence and character, and is very naturally deeply mortified at receiving from your Department a notification that he had been removed. He must be restored to his office without delay. In the meantime I wish you to institute an immediate examination, and ascertain through whose agency, among your subordinate officers so inexcusable a blunder has occurred, or by whom so great an outrage has been perpetrated without your knowledge or mine, not only upon *Dr. Ramsey*, but upon the public, for I intend to hold any subordinate in your Department who has had an agency in it, to a strict accountability. I wish you to cause a Report in writing to be made to you by any such subordinate, and have it transmitted to me that I may judge of it.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. GEU-S. Addressed locally. See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Published in LJKPCJ, pp. 255-56.

1. Place identified through content analysis.
2. James G. M. Ramsey.
3. Letter not found.
4. Letter not found.

TO JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

My Dear Sir: Washington City May 21st 1847

I addressed to you a hasty note last night, in answer to your letter announcing to me, that you had been removed as Post Master, at *Mecklenburg Tennessee*. I transmitted to you a [brief]¹ note from the Post Master Genl.² on the subject, and informed you, that there was undoubtedly some strange mistake, which I was then unable to explain (it being when I wrote 10. o. Clock at night), but which I would cause to be fully investigated this morning. I now enclose to you a Report which I have just received from the Post master General.³ From this you will see that the gross, mistake which has given both you and myself so much

pain, was committed by one of the Clerks in the Post office Department.⁴ The Post Master Genl. as you will perceive from his Report, is of opinion that it was an unintentional error of the clerk in endorsing the papers in reference to another office in your neighbourhood. It is however an error of that character, however unintentionally committed, which deserved severe censure, and unless the clerk shall satisfactorily explain it, he shall be removed. The matter is now corrected and you are still Post Master at Mecklenburg.

I should be pleased to write you in reference to public affairs, but my whole time is so occupied with my public duties, that I have scarcely a moment to devote to my correspondence with my friends. I am always pleased to hear from you, and if I do not answer your letters, you will I know attribute it to the true cause.

With my kind regard to Mrs Ramsey⁵ . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Mecklenburg Post Office, Knox County, Tenn.

1. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.

2. Cave Johnson. Letter not found.

3. Enclosure not found.

4. Robert A. Lacey (c. 1810–late 1860s?), a native of Virginia, attended the U.S. Military Academy, 1815–18, and received a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1824. Appointed to the Florida territorial medical board in 1828, he became a post office clerk at Washington City around 1830 and served into the 1850s.

5. Margaret Barton Crozier (1802–89), the daughter of Knoxville merchant John Crozier, married James G. M. Ramsey in 1821.

FROM WILLIAM P. ROWLES¹

Sir.

Lawrenceburg Tenn. May 21/47

During the war of 12–15 the Fed[eralist]s.² denounced it as “Jim Madison’s war,”³ & tauntingly required “him & the Dems to fight it out.” So do their alies the whigs now. Their favorite stump slang is “this is Polk’s war, he made, let him & the Dem. party fight it out” &c &c. As yet we have only been skirmishing, but the season for work is at hand. We are all at our posts with high hopes of complete success. We want all the war documents. Those showing the relations of our country with Mexico for years past, The Act & votes declaring war—&c, &c. We are called on to repel the charge of toryism on Mr Buchanan.⁴ Truly all this is for Buncombe,⁵ but must be met. I respectfully request that you will cause a file of suitable documents to be sent to us—myself & B. M.

Moore.⁶ We feel strong hopes of being able to retain our former ground, & a determination to advances.

I have received from the War office several drafts for monies due volunteers, their Widows &c, payable by the "Paymaster most convenient." There being no Paymaster in Tennessee, these drafts remain unpaid and useless to those who need them. I have been desired to ask you whether an agent, say C. C. Abenathy⁷ Pension Agent of Giles—or some person in each county—to pay these claims. If the latter plan is approved by congress M. Bentley⁸ would be well qualified & responsible. An attention to this at this time would be very useful in several ways besides the convenience to worthy & needy persons.

There has been an application pending some time for a Post Office at Ashland in Wayne county. The P[ost]. M[aster]. recommended was the brother of Mr McKnight⁹ of this place a Whig. The Whigs say, on the stump, this application will fail because a Dem. was not named. Of course there are reasons why we would prefer a D. & if one can be found there, the application will be renewed, when it is hoped this sweet morsel will be taken from our opponents.

As I am persuaded you are fully aware there is no one in Tenn. or elsewhere who has been more willing to sustain our cause, or who is now more anxious for its triumph, I hope you will excuse & tolerat this trespass upon your time & patience & ascribing it to right motives & zeal for principles that none love better to labor for than . . .

W. P. ROWLES

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 6, 1847.

1. A Virginia native and former Alabama resident, Rowles (c. 1792–1851) was a physician, lawyer, and Methodist preacher. He served in the Second Seminole War and as a Democrat in the Tennessee Senate, 1847–49.

2. Letters inserted here and below to complete probable meanings.

3. War of 1812, fought 1812–15 during the presidency of James Madison.

4. James Buchanan had begun his career as a Federalist. Rep. Erastus D. Culver, a New York Whig, described him and George Bancroft as "old Federalists" in a speech in the U.S. House on January 20, 1847; Culver cited an early speech of Buchanan's criticizing Madison and the War of 1812. Several newspapers of spring and summer 1847, including the *Raleigh Register*, and *North-Carolina Gazette* of May 14, reminded readers of Buchanan's early political leanings.

5. A variant of "bunkum," slang for "a ludicrous assertion, drivel."

6. Born in Kentucky, Moore (c. 1806–?) was a farmer and Democrat in Lawrence County, Tenn. In 1850 he was among the founders of the Tennessee River, Nashville, and Cincinnati Rail Road Company.

7. Born in Virginia, physician Charles C. Abernathy (c. 1790–1870s?) of Pulaski, Tenn., served as chancery court clerk for Giles County in the 1830s and army pension agent for that county in the 1840s and 1850s.

8. Leonidas Mino Bentley (1823–78) was a Lawrenceburg lawyer and editor of the Lawrenceburg *Academist* (renamed the *Times* in 1847), 1846–47. A Democrat, he later served in the Tennessee House, 1851–53 and 1857–59.

9. Efforts to identify McKnight yielded no conclusive results, but three possibilities. James E. McKnight (c. 1808–1850s?) was a North Carolina-born merchant in Wayne County, Tenn. William McKnight, Sr., and William McKnight, Jr., both lived in Lawrence County, Tenn. The latter was a Lawrenceburg merchant and a justice of the peace.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dr. Sir

Columbia [Tenn.]¹ May 21. 1847

I called out yesterday to see Gen'l Pillow² after his return from Mexico. He seems in good health except his wound, which is pretty severe, and may affect that arm the ballance of his life. He gives many interesting particulars of the state of things in Mexico—thinks the Mexicans are entirely conquered, *but will not make peace*. His opinion is that the only course our Government can advantageously pursue is to take military possession of the country, establish military government—displace from office & power all the war partisans, and put in their places men known to be in favor of Peace. This party he thinks are numerous, but they dare not avow themselves. He thinks the expenses of the occupation ought to be taxed on the wealth of the country. This with the opening the Ports and collection of revenue duties, must after a while produce a desire for peace, unless indeed, (which is not improbable) the enlightened Mexicans prefer to live under even an American military Government to their own miserable rulers.

I was enquiring of Gen'l Pillow about my kinsman Dick Hays (Richard J. son of Stokely D. Hays).³ He says he went out as a private, but was afterwards elected 1st Lieutenant in Jones company,⁴ and commanded the Company up to the taking of Vera Cruz, where he distinguished himself at the head of his company. His captain (Jones) returned home on sick furlough & after he returned accidentally shot himself in the foot, so that Hays was all the time in command of the Co. Pillow represents him as a first rate officer. At Vera Cruz he became sick and much discouraged, resigned & came home. His discouragement was owing as the General says to the continual persecution of his superior officer Col. Haskill.⁵ Haskill & Dick Hays went out as privates—it was understood Haskill was to be a candidate for Col. & Dick for Lieut. Col. and altho them and their friends had always been violent political

enemies, a compromise was made, by which Hays's friends were to aid Haskall's views & Haskall & friends were to aid Hays's. Hays & friends did aid Haskall—but Haskall formed another combination and violated his pledge, and as General Pillow says "persecuted him throughout the campaign." Hays finding Pillow his friend unburdened his griefs to him, and thus he became acquainted with the various vexations he underwent.

I mention these facts to you, knowing you are aware how warm & devoted friends the Hays's & Butler's⁶ have always been to you, and in the hope that some military position may be in your power which might suit him & soothe his feelings—a position where such a violent political partisan like Haskall is will have no power to take vengeance for home political differences. Dick is of the very best blood for good game. The Hays, Butlers & Donnelson Stock⁷ are famous as good soldiers, and there is not the slightest danger of Dick's disgracing any appointment you might be able to give him. The line⁸ would suit his talents much better than any thing in the Qur. Master or Commissary Dept. His friends at Jackson would be very grateful for some notice of him, if any suitable vacancies exist.

Our political contest is not very exciting. Notwithstanding Whig bragging, I think Aaron⁹ will beat Neil S. Brown further than he did Foster.¹⁰ The Whigs are now silent as to the Tariff of 1846¹¹ & *protection*, they confine themselves to coarse and unreasonable abuse of the administration and of the Mexican war, which they insist is unjust and was unnecessarily & wickedly commenced &c. &c. According to my judgment they are killing themselves about as fast as a political party can effect such a job. Sykes¹² has fully gone over to the Whigs, and is now as their candidate for Congress in this District, abusing the administration, the war &c. as lustily as any of them. His defection has had no influence whatever—except to place him in a supremely ridiculous & contemptible position—not a single Democrat has followed him. I cannot think Bowling Gordon will, under the circumstances, run the race out. He is a good & true Democrat, and was next to Martin¹³ my choice as the nominee of the convention. He lost the nomination in my judgment by prematurely refusing to abide the decision. I think he will not run much longer—but Thomas¹⁴ will be elected any how. I never saw our people better united or determined to sustain their principles. The Whigs will find, or I am much mistaken, their unreasonable denunciation of the War, a fatal mistake in policy. This is now the only issue. Their attempt to use General Taylor as they did the Coon in 1840¹⁵ will avail them but little.

JAMES WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “Private” on the cover and “(Private)” at the top of the letter. From Hampton C. Williams’s AE: “Private.”

1. State identified through content analysis.

2. Gideon J. Pillow.

3. A nephew of Andrew Jackson and a follower of Aaron Burr in 1806–7, Stokely D. Hays (c. 1789–1831) served in the War of 1812 as quartermaster general of Tennessee volunteers. After leaving the army in 1821, he moved to Jackson and practiced law. In 1833, he was register of the land office at Mount Salus, Miss. His son Richard J. (c. 1822–1899?) served as a second lieutenant in the Second Tennessee Infantry Regiment during the Mexican War. He then returned to Jackson and practiced law.

4. Company F of the Second Tennessee Infantry Regiment, commanded by Capt. Timothy P. Jones, was raised at Jackson in May 1846 and discharged in May 1847. Richard J. Hays was appointed second, not first, lieutenant, but by April 1847 the company had no first lieutenant. Jones, of Madison County, had entered the U.S. Military Academy in 1830; while there he was a roommate of Edgar Allan Poe. Jones, however, was court-martialed and dismissed from the Academy in 1831.

5. William T. Haskell.

6. Stokely D. Hays’s wife was Lydia Butler Hays (1788–1865), sister of Andrew Jackson’s nephew-in-law Dr. William E. Butler and cousin of Gen. William O. Butler.

7. Walker refers to the family of Andrew J. Donelson and his brother Daniel S. Donelson. Daniel (1801–63) was a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy who served as a brigadier general in the Tennessee militia, 1829–34. The Hays, Butler, and Donelson families were all related by marriage.

8. A position in the field or on the battlefield.

9. Aaron V. Brown.

10. Ephraim H. Foster.

11. Walker Tariff.

12. A native of Alabama, William J. Sykes (c. 1819–1898), a lawyer, edited the Columbia (Tenn.) *Beacon* in 1846. He ran for Congress in 1847 but withdrew from the election in July. He later represented Maury County as a Democrat in the Tennessee House, 1853–55.

13. Barclay Martin.

14. James H. Thomas.

15. Walker refers to Whig William Henry Harrison’s election as president. The raccoon was a symbol of the Whig party. A Virginia native, Harrison (1773–1841) served in the army, 1791–98 and, as a general, 1812–14. As governor of Indiana Territory, 1801–13, he famously defeated Indians under Tecumseh at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. He later served as U.S. representative from Ohio, 1816–19; U.S. senator from Ohio, 1825–28; and minister to Colombia, 1828–29. Inaugurated as president on March 4, 1841, he died one month later.

TO JOHN CATRON

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 22nd 1847

I have written to day to *Mr V. K. Stevenson*,¹ requesting him to attend to some business for me, connected with my purchase of the *Grundy*² property. Should he be absent from home, I ask the favour of you, to open my letter to him, and attend to the business for me in his stead.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Vernon K. Stevenson.

2. Felix Grundy.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

My Dr Sir,

Washington City May 22nd 1847

[My last]¹ payment of *seven Thousand* [. . .] \$7.000 [. . .] the *Grundy*² property in Nashville shall [be] paid [. . .] on the 1st of [January] next. *Gov. Brown*³ who made the contract for me, wrote me at [. . .] that [. . .] had an understanding with *Mr Bass*⁴ that if I should find it convenient to make the payment sooner than that time, it would be received, deducting the interest, &, in the [. . .] of payment until the [. . .] of the [obligation will] be executed to my [. . .] at that time. I have sold my house and lot at Columbia; and also some lands in the [. . .] District, and my affairs are now in a condition, to make the payment at this time without [. . .], and I desire to do so. I request you [would] after seeing *Mr Bass* [. . .] attention seeing that the [money] will be received, to draw a Bill on me, for an amount which will [. . .] the obligation given by [*Gov. Brown*] deducting from the amount of that obligation, the interest and the difference of exchange whatever that may be. You can draw on me *at sight*, at this City, or if you can negotiate it for a better premium by drawing on me to be paid at Philadelphia or New York, you can do so, payable at *one* or *two* days after sight. I would have no difficulty in remitting the money to either place any day. I prefer to pay now rather than wait until the 1st of January, because I will save something in interest and exchange. When you take up the obligation for \$7.000, given by *Gov. Brown*, cancel it, and enclose it to me.

As I shall not commence making any improvements on the premises, until the spring or summer of next year, *Mr Bass* can if he desires it, continue to occupy them, at the same annual rate of rent which he pays for this year, until it shall be necessary for him to give away to the workmen.

As soon as the balance of the purchase money shall be paid by you, as requested above, I desire to have my title to the property perfected. I believe in a former letter, written some months ago, I requested you, to engage my friend *Mr Humphreys*,⁵ to examine and see that the title was regular and good.⁶ If *Judge Catron*⁷ is not too much engaged, perhaps, he could look into the title and see that all is right. If the Judge cannot attend to it, will you request *Mr Humphreys* and *Mr Fogg*⁸ to do so for me. It would be fatal to my future comfort, if by any omission, I should by any possibility fail to get a good title. I have understood from some source that the title to the *Grundy place proper*, was to come through the Chancery Court. If so, great care should be taken to see that the proceedings have been regular. In addition to this, to make assurance doubly sure, I should have a general warranty Deed, from *Messrs Bass & McGavock*,⁹ the Executors, &c., who sold the property to me. For the part sold to me by *Mr Bass* in his individual right, he will of course make me a general warranty Deed.

Let me hear from you as soon after the receipt of this letter, and after you have attended to the business, as you can conveniently do.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Word or words here and below uncertain or illegible, light and blurred ink transfer.

2. Felix Grundy.

3. Aaron V. Brown.

4. John M. Bass.

5. West H. Humphreys.

6. Letter not found. Polk may be referring erroneously to his letter to Brown, not Stevenson, of November 8, 1846.

7. John Catron.

8. Polk may refer to Francis B. Fogg or Godfrey M. Fogg. These brothers, both born in Connecticut, were law partners of Ephraim H. Foster in Nashville. In 1818, Francis (1795–1880) moved to Columbia, Tenn., and then to Nashville. He read law with Polk in Felix Grundy's office, then opened a law practice with Foster. In 1834 he served in Tennessee's constitutional convention. Godfrey (1800–1876) lived in Boston before moving to Nashville in 1822. After working in the local land office, he joined Francis and Foster's law office. While chairman of Nashville's finance committee in 1847, he helped Stevenson build support for the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad.

9. Jacob McGavock (1790–1878), like Bass, was a son-in-law of Felix Grundy. Born in Virginia, McGavock moved to Nashville in 1807 and served as an aide to Andrew Jackson in the Creek War, 1813–14. A major slaveholder, he served as clerk of the Davidson County circuit court, 1834–36, and of the U.S. district court for Middle Tennessee from the 1840s to the Civil War.

FROM JOHN WILLIAMS¹

Dear Sir:

Jackson Miss May 22nd 1847

For a considerable time I blamed our government for not declaring war against Mexico² and now having as I conceed conquered them feel as anxious for an Honourable peace and can see but one effectual way to accomplish it, and that is to make their Church property subject to the arms of the U.S. Some twelve months since you ordered that their Church property should be held sacred and that any person violating the same should be dealt with in the most rigorous manner,³ and just so long as that order remains in force their Priest will encourage the war but recind that order and my opinion is that they will immediately sue for peace, and I do think that you have ample cause for doing so in as much as they have applyd and appropriated a part of that property to carry on the war against us.

JOHN WILLIAMS

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 1, 1847.

1. The census of 1850 lists six adults named John Williams living in Hinds County, Miss. Five were farmers or planters, one an overseer.

2. By official U.S. accounts, hostilities between the United States and Mexico broke out on April 25, 1846, when Mexicans fired on U.S. forces in disputed territory north of the Rio Grande. The U.S. House and Senate later passed a declaration of war, which Polk signed on May 13. Williams may be criticizing Polk or the army for going to war before the declaration, criticizing Congress for not declaring war earlier, or expressing a mistaken belief that Congress never formally had declared war. See "An Act providing for the Prosecution of the existing War between the United States and the Republic of Mexico." *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 16.

3. The administration's proclamation of June 4, 1846, announcing and justifying the war to the Mexicans, noted the hundreds of thousands of American Catholics and the U.S. Constitution's protection of religious freedom. It promised, "Your religion, your altars and churches, the property of your churches and citizens, the emblems of your faith and its ministers, shall be protected and remain inviolate." House Executive Document No. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 284–87. See also letter and notes in John H. Savage to Polk, April 19, 1847.

TO GEORGE M. DALLAS

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 24th 1847

In answer to the inquiries contained in your letter of the 22nd Instant,¹ I can only say that I still contemplate making a short visit to

the North in June, but am unable to fix upon a precise day when I may be expected in Philadelphia, until after my return from North Carolina. Much, indeed, every thing will then depend upon the condition of public affairs, and my public duties in reference to them.

You shall however be advised some days in advance the time when I will leave Washington. As to the "*mode of reception*," about which you wish to consult my wishes—I can make no suggestions. That I must leave entirely to my friends. Whatever "*mode*" they may adopt will be agreeable to me, only remarking, in reply to one of your inquiries, the "*public dinner*," it strikes me would be unusual and not appropriate for one occupying my position. I could not I think with propriety accept a formal invitation, to such an entertainment. I will cheerfully meet my fellow citizens, in [any]² other of the "*modes*," which you suggest, or in such [modes] as may be most agreeable to them.

Mrs. Polk and myself, will take great pleasure in accepting the kind invitation of Mrs. Dallas³ and yourself, to make your house our home, during our short stay in your City.⁴ The public reception, such as my friends may suggest, would of course be at some public place, after which I could retire to your House.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Philadelphia and marked "*(Private)*." Published in *NU*, pp. 102–3.

1. Letter not found.

2. Word here and below uncertain, light ink transfer.

3. Sophia Chew Nicklin (1798–1869), the eldest daughter of Philadelphia businessman Philip Nicklin, married George M. Dallas in 1816.

4. As vice president, George Dallas lived in Washington City only when the Senate sat in session. During recesses he lived in Philadelphia, where Sophia Dallas remained throughout his term.

FROM GEORGE S. HOUSTON

Sir

Athens. [Ala.]¹ 24. May 1847

I wrote you a few days ago saying that we were not all doing so well here as we might have done.² The Taylor feeling runs very high and our votes for a Lt. Genl.³ and Thompsons proviso to the resolution of thanks⁴ are falling upon us with great Severity. I dont think it can beat me indeed I feel sure it cannot, but it will beat & has beaten many others of your friends. Such is my opinion. I fear we will be beaten in many districts even in this state. Payne⁵ was set aside by his own party because of those votes but has produced such discontent in the district that many of our friends are seriously apprehensive of loosing the district.

The fear is that Bowden⁶ will be beaten by a violent Calhoun man. The Mobile district I fear is gone. I think it is whig anyway. Hilliard⁷ will be re-elected, so there is a chance for four whigs from this State & if Hubbard⁸ Should be elected you know what he will do for you. He is denouncing the tea & coffee tax—the ten Regiment bill; says it should have been for volunteers—the proviso, to the resolution of thanks, and the Lt Genl. and evidently shows a Calhoun feeling on the three million bill.⁹ The Consequence is he is getting all or nearly all who feel in the least disaffected to our principles & some more of course. I can manage him unless I am greatly mistaken but I do yet very fully think you should have some one to write a few good clear temperate editorial articles for the Union¹⁰ on these Subjects, Shewing that the proviso was never intended to censure Genl Taylor, that the administration had disapproved the capitulation & especially the armistice, that the resolution was unusually broad more So than any former resolution of thanks, that it was so drawn to make us endorse the capitulation armistice and all & thereby indirectly take Sides with Taylor & against your administration, that the correspondence between the war Dept & Taylor had not been published, that the evidence therefore was not before us even had we desired to express an opinion between you, that it would have censured you *unheard* that the proviso is negative & does not condemn the capitulation but only excludes them from the operation of the resolution of thanks, that we voted nearly all of us to suspend the rules to let in the resolution, and after the Senate had put in a substitute which was construed to exclude or rather not include the capitulation we (all of us in the House) voted for it, that we past the proviso on by 40 majority & could have kept it on but we did not desire to do it when the Senate did you justice. These things if properly presented would aid us in all of the states where elections are to take place. As to the Lt Genl. you & Taylor differed about the Campaign. He was for Mr. Calhouns marked line policy¹¹ (Substantially so) he seemed to be moveing on Slowly & you wanted a man who agreed with you as to the campaign &c &c &c to conduct it.

Then an article shewing the course the Southern people have heretofore pursued relative to slavery in Oregon, that the southern policy has been to give it to the free States, that twice or more (*let them examine the journals*) before last session we have passed thro the House Oregon bills makeing the territory free, & all of the south voteing for them, once without a division in the House at all, no objection being made to the bill *by any one* (1st sess 29t Congress).¹² Dont publish the vote putting in the *slavery restriction*, for the journals shew that I did not vote on that which I believe false but yet it shews it so. The last session we were divided 32 for the bill 33 against it of the slave representatives.

These things Should appear in the *Union* because it is our leading paper & again it is considered to be your organ and will of Course aid much more than to appear first in any other paper and my notion is they should appear at an early day for if they are to do us good the sooner the better. Will you give this a little thought. I dont write to Ritchie¹³ because I have not been in the habit of it. You can talk to him if you think necessary.

GEO S HOUSTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “(Private).” From Hampton C. Williams’s AE: received June 3, 1847; “A frightful [particle] of Alabama politics” (word in brackets uncertain, obscured by postmark).

1. State identified through content analysis.

2. Houston to Polk, May 18, 1847.

3. On the effort to make Thomas H. Benton a lieutenant general, see letters and notes in Andrew Lane to Polk, January 1, 1847, and Benton to Polk, March 6, 1847.

4. Jacob Thompson’s proviso to Congress’s resolution of thanks to the officers and soldiers at Monterrey.

5. William W. Payne.

6. Franklin W. Bowdon.

7. Born in North Carolina, Henry W. Hilliard (1808–92) became a University of Alabama professor and a Montgomery, Ala., lawyer. He served in the Alabama House, 1838; as a Whig presidential elector, 1840; as chargé d’affaires to Belgium, 1842–44; and as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1845–51.

8. David Hubbard.

9. John C. Calhoun voted for the Three Million Dollar Bill in the U.S. Senate but against the Wilmot Proviso, which the House had amended to it and the Senate removed.

10. Washington *Union*.

11. Calhoun, in a speech before the Senate on February 9, 1847, during debate on the Three Million Dollar Bill, recommended the holding of a defensive line in Mexico that would become the border between the United States and Mexico after the war. He opposed advancing farther into Mexico.

12. See letter and notes in Houston to Polk, May 18, 1847.

13. Thomas Ritchie.

TO CORNELIUS W. LAWRENCE¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 24th 1847

I enclose to you *Mrs Polk’s* answer to the kind letter which she received from *Mrs. Lawrence*.²

After my constant confinement here for more than two years, with the exception of less than a week, last summer,³ I feel that some little

respite from my public labours and cares, will be proper, if not necessary. Though my general health continues to be good, I am sure it would be improved, by a short season of recreation. With this view, I have said to some of my friends, who wanted me to do so, that I would probably visit New York, some time in June, if the state of my public duties would permit it. Such is my intention, though I cannot now name the precise time. You may have observed from the newspapers that I contemplate making a short visit to the University of North Carolina, next week. I will be absent but a few days, and the probability is that I can go to New York about the 15th or 20th of June. After my return from N. Carolina I will advise you more definitely of the time. I thank you for your kind invitation to make your house my home, during the visit.⁴ It would give me sincere pleasure to do so, but I incline to think that it would be more convenient to my fellow-citizens, who may desire to see me, that I should, have my quarters at a Hotel, where they would have easy access. And besides it would I know put a private family to great inconvenience to have me & those of my family who may accompany me as guests. In haste: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, facsimile, published in Edward Stern, *History of the "Free Franking" of Mail in the United States* (New York: H. L. Lindquist, 1936), p. 183; see also Stern's transcription, p. 185. Addressed to New York City and marked "(Private)." See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

1. Cornelius W. Lawrence (1791–1861), a New York City merchant and long-time president of the Bank of the State of New York, served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1833–34; as mayor of New York City, 1834–37; and as customs collector at that city, 1845–49.

2. Enclosure not found. Lydia Ann Lawrence (1811–79), a widow, married Cornelius W. Lawrence in 1844.

3. James and Sarah Childress Polk vacationed at Fort Monroe in Hampton, Va., August 19–25, 1846.

4. Cornelius W. Lawrence to Polk, May 19, 1847.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear sir [Yalobusha County, Miss.]¹ May 24th 1847

Yours dated the 24 April I had received. Sir your People and all at this Time in good helth. I have a first rate stand of coten and in good condition though small for the time cold² spring. My corn Looks well and in good condition. Oats tollerable oupland in oats.

As for the num ber of acres cleared I dount nough prehaps you dough. I think I have clered won hundred acres. We have all the opin land in cultivation Except the galded³ places say 6 or 8 acres.

I think we had 270 acres in coten about 150 in corn about 30 in oats. As mention abouve this taks all the cleared land. If it be a good season I think I shal make a good crope as I think I shal be able to cultivate it reightly.

I have receved Two more muls from Col campbell.⁴

Receved a negro gurl from Mr Belomy in cofivill by the name of marier bought by Mr Mack neil bolerver Tennessee.⁵

The stock all looks well at this tim.

If we have a good season I think we will make a good crope. I have nothing Mor worthe your at tention.

JOHN A MAIRS

[P.S.] Marier⁶ request me to give heir respects to you and her Mistes and if you pleas in the next Leter your rite me to let hir nough hough hir sone Henry⁷ is iff well and houg he is doing.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 6, 1847; "Relates to my plantation Business."

1. Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

2. Mairs may mean either "cold" or "called."

3. The now-obsolete word "galded" meant "broken at the surface, furrowed, or washed away."

4. Robert Campbell, Jr.

5. Maria Davis, George W. Bellamy, and Ezekiel P. McNeal. Bellamy (c. 1816–1880), born in Kentucky, was a Yalobusha County merchant and slaveholder. Mairs refers to the towns of Coffeerville, Ark., ("cofivell") and Bolivar, Tenn. ("bolerver").

6. This Mariah (c. 1814–1851?), Henry Carter's wife, was part of Sarah Childress Polk's dowry in 1824; the Polks lost title to her in settling Joel Childress's debts, but then repurchased her. She served them in Columbia, Tenn., until Polk sent her to his West Tennessee plantation in 1831 and, with her family, to his Mississippi plantation in 1835. There she became a seamstress and weaver.

7. Sarah Childress Polk and Henry, Mariah and Henry Carter's son. Henry (c. 1831–?) served Polk as a house slave in Tennessee and in the White House.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Sir:

Washington May 24th 1847

I have signed commissions for officers in the 10. Regiments authorized to be raised by Congress, as follows, viz—

For 9. Cols, whereas there should be 10. Cols. The commission of one Col. has not been sent to me;

" 9. Lieut. *Cols*, whereas there should be 10. Lieut. Cols. The commission for one Lieut. Col. has not been sent to me.

- " 16. Majors, whereas there should be 20. Majrs. The commissions of 4. Majrs. have not been sent to me.
- " 99. Captains; Whereas there should be 100. Captains. The commission of one Captain has not been sent to me.
10. Surgeons, being the number authorized by law.
19. Assistant Surgeons, Whereas there should be 20. asst. Surgeons. The commission for one asst. Surgeon has not been sent to me.

The omissions have no doubt occurred in making out the commissions, in the adjt. Generals¹ office. You are requested to cause the matter to be investigated, and this error corrected.

I desire to sign the commissions for the 1st and 2nd Lieutenants in the same Regiments as soon as they can be prepared.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Roger Jones.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Dr. Sir:

Washington May 24th 1847

I referred to you a few days ago, a letter in behalf of *Cadet Phenix*¹—who was lately discharged from West Point. He seems to be very persistent, and insists that if he can have a trial by a Court martial, he will be acquitted of the charges upon which he has been dismissed. If he is right in this, his case would seem to worthy of further consideration. He desires to have a conference with you in relation to his case.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NjP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Letter not found. Benjamin C. H. Phenix (c. 1825–?) of Maryland entered the U.S. Military Academy in 1845. A court martial recommended his dismissal in October 1846, but Polk overruled the sentence. By 1860, he was working as a clerk in Washington City.

FROM WILLIAM MOORE

My D. Sir,

Mulberry [Tenn.]¹ 24th May 1847

I drop this short line to give you my opinion on our prospects &c. I have no doubt of the Reelection of Govr. Brown.² We intend giving our Volunteers & Old Soldiers, some big dinners in Lincoln & Bedford³ when they return. The Martial musick belongs to our party, but on those

occasions we say nothing on Politicks. We hold ourselves ready for 1848, when we see who our Candidate will be. The whigs begin to ride old Rough,⁴ barebacked, for when we saddle him with War, Riogrand⁵ &c, this mounts him so high they cant get their foot in the stirup. Scotts⁶ Victories pester them, verry much, & since Santa Ana has taken to running they have quit abusing the President for leting him in.⁷

I hope the War is near its close, but should Mexico hold out untill the meeting of Congress call for a force that will be able to over run their country forthwith & force her into measures.

I have nothing new.

W. MOORE

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE: received June 5, 1847.

1. State identified through content analysis.
2. Aaron V. Brown.
3. Counties in Tennessee.
4. "Old Rough and Ready," epithet for Zachary Taylor.
5. Moore probably meant to write "Rio Grande."
6. Winfield Scott.
7. See letter and notes in John H. Savage to Polk, April 19, 1847.

TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 25th 1847

I wrote you to Columbia on the 18th Instant, & immediately after I receivd your letter of the 10th written at New Orleans,¹ from which I learned from you that you were on your way, on a short visit on account of your wound, to your family in Tennessee. For the reasons stated in that letter, which I take it for granted reached you safely, I earnestly urged upon you the importance of your immediate return to the army. Intelligence since recived, and especially, despatches from *Genl. Scott's* Head Quarters, at *Jalappa*, under date of the 7th Instant, make it still more important that you should with the least practicable delay be at the Head of your Division, two thirds of which will be at *Vera Cruz* before you reach there. Fearing that you may not have appreciated the importance which I attach to your presence with the army, and that by possibility you may yet be at your residence, I write you this. I see by the newspapers that *Genl. Patterson*² has returned to New Orleans. *Genl. Shields*³ is prostrated by his wound, and may not recover, so that of all the officers whom I appointed *Genl. Quitman*⁴ alone remains with the advancing column of the army. You are aware too that *Genl. Butler*⁵ is absent from the army, still suffering from his wound. I have not deemed it necessary to have any formal order issued to you from the

War Department, knowing that you would at once, act upon my suggestions, and regard them as equivalent to an order.

I will write you to night addressed to you at New Orleans, in which I will give you a brief statement of the substance of the despatches received from *Genl. Scott*.

I repeat my earnest wish if this letter should reach you in Tennessee, that you will proceed to your command with the least practicable delay.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. The Secretary of War⁶ fully concurs with me in these views. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.; enclosed in Polk to Jeremiah Cherry, May 25, 1847, and forwarded to New Orleans; marked “(Private & confidential).”

1. Pillow's letter not found.

2. Robert Patterson (1792–1881), an Ireland native and Philadelphia merchant and manufacturer—not to be confused with Robert M. Patterson, director of the U.S. mint at Philadelphia—first joined the army during the War of 1812 and later served in the Pennsylvania militia. Rejoining the army in 1846 as a major general, he led troops against Tampico, Veracruz, and Cerro Gordo before returning to Philadelphia at the end of the war. A Democrat, he supported Andrew Jackson's election to the presidency in 1828; in 1836, he cast Pennsylvania's electoral vote for Martin Van Buren.

3. James Shields.

4. John A. Quitman.

5. William O. Butler.

6. William L. Marcy.

TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 25th 1847

On the 18th Instant, and immediately after receiving your letter of the 10th, written at New Orleans,¹ I addressed to you at Columbia, a letter of great importance, which I hope you may have received. Taking it for granted that you would receive it, in due course of the mail, and that you would as I requested, set out forthwith on your return to the seat of War, I write you this addressed to New Orleans. Despatches received from *Genl. Scott*, under date of the 7th Instant, make it doubly important that you should join your *Division* and be with the Head Quarters of the advancing column² at the earliest practicable period. *Mr Trist*, who as I informed you in my letter of the 18th had gone out with important despatches had arrived at *Vera Cruz* and sent the despatches which he had to *Genl. Scott* at *Jalappa*. *Mr Trist* would go up with the train³ which left *Vera Cruz* on the 8th. He informs me that he

left the important communication which he had for you,⁴ with *Lieut. Col. Wilson*⁵ at *Vera Cruz*, where you will receive it. Enclosed with it was your commission as *Majr. Genl.* At the date of *Genl. Scott's* despatch of the 7th Instant, he had received the despatches taken out by *Mr Trist*, and among other documents he forwards to the War Department, a copy of a letter written by him on that day to *Mr Trist*, which I regret extremely to say, is in very bad taste and temper. From its tone I greatly fear that he will not co-operate with *Mr Trist*, in any movements which look to the opening of negotiations for peace. I shall not repeat his letter further than to say, that he was when he wrote manifestly in a bad humour and that too without cause. Probably *Genl. Scott* expected to be himself invested with *Diplomatic Powers*. There can be no other reason for the violence of language he uses. He even expresses a doubt, whether he will send under a flag of truce, an official letter from the Department of State, addressed to the minister of Foreign affairs of Mexico,⁶ which he had been directed by the Secretary of War,⁷ to transmit, under [certain] circumstances. This want of hearty co-operation, on his part, with *Mr Trist*, may I fear retard, if not defeat the object of *Mr Trist's* mission. I hope My Dear Sir: that you will soon join him, and by your cool counsels reconcile any want of harmony which may exist, and do any thing in your power to have the great object, a just and honourable peace concluded. It is late at night. I write in haste, but will write again, more fully on tomorrow.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. More than two thirds of your *Division* are either at *Vera Cruz* by this time, or *en route* for that place. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to New Orleans; marked “(*Private & confidential*).”

1. Letter not found.

2. Jalapa, Mexico.

3. Polk here refers to a column of troops and horses. The first locomotive train line in Mexico, from Veracruz to Mexico City, did not commence operations until 1873.

4. Polk to Pillow, April 14, 1847, and Polk to Pillow, April 15, 1847.

5. Henry Wilson (1792–1872) of Pennsylvania had served in the army almost continuously since 1813. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in command of the First Infantry Regiment in 1842 and brevetted a colonel in 1846 for his service at Monterrey. He was appointed governor of Veracruz in March 1847.

6. Polk refers to a letter of April 15, 1847, from James Buchanan to Manuel Baranda that rejected a Mexican proposal that the United States vacate Mexican territory and ports before the beginning of peace negotiations. Buchanan's letter stipulated that Polk would not again offer to negotiate until he believed that

Mexico would hear peace proposals; the letter also announced the appointment of Nicholas P. Trist as commissioner. In this letter to Pillow, Polk probably also refers to another letter of the same date from Buchanan to Baranda, introducing Trist. See both letters from Buchanan to Baranda, which Trist brought to Mexico, in *WJB*, pp. 267–70. Baranda (1789–1860 or 1861) had become Mexico's minister of foreign relations on March 27, 1847. He had resigned on May 10 but soon returned to the post. A peace advocate, he earlier had served as minister of justice and public education and as governor of Guanajuato.

7. William L. Marcy.

FROM RICHARD RUSH

Dear sir, Sydenham,¹ near Philadelphia, May 25. 1847

Mr Tod,² our new minister to Rio, called on me last week, and I am glad to have had an opportunity of making his personal acquaintance, and gratified to learn, as I did, that he had called at your request. He was accompanied by Major Morgan,³ and we had some pleasant conversation.

I last week gave up all intention of going out in the new steamer Washington,⁴ superb a vessel as all accounts, so far, concur in stating her to be; and accordingly informed Mr Johnson⁵ of my decision, who had made me a kind communication on the subject.

This done, I determined to take passage in a New York Packet direct from Havre,⁶ and wrote to make the necessary inquiries as between the one to go this day or tomorrow; and the next, which sails on the first of June. Finally, I was on the eve of engaging berths in the latter; that alternative arising through the indisposition of one of my daughters.⁷ I am glad to say that she is recovering, but still not with a prospect of sufficiently restored strength I fear, to go in the Packet of the first, which would oblige us to leave home a couple of days in advance; but before the sailing of the next succeeding Packet, viz, on the 8th of June, there is no reasonable doubt but that she will be quite well. I shall therefore write to day to engage the necessary accommodations for myself and family in that Packet, having been ready myself to go since the middle of this month.

I clung to the hope until a late day, that you might still have been induced to visit Philadelphia, with Mrs Polk, during the present month, as you once I believe contemplated, that the great gratification of receiving you at my home here, might have been open to us all before I go away.

And now, dear Sir, I feel that I cannot go away, without sending you a newspaper containing an account of a dinner given to me by some fifty of sixty Philadelphians of all parties on my appointment as

minister to France, since I last returned from Washington.⁸ I do so, not through idle vanity, which is not the feeling in me, but to express anew, and emphatically, my grateful feelings towards you. Three fourths of the company I should think were of those who terribly denounced and effected to scorn me for the part I took agt. the bank of the United States in the days when you, as chairman of the committee of Ways and means in the H.R, gave it the first great congressional blow for its malpractices.⁹ Of these three fourths; nearly all have shunned me since, and tried to keep me down in my native atmosphere; and would have continued to do so to the end of the chapter, but for the mark of honor and confidence you have conferred upon me, thus rendering my public triumph complete in my own country and abroad. As they bury the hatchet, so will I; nor stop to go into their motives. *Your* act has given me the conspicuous, public, victory, though you could not have known a tithe of the suffering to which those people and hosts associated with them, here *and in England* (while I was there, on general Jackson's friendly agency to recover the Smithsonian¹⁰ money,) at one time subjected me. But *your* kind act having, I repeat, clothed me with the crowning victory, I am content. That victory I shall leave to speak for itself, in its own potent voice, never showing exaltation openly, (though if I had no inward feeling of the kind, I should perhaps be a little too stoical,) still less resentments—or as much as harboring the latter; though I must be true to my friends.

Once more then, dear Sir, the occasion of this somewhat remarkable dinner, reviving, and I must hope excusing, the feeling in me, I must, in again bidding you adieu, and offering my best compliments to Mrs Polk with the hope that you may both, with Judge Mason¹¹ in company, enjoy all the recreation you so richly deserve from your approaching visit to chapel-Hill, . . .

RICHARD RUSH

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received May 26, 1847; "*Private*."

1. Sydenham was Richard Rush's country estate.

2. David Tod.

3. Thomas J. Morgan (1815–50) was secretary of legation to Brazil, 1847–50. Born in Washington County, Penn., he had edited a newspaper there before raising a company for the Texas war for independence in 1836. He then had practiced law in Columbus, Ohio; served as clerk of the Ohio Senate, 1841–42; and served as law clerk in the Solicitor's Office of the U.S. Treasury Department, 1846–47.

4. The *Washington*, launched in 1847 by the Ocean Steam Navigation Company, was the first trans-Atlantic American mail steamer. It sailed from

New York City to Southampton, England; Le Havre, France; and Bremen, in today's Germany.

5. Cave Johnson.

6. Le Havre, France.

7. Rush had three living daughters, all unmarried and living with their parents: Anna Maria (1820–87), Sarah Catherine E. (1823–1905), and Julia S. (1826–58).

8. Enclosure not found.

9. In 1832, Andrew Jackson vetoed a bill rechartering the Bank of the United States. At his urging, the House Ways and Means Committee conducted an investigation of the Bank early the next year. The majority report, which the House adopted, cleared the Bank of most charges of wrongdoing. Representative Polk, however, wrote a minority report that accused the Bank of weakness and its president, Nicholas Biddle, of lying to the Treasury Department about his reasons for recently requesting a postponement of payments. In 1834, Polk convinced the House to refer various documents relating to the Bank to the Ways and Means Committee, which he then chaired. The committee issued opinions, written by Polk, that advised against rechartering the Bank and urged the transfer of government funds from there to state banks. The full House concurred.

10. James Smithson.

11. John Y. Mason.

FROM JOEL TURRILL

Dear si

Sandwich Islands Honolulu May 25th 1847

Since writing you in March last¹ Ladd & co have given the Arbitrators written notice, that they withdraw from the Arbitration, and the Government have protested against their doing so. I send you a new edition of the history of the Islands by Jarvis,² just out, one chapter of which is devoted to the celebrated case of Ladd & co, from this and from the newspaper which I send,³ you will get a tolerable view of that Case. Nothing has been done in relation to the treaty⁴ since I last wrote you except, that the Minister of foreign relations⁵ has returned the draft to the Commissioner⁶ with objections.⁷ So far as American interests are concerned it is of little or no consequence, as in the absence of any treaty we are placed upon the footing with the most powerful nations—this is much better than a bad treaty or one containing clauses which would tend to excite jealousy of other Powers.

Matter have greatly changed for the better since my arrival here. There has been a very great improvemnt in the Judiciary by the Appointment of Judge Lee.⁸ Justice is now meted out here with as even and impartial hand as in most parts of the, U.S.

Some changes in the harbor [. . .] for the better have been made d[ur]ling the past year, and I am in hopes of havig those changes, so far [taking] effect [. . .] greatly di[mi]nished if not entirely removed.⁹

I sent you a long communication in relation to the Islands by the William Neilson, she sailed from this Port for China on the 5th of last August, and has not since been heard of. Ex Commissioner Brown & son were among the passengers.¹⁰

Should the war continue, and there be Any danger from privateer,¹¹ It would be important to have a convoy for such whale ships as will be ready to retun to the, U.S. this fall. I have so written to the Commander of the Pacific Squadron.¹²

It would be of great recruit to have one of our smaller class of ves-sels here d[ur]i[n]g¹³ most of the year, particularly when the whale fleet is here, *Provided*, the officers would not be induced to join the crusade agist the Government by any one.¹⁴

J TURRILL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private*.” Postmarked New York City, January 4. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received January 6, 1848.

1. Turrill to Polk, March 25, 1847.

2. Reference, with slight misspelling of the author’s name, is to James Jackson Jarves, *History of the Hawaiian Islands*, 3rd edition (1847).

3. Enclosures not found.

4. Hawaii–U.S. treaty, eventually signed in 1849. For more on events and individuals discussed herein, see letter and notes in Turrill to Polk, March 25, 1847.

5. Surgeon and businessman Robert C. Wyllie (1798–1865), a native of Scotland, was foreign minister of the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1845–65.

6. Anthony Ten Eyck.

7. Here Turrill wrote two superscript characters resembling “<<” or “22.”

8. William L. Lee.

9. In this sentence, the bracketed “ur” and “mi” are inserted to complete probable meanings; other brackets indicate illegible or uncertain text.

10. George Brown (?–1846?) of Massachusetts was U.S. commissioner to the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1843–46. The brig *William Neilson* left Honolulu on August 5, 1846, bound for China. Its passengers included Brown, possibly on a mission to establish closer relations between the United States and China. The ship, however, never reached China and was not heard from again.

11. During the Mexican War, widespread fears persisted in U.S. civilian and military quarters that the Mexican government would dispatch privateers against the U.S. civilian fleet. No such ships, however, were ever deployed.

12. James Biddle.

13. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

14. Turrill possibly refers to concerns in Hawaii that U.S. Navy officers in port there would join a filibuster organized on and launched from U.S. soil. During his term as Hawaii's foreign minister, Wyllie feared that American men, drawn to California by its gold rush but unsuccessful in their quests for fortune, would be enlisted into filibusters against the islands. The only incident to even approximate such a scenario took place in November 1851, when the clipper *Game Cock* landed at Honolulu with about thirty men led by Samuel Brannan of San Francisco. Brannan's precise intentions remain unclear, but he and his men, days later and without gunfire, were forced to reboard their ship and sail away.

FROM GEORGE W. DRAPER¹

Dr. Sir

Philadelphia May 26th 1847

Desirous of being appointed Minister to France Russia England or Spain in the event of a vacancy occurring or of receiving an appointment in the Army or Navy I respectfully offer my services to your consideration. Referring you to R. M. Patterson, Esq.² President of the United States Mint Mr. Alexr. Milnor,³ paying teller of the Bank of the Northern Liberties of this city I remain

GEORGE DRAPER

An Acrostic in Memory of His Majesty

Louis Philippe the greatest Souvereign France has e're produced
On historys page your immortal name will stand
Until the triumph of the archangel tells that time shall be no more
Illustrious king in all things you've excelled
Save in the art that drenched your fields with gore
Pulled down the ancient monuments of France
Hurling destruction on her friends and foes
Imperial ruler of a powerful state
Long may you live to injoy the fruits of peace
Infused by you throughout the christian world
Perternal guardian of the peoples rights
Purchased by freemen at the cannons mouth
Enfranchised millions hail you as their King
No 10. 1st of Blank verse

Composed by George Draper

P.S. Out of employment for more than 8 years G.D

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Hampton C. Williams's AE: "As a specimen of his talent, and genius he sends an acrostic on Louis Philip./Very soft or crazy/Recd 2 May 1847" (Williams mistook the month).

1. Draper (c. 1813–1880s?), a Pennsylvania native with no profession, was, by 1850, declared insane and housed in the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane in Blockley Township. He remained there until at least 1880.

2. Trained in medicine in Europe, Robert M. Patterson (1787–1854)—not to be confused with Gen. Robert Patterson—taught at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Virginia before serving as director of the U.S. mint at Philadelphia, 1835–53. He was president of the American Philosophical Society, 1849–53.

3. Alexander P. Milnor, a Philadelphia Whig, had been first teller of that city's Bank of the Northern Liberties since 1839.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

[Washington City]¹

Dear Sir,

Wednesday, May 26, 1847. 10 o'clk a.m.

A few minutes since I received the Gazette from McMinnville² containing the paragraph which I cut out and send you en closed.³ It shows how the war spirit prevails in the Old Mountain District.

From Washington Co. Va. on the state line, from my friends King, Pemberton &c. and from Longacre in Sullivan,⁴ I learn there is great dissatisfaction felt among the people of a large portion of the district with the course of A. Johnson⁵ at last session of Congress, and that if it is possible, without producing a split, they desire to bring out some other candidate. This I expected when Johnson was misrepresenting the democracy⁶ of his district here.

As you will be some time absent, accompanied of Course by Col. Walker,⁷ if there is any kind of service I can render to either of you, in any manner, during your absence, I hope you will not hesitate to signify it to me through Col. Walker, or in any other manner. I hope, however, to have the pleasure of seeing you in person before you leave.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Marked "(Private)." Probably addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received May 26, 1847; "Private."

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. The McMinnville (Tenn.) *Central Gazette* was a weekly newspaper published from 1832 to around 1848.

3. Enclosure not found.

4. Jonathan King, Benjamin F. Pemberton, and Ireson Longacre. King (c. 1791–1870s?), a Tennessee-born farmer and Laughlin's friend since their shared Virginia school days, lived at the mouth of Spring Creek in Washington County, Va. Pemberton (c. 1820–1870s?), a Tennessee native, was also a farmer in Washington County. Longacre (c. 1775–1850s?), a Virginia native, was a farmer in Sullivan County, Tenn. In the 1830s, he served as an acting justice of the peace.

5. Andrew Johnson.
6. Democratic party.
7. Joseph Knox Walker.

TO EDWARD J. MALLET¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City May 26th 1847

I regret extremely that my attention was not called to your esteemed letter of the 17th Instant, until this evening. It sometimes happens, that my letters not on official-business, are laid aside by my Private Secretary² to be read when my public duties will permit. He omitted to bring yours to my special notice, & this will explain to you the delay in answering it. *Judge Mason*³ and myself, will visit the University of N. Carolina, and be present at the commencement on the 3rd of June, and I assure you it will give me my sincere pleasure to have you of our party. Our arrangements have been made to leave this city on Friday the 28th Instant. We will reach Raleigh on Saturday, and remain there until Monday the 31st, on which day we will go to Chappel Hill. We will I learn be met at Raleigh by our class-mate & esteemed friend the *Revd. Wm. M. Green*, and a committee from the college. Now My Dear Sir, though I fear you cannot reach here, before we leave, can you not join us at Raleigh & accompany us from that point? I hope you will do so. I repeat my deep regret, that your letter was not brought to my notice earlier: still I hope to have your company from Raleigh. I am sure you would enjoy the visit. We will probably meet many of our class-mates & college friends, from whom we have been long separated, and whom we may never have another opportunity to see.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to New York City and marked "(Private)." See also L, typed copy. NcU.

1. Mallett (1797–1883) graduated from the University of North Carolina with Polk in 1818 and received a master's degree from there in 1830. He worked in the commission and shipping businesses in North Carolina and Rhode Island before serving as postmaster at Providence, R.I., 1829–44, and on the Providence Common Council, 1839–40. In 1845 he became a New York City businessman; the next year he patented an improved telegraph.

2. Joseph Knox Walker.
3. John Y. Mason.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir/

Washington 28 May '47. 1/2 past 7 P.M.

There has been nothing in your mail to day of the least consequence for you to know.¹ I have looked over the *Picayune*² of the 21st. It contains not a word of news from the army. I have neither seen nor heard from Governor Marcy³ to day. I presume he has been busy in preparing his Despatch. Tomorrow morning I shall look after this matter. All's well!

Hoping you may all enjoy yourselves & convert the old North State from the error of her ways,⁴ I remain . . .

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Chapel Hill, N.C.

1. During Polk's trip to Chapel Hill, N.C., with Vice President George M. Dallas absent in Philadelphia, Secretary of State Buchanan oversaw the federal government in Washington City. In a reference that may or may not have been in jest, the *New York Gazette* of May 29 even referred to Buchanan during that interim as "the President *pro tem*."

2. Established in 1837, the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* (and its weekly counterpart) played a key role in reporting on the Mexican War. Coeditor George W. Kendall organized a network of correspondents throughout the warfront and a network of couriers and steamboats to speed their stories to New Orleans. Those stories often arrived in the United States before official government dispatches and regularly were quoted by other newspapers around the country.

3. William L. Marcy.

4. Buchanan likely refers to North Carolina's Whig political leanings. Henry Clay had won the state's presidential election in 1844 and it now had a Whig governor. Its congressional delegation was mixed, but in August 1847, suggesting Polk's lack of success at its conversion, Whigs picked up three more of its U.S. House seats.

FROM HARVEY CURTIS¹

Most Honored Sir,

Madison [Ind.]² May 28th 1847

I am aware that in addressing you directly, & especially upon the topics hereinafter introduced, I expose myself, perhaps justly, to the charge of impertinence & presumption; nevertheless I sit down to the task, because I could not be satisfied that I had done all my duty to my country were I to do nothing; & this mode of offering my tribute, seemed to me most accordant to my profession. (*a Presbyterian clergyman*.) I love my country, & have long believed that an allwise & all powerful Providence was leading us along, by methods of his own choosing to occupy a high place among the nations of the earth, & to act an important part in promoting the physical, intellectual & moral elevation &

improvement of the human family. I behold my country now engaged in war. I have not felt called upon to go into an investigation of the causes of the war, nor have I the documents necessary to guide me in such an investigation. As an American I assume that my country is right.

Two questions have for sometime occupied my thoughts, & if the following suggestions do no good, they can do no harm, thus privately communicated. 1st *How may the war be brought to a successful termination at the least expense of blood & treasure?* That our army can conquer any force which Mexico can bring into the field has been demonstrated sufficiently. But will Mexico make peace when thus conquered in the field? Present appearances indicate that she will not. There appears to be no sufficiently stable authority to negotiate a peace. No public man there would dare to risk the attempt. And the Mexican Spano-Indian blood seems fully roused to the desperate effort by guerrilla warfare, & individual assassination to worry & drive us from their land. To hold the whole country by military occupation is obviously impossible without an army of 100.000. men. To withdraw from the country, would leave Mexico, elate with pride, & embittered by defeats, more intractable, & difficult to treat with, than ever before. Would it not be best to withdraw to some practicable line, cutting off the northern & thinly inhabited part of the country which could be easily held, & then retain it as a pledge, till they will offer, nay sue for peace? A line of strong points extending to the Pacific might be selected & fortified. From 20 to 50 miles south of the main line could be established a line of outposts parallel to the main line, dependent on it, drawing their resources from it, & to fall back upon it if pressed by a large force. This line of outposts would serve as a safeguard to the communications along the main line by keeping at a distance small marauding parties. The double line would also more effectually cut off the communication of the Mexicans North & South of said lines with each other. Let the suitable detached forces be sent to subdue, & maintain in quiet the country north of said lines. The States therein might be left to their own government subject to such restrictions as might be necessary for the maintenance of our supremacy, & of public order, & the defence of American settlers on the vacant lands, or in the cities. This territory thus occupied should be open to immigration. Any of the old inhabitants being at liberty to emigrate south of the line who should choose to do it; & those who were insubordinate, to be sent south, i.e. banished [from]³ the territory. Five years of such occupation of a territory, by introducing many American & European settlers, & by showing the superiority of our laws &c. would make the country irrevocably ours. With such a line of posts the Mexicans could not conquer that territory back. She must negotiate for it, & that speedily. I think she would hardly dare assail that line & if

she did she could be easily driven back. Her guerrilla system would be of no avail against such a line.

2d) *Where should such a line of occupation be drawn?* I would Suggest *Matamoros Monterey Saltillo, Durango & Mazatlan* as the Main line with intermediate points. This line would have the advantage of being *short*, about 600 miles, & almost half of it now occupied. 15.000 men would be sufficient to maintain this double line, & leave 3000 for a moveable force to dispatch northward wherever it should be necessary. The tariff at the Mexican ports now in our possession would go far towards sustaining this army. This line has been suggested to me by a twofold consideration. 1st The ease of holding it. 2d The advantage of it, if it should become the permanent boundary of the two countries. A ready communication with the Pacific is a great desideration. From Matamoros to Saltillo is a regular & easy ascent to the table land of Mexico. And If, as the maps have led me to conclude, there is a pass from the tabl[e]⁴ land to the Pacific near Durango, this has advantages for the great highway of China trade second to none other: 1st It would be within our own borders & thus could be controlled by us. 2d It would be much more direct than by Tehuantepec.⁵ 3d It would form the outlet east & west of all the productions⁶ of that table land north as far as *Paso del Norte*, which naturally seeks its outlet southwardly.

A line from somewhere midway between Matamoros & Santander by way of Florida, thence along the southern lines of Coahuila, Durango & Cinaloa,⁷ would form a natural *water shed*, or dividing line of commerce.

I have Suggested this as a present line to be held as a pledge of peace. If Mexico should assume a proper port & bearing toward us, & offer negotiation a line would of course be fixed by treaty. If not we should soon establish this by occupation. I have thought that this course would secure us all that we can ask or desire, & still cost little more sacrifice of money or of life.

I have feared that the virulence of party strife might So embarrass the Executive of the Nation as to compel a closing of the war in some such way as to throw away all that has been done, leaving matters of difference between us & Mexico unsettled, to be bones of contention for years. But I cannot believe that there will be any, who would attempt to withdraw our troops from such a defensive position as I have attempted to sketch out.

I have little hope that Mexico will make peace with us; she is too proud, & feeble, & selfconceited. In this way I have supposed we might make a peace for ourselves, or bring her to Speedy & reasonable terms.

Begging you to receive this as kindly as I have honestly & patriotically penned it, I am honored Sir, . . .

HARVEY CURTIS

ALS. DLC-JKP. From Polk's AE: received June 3, 1847.

1. Born in New York, Curtis (1806–62) studied at the Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., and in 1836 became pastor of the Congregational Church in Brandon, Vt. In 1841, the American Home Missionary Society appointed him its agent for Ohio and Indiana. He served as pastor at Madison, Ind., from 1843 until 1850, when he accepted a pastorate in Chicago.

2. State identified through external research.

3. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

4. Letter cut off side of page.

5. Mexico's Isthmus of Tehuantepec had attracted attention since the sixteenth century as a possible location for a canal or, more recently, a railroad linking the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. In April 1847, Polk instructed Nicholas P. Trist to make the right of transit across it a condition for a peace treaty. The Mexican government refused the request, noting that it already had granted that right to British developers. The United States eventually obtained the sought-after right of transit in the Gadsden Treaty of 1853, but never developed the route.

6. Crops or livestock.

7. Sinaloa, Mexico.

FROM ALANSON BILLINGS¹

Dr Sir

Huntsville. [Ark.]² May 29/47

Under a Heavy state of [Greivant]³ that I write you this Letter while this morning at the PO in this town⁴ in conversation in regard to the Collumbia case against me Last year, which Pillow⁵ was the Sole cause off. What Do you think of such Base treatment as I Did receive By Pillows infulence? Why the People here are all in a Rage against him & no wonder for he is a terenical Dirty Dog of a fellow. I am very Bitter against him & have the very Best Cause to be of any man under gods heavens & if he is any part of a Gent. he will Recompense me for & Restore me to my satisfaction. Cost me a pretty sum Besides thrown into Jail & then tried for the penitintiry. God almighty & Eternally Dam such scoundrels. It is not to Be wondered at that [. . .] this for nothing man of spirit would Do the same thing over.

If he is the Bearer of Dispathes from Genl Scott what Passage is he to take the main Road & come [. . .]⁶ up to N. Someone will Have the Damd Rascal Life yet I hope.

A BILLINGS

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received June 1847 (day obliterated, hole; Whitthorne served as Polk's private secretary June 12–20); "Billings v Pillow. crazy epistle."

1. Billings (1795?–1864?), a New England native, was a Democrat and a former collecting agent for the Nashville *Union*. By 1844, he and his son were operating a Nashville bookstore and publishing house. He also traveled selling

his wares. On January 17, 1846, after he sold, in Columbia, Tenn., a picture of slaves being branded on the African coast, he was indicted as an abolitionist trying to incite a slave rebellion. He spent one night in jail before supporters paid his bail. His trial was delayed until May and apparently ended with an acquittal. Thereafter he evidently moved to Arkansas; later he moved to Sumner County, Tenn.

2. State identified from postmark.
3. Word here and below uncertain or illegible.
4. Huntsville, Ark., post office.
5. Gideon J. Pillow, who took part in Billings's prosecution.
6. Word obscured by tape.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir/

Washington 29 May 1847 7 P.M.

There is nothing of the least public importance in your mails to day. The *Picayune*¹ of the 22d Instant has no news from the army. Every thing is as dull as possible.

JAMES BUCHANAN

P.S. Mr. Williams² informs me that the letter from John T. Leigh³ has been received. He says you know all about it.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Chapel Hill, N.C.

1. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*.

2. Hampton C. Williams (1806–77), a Democrat from Georgia, held government clerkships under Presidents Andrew Jackson and John Tyler. Under Polk, he was appointed a clerk in the Post Office Department in 1845 and in the War Department later that year, then a naval storekeeper in March 1847. Polk often employed him as a clerk at the White House. He read some of Polk's mail during the Chapel Hill trip. Twice, in February 1847 and August–October 1848, Williams filled in as Polk's private secretary during Joseph Knox Walker's absences. Hence, his AEs appear on some letters in this volume. Later Williams became a Fairfax County, Va., farmer.

3. Letter not found.

FROM HENRY DODGE

Sir

Madison [Wisc. Terr.],¹ May 29th 1847

Mr. Catlin,² the present Secretary of, this Territory, has been, advised, that charges have been submitted, to the President, against, him, that he had united, with, the, enemies, of, the administration, to defeat, the Constitution, at the April Election; the majority for the rejection—of the Constitution, was upwards of 6000., many of the best Democrats, voting, against, it. It was not considered, a party, measure. I

regret the result, as I voted, for the, constitution. I considered the, time had arrived, when, Wisconsin, should, become a State; a large majority of the people, of the Territory, had Voted in favor of a state Government, last year. I was under, the, impression, that it was better to, amend, the Objectable, features, in the, Constitution, than to reject it.

I have always considered, Mr. Catlin, a sound, unwavering, Democrat. As a disbursing officer, he has promptly, paid over, the public monies, entrusted, to his charge, by the Government. I know him, to be a warm and decided friend of your, administration, and would regret that he should be removed from office, to gratify his personal enemies—it would have a tendency to produce a greater division in the Democratic party than at present, exists, a state of things I should regret exceedingly to see.

HENRY DODGE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received June 14, 1847.

1. Territory identified through content analysis.
2. John Catlin.

FROM WILLIAM R. KING AND JAMES E. SAUNDERS¹

Dear Sir

Mobile [Ala.]² 29th May 1847

The consulship at Havana, having become the subject of conversation between us a day or two since,³ and both of us having concurred fully in the opinion that the incumbent Genl. Campbell⁴ should be removed, and some gentleman of equal or superior ability from the ranks of the Democratic party appointed in his stead, we have taken the liberty of expressing our views to you in reference to it.

We are no advocate for a proscriptive policy yet we are concerned that it contributes materially to the success of an administration, when its sincere friends vacate the *important* Office under it. This much at least is generally expected, and in speaking of this consulship we will not withhold the fact, that the continuance of Genl. C. has been the cause of much dissatisfaction amongst your friends, for the reason that it is very generally beleived, that his claims to this station (which is very little inferior in emoluments & importance to many second-rate diplomatic missions) are inferior in every respect to those of many who have spent their lives in the defense of Democratic principles. Now in adverting to this state of feeling amongst our friends, do not understand us as condemning the course pursued in the first instance in retaining this officer. We can well imagine that there were considerations connected with the harmony of our friends which promised good results

from the measure. We shrewdly suspect however, that some of the reasons at least have ceased to exist—that the seed has fallen on strong ground, and that the feelings which prompted your action have met with no corresponding response. The removal of Genl C. we beleive will be unattended with any mischievous result. If any farther comments should be made upon it they will serve only to exhibit your past magnanimity of feeling, which has hitherto never been publicly acknowledged by your opponents (as far as we know) in one single instance.

In our own ranks we have many men possessing high qualifications and claims to such a position. Amongst them is Thaddeus Sanford Esqr Editor of the *Mobile Register & Journal*⁵ who like the venerable Ritchie⁶ has spent his life in a consistent advocacy of Democratic⁷ principles—a gentleman of polished easy manners—of the first order of mind—of rare discretion coupled with ample firmness—and rich in experience and general information. Indeed we believe, Mr Sanford could discharge creditably the duties of almost any foreign mission which we have: and yet from the lean manner in which our political writers are sustained, this man after passing the meridian of his life in constant toil, is now left with means inadequate for the genteel support of himself and an only child a lovely & intelligent daughter⁸ who is the only member of his family left to solace his old age.

We submit these views Freely for your consideration. We do not pretend to be cognizant of all the circumstances which may influence the question, and should you determine that it still the wiser course to continue the incumbent we shall be satisfied, that your reasons (which we do not seek to elicit) are sufficient.

WILLIAM R KING
JAMES E. SAUNDERS

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “(Private).” From Polk’s AE: received June 8, 1847; “*Private*.”

1. Letter written by Saunders and signed by both. King (1786–1853), a North Carolina native and an Alabama planter, represented a North Carolina district in the U.S. House, 1811–16, and Alabama in the Senate, 1819–44 and 1848–52. Among other offices, he served as legation secretary simultaneously to the Kingdom of Naples and to Russia, 1816–18, and as minister to France, 1844–46. In the latter post, he was widely credited with preventing official protests from France and the United Kingdom against the 1845 U.S. annexation of Texas. He served briefly as vice president under Franklin Pierce, March 4–April 18, 1853, before his death. King began his career as a Democratic Republican and ended it as a strident Democrat.

2. State identified from Polk’s AE.

3. Polk’s diary contains no reference to this conversation.

4. South Carolina native Robert B. Campbell (c. 1793–1862) prevailed against these two critics and remained as consul at Havana, Cuba, until 1850. He, after all, possessed a tested resilience. He had served in his state's senate, 1821–23 and 1830, and in the U.S. House, 1823–25 and 1834–37, first as a Jacksonian and then as a Nullifier. Moving to Alabama, he served in that state's legislature in 1840. He served as consul at Havana, then still under Spanish title, 1842–50, before moving to San Antonio, Tex., in the early 1850s and serving on the commission to resolve U.S.-Mexico boundary disputes. From 1854 to 1861, he served as consul at London.

5. Connecticut native Sanford (1790–1867) as a young man pursued commercial enterprises in New York City and Mobile, Ala. He owned and edited the *Mobile Register*, 1828–37; repurchased the newspaper in 1841; and, after combining it with other local publications, renamed it the *Mobile Register and Journal*. Under his direction, which stretched into the mid-1850s, the paper became associated with proslavery and Democratic party politics and employed innovative uses of the telegraph in news-gathering. Sanford also served as president of the state bank of Mobile, 1833–44.

6. Thomas Ritchie.

7. Democratic party.

8. Sanford's daughter, whose name has not been identified, died years before he did, within a year after her marriage.

FROM VERNON K. STEVENSON

Dear sir

Nashville Tenne. May 29th 1847

Your much esteemed favor of the 22nd Inst came duly to hand last night & I called this morning upon Mr. Bass¹ who Stated to me that the Grundy² Part of the property had been decreed to you by the chancery court that he & Mr. McGavack³ can give no warranty as they are mere executors without any interest in the property Mr Grundy having left them nothing; but that he will afford every facility to Judge C or Mess Fogg & Humphreys⁴ in investigating the claim of title. Mr Bass will give a general warranty deed to the part sold by him, & says there is no defect about the ballance as all came originally from Grundy. We will have this looked into fully at any rates.

Mr Bass declines to receive the money offered at present by you until he hears from the heirs which will be 10 or 15 days. He says that Govr Brown⁵ was mistaken in saying that he Bass had agreed to receive this mony & deduct the interest which he supposed grew out of his having said to the Governor that the heirs were generally poor & consequently he had no doubt but that most of them would be glad to have the mony at any time by deducting int.

From all I could learn Mr Eakin⁶ is the only one who will likely refuse & that Mr McGavock will most probably receive this for him. At

any rates you shall be advised so soon as they determine I can sell at half per cent & possibly higher on Philada. today & may do better by the time I learn if they will take the mony & discount the interest as will not draw until I know thy will receive it.

Mr Bass was a little displeased at Mr Mackgavocks receiving the mony paid last & discounting the interest but I satisfied him & he said no more about it.

Genl Pillow⁷ left this morning for the seat of war. H[e]⁸ looks considerably worsted. We will carry Tenness like a whirlwind for A V Brown. Our majority from present appearances will not fall below 10.000 & may go much above that.

We are taking all Mexico with our Glorious army & France can say nothing since her tricks for the Infanta & we have silenced England by small presents to heer starving populace⁹ so it seems that the ballanc[e]¹⁰ of Power so much talked of in annexing Texas,¹¹ fails to act, even when we are reaching to the verry city of Mexico.

V. K. STEVENSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 6, 1847; answered June 8, 1847; "Relates to my private business."

1. John M. Bass.

2. Felix Grundy.

3. Jacob McGavock.

4. John Catron, Francis B. or Godfrey M. Fogg, and West H. Humphreys.

5. Aaron V. Brown.

6. William Eakin (1810–49) was one of Felix Grundy's sons-in-law. Born in Ireland, he immigrated with his family in 1822 to Tennessee, where they operated a farm, tannery, and dry goods business. William moved to Nashville in 1840 and married Felicia Ann Grundy in 1842.

7. Gideon J. Pillow.

8. Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

9. Stevenson refers to the marriage of the Infanta María Luisa Fernanda to Antoine Marie Philippe Louis d'Orléans, Duke of Montpensier, and to Americans' aid to the Irish and Scottish during the potato famine, including that carried to Ireland on the naval ships *Jamestown* and *Macedonian*. On the famine relief, see letters and notes in Robert Gray to Polk, February 22, 1847; Uriah P. Levy to Polk, February 27, 1847; and Jane Hickey Sealy to Polk, June 1, 1847.

10. Letter cut off side of page.

11. The British and French governments, anxious to maintain economic ties with the cotton-producing Texas republic, had, in 1845, supported that republic's continued independence. Those governments also had hoped that an independent Texas would limit U.S. expansion and thereby help establish a balance of power in North America.

FROM HAMPTON C. WILLIAMS

Dear Sir, [Washington City]¹ Sunday evening May 30th 1847

As Mr. Buchanan had not come this evening you may probably, not hear from this place, and I thought I would send you a line.

In the mail of to day the matter of greatest interest is, that Capt. Davis² writes, that General Shields³ is recovering slowly, but as fast as his surgeons can desire. Most of his late suffering was caused by the dislocation of two ribs, which was not found out until a few days before Capt. Davis. There are letters from Monterey, Halapa, Matamoros⁴ &c as late as the 1st of this month, but they are letters of application for office, and a change of employment.

H. C WILLIAMS

ALS. DLC—JKP. From Polk's AE: "Addressed to me at Chapel Hill N.C." and received May 30, 1847.

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. Born in Malta to American parents, George T. M. Davis (1810–88) was an Alton, Ill., lawyer and associate editor of the Alton *Telegraph and Democratic Review*, 1842–47. A Whig, he served as mayor of Alton in the early 1840s. He went to Mexico as a second lieutenant of the First Illinois Infantry Regiment in 1846 and served as Gen. James Shields's aide-de-camp.

3. James Shields.

4. Monterrey, Jalapa, and Matamoros, Mexico.

FROM FREDERICK P. STANTON

Dear Sir Memphis 31st May. 1847

Mr Van Pelt, late the efficient Editor of the Appeal,¹ has retired from his position at the head of the press in this place—his chief motive for so doing was that his health has not been good in Memphis. His friends here think him entitled to some favor at your hands and would be glad to see him receive a respectable appointment. It is unnecessary for me to say any-thing more: you know Mr. Van Pelt and his services. I merely give expression to the general feeling of your friends in this quarter, knowing that you will gratify them if possible.

FRED. P. STANTON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 12, 1847.

1. Henry Van Pelt (1794–1851), a Democrat, had edited the *Memphis Weekly Appeal* since 1841. He returned to the newspaper, by then called the *Daily Appeal*, in 1848 and edited it until his death. He earlier had edited several papers in Franklin, Tenn.

JUNE

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

Dear Sir,

[Washington City, c. June 1847]¹

All hands that can be employed are at work & have been for days on the balance of the statements you desire.

I have been at work constantly on them myself and will continue to devote to them my constant & undivided attention. The moment they are finished I will bring them to you with a written view of the matter.

There is one instruction from the War & Navy department indispensable to save the finances, and that is to collect *every dollar* we can in Mexico and to apply it not as the discretion of the officer may dictate, *but in aid of the expenses of the war*.

I will be with you this evening or *early* in the morning.

R J WALKER

ALS, copy. PPIU.

1. Place and approximate date identified through content analysis. This letter probably describes the preparation of Walker's report of June 10, 1847, recommending tariff policies for occupied Mexican ports. That report modified Walker's lengthy report of March 30 on the same topic, in response to questions from Secretary of War William L. Marcy. See both reports in *CMPP*, pp. 524–30. See also letter and notes in Walker to Polk, March 31, 1847.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir/

Washington 1 June 1847 1/2 past 7 P.M.

I almost wish some stirring event would occur to relieve the dull monotony of my letters. There is nothing of the least importance in your mails to day. We are all relieved to know positively that Mr. Trist & the bag train have arrived safely at Jalapa. Dulness now reigns supreme in this City.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC-JKP. From Polk's AE: "Addressed to me at Chapel Hill N.C." and received June 1, 1847.

FROM FRANCIS N. FISK ET AL.¹

Sir

Concord N.H. June 1st 1847

Perceiving by the public prints that you contemplate soon visiting New England, allow us to express the hope, that it will suit your convenience to visit New Hampshire.

We earnestly invite you whenever your leisure will permit to visit the Capital of our State, and although we have but few external attractions in comparison with our cities and larger places of wealth to present as an inducement for you to extend your journey so far into the interior; still may we not hope, that the cordial welcome you would receive, the high satisfaction all would feel in beholding the President of the United States in our village and welcoming him to the general hospitality, and kindness of the Granite State, may have an influence in occasioning an opportunity for us and our citizens generally to offer that respect which is due to your elevated station, your eminent public services and private virtues.

Sincerely attached to the institutions of our Country, all hearts will welcome, thrice welcome the chief Magistrate of the Nation traveling in the style of a private citizen.

Trusting that our citizens may not be deprived of the distinguished honor of thus meeting you: please to accept, Sir assurances of the high consideration with which we have the honor to be . . .

FRANCIS N. FISK

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 9, 1847; answered June 19, 1847. Joseph Knox Walker answered on June 19, in a letter addressed to "Hon Paul Wentworth & others," that Polk "hopes to have it in his power to spend a few hours with his fellow citizens of Concord." ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

1. Letter written by Fisk and signed by him and twenty-nine others. Fisk (1780-1870), a director and later president of the Merrimack County Bank in

Concord, had served as town clerk, 1819–28; in the New Hampshire house, 1825–26; on the New Hampshire Executive Council, 1827–28 and 1829–31; and as town moderator, 1834–35.

FROM JOHN H. LINAM¹

Dear Sir 1 June 1847 Pleasant Green Lawrence Cty Tennessee

Permit me to present my self, before your honor, as a friend personally, & politically, and that I sincerely hope these few lines may find you & Lady in the in Joyments of good health, prosperity and hapiness, life desiers. Suffer me to assure your honor, that the democracy² of our County are well pleased with the cours you have persued in relation to our Goverment affairs. I have not heard much chagrin from the whigs except Some of their polititians, who denounce the war as uncaled for unconstitutional unholy & James K polks war. Rest assured, it is going to use them up in our pesent contest, as far as I can learn. A. V is using Neal. S.³ up horribly. He is no match atal in debate for the governoeer. I think there is no danger of our Success in the Election of A. V. & C.

President permit me to say to you that our section of country is generally healthy at present also in Maury.⁴ Our crops are backward owing to the coolness of the spring. Wheat will be prety good if no disaster happens it, here after.

The most of our kinds have become some what contaminated by Smut,⁵ wich brings me to make one request of you hoping that it not be troublesome or offensive to you to incorage agricultural persuits. In looking over the anual report of the Commissioner of pattents⁶ I there See in page 413 a kind of wheat caled, Etrurian wheat dicribed as being a white wheat of excellent quality, & early maturity. If, I, through your agency Could procure a small quantity of it, I should feel happy in makeing the experement, to see if it would suit our Climate or not. If it would, it might be a great acqusition in our country. I feel some anceiety to introduce this new kind of wheat in to our state & county hoping it may be beneficial to our selves & neighbors.

Mr B. Martin⁷ promiced to bring me Some with him. I expct he has forgotten it. I there fore make free to request of you the little favor of Sending me a small quantity of it for trial. I there fore am under lasting Gratitude, and feel bound to divide with you if required, Should it proove to be a superior kind to others heare. If it does not we can but desist the growing of it, if it proove unworthy attention.

I have always thought it was as easy to grow a good thing as a mean one. Therefore if thee is any best let us have it. I am always willing to bear my part in makeing experiments for the good of my self & country.

Permit me, to assure you of the high Consideration I have towards your Self and Lady. . . .

JOHN. H. LINAM

P.S. Direct the wheat to Lawrenceburg to the Care of D parish P.M.⁸

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 12, 1847.

1. Born in South Carolina, Linam (1787–1876) lived briefly in Alabama before moving to Lawrence County, Tenn., in 1824. There he owned a plantation.

2. Democratic party.

3. Gov. Aaron V. Brown and challenger Neill S. Brown.

4. Maury County, Tenn.

5. Smut is a fungal disease of plants, especially cereal grasses. It converts parts of the plants into masses of spores.

6. Edmund Burke. The Patent Office did not issue a report for 1846. Its most recent report, which Linam cites, was the *Report of the Commissioner of Patents, for the Year 1845* (title slightly different in Senate edition), which Congress ordered to be published in 1846. See House Document No. 140 or Senate Document No. 307, 29th Congress, 1st Session. Linam misread the report; though it mentions Etrurian wheat, the description he summarizes refers instead to Tuscany wheat.

7. Barclay Martin.

8. Roberson D. Parish (c. 1807–1850s?), a native of North Carolina, was postmaster at Lawrenceburg, Tenn., in the late 1840s and early 1850s.

FROM JANE HICKEY SEALY¹

June 1st 1847.²

Sir,

Roseville South Ford Dartmouth Devon Engd.

I request your permission to address you. I take the Liberty of soliciting your Patronage; “[in Washington].”³ I feel an ardent desire, to emigrate to your [happy Washington] City, & to [. . . anything] in My power, assist my dear Husband⁴ in his farwise worthy project of improving his present pecuniary circumstances. I have received a *solid* English Education, with a thorough knowledge of French, and Music; Sir—If you require a Governess competent not only to impart the rudiments but finish young Ladies I offer myself as a *Candidate*. I am *active*, cheerful & *domestic* & I will devote every Energy of my mind to give you entire satisfaction. My accent is English, native [this Land].⁵ I am of Irish Parent's. My Father⁶ was distinguish[e]d⁷ as a Scholar in St John's Col., Cambridge Engd.⁸ altho Dublin gave him Birth. My Eldest Brother⁹ is [Now]¹⁰ Chaplain in [Aoswache], La [Mulrankin], La [. . .] to the British [Residents]—he gave up the Living of Wexford, Ireland from ill health & state of his poor Country. My second Brother¹¹ is a Clergyman *near Cork*. Our great Desideration at present *is want of*

Cash. If Sir you share yours If you can so arrange as to [send]¹² us to leave, for your Port God willing “*We are with you*” without delay.

Sir I am joined by my two Children¹³ in sincere wishes.

JANE SEALY

N.B I wrote to your secretary W W Seaton Esq Relief Comm¹⁴ there stating our natinal Position. Some do not wish our affairs to be made *Public* in Ireland or Engd. and [are . . . grateful to] Mr W W Seaton.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Marked “Private!!!” Mailed with Sampson S. Sealy to Polk, June 1, 1847; addressed to “President of the City of Washington/ Washington,/United States/North America.” Postmarked Dartmouth, May 31, 1847; Liverpool, England, date illegible; Boston, date illegible. From Washington Curran Whitthorne’s AE: received June 19, 1847; “*well written letters.*”

1. Jane Hickey (c. 1795–1866), a native of Murragh, County Cork, Ireland, married Sampson S. Sealy at Richmount, Bandon, County Cork, in 1828. They went to Australia that year, but returned to Ireland a few years later. After some time in England, they moved to the island of Jersey by 1851. Despite the wishes expressed in this letter and Sampson’s of the same day, they did not immigrate to America.

2. Letter postmarked May 31, 1847.

3. Words here and below uncertain or illegible, faded ink.

4. Sampson S. Sealy (1800–1867), born at the family estate of Richmount, was in the British army, 1820–28, rising to the rank of captain and serving a stint in India. After retiring, he obtained two thousand acres of farmland in Australia. He failed, however, to make a good living there—hence his and Jane’s return to Ireland.

5. Words uncertain.

6. Ambrose Hickey (c. 1750–1826) studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and St. John’s College, University of Cambridge, England. He was ordained a deacon in 1773 and a priest in 1774. He served as curate of Innishannon, 1775–80; priest at Donoghmore, 1780–84; rector at Ballymoney, 1784–96; and rector at Murragh, 1796–1826. His wife, Jane Sealy’s mother, was Jane Herrick Hickey (?–1801?), a native of Shippool, County Cork.

7. Letter cut off side of page.

8. St. John’s College of the University of Cambridge was founded in 1511.

9. William Hickey (c. 1788–1875), like his father, studied at Trinity College and St. John’s College. He held clerical positions at Dunleckny, 1811–20; Bannow, 1820–26; Kilcormick, 1826–31; Wexford, 1831–34; and Mulrankin, 1834–75. An advocate for Ireland’s peasants, he cofounded the Bannow Agricultural School and, under the pseudonym “Martin Doyle,” wrote books such as *Hints to Small Farmers* (1830) and *Labouring Classes in Ireland* (1846).

10. Word or words here and below illegible or uncertain.

11. Ordained a deacon in 1841 and a priest in 1842, the younger Ambrose Hickey (?–1882) held the curacy of Ballinaboy, County Cork, 1841–82.

12. Word or words here and below uncertain or illegible, obscured by tape.

13. Jane S. B. Sealy (c. 1830–after 1901) was born at sea; Roseanna B. S. Sealy (c. 1834–?), in Australia.

14. William W. Seaton, the mayor of Washington City, formed the Relief Committee of Alexandria, Va., in the fall of 1846. It raised money and, in collaboration with committees in Washington City and Wilmington, Del., sent the *General Harrison* to Ireland with provisions the following April; the ship arrived in May. Seaton also advocated the sending of the naval ship *Macedonian* to Ireland and, in 1855, visited Ireland himself. He was not Polk's secretary.

FROM SAMPSON S. SEALY

1st June 1847¹

Sir/ Rose Ville South ford Dartmouth Devonshire England

Although I have not the honor of being personally known to you, I request permission to address you, and this I am glad to do, knowing that you have shewn such benevolence towards my Countrymen the Irish.² I beg to state that I am a retired Captain of Her Majestys 84 (foot) a regt.³ I entered the service, at an early age after the war, and retired from it in the yr 1828 being induced by the fair promises held out by our Govt. to officers of the Army and Navy to emigrate to Australia, and become a settler in that Colony. Although I possessed the requisites for a Settler, and set out with a good Capital I did not succeed as an Agriculturist, and was obliged to return home with disappointed hopes. My Father⁴ is deceased, I am second eldest Son, & the property is entailed upon my Brother Richard Sealy.⁵ My relatives are all Irish, extensive Landholders. I do not possess any land, myself and Ireland is in such a depressed state as to rents as my Family cannot none assist me, as they would gladly do so. I have a wife⁶ and two young Daughters⁷ to provide for, and being an *Irishman* I have no influence whatever with the English Govt. Although I am a *Liberal*.⁸

I have turned my thoughts towards Washington being partial to a Republican Govt. I am of the *Protestant Religion*. Sir permit me to offer my services to you in any way suited to my former Military habits. I am of the *Middle* age, healthy, and active. "General Sir Ralph Darling"⁹ formerly Governor of Sydney, knows me, and will (if required) give me a letter of introduction to you. I can also forward to you one from my friend Sir Thomas Swinerton Dyer Baronet¹⁰ late Captain of the Royal Navy who resides in Dartmouth. My wife is the Daughter of a Clergyman.¹¹ She is *active talented* and *accomplished* and is competent to fill any responsible situation, suited to the Daughter of a Clergyman.

I will state candidly that my present funds will not admits of my defraying the expense of our passage money to Washington. My family suffers much from sea sickness and would require airy and comfortable accommodations for the sake of health. Perhaps you may be induced to do away with this difficalty by giving me and my family a free passage to Washington; at your desire I would wait upon the Captain of a vessel, or any Agent of yourn in Sothampton, & give him Satisfactory References as to my character connexions, &c &c and if we decide upon going with him, to your city permit me to propose as follows for your kind consideration, namely that you will have the goodness to allow your Agent to advance me as a Loan, a small Sum of money, to enable me to pay honourably any and every little outstanding accounts which I may have up to the time of leaving in this place. I will of course repay you out of any salary allowed to me. I receive the interest of a thousand pounds regularly half-yearly, and that I would hand over to your Agent to repay you by half yearly installments. It is at five pr Cent and is paid peranually. There is a *Trustee* over it. One hundred pounds would enable me to leave Dartmouth honestly and respectably. I do not require a Donation or expect it, only an advance which I have honest principles (and funds) to repay you having a thousand pounds in the funds independent of rents in Ireland. My eldest Brother is a single man who does not intend to marry and I will be entitled to three Estates at my mothers¹² death. I shall come in for some money; but at present I have not an Income sufficient, to provide for the family of a respectable person. My wife and myself have always been accustomed to move in the best society and on that account we cannot improve our circumstances in England. I should like to have this before the end of the Summer. My going will depend upon your reply. I should not like to go as an adventurer. I solicit your patronage Sir/without any claim to it but that of my being an *Irishman* and a retired officer of disappointed hopes. Hoping for a favorable answer . . .

SAMPSON S. SEALY

[P.S.] I assure you it will be my constant study to merit your approbation and prove myself a worthy Citizen of Washington. I am of temperate habits and cheerful [. . .]¹³ and honestly & Industriosly disposed.¹⁴

ALS. DLC-JKP. See Jane Hickey Sealy to Polk, June 1, 1847, with which this was mailed.

1. Letter postmarked May 31, 1847.

2. On the U.S. government's contribution to Irish relief, see letters and notes in Robert Gray to Polk, February 22, 1847, and Uriah P. Levy to Polk, February 27, 1847. Polk made a personal donation of fifty dollars in February 1847.

3. Sealy wrote "a regt" above "(foot)."
4. John Sealy (1769–1836) was born at the family estate of Richmount, Bandon, County Cork, Ireland, and died in Bandon.
5. Primogeniture then prevailed within much of Irish society. Richard Sealy (1798–1882), Sampson's elder brother, lived at Richmount. He still held the estate in the 1870s, when its area was recorded as 844 acres. By the 1850s he also held and leased out the estate of Burren House in Bandon, County Cork.
6. Jane Hickey Sealy.
7. Jane S. B. Sealy and Roseanna B. S. Sealy.
8. Lord John Russell and his Whig ministry governed the United Kingdom, June 1846–February 1852; see notes in George Bancroft to Polk, January 4, 1847. Although the United Kingdom's Liberal party—successor party to the Whigs—was not formally organized until the late 1850s, the term "Liberal" already had been in use in the United Kingdom for decades as an epithet for Whigs, free-trade advocates, and other reformers.
9. A British navy officer since 1793, Sir Ralph Darling (1775–1858) was promoted to major general in 1813 and to lieutenant general in 1825. He became governor-in-chief of New South Wales, Australia, in 1825. Unpopular with colonists and antagonistic toward the press, he was recalled in 1831; he returned to military service and remained in it until his death.
10. Sir Thomas Swinnerton Dyer (1770–1854) succeeded his cousin as eighth baronet in 1838. In the British navy since 1782, he had commanded the HMS *Ready* as a lieutenant and in 1810 had attained the rank of commander with command of the HMS *Driver*, 1810–11.
11. Ambrose Hickey of Murragh, County Cork.
12. Esther Stawell (1778–1856), a native of Kilbrittain, County Cork, married John Sealy in 1796.
13. Word illegible, light ink transfer.
14. Sealy wrote his postscript to the left of his closing and signature.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir/

Washington 2 June 47. 9 P.M.

Major Williams¹ reports nothing in the mails to day except applications for military appointments. Governor Marcy² has received no Dispatches from the army, nor have I heard from Mr. Trist since before your departure. You could not have been absent at a more fortunate time. We shall expect you on Sunday; though I tell inquiring friends that you will be here either on Saturday or Monday. I presume Mrs. Polk will forgive this little pious fraud for the sake of preserving her cherished character.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE: "Addressed to me at Chapel Hill, N.C.," and received June 2, 1847.

1. Hampton C. Williams.
2. William L. Marcy.

FROM JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

My Dear Sir

Mecklenburg T. June 2, 1847

I recd. to day your favor of May 21. & had by the previous Mail received yours of May 20, each inclosing a note from the Post Master General.¹ To these notes I have this moment replied in a letter to W. J. Brown² his 2nd Assistant “that the explanation in reference to my removal as P.M. at this place is perfectly satisfactory—the mistake on the part of Doctor Lacy³ might easily occur in the hurry of business & I must beg you to request the P.M. General from me to overlook it & by no means to remove a good clerk on the account of a mistake so plainly unintentional.”

For the friendly interest manifested by your promptness in having the matter investigated & the clerical error explained I must beg you to receive my sincere acknowledgments. My surprise was so great in receiving a letter directed to me as Late-P.M. & requiring an immediate adjustment of my accounts &c. &c. as not to allow me to lose a single Mail in requesting the reasons for which I was removed. If I had waited a Mail or two later the arrival here of the Commission to my successor would have shewed that it was all accidental & unintentional. I hope Dr. Lacy will not even be censured—much less removed for the harmless mistake.

I have occasionally written to you freely & frankly on matters of public concernment. Not that I expected a reply or supposed that what I could say on National subjects would interest or enlighten you—but a hasty letter from an old correspondent & friend I knew if worth no more would serve to relieve you a little from the weightier cares of important Executive Duties. These I know have often been burthensome—oppressive & perplexing—even difficult & embarrassing—and you have not a friend in the United States who more than I, has sympathised in your official cares or felt more desirous of sustaining & vindicating your Administration. I think I can be impartial. I know I have no motive in misleading you or others but I must say that after analysing all that the Opposition says to the contrary that posterity will be unanimous in its verdict as to the wisdom, the patriotism the ability—and the success of all the prominent measures you have adopted. I may have enumerated them to you before & will not specify them here. It is enough for me to say that in nearly every case you could not have done otherwise—that a contrary policy would have immolated yourself—ruined your friends & have destroyed the country & moreover have exposed you

in a ten fold degree to the reproaches & malignity of the uncandid & fault-finding & unpatriotic presses of the opposition. I have occasionally lost a patient—or failed to cure him. Upon a review of his treatment I become reconciled to his fate—any other course would have hastened the fatal event or have added to & increased his sufferings. I feel some self complacency even in witnessing the failure of art to relieve him. I have done my duty—events are God's. In your case I do not know an instance where you would have acted otherwise or where your success could have been greater or more brilliant (certainly not in the Mexican war for history records no such a years work in any age or by any country). Your very successes—& good fortune seem to give rise to fault finding & complaints. I am glad to know you bear yourself under it all with such admirable philosophy & unwonted equanimity. It seems to me you have whiped them Mexicans enough—& if any opportunity presents itself by the advance of Genl. Scott to their capital—or from the proffered mediation of Mr. Bankhead⁴ to negotiate an honorable peace with a suitable indemnity for past expenditures—& guaranties of future peace—general public sentiment would authorise you to offer them the olive branch. It will be magnanimous now that their Government is so effectually conquered, to be less rigid in your exaction upon them than if they had been more successful in resisting your military & naval operations. I fear there is hardly left remaining stability enough in its central Govt. to make a real peace—Scarcely enough of their Provinces & Departments left to give validity to a negotiation. *Mexico has been.* She is now on the point of dismemberment or annihilation. But on this subject I feel unable to give a correct opinion.

In Tennessee the Mexican war has become the pervading topic among the politicians & political journals. Gov. Brown drives Neill S.⁵ from one position to another & has taken all his out-posts. The citadel itself will soon surrender. His last speech in E[ast]. T[ennessee].⁶ was delivered last week at Kingston with tremendous effect. A report of it appears in to days "Standard."⁷ He is evidently stronger than when the canvass opened & will I feel no longer a doubt of it beat 2 or 3.000 votes—perhaps more. The Legislature may be more doubtful—but for two weeks past I have felt a strong conviction that it was safe too. I judge of the State by E. Tennessee—we must gain in this section at least three in the House & perhaps one in the Senate. Several of the counties are running War-whigs. Where it can be done with any hope of success we discard amalgamations of this sort & bring out a genuine Democrat & stand aloof from a candidate unsound in all other aspects. In this county (Knox) we may have to adopt this course. But in this Con. Dist. we have refused to take up a war whig (Luke Lea)⁸ as was

once early proposed to us & have just put upon the track a thorough Democrat against Mr. Crozier as thorough an ultra Whig as is this side of the Rio Grande. His speech in Congress⁹ is going to cost him his seat. His friends are drooping off every day—some remaining neutral—others declaring themselves for our candidate S. A. Smith¹⁰ of Cleveland. He spoke here the first time on last Saturday & has made a decided & visible impression. Crozier must be & I beleive will be beaten.

If the two Cockes¹¹ continue their race Wayne Wallace¹² will be elected. So we will carry all E. Tennessee.

Blount County where I have been two or three times lately will send Richie¹³ to the H. of R.—a Dem. gain.

But I stop—we have just received distressing news of our married daughter Mrs. Brecks¹⁴ situation at Richmond Ky. We have some apprehensions of her health. Please present Mrs. Rs¹⁵ best regards with my own to Mrs. Polk & beleive me to be

J. G. M. RAMSEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 8, 1847.

1. Cave Johnson.

2. William J. Brown.

3. Robert A. Lacey.

4. Charles Bankhead (1797–1870) served as a key diplomat of the United Kingdom in the United States, 1831–33 and 1835–36, and in Mexico, beginning in 1843. In August 1846, he offered to negotiate a peace treaty between Mexico and the United States, but the Mexican Congress rejected the offer the following April. In early June 1847, Nicholas P. Trist delivered, through Bankhead, James Buchanan's letter of April 15 to Mexican foreign relations minister Manuel Baranda, stipulating the terms under which Polk would commence peace negotiations with Mexico. See letter and notes in Polk to Gideon J. Pillow, May 25, 1847.

5. Aaron V. Brown and Neill S. Brown.

6. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

7. The Knoxville *Standard*, successor newspaper to the *Argus*, was published 1844–56.

8. Luke Lea (1783–1851), a North Carolina native and a veteran of the Creek and First Seminole Wars, was for thirty years cashier of the Bank of Tennessee. He served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1833–35; as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1835–37; and as Tennessee secretary of state, 1837–39.

9. John H. Crozier's February 18 speech promoted internal improvements.

10. Samuel A. Smith (1822–63), a Cleveland, Tenn., lawyer, served as attorney general for Tennessee's Third Judicial District, 1845–48; as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1848; and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1853–59.

11. John Cocke and William M. Cocke.

12. Wayne W. Wallace (c. 1814?–1870s?) of Blount County previously had run, unsuccessfully, in Tennessee's Second Congressional District in 1843. He lost the election of 1847 to incumbent Whig William M. Cocke. He may later have moved to Knox County; censuses list a Wayne W. Wallace in Concord in 1860 and a Waine Wallace in Campbell in 1870, in each case identified as a Tennessee native and a farmer.

13. Eli Richey (1795–1857) was a farmer born in North Carolina. He married in Washington County, Tenn., in 1816, but had moved to Blount County by 1836 and was postmaster at Cloyd's Creek there in 1846. He had moved to Bradley County by 1850 and represented it as a Democrat in the state house, 1855–57.

14. Elizabeth Alexander Ramsey (1823–1911) married farmer and lawyer Daniel Breck, Jr., in 1845.

15. Margaret Barton Crozier Ramsey.

FROM JAMES RUSSELL ET AL.¹

Sir

Boston. June 2d 1847

It is the earnest desire and hope of the Democracy² of this Commonwealth that you will visit Massachusetts during the present summer. In this desire a very large portion of our fellow citizens of all parties fully participate.

We have been directed in behalf of the Democratic State Central Committee to convey to you the expression and assurance of this desire and to request you if practicable to include Massachusetts in your northern tour. We are fully Satisfied that the moment it became known that the President intended to visit Massachusetts, the various State and municipal authorities would take that action upon the subject which the Presidents friends would reasonably expect and wish.

No duty could be more pleasant to us than the one referred to, except that of giving you a hearty welcome to our midst.

And we therefore for ourselves and as the authorised representatives of our party most respectfully and cordially invite you to the Old Bay State.

JAMES RUSSELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received June 10, 1847. From Polk's AE: answered June 19, 1847. Published in *NU*, pp. 103–4. Walker answered on June 19 that Polk probably would visit Boston and Lowell, Mass. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

1. Letter written by Eliab Ward and signed by Russell, Ward, and five others. Russell (1788–1863), a West Cambridge, Mass., lawyer and Democrat, served in the Massachusetts legislature most years from 1839 to 1845. He was a del-

egate to the Democratic National Convention of 1844 and a state director of the Western Railroad Corporation, 1845–48. Ward (1805–92), a Middleborough, Mass., lawyer and militia officer, served as a Democrat in the state house, 1838–39, 1842, and 1852, and in the state senate, 1843.

2. Democratic party.

FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear sir,

Columbia Tenn. June 2d 1847

Such have been my engagements that I have defered writing you for some time in relation to our business matters.

I have paid the following amounts for you:

March 29/47	to Mrs. Jane Polk	\$34.
" "	Your taxes corporation ¹	10
May 6/47—	Mrs. Jane Polk	50.

Which amounts I have charged against you. I here inclose Mrs. Polk's recpts for \$34 & \$50.²

I also inclose your note payable to S. P. Walker³ due Jan'y 1/45 for

	\$144.30
Interest to date	20.40
Your order inclosed (See remarks below)—	33.00
4 years interest—	<u>7.92</u>
	\$205.62

I will draw upon you in favor of Messrs Cole & Howard⁴ of Baltimore for this sum say \$205.62.

The inclosed order for \$33.⁵ I have no recollection whether you have ever settled it or not. If you have done so, or even *suspect* you have please say so & I will give you credit for \$40.92 the order & interest.

Your friends here, all are well.

In justice to myself I beg leave to say a word about the Canvass for Congress in this District.

In Februay upon being solicited to become a candidate for Congress I said "if nominated by a convention I will accept."

Boling Gordon went to every county in the District soliciting the nomination & pledging himself to abide by the decision of a convention. I stayed at home leaving the party free to choose. A few days before the convention met Gordon withdrew his name from the Convention and announced himself a candidate. The convention met & hearing of Gordon's conduct I said to my friends who were delegates that if it was believed best for the interest of the cause to let Mr. Gordon have the

field & make no nomination, to do so—That I would not willingly create or suffer to be created any division. The Convention nominated me unanimously.

Mr. Sykes⁶ is now in the field & is more abusive of the Administration than any body else, & the whigs are supporting him. Gordon has reportedly said that if the whigs support Sykes he (Gordon) will quit—what he will now do I cannot say. I have just returned from Hardin & Wayne.⁷ I do not believe that Gordon will get 100 democrats out of Hickman. I believe I can & will beat both.

I wish you to be assured that I have acted properly in this matter & further that I will act in no other way, but will make any honorable sacrifice for the cause.

JAMES H. THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 11, 1847; "Relates to my private affairs. . . my note & order enclosed"; vouchers and Jane Knox Polk's receipts enclosed.

1. Thomas presumably refers to a local tax in Columbia. Tennessee's constitution of 1834 and subsequent state legislation authorized incorporated towns to levy "taxes . . . for corporation purposes." Neither Tennessee nor the United States levied a tax on corporate or private income before the Civil War.

2. Thomas enclosed Jane Knox Polk's receipts of March 29 and May 6, 1847, for her legacy from Samuel W. Polk. DsS in Thomas's hand. DLC–JKP.

3. Samuel P. Walker. Thomas enclosed his bill of June 2 drawn on Polk for \$205.62, endorsed by Cole & Howard. ADS and E. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE to the bill: "in payment of my note for \$144. and order for \$30. and interest on both . . . Paid June 14th 1847."

4. Abraham G. Cole and George W. Howard of Baltimore ran the dry goods business of Cole & Howard from the 1830s until the 1850s, when Abraham's son took his place.

5. Enclosure not found.

6. William J. Sykes.

7. Hardin and Wayne Counties, Tenn.

FROM ANONYMOUS

Dear Sir

N York June 3d 1847

As I write to inform you & not to make personal quarrels, I omit to sign my name but as our Presid. & I a Citisen feel in duty bound to give such information as I have, not from loose report, but from positive authority & may induce immediate enquiry & you will find all I wrote are facts. I am sorry to say that our chargé M[r.] Elsworth¹ in Stockholm, who I do not know & have no predilection for or against further than we must all have a pride in being well represented & an old respectable

family, is acting in a very weak & unbecoming manner. He is continually in liquor & his associates are low characters of the opera.² The foreign embassies avoid him, he wastes his money & refuses to pay his Bills for support of his family, his postage to the Government he does not pay, & Govern Post Master Per³ lately said they will not deliver him his next Dispatches, & though considered a man of talents he acts & talks like a low bred idiot. His life sadly mortifies his wife⁴ who wishes him recalled. He borrows money on the meanest pretenses & never pays—even brags publicly that his situation protects him. You will consider this written with the best intentions—no unkind feelings to Mr Ellsworth, but as a faithful Citizen when we get such information I feel it due to the Executive & to my Country to write it, & haveing brought this to yr attention for you to act as in yr Judgmt may seem best . . .

P. NY.

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked New York City, July 1. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 2, 1847.

1. Text inserted to complete probable meaning. Henry W. Ellsworth (1814–64), grandson of eighteenth-century U.S. Supreme Court chief justice Oliver Ellsworth, was a lawyer from Connecticut. He moved to Indiana in 1835 and wrote *Valley of the Upper Wabash, Indiana, with Hints on Its Agricultural Advantages: Plan of a Dwelling, Estimates of Cultivation, and Notices of Labor-saving Machines* (1838). He served as chargé d'affaires to Sweden, 1845–49.

2. During the mid-nineteenth century, comic opera—Italian *opera buffa*, French *opéra comique*—continued to win growing popularity. In contrast to older styles such as *opera seria*, whose settings and characters tended to be of aristocratic origin, comic opera stressed stories and characters grounded in more commonplace, even debased, circumstances. The style's leading exponents from that era included composers Gioacchino Rossini and Gaetano Donizetti.

3. Per Wilhelm Pripp (1791–1870), after stints as an office scribe, clerk, and accountant, became manager of the Stockholm post office's outgoing post section in 1843. He served as postmaster of that section, 1844–70.

4. Mary Elizabeth West (1817?–1869?) of Massachusetts married Henry W. Ellsworth in 1844.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My dear Sir,

90 Eaton Square London June 3, 1847

I am ashamed to write you a letter in haste: but the interruptions from visits are enormous.

The taking of San Juan¹ & the Battle of Cerro Gordo, have changed entirely the complexion of European opinion about Mexico & the United States. The greatness of the results is becoming more & more apparent. Those friendly to America desire to see our rule extended very far: & the

cessions of territory which would have been thought sufficient heretofore, would now seem less considerable. Commerce on the Pacific under our flag is the great result that is anticipated: & for that ports in the Gulf of California & the pass by way of Tehuantepec seem desirable & essential.

No European Government has taken greater interest in our affairs than the Prussian. The king of Prussia² has, from the first, watched events; he obtained from London the earliest information, studies the progress of our arms with Alexander von Humboldt³ for his companion, & I am persuaded, views our progress, as the cause of civilization. Lately at a public meeting where I was present, the Prussian minister⁴ spoke of our coming power on the shores of the Pacific with hope & approbation, in the presence of a *very numerous* & very distinguished gathering. Perhaps I ought to add that the English did not cheer him; but he expressed himself deliberately & decidedly; & does so on all occasions in his intercourse with the ministry⁵; & tells them the results are inevitable, that we are beyond their influence.

It is for these reasons, that I gave to a Prussian officer a letter of introduction to you & to Gov. Marcy.⁶ I hope he can be allowed to repair to the scene of war, with some employment as a volunteer. It will have a good effect in these quarters.

One word more. Mr McGregor,⁷ of the Board of Trade is thoroughly With us on this subject of Mexico, & tells Lord John⁸ & the ministry & the public, that all Mexico (& Guatemala to boot) must one day become ours. He has written a book on America,⁹ which I must buy & send to Mr Buchanan. You will find much of the British writer, but the account of General Jackson is the fairest that has been made in England. He has also in his work taken care to republish & applaud Webster's anti tariff speeches of 1820. Now can you not have a good review or notice of his work inserted in the Union?¹⁰ McGregor is of great service: he is thoroughly free trade, & labors to do away with the Navigation Laws,¹¹ & is at heart friendly to us.

Best regards to Mrs Polk. If she does not write, I shall write again to her to remind her of me.

I think you must be satisfied with the events of your administration.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 19, 1847.

1. Castle of San Juan de Ulúa.

2. Frederick William IV.

3. Trained at Göttingen University, scientist Friedrich Heinrich Alexander, Baron von Humboldt, (1769–1859) conducted research trips to Mexico and

South America, 1799–1803, and to Asiatic Russia, 1829. He wrote or cowrote numerous books on science and culture. Between 1830 and 1845, Prussia's kings sent him on several political missions to Paris.

4. Christian Karl Josias, Chevalier von Bunsen, (1791–1860) was a Prussian philologist, theologian, and historian. He served as secretary of legation to Rome, 1818–27; minister to Rome, 1827–38; ambassador to Switzerland, 1839–41; and ambassador to the United Kingdom, 1841–54.

5. British government officials.

6. Bancroft's letter to Polk and William L. Marcy has not been found; searches for the Prussian officer's identity have yielded no conclusive results.

7. John MacGregor (1797–1857), a Scottish-born statistician and historian, lived for some time in Prince Edward Island, Canada, where he served in the House of Assembly and as high sheriff. After returning to the United Kingdom, he served as a secretary of its Board of Trade from 1840 until he entered Parliament in 1847.

8. Lord John Russell.

9. *The Progress of America, from the Discovery by Columbus to the Year 1846* (1847).

10. *Washington Union*.

11. The Navigation Acts, passed by Parliament between 1650 and 1766, mandated that many goods traded between the British empire and foreign countries or between Great Britain and its colonies be carried on British ships with mostly British crews and be shipped through British ports. Consistent with mercantilist theory, the acts were designed to protect Great Britain from foreign competition and to maximize profits from its colonies. The restrictions became less popular amid growing nineteenth-century support for free trade. Parliament repealed them in 1849 and 1854.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir/

Washington 3 June 1847. 1/2 past 8

Major Williams¹ again reports, "nothing of any consequence by the mails to day except a letter from General Pillow."² I have read this letter. It bears date on the 26th ultimo & states that he would leave the day after on his return to the army at Mexico; but nothing more of any importance.

By this afternoon's mail, I received a letter from Mr. Trist dated at Jalapa on the 21st ultimo. He expresses his fears lest General Scott might refuse to forward my despatch to the Mexican minister for foreign affairs³; but I confess I have no such apprehensions. It is evident he had not seen the General who must have left Jalapa before his arrival. He was to leave the next day (the 22d) with General Twigg's⁴ division for Puebla. He says that a report had reached Jalapa the evening before the date of his letter that Herrera had been elected President of Mexico.⁵ This, if confirmed, will be good news.

I shall send this letter under cover to the Postmaster at Richmond⁶ hoping that it may meet you there: & shall not write again.

JAMES BUCHANAN

P.S. Mr. Graham⁷ has arrived. Mr. Johnson⁸ delivered him his commission. I have not yet seen him.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed “care of the Postmaster at Richmond Virginia.” From Polk’s AE: received June 3, 1847.

1. Hampton C. Williams.

2. Gideon J. Pillow. Letter not found.

3. Manuel Baranda. See letters and notes in Polk to Pillow, May 25, 1847, and James G. M. Ramsey to Polk, June 2, 1847.

4. David E. Twiggs.

5. Formerly an officer in the Spanish army, José Joaquín Herrera (1792–1854) became, during the 1820s, a general among Mexico’s revolutionaries. A moderate, he was several times minister of war before serving as president, 1844, 1844–45, and 1848–51. He was second-in-command of the Mexican forces, under Santa Anna, in 1847. Contrary to the report Trist had heard, Herrera was not elected president in 1847. An election of May 15, in which he was a candidate, was declared invalid because too few Mexican states participated. Pedro María Anaya relinquished the presidency to Santa Anna on May 20.

6. In 1845, Polk appointed Thomas B. Bigger (1795–1880) postmaster at Richmond, Va., a post he subsequently held for over twenty years. A militia officer and a veteran of the War of 1812, he had operated a Richmond exchange and lottery business in the 1830s.

7. Daniel Graham.

8. Cave Johnson.

FROM CHARLES J. FOX¹

Sir Collectors Office Mobile [Ala.]² 3 June 1847

I have been instructed by the Post Master General³ that an express would be run from this place to Montgomery, for the purpose of expediting despatches from the Army, under my directions; and that in the meantime untill the arrangements were completed, all such despatches should be forwarded by the mail. The enclosed⁴ were received this morning by the mail from New Orleans and will proceed by todays mail.

FOR J E SAUNDERS⁵

CHAS. J. FOX

[P.S.] Mr Saunders being absent on duty connected with the Light House Department I respectfully submit the above. C.J.F

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 9, 1847.

1. Fox (c. 1812–1850s?), a Virginia native, served as an inspector at Mobile, Ala., from the 1830s to the 1850s. In 1847, he also served as deputy collector there.

2. State identified through content analysis.

3. Cave Johnson.

4. Enclosures may have included Anonymous to Polk, May 1, 1847.

5. James E. Saunders.

FROM ANONYMOUS

His Excellency Mr Polk.

[New York City]¹ June 5th [1847]²

I have never written to you but with an honest intent, & I think you will admit, with good sense. My Education, my Experience & my position authorise me to claim attention. I will make myself known to you someday at the White House.

We must have Peace. Our situation at home requires it, & our foreign relations, will soon become Embarrassed if delayed. Dont be anxious for too much Territory at *present*. Get what is indispensable *now*. Leave the rest to time. In 20 years we may want more of Mexico. Our Situation then, will Enables us to get all we want on a mere hint with money or *loan*. *Remember this*. In the English Dispute,³ I held this same doctrine. In 25 years, we can Have any part of Canada we Please. Make a Peace, or there will be a total change of Parties in the U States, and there will be a storm that will over throw, all the present politicians. I see it coming. Be Brief for so the Enforcement of the times *require*.

Get Enough of California, to reserve a port, a harbour & right of way from Independence⁴ to the sea. Thats all we want now. The Saxon race settling in California & Texas will, render war unnecessay. Be Brief, make Peace & get the credit of it, & you have no time to lose—or others will do it for you & claim the credit.

W P.

[P.S.] There is trouble brewing in Brazil. Send off all the vessels you can to Rio, & at once, or you will surely have a Brazillian war on your hands.⁵ I have information thence on which I can rely. The Priests in Brazil are all hostile to the *Yankos* & urge the Emperor⁶ to hoslitley in the name of Christ & the virgin. This is sympathy for the church in Mexico. Remember this hint. In 4 months, what I tell you will be confirmed. WP.

[P.S.] The People in Rio at Bahia Montevideo & Isla Grande,⁷ are ripe for war with the Yankees. The Priests are at the bottom of this movement. In Columbia, Gautamala & in the Banda oriental, a Bad feeling is against the U States is created by the Catholic Priests, all bottomed in the Mexican war.⁸

I warn you in time. If Mr Wise⁹ has not so informed you he has been deceived. The captains of vessels from Montevideo & Rio lately arrived here, make no Secret of their opinions. All go to confirm this view, of the State of feeling in Brazil.

ALI. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received June 11, 1847; "This man has written some very sensible anonymous letters from time to time" (see Anonymous to Polk, September 21, 1846).

1. Place identified from postmark.

2. Year identified through content analysis.

3. The author refers to the debate between the United States and the United Kingdom over the Oregon Country, resolved by treaty in 1846.

4. Reference is probably to Independence, Mo., among several locales considered the eastern terminus for the Santa Fe Trail and for what became known as the Oregon Trail. See also letter and notes in Charles Ferguson to Polk, July 8, 1847.

5. Relations between the United States and Brazil, soured by events of 1846 involving Minister Henry A. Wise, remained poor owing to Polk's refusal to repudiate and recall Wise (see letters and notes in George Bancroft to Polk, February 3, 1847, and John Y. Mason to Polk, February 13, 1847). On May 3, 1847, Brazil's emperor recalled its minister to the United States. Some American newspapers, including the oft-quoted *New York Journal of Commerce* of June 9, discussed the possibility of a war with Brazil. Relations between the countries, however, greatly improved after new minister David Tod arrived in Rio de Janeiro in August.

6. Pedro II (1825–91), Brazil's second and last constitutional emperor, reigned from 1831 to 1889.

7. The author probably refers to the Brazilian island of Ilha Grande.

8. No rift developed between the United States and these countries. In 1846, the United States signed the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty with Colombia, then called New Granada. It eliminated tariff discrimination against American goods and gave the United States the right of transit across the Isthmus of Panama, a likely site for a canal. The Senate did not ratify the measure until 1848. U.S. chargé d'affaires Benjamin A. Bidlack observed that the people of New Granada initially had opposed American action in Mexico; but by the end of 1846, he noted, they seemed more likely to side with the United States in a war than against it. Newspapers reported, in March 1847, a proposal by Senator Pierre Soulé for the United States to help Mexico acquire all of Central America, including Guatemala, in exchange for land concessions in northern Mexico. Such an offer, however, was never made. The Banda Oriental, formerly part of Brazil, in

the 1820s became the new nation of Uruguay. From 1839 to 1851, it fought a war with Argentina; the United Kingdom and France intervened in that conflict, but the United States did not.

9. Henry A. Wise.

FROM ANONYMOUS

[St. Francisville, La. c. June 7, 1847]¹

You will have to answer in the day of Judgment. A third rate lawyer is not competent to preside over the Duties of these U States.

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received June 1847 (day obliterated, hole; Whitthorne served as Polk's private secretary June 12–20).

1. Place identified from postmark; approximate date identified from postmark and Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir,

New Orleans June 7 1847

I arrived in this city last night, & am this morning in receipt of your communication by Mr Trist,¹ and also your esteemed confidential favour of the 26th ultimo.² I left home on the day after I wrote you,³ & have made my way here as rapidly as I could by steam do so.

I regret exceedingly the *difficulties*, & *want of Harmony* in action, referred to in yours of the 26th ultimo, though my surprise is far less than my sorrow. On several occasions Before I left the army Genl. Scott made use of expressions in his conversations with me which satisfied me that he was very much *unsatisfied* & *irritated* by your action & communication as *connected* with the Lieut. General hope⁴ & I hop[e]⁵ that his *irritation* of feeling, does not *originate*, (though it may have been aggravated some what) in the authority given Mr. Trist. I was not taken by surprise at the intelligence communicated in your letter of the 26th ultimo. I shall leave the city by the steamer "Fashion,"⁶ which Col Hunt⁷ says can properly leave on the morning of the day after tomorrow. I will go as rapidly as possible to the Head Quarters of the army.⁸

I need scarcely say that all I can do, shall be done, to place your views & conduct & feelings in regard to this matter in its proper light before Genl. Scott & to produce Harmonious action with the commissioner Mr Trist, shall be done. I trust you know my Devotion to yourself & your wishes and feelings, (independent of the duty to my country) which is in this case, *as in all others identical* with my duty to the country,

well enough to understand that no effort on my part will be spared to bring about this result. But I confess that I have *fears*, & *strong ones* for the success of my efforts, knowing as I do the state of his feeling, & apprehending as I do, that before I reach the army, he⁹ will have taken his position publicly and most probably have *avowed it* so as to commit himself one way or the other.

It is possible that if he has, I may be able to satisfy him that he has misapprehended your views & feelings, & that he has nothing to gain by a cause which must result in a sacrifice of the public good, as well as in an open rupture with the Govt. I trust I shall be able to satisfy him upon this subject and to accomplish your wishes. If it be possible it shall be done.

At Memphis, on my way to this city, I met with a communication, signed by Genl. Haskell & some other officers of the 2nd Tennessee Regt. addressed to the public, and gotten up in this city, in which my conduct is greatly misrepresented, in the Battle of Cerro Gordo.¹⁰ I was not a little surprized at this *gratuitous* assault upon my character, and at first could not understand the *influence* which had produced so unprovoked & unjust an assault upon my reputation as a military man.

Upon my arrival in this city, the secret is revealed by my friends here. I learn from them that Col Haskell, and Bailie Peyton,¹¹ & the Editor of the Picayune,¹² & some other prominent [& pedler]¹³ partizans Whigs here have the secret conclave several days *concocting the assault*, and that cart loads of the papers, containing the assault¹⁴ have been by steam shipped for Distribution in Tennessee, intended to affect the election of Govr. now waxing hot in Tennessee.

I prepared a reply on my way down from Memphis which will make its appearance in the city papers of this week,¹⁵ of which I feel that my friends will have no cause to *feel sore* upon the subject. No assault more unprovoked malignant could scarcely be conceived. You, who have fought this unprincipled party for the last quarter of century, passing successively from private life to the most exalted station which a great & free nation can confer, know its *tricks*, its *winding & shiftiness* well enough to understand why, & though never engaged in political life & though I have submitted to greater sacrifice of personal comfort & private interests than perhaps any man in the army, & though exposing my life on all occasions and exposing myself to great privations and hardship[s]¹⁶ *you* I say, may understand why I am singled out as a *villain* [to]¹⁷ the malicious assaults of this party. I am proud to be your warm & *devoted personal & political friend* & to possess your *confidence*. It was this which with *Peytons intrigue*, left me at Camargo,

to live or die on that [. . .] & stripped me of my command. It is this, which will end the assaults upon me upon my promotion as Major-General. It is this, now that my reputation & character has placed me prominently before the country (for my conduct in the recent Battle¹⁸ in which I have had a prominent part, wit[h]¹⁹ the assault had stifled the abuse of the Whig press[])²⁰ that induces the Whigs of this city to use Haskell (& these officers) to make an assault upon me as groundless as it is *imbecile* and *malignant*. You will see my reply to *the article*. It is deemed proper by our friends here to make a reply for though the whole intrigue is here well understood and the affair is harmless for this market, yet may do us damage in Tennessee and elsewhere if not promptly met & exposed.

I received with your letters, one from Knox²¹ upon the subject of Genl. Scott's irritation with the appointment of Trist, in substance the same as your own. Please say to him that I received it & thank him for it kindly. I would write him, but my time here is so short & my engagements so pressing, that I have not a moment of time to spare. Be good enough to request Knox for me, to see that this *reply of mine* to Haskell's assaults is inserted in the "*Union*"²² or I fear the Whig press will seize hold of it with eagerness and avidity & spread it as extensively in the nation as it is possible to do.

You will see from the news from the army that we shall most probably have another battle before we reach the capital. I shall move forward with all possible dispatch to get there in time to participate in it. Upon my arrival I will place myself in full & free communion with Mr. Trist & Genl. Scott and advise you by every opportunity of the state of *feeling existing* there & of the prospect of affecting a treaty &c.

GID J. PILLOW

P.S. I have just had an interview with Blanchard²³ whom you have recently appointed a major of the 12th Regt of Infantry. Though again called upon by this commission in the line to soon to leave his interesting family after so long a service which I know is indeed most trying, he has resolved from a sense of duty to the Govt. to accept the appointment. But his appointment fixes his rank in as he tells me, to commence from 27th May, which makes him the Junior Major of the whole 20 of recent appointments. He is a military Man by education & habits & turn of mind & is a superior officer and a man of Talents & looks to the question of rank and the prospects of promotion with great interest, & as I place a high estimate upon his services in my command & think him greatly superior to many Colonels in the service, if you can without

impropriety assign him to rank, (as I understand by the 10 Regt. Law you can) equal to his superior qualifications & strong claims I shall be gratified that you would do so. Gid. J. Pillow

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private & Confidential*.” From Polk’s AE: received June 14, 1847.

1. Polk to Pillow, April 14, 1847, and Polk to Pillow, April 15, 1847.

2. Letter not found.

3. Letter not found.

4. Pillow likely refers to Scott’s ongoing irritation at Polk’s recent and unsuccessful effort to appoint Thomas H. Benton to a lieutenant generalship, a commission with which Benton would have outranked Scott. See also letters and notes in Andrew Lane to Polk, January 1, 1847, and Benton to Polk, March 6, 1847.

5. Letter either absent or faded.

6. The army purchased the *Fashion*, previously a privately owned mail steamer, in November 1846 to carry troops to Mexico.

7. Thomas F. Hunt (1793?–1856) of North Carolina had served in the army almost continuously since the War of 1812. He was appointed lieutenant colonel and deputy quartermaster general in 1839. He was given the brevet rank of colonel in 1848 and that permanent rank three years later.

8. Scott had established his headquarters at Puebla, Mexico, in late May.

9. The antecedent of “his” and “he” is unclear, either Trist or Scott. But, given this letter’s subsequent reference to fears of the subject’s taking “his position publicly,” the volatile Scott, rather than the secret agent Trist, is the likely subject of this digression.

10. Pillow refers to William T. Haskell, who held the rank of colonel but was called “General” by courtesy. Though the Battle of Cerro Gordo, in April 1847, resulted in a U.S. victory, both Democrat Pillow and Whig Haskell soon faced criticism for perceived shortcomings in their leadership during the engagement. The controversy led to the public exchange that Pillow discusses in this letter. Haskell, after his return from Mexico, won sufficient vindication to be elected to a seat in the U.S. House later that year, representing West Tennessee.

11. Balie Peyton (1803–78), a Gallatin, Tenn., lawyer, served in the U.S. House, 1833–37, then moved to New Orleans and served as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana, 1837–41. He served as an aide-de-camp on Gen. William J. Worth’s staff during the Mexican War. Originally a Democrat, Peyton became a Whig during his time in Congress.

12. The New Orleans *Picayune*’s coeditors were George W. Kendall, who was reporting in Mexico throughout the war, and Francis A. Lumsden, to whom Pillow probably refers. Born in North Carolina, Lumsden (c. 1808–1860) worked at the Washington *National Intelligencer* before founding the *Picayune* with Kendall in 1837. He remained with that paper until his death. He went to Mexico in 1846 as captain of a Georgia company called the Gaines Rangers. It soon disbanded, but Lumsden returned to Mexico to cover the assaults on Tampico and Veracruz early in 1847.

13. Word or words uncertain.

14. The *Daily Picayune* of May 29, 1847, published a statement signed by Haskell and sixteen other officers of the Second Tennessee Volunteer Regiment, part of Pillow's brigade at Cerro Gordo. It asserted Pillow's error in ordering a failed assault there and refuted reports that Pillow had led the assault. An accompanying editorial praised the regiment's gallantry, endorsed the officers' assertions, and implied that Pillow had exaggerated the severity of his wound.

15. Pillow's response, dated June 7, appeared in the New Orleans *Daily Delta* of June 8 and the *Daily Picayune* of June 9. Pillow challenged the accuracy of the officers' account of the battle and defended his order for an assault. He claimed that Haskell had admitted to authoring the statement alone, questioned Haskell's competency, described Haskell as "my personal and political enemy," and reproached Haskell for leaving the field during the battle.

16. Letter either absent or obscured by tape.

17. Word here and below uncertain or illegible.

18. Battle of Cerro Gordo.

19. Letter uncertain, obscured by tape.

20. Closing parenthesis missing.

21. Joseph Knox Walker to Pillow, May 26, 1847. ALS. DLC-JKP.

22. Enclosure, if any, not found. Both the officers' statement from the *Picayune* and Pillow's response from the *Delta* appeared in the *Washington Daily Union*, June 18, 1847.

23. Massachusetts native Albert G. Blanchard (1810–91), a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, served in the army, 1829–40, then became a New Orleans merchant and director of the public schools there, 1843–45. A captain in the Mexican War, May 1846–May 1847, Blanchard was appointed by Polk to the majority rank that Pillow mentions on May 27, 1847. After his discharge in July 1848, he returned to teaching in New Orleans. He served as a brigadier general in the Confederate army during the Civil War.

FROM GEORGE W. ROSS¹

Sir

Ross, Tenn June 7th 1847

After my best respects, I take the pleasure of writing you a few lines. We arrived at home last week from our tour to Mexico, our company in good health, & spirits. It was not until we reache Tennessee that we knowed our friends particularly the opposite party was heaping abuses upon us, & the war not directly but indirectly. (the Administration) I have always bin a whig and voted against you, from my training, but I now see my folly that partisans will even give aid & comfort to the enemy & try to discourage noble hearted fellows from going to fight the battles of their country just to gratify their own thirst for power. It will be one of the best things they can bring up in Govenor Browns² favor, which will elevate him again to that station he so richly deserves. For

every volunteer nearly to a man will go for him their best, for his goodness towards them. I ask[ed]³ him if their was any office now vacant, that he could aid me in geting he said he did not know but would gave me a letter to your excellency,⁴ and if their was he would try and procure it for me, as I had served out my twelve months, as a volunteer, and wanted to go back again. I notice the volunteers [are]⁵ all allowed 160 Acres of land.⁶ They talk of going to Texas (San patritio) or to Wisconsin territory as at either place the Govenor said most likely their would be a land office opened and if so I could likely get the appointment, if so or their is any other appointment vacant, on the frontier or the Army, I shall ever feel grateful to you if you will confer the honor to me, & shall ever remain

GEORGE W. ROSS

[P.S.] Pleas answer as soon as convenient.

Refer to A R Crozier, Julius Blackwell, or to Govr. Brown.⁷

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received June 18, 1847; "was a whig himself but *repents*."

1. Ross (1824–91), of Ross, Anderson County, Tenn., served in a Tennessee regiment in the Mexican War and by 1850 had become a McMinn County merchant. He was an alumnus of East Tennessee University in Knoxville.

2. Aaron V. Brown.

3. Letters either absent or faded.

4. Letter, if any, not found.

5. Word uncertain, faded ink.

6. The Ten Regiment Bill granted to each soldier in the Mexican War 160 acres of land or one hundred dollars in Treasury scrip if he served at least a twelve-month term, or forty acres or twenty-five dollars in scrip if he served a shorter term.

7. Ross wrote his postscript to the left of his signature. References are to Arthur R. Crozier, Julius W. Blackwell, and Aaron V. Brown. Crozier (1809 or 1810–1899), an East Tennessee Democrat, served as editor and publisher of the Knoxville *Standard*, 1844–47; as U.S. marshal for the Eastern District of Tennessee, 1845–50; and as Tennessee's comptroller of the Treasury, 1851–55. Blackwell (c. 1797–1867) was a native of Virginia and a farmer in Athens, Tenn. He represented a Tennessee district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1839–41 and 1843–45.

TO JOHN T. LEIGH

My Dear Sir:

Washington City June 8th 1847

I have receivd your letter of the [25th] ultimo,¹ and thank you for the kind attention you have given to my business. I am glad you have,

compromised [on the land] cost with *Mr Rayburn*,² and am satisfied with the terms. Though I have been wholly guiltless in the matter, it was better give him [the . . . *rate*], than to be [beleagared] by a petty law-suit. I hope you may be able to compromise the suit for the 40. acres, which [was] pending. *Mr Rayburn* in his letter which you enclosed to me, states as his reason for not compromising this was, that "several other holders of lands purchased at tax sales, who are anxious to have the question, as to title settled," had "agreed to assist his accompanying counsel to prosecute the case," and that consequently "he could not with justice to all parties" or himself "withdraw this suit," as he would have "a lawyer's fee to pay," and "the question, would yet remain unsettled." Now [. . .] *Mr Rayburn* for any costs or liabilities he may have incurred, and in addition to pay him at the same rate you would have done, in the compromise for the 80. acres. The Lawyer's fee for the services already performed would probably be inconsiderable. *Mr Rayburn* and the other parties interested, could thus if they chose, select some other case with resident citizens of Mississippi in which to have the tax laws of the State settled by a legal adjudication. Surely I can have no desire, that, a question of such magnitude should be settled in my person, and that too about a spot of land, that is not worth to any one else but myself, the Government price of \$1.25-acre which was paid for it. It is useful to me, because if I did not own it, the shape of my tract would not be so good, and because the usual pass-way, from my houses to the Gin and a portion of the farm passes through it. Indeed to any one else but me, it is not worth a cent an acre. *Mr Rayburn* I am sure will not desire, to keep me involved in a petty law-suit, in order to test the law in such cases; when he can just as well do so, in a suit against some one else, and for a more valuable property. When *Cl. Campbell*³ called on *Mr Rayburn* to reclaim the land, I suppose he was probably somewhat insulted. I knew nothing of it, until I heard that the suit had been instituted. I much prefer to settle the case by *compromise*, than to pursue the course you indicate. If you make a *compromise*, write to me the amount which you agree to pay, and I will at once remit it to you. Fearing that I might trouble you too much about this matter, I wrote a few days ago to my old friend *James Brown Esqr.* of Oxford, and requested him to call and see you on the subject, and co-operate with you in affecting a settlement.⁴ I desire however that you will proceed and make the *compromise*, if it be practicable, without consultation with him, if he has not called on you when you receive this letter. I will thank you, when you shall see *Mr Mares*⁵ to say to him that he must not fail for the future to return all my property real & personal, that is subject to the payment of taxes, at the time required by law, and not to neglect to pay the same. This was

always my direction to my managers, and the failure to pay the taxes, if it really occurred, was the result of ignorance or accident. Of *Mr Rayburn*, from a slight acquaintance with him,⁶ I had formed a favourable opinion, and I cannot doubt, when you make to him the proposition, which I authorize you to make, that he will accede to it.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Letter and enclosure not found. Bracketed text here and below uncertain or illegible, light ink transfer.

2. John K. Rayburn.

3. Robert Campbell, Jr.

4. Polk to Brown, May 18, 1847.

5. John A. Mairs.

6. Polk probably refers to Davidson M. Rayburn, not plaintiff John K. Rayburn. See Leigh to Polk, July 22, 1847.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

My Dear Sir:

Washington City June 8th 1847

I have received your letter of the 29th ultimo. You inform me that *Mr Bass*¹ declines to receive payment, deducting interest of my last note for the *Grundy*² property, until he can hear from the parties interested. Taking it for granted, from what *Gov. Brown*³ wrote me at the time, that such was the understanding, I made my arrangements [. . .]⁴ anticipate the payment. As I have the money in hand I desire to do so and thereby save the interest. If you shall find that all the parties interested will not receive the money, and deduct the intrest, I wish you to pay such portion of it, as will be received, and draw on me for the amount, as I requested you to do, in my former letter.⁵

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. John M. Bass.

2. Felix Grundy.

3. Aaron V. Brown.

4. Word illegible, incomplete ink transfer.

5. Probably Polk to Stevenson, May 22, 1847.

FROM ISAAC TOUCEY¹

My dear Sir

Hartford Connecticut June 8th 1847

The recent visit of the President to North Carolina has served to excite afresh the wish long entertained by the Republicans of the North, that he wd pay a visit, brief though it might be, to this part of the Union.

There are many reasons why we wd especially press the invitation at the present time. In the midst of an administration conducted with the most brilliant success both at home & abroad, we shd like to point you to some practical results in this quarter. To say nothing of considerations of personal acquaintance & friendship, or political sympathy & attachment, we wish you to behold with your own eyes the ruin & desolation supposed to follow upon the patriotic vindication of national rights & the introduction of enlarged & liberal views into the domestic administration of this country.²

We can readily appreciate the difficulties attending your absence from the Seat of Government; but the facilities of rapid travelling are so great, & the necessity of a little unbending from the cares of State so indispensable, that we flatter ourselves you will accede to the unanimous wishes of your friends. Allow me to speak for myself individually as well as for others, & to promise you as warm a reception as was ever accorded to any Chief Magistrate.

ISAAC TOUCEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 13, 1847; answered June 19, 1847. Published in *NU*, p. 104.

1. Hartford lawyer Toucey (1792–1869) served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1835–39; as Connecticut governor, 1846–47; as U.S. attorney general under Polk, 1848–49; in the U.S. Senate, 1852–57; and as secretary of the navy under President Buchanan, 1857–61.

2. Toucey probably refers to New England's prosperity in spite of Whigs' claims that Polk's domestic and foreign policies would create a national depression. The New Haven (Conn.) *Palladium*, a Whig newspaper, predicted on September 1, 1846, that 15–20 percent of workers would lose their jobs in the latter half of 1846 and that half of all factories would close by March 1, 1847. Democratic papers in 1847 ridiculed that erroneous forecast.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir,

New Orleans June 9th 1847

I shall leave this city in a few minutes. I was detained one day longer than I expected by the failure of the Quarter master's Department to have the Fashion¹ ready for the sea. I wrote you a few days since acknowledging the reception of naval letters,² & I now acknowledge the reception of your favour of 25th ultimo which was addressed me at Columbia. The anxiety you feel that I would be at the Head of my Command is one which does your own *heart* as a Patriot *honor* & appreciating it as I do, I did not hesitate to tear myself from my Dear wife & children,³ leaving them with a *bleeding heart* & *disconsolate* to meet your wishes and to obey the call of my country.

The difficulty of which you speak in your letter between Trist & Genl. Scott is now here known. It has come to the public through Paymaster Bell⁴ who has just arrived in this city from Halapa.⁵ I do not know Bells *feelings*, but he says, I understand, that Trist did not go to see or call upon Genl. Scott for a week after he reached Jalapa, and that up to the time of his departure, Trist had not communicated to Genl. Scott his *instructions* & the views of the Govt. & that Genl. Scott had refused him an escort to the city of Mexico &c.

I do not rely with confidence upon these reports but it is certain that there is no *harmony* of feeling or actions between these Gentlemen, & I much fear the *Breach* will be *too wide* when I reach there, to be healed by any agency or influence which I can exercise. I much incline to think that there will in 2 or 3 weeks, be a general attack made upon you by the Whig press of the country because you did not invest Genl. Scott with *Diplomatic* powers, or at least associate him with Trist. Such I think, has been the practice of the English Gvt.⁶ and you will find that *these* Gentlemen in this, as in *all else* are *monarchists*. It seems to me that Trist has not understood Genl. Scott's character.

Certainly the public good must suffer in any such collisions—nothing can be expected to result from this want of harmony but to defeat your wishes & expectations, & I fear Trist's pride of character has induced him to hold himself too much aloof from Genl. Scott.

However this may be, you may rely upon my best efforts to conciliate them, & to bring about a proper understanding between the parties. If I find, when I reach the Head Quarters of the army,⁷ that there is a feeling in the Mexican Govt. at all favourable to peace, and these men, should obstinately refuse to *work together*, and thereby the public interests of the two Govts. is likely to be jeopardized, I will immediately advise you of the results & make such *remedial* suggestions as the public good of the nation may require.

Having been detained here one day longer than I expected, I have had the pleasure of witnessing the most complete revolution in public sentiment in regard to myself. Haskell's⁸ assault upon me was wholly unprovoked, & though it made statements which unexplained would have been prejudicial to my reputation, yet I have so completely turned the *tables upon him* as to have *floored him*, & left him not one inch of ground to stand upon. His own friends admit that he is so *badly used* up, that his military reputation, if any he had, is completely gone. Our new Orleans friends, have all rallied around me, evincing a degree of *devotion* and warmth of friendship for me which nothing could have produced but these malicious assaults of the party enemy. If the Whigs don't mind & manage their attacks with more prudence, they will make me of some consequence & give me some charact[er].⁹

Indeed I have never had manifestations of feeling so strong in my life as I have received here. You will see that even the Whig papers, have published my *Defence*,¹⁰ & the universal sentiment of this community is that Haskell is a *disgraced man*, that he has not one inch of ground left to stand upon.

I will write you again as soon as I can reach the Head Quarters of the army.

I leave now in a few minutes. My room is full of my friends & I regret that I cannot say any thing more satisfactory in regard the movements in the *Interior*.

GID. J. PILLOW

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

1. The steamer *Fashion*.

2. Pillow to Polk, June 7, 1847.

3. Mary Elizabeth Martin (1812–69), daughter of Maury County, Tenn., circuit court clerk George M. Martin, married Gideon J. Pillow in 1831. They had six children at the time of this letter, all of them born in Tennessee: Gideon J., Jr., (c. 1836–1859), Mary A. (1837 or 1838–1910s?), George M. (1839–72), Narcissa C. (1841–1900s?), Martha E. (c. 1843–?), and Margaret A. (c. 1845–?).

4. Born in Rhode Island, Lloyd J. Beall (1808–87) of Maryland had served in the army since graduating from the U.S. Military Academy in 1830. Promoted to major and paymaster in 1844, he resigned in 1861 to become colonel and commandant of the Confederate Marine Corps.

5. Jalapa, Mexico.

6. The United Kingdom had invested some generals, including Sir William Howe and Sir Henry Clinton during the U.S. Revolutionary War, with diplomatic powers. In the 1780s Warren Hastings, governor-general of India, created the Secret and Political Department, a government unit responsible for both military planning and diplomacy within India and between India and foreign nations; in 1843 that unit was renamed the Foreign Department.

7. Puebla, Mexico.

8. William T. Haskell.

9. Letters uncertain, obscured by tape.

10. The New Orleans *Picayune*, which printed Pillow's response on June 9, at this time leaned toward the Whigs.

FROM ALFRED BLACKMAN ET AL.¹

New Haven, Connecticut June 10th 1847

Having learned with unfeigned pleasure, that it is the design of the President of the United States to visit some of the Northern Cities of the Union, the undersigned would express to him their earnest desire that

he will direct his tour into the State of Connecticut and, particularly, to the City of New Haven.

There are thousands of his fellow countrymen we can assure him, who will rejoice at the opportunity for extending to him an openhanded and cordial welcome upon the soil of Connecticut, and we cannot but think that an inspection of the prosperity and content which now pervades our State, in common with all New England, will have a peculiar gratification for himself.

We beg leave to urge this upon the consideration of the President and to request that we may be advised, should his determination accord with the wishes of, . . .

ALFRED BLACKMAN

NS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 15, 1847; answered June 19, 1847. Joseph Knox Walker answered on June 19 that Polk would travel through New Haven and Hartford and, if possible, would "spend a few hours with his fellow citizens" in both cities. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

1. Letter signed by Blackman and five others. A Connecticut-born lawyer, Blackman (1807-80) had lived in New Haven since 1843. Elected to the state senate in 1842, he served briefly before becoming probate judge for Waterbury, 1842-44, and probate judge for New Haven, 1843-44.

FROM CHARLES F. FLETCHER¹

Mr President,

Kalorama [D.C.] June 11. 1847

While many letter writers are writing at you & sending their letters to the public prints, I have thought proper occasionally to put my thoughts on paper & send them to you.

I look abroad now & see every where through the length & breadth of this great nation a greater degree of prosperity than we have attained to at any former period and the prosperity of a nation is generally an [image]² of the wisdom of its rulers. I look beyond our borders & I look at the Mexican war, conducted in the right manner & with decision & with energy with action, prompt & immediate action. The result must be left to heaven. He who numbers every hair of our heads & suffers not even a sparrow to fall to the ground without His notice³ cant, be unmindful of the marching of armies and the overthrow of kingdoms. For some great good to the human race undoubtedly these events have been brought about, but 'tis not given to mortal man to know the why & the wherefore rather only to do his duty & then admire & wonder at the wonderful works of God.

Mr President

I took up my pen to write on city affairs & give your Excellency information of a projected rail way through the city not that I desire any immediate action on your part but the law has made the chief Magistrate in some things head of the district.⁴ Therefore he ought to know if work is contemplated to be done within the district.

The Baltimore rail road⁵ crosses Massachusetts avenue at east first Street & from thence it is proposed to make a rail road through Massachusetts Avenue to 21st and P. streets, thence through P. street to rock creek crossing the creek just above the present bridge near the old paper Mill passing over the county road by a viaduct. Entering George town it will pass along west Street continuing across third street to the catholic grounds, thence turning a circle at nearly right angle it will cross a bridge to be built upon the top of the aquaduct over the river thence proceed in the most direct course to Alexandria.

The distance may be about ten miles and the expense \$200,000. & to be called the washington George town & Alexandria rail road company,⁶ & from Alexandria to Aquia Creek is about thirty miles where terminates the Fredericks burg rail road.⁷ This connection of thirty miles will probably be completed in a few years thus forming another connecting link between Washington and New Orleans.

The grand depot in the city will be on the open space at the intersection of 21st & P. Streets & Massachusetts avenue, from whence a rail road will continue up the Avenue crossing rock creek near Mr Lyons Mill dam⁸ thence passing up a ravine will intersect the Frederick town road near the poor house in George town—from thence to the intersection of the Baltimore & Ohio rail road near Frederick town & is about thirty miles.

This connecting link will also be made in a few years. Thus the capital of the United states will become the great center of a chain of rail roads extending east to the Utmost bounds of Maine, North west to the great lakes & canada & finally perhaps to the Pacific Ocean, South west across the Mighty alliganyes thence crossing the Ohio river & meeting the Mississippi at St. Louis, continuing perhaps across the Praires to Santa Fe, & thence to the gulf of California.

Southerly along the Atlantic coast to Florida Hence across the peninsula to Pensacola and along the gulf of Mexico to New Orleans & perhaps finally to Vera cruz & Huatsacualco⁹ connecting with the rail road across the isthmas.¹⁰

The mind is lost in wonder & admiration at the extent of improvement that this country is destined to undergo much of which will be done before this generation passes away.

It will be matter of history that yr Excellency had a large share in promotion of these improvets.

CHAS FLETCHER

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed locally. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received June 14, 1847; "Chas P. Fletcher . . . presumed to be an incog *name*." Whitthorne was mistaken in both the middle initial and the presumption of a pseudonym.

1. Fletcher (c. 1795–1860s?), a native of Massachusetts and former resident of New York, moved to Kalorama, D.C., after his son-in-law purchased that estate in 1846. A farmer, he petitioned Congress in 1845 for the right to operate a mail line to the Pacific. After this letter, he continued to advocate the building of new railroads around Washington City.

2. Word uncertain.

3. Reference to Matthew 1:28–29: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father./But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

4. The Constitution gives Congress governing authority over the District of Columbia. When it created the District's government in 1801, however, Congress authorized the president to appoint justices of the peace who together formed a board of commissioners in each of the District's two counties. "An Act concerning the District of Columbia" and "An Act supplementary to the act intituled 'An act concerning the District of Columbia.'" *SL*, 6th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapters 15 and 24. After 1847, when Alexandria County returned to Virginia's jurisdiction, only Washington County remained in the District.

5. Intended to link the Atlantic Ocean to the Ohio River, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was chartered in 1827. Construction began in 1828 and in 1842 the Railroad reached from Baltimore to Cumberland, Md., which remained its western terminus in 1847. The Washington Branch, linking Baltimore to Washington City, was chartered and begun in 1833 and opened in 1835.

6. No such company was formed, or such railroad constructed, at this time. The Alexandria and Washington Railroad Company was incorporated in 1854 and service between those two cities began in 1856.

7. The Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad was chartered in 1834 and completed in 1842. It stretched from Richmond, Va., to Aquia Creek, on the Potomac River. Steamboat service connected Aquia Creek to Washington City and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

8. Fletcher refers to the dam by a flour mill that was purchased by John Lyons and three others in 1811. Lyons (1780 or 1781–1854), a native of Delaware, built a house near the mill and operated it until at least 1850.

9. Coatzacoalcos, Mexico.

10. Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

TO ROBERT ARMSTRONG

My Dear Sir:

Washington City June 13th 1847

I have received your letter of the 19th ultimo,¹ brought out by the last steamer. Seeing the course which the war with *Mexico* has taken, and that it has been protracted much longer than was anticipated at its commencement, I now regret that you had not been placed in a position to participate in it, especially as you desired to do so.² Early after hostilities broke out between the two countries I expressed to you the opinion, which I then entertained, that the war would probably be of short duration, and that but little glory, could be acquired in it.³ Upon these grounds as your sincere friend I advised you not to relinquish your present eligible position, for the purpose of embarking in it. In my views as expressed to you at that time, you seemed to acquiesce. When I wrote you on the 28th of April, I had a great desire, still to gratify your wishes, if I could do so, with propriety; I then supposed I could. On the 13th ultimo, I wrote you again, and suppose you have received that letter, frankly and as an old friend, stating to you the embarrassments which surrounded me, in reference to the command which I had hoped to be able to confer on you, as communicated to you in my letter of the 28th of April. Shortly after I wrote you my last letter of the 13th of May the public sentiment of the *army*, and of the *country*, became so strong in favour of *Col. Jefferson Davis*, that to have failed to respond to it would probably have produced, the most disastrous consequences. Ours is a government of public opinion, and I felt myself constrained to yield to it, and I accordingly appointed *Col. Davis* to the vacant *Brigadier Generalship*. The public opinion throughout the country is, that *Col. Davis* and his noble Regiment from Mississippi saved the battle of *Buena Vista*. So strong was the popular feeling in Mississippi, that I have reason to believe, that the political character of the State, would have been changed, at least for a time, if *Col. Davis* had not been appointed. Since his appointment there is a general rejoicing in that quarter. *Col. Davis* is a graduate of West Point, is a scientific and most gallant officer, & richly merits the promotion he has received. I state these facts to you frankly, in explanation of the controlling considerations which have induced my action on the subject since I first wrote to you. I think you are entirely right not to desire to enter the army, at this period of the war, when the fighting is probably all over, unless, it may be of the guerrilla kind. I have no expectation that any other general battle will be fought. *Jalappa*, *Perote* & *Puebla* are now in our possession, and there is every probability that the City of *Mexico*

will surrender to our army without resistance. How long the stubborn race with which we are at War, will continue to reject our [exertions]⁴ of peace, I have no means of Judging. One *commissioner*,⁵ vested with full diplomatic powers, was with the Head Quarters of the army, on the 21st ultimo,⁶ but up to that time had held no communication with the Mexican authorities.

I have recently made a short visit to the University of N. Carolina. The reception given me every where on the route, and at the University was very cordial. Not a single unpleasant incident occurred, but on the contrary every thing was done to make my visit pleasant and agreeable.

Your daughter *Little Rachel*⁷ visits us very often and calls *Mrs. Polk, aunt*, as affectionately and familiarly, as if she had been raised in our family. She spent from last saturday evening until monday morning with us. She is very well, has grown very much since you saw her, and I think is progressing finely in her studies. *Mrs. Polk* takes as much interest in her, as if she were her own daughter.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Liverpool, England, and marked “(Unofficial & Private).”

1. Letter not found.
2. Armstrong to Polk, November 4, 1846; Armstrong to Polk, November 14, 1846; Armstrong to Polk, January 4, 1847.
3. Polk probably refers to a conversation during one of Armstrong's three visits to Washington City in August, September, and October 1846.
4. Word uncertain, blurred ink transfer.
5. Nicholas P. Trist.
6. Jalapa, Mexico.
7. Rachel H. Armstrong.

FROM JOHN M. BASS AND JACOB MCGAVOCK¹

Nashville June 14 1847

\$6770 17/100.

Receivd of His Excellcy Jas K Polk by the hands of V K Stevenson Esq² six thousand seven hundred & seventy 17/100 dollars being payment in advance & in full (intrest off) of seven thousand dollars due on the 1 Jany next for purchase of the residence of the late Judge Grundy³ made of us as Exe[cu]ter[s]⁴ of mr Polk & ratified by Mr [. .]⁵ of the chancery court of Franklin Ten.

JNO M BASS
JACOB MCGAVOCK

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

1. Letter written by Bass and signed by both.
2. Vernon K. Stevenson.
3. Felix Grundy.
4. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.
5. Name illegible.

FROM EDMUND BURKE

Sir,

Patent Office June 14th 1847

I had the honor to receive your note¹ enclosing the letter of Mr Linam,² and regret to say that I have not on hand *any* kind of wheat, and therefore cannot comply with your request in behalf of Mr Linam. No appropriation was made by Congress for procuring seeds in 1846, and none were obtained. At the last session provision was made for that purpose,³ and, therefore, as soon as the new crops come in, this office will be amply supplied. I will make a memorandum of Mr Linam's request, and when I receive my supply of seeds, I shall take great pleasure in placing in your hands, to be sent to him, samples of all the varieties of wheat which I may be able to obtain.

EDMUND BURKE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Letter not found.
2. John H. Linam to Polk, June 1, 1847.
3. "An Act making Appropriations for the civil and diplomatic Expenses of Government for the Year ending the thirtieth Day of June, one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight, and for other Purposes." *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 47.

FROM HENRY SIMPSON

Dear Sir,

P[hiladel]p[hia].¹ June 14/47

You had better decline visiting the northern and middle states. I think the feeling that exists against you, owing to your Secretary of *state*,² could not be overcome.

HENRY SIMPSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*private*." From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received June 15, 1847.

1. Letters inserted to complete meaning.
2. James Buchanan.

FROM VERNON K. STEVENSON

Nashville, June 14, 1847

Stevenson reports that John M. Bass and Jacob McGavock, having checked with Felix Grundy's heirs, agreed to accept payment for the Grundy property in advance and deduct the interest. So, in accordance with Polk's letter of May 22, Stevenson drew on Polk for \$6,719.80 (\$7,000.00 minus the deducted interest and exchange fee) in favor of Union Bank cashier James Correy,¹ payable after ten days at the Bank of Philadelphia. Stevenson paid before receiving the deed so that Polk could avoid incurring interest. He will have the deed recorded once John Catron writes it "in a few days."

The deed for thirty feet of the property has not been found but Catron foresees no problems with the title. Fogg² affirms that the chancery court's decree regarding the title to the property is "in proper form." Bass says that he may wish to remain in the house next spring while his own house is under construction.

Stevenson recommends John L. Brown for an appointment as a quartermaster or commissary. He expresses dislike for a Mr. Johnson of Charleston, S.C., who asked him to sign a letter of support that hid the fact that Johnson "was a squatter & not a regular resident"; Stevenson signed it only after Johnson added that fact to the letter.³ Stevenson predicts Gov. Aaron V. Brown's reelection by a wider margin than last time.

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

1. Correy (c. 1795–1860s?), cashier of the Pittsburgh branch of the Bank of the United States for most of the 1820s and 1830s, also served as cashier for private banks in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and as a Pittsburgh alderman in 1833. He had become cashier of the Union Bank of Tennessee in Nashville by 1843 and stayed in that post until at least 1860.

2. Francis B. Fogg or Godfrey M. Fogg.

3. Letter, if addressed to Polk, not found.

FROM RICHARD A. TOWNES¹

Sir, Oakachickama. Yalobusha Co. Missi. 14h June 1847

Some time past you wished to dispose of your tract of land in this County. Supposing that you are still willing to dispose of it, I make you the following propositions: I will purchase your farm at a fair price, 1/3 cash next march the balaance in 1 & 2 years from the time of making the 1s payment. I will purchase your farm & stock of every description in same way. I will purchase your farm & stocks & crop of Corn Fodder &c &c. you retaining possession until yr. crop of cotton is secured & subsisting yr hands² & overseer³ from the provisions on the place. Or I will purchase your Farm & everything on it, but Negros, retaining posses-

sion of the Negros until the present crop is secured, or some specified time, next winter, say 1s Jany 1848. I wish to purchase a place near my relations in this county. Yours will suit me, if the price is not too high. The deferred payments I can secure to you satisfactorily. If you are willing to sell, & we can trade, the 1s payment I will be able to make at any time, & if the price suits I can pay the most of it, or, perhaps, all by 1s of March next. If you wish to sell Land Negros & all, & will give a little time with the privilege of paying in cotton at a price corresponding with the price asked for your property, perhaps we can trade, but as I have a force sufficient for the cultivation of yr place I had rather not purchase any more Negros.

An answer to this will much oblige

R. A. TOWNES

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "mail Private" on the cover. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 1, 1847. Walker answered on July 21, 1847, that Polk did not wish to sell. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

1. Born in Virginia, Townes (c. 1815–1860s?) was a Yalobusha County planter. He announced himself a Democratic candidate for Mississippi governor in 1849 but did not mount an extensive campaign.

2. At his death in 1849, Polk owned fifty-six slaves on his Yalobusha County plantation.

3. John A. Mairs.

FROM ANONYMOUS

Sir,

Boston June 15 [1847]¹

Your attention is respectfully requested to an article in the "Boston Daily & Commercial Advertiser,"² in which reference is made to your proposed visit to new-England: and particularly to Boston, should you unfortunately intend to come hither. The nature of the reception you would meet, is in that article with great courtesy, but equal plainness, set forth. And you will not fail in perusing it to be assured, that it expresses fully the sentiments of the most intelligent and influential citizens among us. The people of Boston can never be unmindful of the *exterior respect* due to any chief Magistrate of the nation. But the reception of Mr. Tyler, here, sufficiently showed how well they can distinguish between a *demanded decorum* and an heartfelt respect.³ You will not wisely consult the feelings of the people of Massachusetts or *your own*, in extending your progress to their borders, at the present time.

The unjust and atrocious war, in which you have plunged this country, and for which you are, *personally* responsible before God and man-

kind; the presumptuous and mischievous exercise of pre-rogative, in regard most especially, to the Bill for National Improvements,⁴ are too deeply considered and justly condemned, to permit the people of New-England to extend to you any other than the outward respect, demanded by your station. We have too much respect for ourselves to withhold *that*: We have too much reason to condemn your administration to offer you any more. Be assured, Sir, that you will be ill-advised, should you determine to make experiment of the people of Massachusetts.

Note P.S. For this whole matter of your Veto be pleased to consult the *American Review*, or *Whig Journal* for June 1847 in an able article on *Western Improvements*.⁵

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 18, 1847; "This is no doubt the spleen of an old Federalist." Published in *NU*, pp. 104–5.

1. Year identified through content analysis.

2. Enclosure, if any, not found. The author probably refers to the Boston *Daily Advertiser*. Established in 1813, this was now a Whig newspaper, published and edited by journalist, lawyer, and publisher Nathan Hale. Hale (1784–1863)—a nephew of the Revolutionary War patriot of the same name (1755–76)—had, in 1815, been among the founders of the *North American Review*, one of the republic's first literary magazines and, during its early decades, an outlet, successively, for Federalist, Whig, and Republican party opinion.

3. Pres. John Tyler visited Boston June 16–23, 1843. Large crowds gathered for events that included a parade, a banquet, and speeches by Tyler and Daniel Webster. According to the Whig Boston *Daily Atlas* of June 17, however, those attending the welcoming procession showed only "cold, formal courtesy" for the president, remaining "as silent and demure as if a funeral pageant were passing."

4. The author wrote "† note" above the line to indicate the postscript. The reference is to Polk's veto of the Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1846 and his not having signed a similar bill of 1847.

5. Based in New York City and edited by George H. Colton, the monthly *American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature, Art and Science* was published from 1845 to 1852. The article mentioned, titled "The Memphis Convention and Western Improvements," presents data on Western agriculture and commerce and urges the need for and constitutionality of federal internal improvements in the West. It criticizes Polk's rejection of the Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bills. Observing that the Memphis Convention of South and Western States of November 1845 brought attention to the subject, the article predicts that Chicago's River and Harbor Convention of July 1847 will do so further. It also recommends the establishment of a bureau of the interior to collect data on domestic commerce.

FROM JOHN K. KANE¹

My dear Sir,

Phila., 15 June 1847

Mr. Dallas² tells me you may probably be with your Philadelphia friends on thursday of next week. We shall wait over thursday of this week to see whether the city councils will take charge of your reception, or rather to leave with them the responsibility of omitting it, for they will of course extend to you the same niggard courtesies which they conceded to Gen. Jackson and Mr. Van Buren.³ But on friday we shall meet, and do all that a thorough-going set of friends can do to make your visit to Philadelphia agreeable. If you will let us know exactly at what time you are to leave Baltimore, we will have a deputation to meet you on the way, and if Mrs. Polk consents to accompany you, we will have things properly ordered to welcome her.

J. K. KANE

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*personal*." From Polk's AE: received June 17, 1847.

1. Born in Albany, N.Y., Kane (1795–1858) became a Philadelphia lawyer and politician. A friend of Andrew Jackson, he played key roles in Jackson's war on the Bank of the United States and in Polk's election as president. He served as Pennsylvania attorney general, 1845–46, and as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1846–58.

2. George M. Dallas.

3. Andrew Jackson visited Philadelphia June 8–11, 1833. The city welcomed him with events that included a reception at Independence Hall hosted by the mayor, aldermen, Select and Common Councils, and other municipal officers. Martin Van Buren visited Pennsylvania in 1839 while president and Philadelphia in 1842 and other years, but did not visit Philadelphia while president, as Kane seems to claim.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir,

Vera Cruz [Mexico] June 15th 1847¹

I had a quick passage across the Gulf. I reached this place yesterday. I find about 1700 Troops (being detachments & portions of the different Regts) of my command. Genl. Cadwallader² left here on the 8th Inst with about 1000 Troops (including the 3 companies of 3rd Dragoons), having taken with him every mounted Dragoon here. Capt Dupireu's³ company is still here, but there are no horses with which to mount it. The consequence is that I cannot go forward to the Head Quarter of the army⁴ until I can put that portion of my command now here in motion.

All communications between this place & General Scott (except by very strong forces) is now cut off. A train with a large amount of specie, with an escort of about 700 men [(la⁵ portion of which was mounted), under Col. McIntosh⁶ was attacked this side the national Bridge on the 8th Inst. The enemy captured about 300 or 400 pack mules, plundered & destroyed 40 waggons & killed & carried away their teams, besides a number of other horses & \$1000 in specie, killing & wounding a number of our men.

McIntosh is said to have been drinking and is much censured. How far he is justly censurable I cannot say. Cadwallader marched immediately to his support, & found the national Bridge *barracadoed*, & was attack there & had to force his way through at a loss of killed & wounded of some 30 men & a number of his horses & mules. A report has reached here this day of the capture within 6 miles of this place of 20 pack horses engaged carrying forage to Santa Fe, 10 miles distant, at which place, the heavy sand road ceases. Many of our men are strewed along the road with their throats cut & to day a returning detachment from Cadwalladers command reports 3 men crucified by being nailed to the Tree. These acts of savage brutality evince any other, than a disposition favorable to peace, among the people on the road.

As I cannot possibly go forward until I can get my forces to march, I am straining my nerve to put them in motion. Cadwallader wrote back that my march will be opposed & that I will have to cut my way through the national bridge.

We have next to *no transportation here*. We have a long march, without subsistence on the road, without the means of procuring forage, & without transports to carry any forward.

The Quarter Master Hetzel⁷ is sick, worn down with labour & disabled very much by Drink as every body here says. Every thing is in wrecked confusion and disorder. He has as bands 2000 poor, weak, and broke down mustang horses & wild, poor, small, mules, not worth feeding. The whole lot are not absolutely worth upon an average \$10 round & These feeble & unbroke mules & broke down mustangs, with a few, very few, american horses, constitute our means of Transportation & even they have to be caught by the Mexican Lasso or Larriet & checked down & broke before [the]⁸ mears, such as it is, is ready for the service and then to make the matter still worse, we are compelled to detail teamsters, (4 to a team) of the soldiers to break and drive the teams; and when broke, a team of 5 of such animals will not haul over these sand hills more than 500 pounds & many of them will not absolutely pull the empty waggons. This same degree of negligence and inattention extends to the immense business of the whole quarter master

Department. There appears to be 2 or 3 hundred laborers of all colours, setting & laying about this Department, doing little if nothing, while the an immense amount of the forage thrown into this Depot, is exposed to the weather.

Troops are daily arriving and are not debarked for 2 or 3 days while the Harbour is [litterally]⁹ jambed with shipping, upon heavy Demurrage.¹⁰

The commissary Department is no better administered than the Quarter Master. The immense supplies of this Department is now under the charge of some clerks, a portion of which, Col. Wilson,¹¹ informs me are *Drunken*. The Lieut. detailed for that service by Genl. Scott, when he ordered off Capt Grayson,¹² is now down very sick. It sickens me to see such mismanagement & disorder which results in daily sacrificing of commerce lives & money to the Govt.

It is said here that all the useless and *valueless* mules & mustangs were purchased by Col. Kearney¹³ under a contract by which he got \$150 pr. month as agent for the Quarter Master Dept. while the Quarter Master paid him in addition \$60 pr. animal for them.

I also hear it said that Karney says he made \$200.000. here in this contract.

One additional evil consequence growing out of all this disorder & mismanagment, is, that the large portion of the subsistence & forage, attempted (with these worthless teams, to be taken forward) is thrown out on the road to lighten the teams, or is left, *teams waggons & all*, in the road to *feed* the enemy, while my own Troops have either to go upon *half alive*, or starve, & buy most of what we consume at enormous prices.

This is a bad picture I present you, but it is beyond all doubt a *true one*. The only transportation which is atall available is the few large fine horses sent over by the Quarter master from new orleans to mount the Dragoons upon. They are *used up*, two in a team, while the 2000 or 3000 worthless mules & mustangs are consuming the forage which in a few weeks is actually worth more than the animals.

Such *inefficiency & imbecility*, (if not actual corruption; but I have no knowledge of the existance of this last) I have never see any where in my life.

To add to all this, our Troops are daily waisting away with disease. The yellow-fever is raging with a good deal of violence in the city. The Medical Director, Doctor Porter,¹⁴ told me to day, that it was now fairly epidemic, & all the *hospitals are full* & are daily [nearing]¹⁵ more so. I shall leave here some way in a few days, if I go without any transportation.

No orders have been received here from Genl. Scott, since I passed a man to¹⁶ or 6 weeks since. He was still at Puebla on the 5th of this month, as I learn from some discharged *teamsters*. As I carry up 40 waggon loads of ammunition I presume Genl. Scott cannot move on from that place until I reach there.

To increase the difficulties & embarrassments of the service I have not a single commissary, in my command, & none, but one, of the Regimental Quarter masters, appointed under the Ten Regts bill¹⁷ & he is wholly *without experience* & this man is the only quartermaster I have for my whole Division in the country & there are none here. They have all run away from the fear of Disease. There is trouble enough for one man. Don't you think so?

June 17th

Not having finished this letter, I have now to state that the advance of my command shoved off this morning—and I expect to follow with the rear on tomorrow.

I have heard nothing of General pierce, since his embarkation at Newport.¹⁸ 4 companies of the 11th Regt. have been out at sea for 20 days from Tampico. They had gotten out of water & were taken into that port by a steamer.

Not a single company of the 12th Regt has yet reached this port. But there were 2 cos of that Regt at New Orleans awaiting transportation. I heard nothing of any others. The 15th Inftry are all here except one company left permanently as I understand in the states by order from war department. 4 co's of 3 Dragoons have gone forward. One is thence not mounted for want of horses, The horses with which they should have been mounted having been taken by Quarter Master to supply, (in conjunction with the worthless animals, purchased up under contract with Kearney) transportation for the Troops now here & about to starve. Capt Caldwell's¹⁹ co. Dragoons I have not heard from. Your letter to me of the 18th Ultimo, mentioned that this Battallion Dragoons constituted a part of Division. The orders from the Adj't Genl.'s²⁰ office not embrace this Battallion. I mention this fact, so that if it be an omission, the proper order may hereafter be made.

My health is still feeble, though improving. My wound is not yet well. The mussels of the arm which were severed by the canister shot in repiring have attached themselves to the *bone* so as to interfere materially with the use and strength of the arm & will constitute, I fear, a permanent disability, though not total, of that arm.

I beg you my Dear Sir to present my very kindest regards to my good friend Col Walker,²¹ & to Mrs Polk. For yourself receive assurances of my continued and [. . .]²²

GID J. PILLOW

P.S. I have just heard that the mexicans have arrived in this city directly from the capital. They state as I understand, that negotiations for treaty of peace have been opened by Genl. Scott and that curriers had been dispatched from the city along the road to this place to direct the Bands of Mxcan Marauders to withdraw from the road & not to attack our parties &C. I have sent to town to ascertain the truth of this report & hope, before I close this letter, to be able to give you more reliable information as to its truth.

I am now satisfied this report is incorrect having just returned from the city myself.

I have however obtained information in which I place a good deal of confidence that Genl. Scott marched on yesterday, the 16th Inst, from Puebla. I have also ascertained that the attack of the enemy on McIntoshs train took & carried off and destroyed property & money to the amount of \$35.000 or \$40.000 and that it is believed here that as Genl. Scott has advanced beyond supporting distance and the Garrison of Jalapa is broken up, the Mexican are making a large additional force with which to renew the attack upon Cadwallad[er]²³ to get his money. Believig the danger to be great, of such a result, I have tonight dispatched two curriers by different routs with orders to stop Cadwallader until I come up so as to avoid so great a risk to so large an amount of money, he havig about \$400.000. I will reach him in about 5 days.

If Trists mission should result in a failure, & the Govt. should (as I think it is obliged to do) *fight on*, you will have to send out at least 10.000 more Troops to the country & order some of the great excess of Transportation now on the Rio Grande base of operations across here. Eastland,²⁴ Q.M. has taken it upon himself to disobey Genl. Scott's order for Transportation to be sent from the Brasos to this place. If the Govt. depends upon the worthless mustangs & mules it will result in more loss to the Govt. than would pay for good new transportation. This war cannot be successfully carried on without keeping open the line of operations from this Base to the army, so as to keep communication with the Gulf, & Govt. To do this alone would require 5000 Troops & without this is done, we shall have the constant repetitions of the *events* occuring in McIntosh's train, besides the loss (& consequent affects of it upon the feelings of our Troops produced by the shocking exhibitions

presented by our men laying *unburied* all along the road sides, with their throats cut & bodies shockingly mangled) to our Troops by the frequent murders.

If we take possession of the capital and terms are not made, it will be impossible in my judgment to institute at the capital a *hard military Govt.*, to draw from the country all its revenues (internal & external) to draw all the supplies necessary to subsist the army from the Interior which cannot be successfully done without a large force especially of Cavalry, to Turn out of power every civil officer opposed to peace and to place in power, those favourable to peace, to support the peace party and thus form a nucleus around which a strong national peace party must & will soon form which will control the public opinion of the country. This being done with an avowal on the part of our Govt that, whenever the people of the country will hold an election according to their party & constitution & will organize a Govt. which will make peace we will withdraw our forces from the country, will soon in my judgment end this war.

We show altogether too much *leniency* & mildness to the savage feeling of this people. They are brutal in their ferocity. They are enemies in the field to day, to morrow they lay aside the arms & go where they please & the next day they are again in the field as Enemies. This is false policy & disastrous in its effects upon the policy of our Govt in the *conduct* of the war.

I am sorry to have been compelled, from a sense of duty, to make known to you the [...] ²⁵ *arising* [...] another defeat, which is truly *heart sickening* to my feelings & must result in losses to the Govt. exceeding all estimation.

I have extend my letters by remarks in regard to the war, from the belief that it will be impossible after I leave this place to communicate with you at all. The Adjt. Genl.'s estimate of the forces in the field is greatly erroneous in the first place because very few of the companies of the new Ten Regt are full, many of these have not more than 40 men, some as low as 30 men & the strongest will be reduced to 60 in 10 days detention here. An average of 50 per company will be fully equal to the actual force in the field. I make these remarks to explain to you how it is that his estimate so far exceeds the actual force in the field. The wastage is indeed most frightful from disease. Some of my companies, are already almost without company officers.

If I have an opportunity I will write you again on the march.
Gid J Pillow

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Private & Confidential*." Postmarked New Orleans, June 29. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 6, 1847; "Private."

1. Concluding section of letter is dated June 17, 1847.
2. George Cadwalader.
3. Virginia native Alphonse M. Duperu was appointed a captain in April 1847 in the Third Dragoon Regiment, one of the regiments authorized by the Ten Regiment Bill.
4. Puebla, Mexico.
5. Opening parenthesis missing.
6. A Georgian, career army officer James S. McIntosh (1787–1847) fought in the War of 1812, during which he was wounded at Buffalo, N.Y. He also fought in various Indian wars. During the Mexican War he was, in May 1846, bayoneted at the Battle of Resaca de la Palma, after which he left active military duty. After returning to service, he was killed, in September 1847, at the Battle of El Molino del Rey. At the time of his death he held the brevet rank of colonel.
7. Abner R. Hetzel (1803 or 1805–1847), an 1827 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, spent most of his twenty-year military career as a quartermaster. At the time this letter was written, he was in charge of the army's depot at Veracruz. He died of cholera on July 20, 1847.
8. Word uncertain, overwritten text.
9. Word uncertain, blurred ink.
10. "Demurrage" can mean "delays in loading or unloading cargoes on chartered ships beyond the length of time contracted by charterers" or "fees assessed by shipowners against the charterers for the delay."
11. Henry Wilson or Louis D. Wilson. The latter (1789–1847) was a legislator and merchant from Edgecombe County, N.C. He became captain of Company A of the North Carolina Volunteer Regiment, created in Edgecombe County, on January 5, 1847. Made a colonel in the regular army in March, he took command of the Twelfth Infantry Regiment on April 9. He died on August 12 of yellow fever. He had served in the state house, 1815–19, and the state senate, 1820, 1824–33, and 1838–47, and had held various other public offices in North Carolina.
12. Kentucky native John B. Grayson (1806–61), an 1826 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, was, during this period, chief of commissariat of the army, serving under Winfield Scott. He was present at the capture of Veracruz, the Battle of Cerro Gordo, and other major engagements of the Mexican War.
13. In all likelihood, references in this letter are to Stephen W. Kearny. In historical sources, references to both him and his nephew, Philip Kearny (1814–62), also an officer in the Mexican War, often misspell the surname as Kearney. Stephen was at this time a brigadier general and Philip a captain, but until June 1846, Stephen had held the rank of colonel.
14. Connecticut native John B. Porter (c. 1810–1869) was an army surgeon based, at the time of this letter's composition, at Veracruz. After being recruited to the army from civilian life, he had, in 1833, been appointed an assistant surgeon. In October 1846, he was promoted to surgeon at the rank of major. In Veracruz, Porter established a military hospital in a former Franciscan convent, managed some twenty army surgeons, and oversaw most medical and sanitation matters. Porter later drew on those experiences in an article, "Medical and Surgical Notes of Campaigns in the War with Mexico, during the years 1845,

1846, 1847, and 1848," 5 pts., *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*, new ser., 23 (January 1852), pp. 13–37; 24 (July 1852), pp. 15–30; 25 (January 1853), pp. 25–42; 26 (October 1853), pp. 297–333; 35 (April 1858), pp. 347–52.

15. Word uncertain.

16. Illegible struck-out word here may explain incomplete thought.

17. Pillow probably refers to Henry Smith. A New York native, Smith (late 1790s?–1847) served in the army, 1815–36; as a U.S. civil engineer on the Great Lakes, 1836–40; in the Michigan House, 1837 and 1840; and as mayor of Monroe, Mich., 1846. He rejoined the army as a major on March 3, 1847, serving as quartermaster at Detroit and Veracruz. He died of yellow fever at Veracruz on July 24.

18. Franklin Pierce, with a portion of his troops, departed Newport, R.I., for Mexico on May 27, 1847.

19. Greene W. Caldwell (1806–64) was commissioned a captain in the newly created Third Dragoon Regiment in April 1847. A physician from Gaston County, N.C., he had enlisted in the army in 1832 as an assistant surgeon. Soon thereafter he studied law and established a law office in Charlotte, N.C. He served in the North Carolina House, 1836–41, and Senate, 1850–52, and in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1841–43, and became superintendent of the U.S. mint at Charlotte in 1844.

20. Roger Jones.

21. Joseph Knox Walker.

22. Two words illegible.

23. Letters obscured by tape.

24. Kentucky native Thomas B. Eastland (c. 1806?–?) was a merchant in Nashville and New Orleans before his appointment, in June 1846, as an army quartermaster with the rank of major. He left the army in 1849 and resided briefly in California before returning to Nashville.

25. Word here and below illegible.

FROM ANONYMOUS

Sir,

Baltr. June 16th 1847

I take the liberty of addressing you as an old "Jackson Democrat." I have been indentified with the Democratic party for 17 years, *and never voted the Whig Ticket*. My object is to direct your attention to the conduct of a great portion of the Custom House officers in this city.

If it is their duty to take the field, and regulate the several Wards of this City, and travel different sections of the State to pack a Convention to nominate a Governor, then I am mistaken in what I believe to be their duty.

I have only to say that if the Democratic party is beaten at the next election, the Custom House officials will be the cause of it.

Ever since Tylerism has been suffered to have the control of the Custom House, the party in this City, have dragged heavily. The great mis fortune is that the *head* of it was not cut off when you came into

power.¹ The people believe in Conventions properly organized, but what use are they, when nothing can be done without the approbation of the Custom House?

Please keep them to their respective duties, and leave to the *people* the choice of Delegates to Conventions.

A DEMOCRAT

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received June 18, 1847.

1. Polk retained John Tyler's appointee as customs collector at Baltimore, William H. Marriott, though he appointed a relative, James Polk, as naval officer (the collector's assistant) in 1845. Marriott (c. 1789–1851) served in the Maryland legislature most years from 1810 to 1830, including stints as state house Speaker, 1822 and 1824, and state senate president, 1828–30. Tyler appointed him collector in 1844.

FROM GEORGE M. DALLAS

My Dear Sir, [Philadelphia]¹ 16. June 1847

I take much pleasure in presenting to your acquaintance Professor John Frost,² a gentleman whose ability and research as an American Historian and general literary acquirements entitle him to very high regard and respect. He visits Washington in the hope of enlarging his hoard of authentic materials for a new Historical work he has in contemplation; and I do not doubt that you will find pleasure in knowing him, and in facilitating his enquiries.

G. M. DALLAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably delivered by John Frost. From Polk's AE: received June 18, 1847.

1. Place identified from other correspondence.

2. A native of Maine and an 1822 graduate of Harvard University, Frost (1800–1859) spent his early career as a school principal in Boston and a school-teacher in Philadelphia. He resigned the latter job in 1845 and soon achieved success as a biographer and historian. Assisted by a team of other writers, he produced over three hundred books, many of which promoted a strident U.S. nationalism.

TO GEORGE M. DALLAS

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 16th 1847

I promised you, in the event the state of the public business should be such, as to permit me to make a short excursion to the North, during the present summer, to inform you, at what time I would be in Philadelphia.¹

It is my present intention to leave Washington on tuesday morning the 22nd Instant and to spend the afternoon of that day at Baltimore. On Wednesday the 23rd Instant, I expect to reach Philadelphia.

Mrs. Polk regrets that her long deferred visit to her friends in Tennessee, will prevent her from accompanying me. She will set out for Tennessee on the same day on which I will leave for the North.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Philadelphia and marked “(Private).”

1. Polk to Dallas, May 24, 1847.

FROM WEST H. HUMPHREYS

Sir,

Nashville June 16 1847

I learnt when in the district¹ that a great design is on hand to make this election and the election of senator to U.S. turn on the [. . .]² of the Western district of [all . . .] an officer by the [. . .] & [. . .].

We understand that Neil Brown is now to renew his charge on Gideon Pillow in the [Kent.] matter and the late Haskell³ expose of the batle of Cerro Gordo and, that this affair is be made to fall in with the feelings of those in the Western district, who desired to get the appointment of brigadier. I satisfied general Hogs⁴ by stating to him the fact that you sent word by James Walker, to general Pillow that you *wanted him in that place before the law was passed or application was made*. General Hogs is a frank & honorable man. Pillow however had been made unpopular there by whig columnes reports & a cold support by democrats. He had however, fought himself into some degree of popularity.

Haskell is to run for congress. Gardner is out & if Williams⁵ can be kept on we shall elect Gardner & no forces shall be spared to do it. In the m[e]an⁶ time cant something be done for the district in the way of Military appointments? Captain Hogs is most popular officer just here. Cant he be appointed in Cheatham⁷ place who it is understood declines. He is one of the most popular captains as the officers inform me in the Army. I am not desirous to make an application for him. I think however it would be a capital appointment and give great satisfaction to the citisens of Mad[is]on⁸ county & to Haskells regiment. I therefore suggest [. . .].⁹

In the next place [Panalt]¹⁰ is almost avid for a trip to the Army. Cant you let him raise a company of Volunteers? He would make a brave officer as ever drew a Blade. Hes been desperate for a year—and would raise a company in twenty days. He would regard it as a *never-*

dying favor. No man has toiled longer and harder and with a more disinterested devotion to Principle than has this same man J. C [Panalt] to my earlier knowlege and there is no man in the state who more merits such a boon at the hands of the democratic party than he does—to at a chance to fight for his country. He is besides in the district & would meet the objection that is being made to the admnstration in that quarter. He would be unwwilling to accept any thing lower than a captain. I hope the exigencies of the service will permit him to be made a captain of volunteers or of regulars.

I have been requested to ask your attention to the appoitment of John L Brown as qater master in this place. A V Bown¹¹ employed him and says he made a good officer. He wants to stay in Tennesse this summer if the service requires such an agent here. His appointment would go on as far as any to cure up a certain soreness at Memphis as any man who could be appointed. I belive he would make a good officer and recomend his appointment. He is sore about the post office at Memphis, but cordially cooperates with us in politics. He has lived her now about a year and I have never heard him spoken of in lines other than those of a gentleman.

These you will please, regard as suggestions for your consideration rather than [personal]¹² applications for favors on my part. I make them because I think the public weal & principles of democracy¹³ will be sustained more especly on the appoitmet of [*Panalt*] and *Hogs*.

We [abraid]¹⁴ to do every thing on Earth to elect Gardner and to defeat Haskell. Gardner is a true democrt *faithful to the last* and Haskell a most [. . .]. We think this charge he has made against Pillow, (for it is him alone)¹⁵ the other one [. . .]) all be exploded and Pillow triumphanly sustained. Mr. Pillow has a great many enemies amongst the Volunteers arising out of his severe discipline and rigid military conduct. Cummings¹⁶ is very sick of participation in the matter & will seek the Earliest opportunity to get out of it and retain Pillow as I learn from him. He was actuated by personal hatred of Pillow cr[a]ddled¹⁷ by Haskell. Pillow has exposed himself to great danger by trying to save *two colonels* who did not do their duty.

You have done one act which the democratic party do not approve or *defend* the whole affair with Benton.¹⁸ He is more candidly & generally despised and hated by the demcrtatic party than any man in the Union excepting perhaps Clay Webster¹⁹ & a few others. There is no body that sustains the act—and more especally since his late speech at St Louis.²⁰ I regard him as a [*persona Non Grata*]²¹ and if you have him connected with the party & require the democrtic party to defend him, they will a large portion damn him & the party too. I trust in god that you will have nothig to do with from this time out. We had concluded here to attack

him in the Union²² on his St Louis speech but it was deferred only because it was feared you would have him connected with the Mexican offer in some way. It would give all true democrats great pleasure to have him lashed and offer [his]²³ neck on the line on. I have never heard but one democrat (R P Curser) who did not cordally denounce him and his whole course. I state these things that you may know something about the sentiment[s] of the party and of the public here.

The Taylor Fever is gradually dying among here. Scots²⁴ success—the fact that the whig party cannot be harmonious on Taylor and that the democratic party will not, place all in such a position that all are obligat[ed] to wait and act on principle. I do not know what we shall do about the matter of Trist.

I would be glad if you could continue for another term for my part,²⁵ and I don't see that we can do better if the war is terminat[e]d this year honourably—and the present prosperity of the country should demonstrate the great success of democratic measures. We shall see.

W H HUMPHREYS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “(Confidential & Private).” From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE; received June 23, 1847; “Private & confidential letter about matters in Tennessee.”

1. Madison County in West Tennessee.
2. Word or words here and below illegible or uncertain.
3. William T. Haskell.
4. Reference is possibly to Joseph L. Hogg (1806–62), whose surname in some other historical sources, as in this letter, is spelled “Hogs.” Born in Georgia and raised in Alabama, Hogg became an Alabama planter, militia officer, and local politician. In 1839, he moved to the Texas republic and opened a law office in Cherokee County; he served in the Texas republic’s House, 1843–44. He promoted the U.S. annexation of Texas and, in 1846, was elected to Texas’s first state senate. When the Mexican War commenced, Hogg resigned his senate seat to become an officer in a Texas volunteer regiment. Though named a Confederate brigadier general during the Civil War, no evidence has been located that he had attained the rank of general in any military organization by 1847.
5. John A. Gardner and Christopher H. Williams.
6. Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.
7. A Nashville native and scion of a prominent Middle Tennessee family, Benjamin F. Cheatham (1820–86) served in the Mexican War as a captain in the First Tennessee Infantry Regiment and witnessed the conflict’s conclusion as a colonel in the Third Tennessee Infantry Regiment. He saw action at Monterrey, Cerro Gordo, and other engagements. During the Civil War, he served as a Confederate general.

8. Letters inserted to complete possible meaning—though Hogg had no evident connection with Madison County, Tenn.

9. Word or words illegible, ink smudge.

10. Apparently J. C. Panalt, per later reference in this letter, but an extensive search in other sources yielded no references to anyone by this name.

11. Aaron V. Brown.

12. Word or words here and below uncertain or illegible.

13. Humphreys may refer to the Democratic party or simply to rule by the people.

14. "Abraid" means "to move suddenly," but in the sixteenth century and earlier also meant "to shout," "to speak abruptly," or "to make a great effort."

15. Humphreys probably meant to strike out this closing parenthesis.

16. Reference is probably to David H. Cummings (1818–67), lieutenant colonel of the Second Tennessee Infantry Regiment, who was wounded in the Battle of Cerro Gordo.

17. Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

18. Thomas H. Benton by this date had incurred the wrath of many Democrats by his growing opposition to Polk's war policies. Humphreys probably refers to Polk's failed efforts to give Benton diplomatic and military authority in Mexico as a lieutenant general or major general. See letters and notes in Andrew Lane to Polk, January 1, 1847; Benton to Polk, March 6, 1847; Polk to Benton, March 9, 1847; and Benton to Polk, March 9, 1847.

19. Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.

20. In a speech in St. Louis on April 13, 1847, Benton discussed his support for the 49th parallel border in the Oregon Country against the Polk administration's early demand for 54° 40'. Benton also discussed his opposition to the Adams-Onís Treaty (1819), which had ceded Texas to Spain. He also noted efforts by himself and others to get Texas back, his consistent opposition to the war with Mexico, and his belief that the United States should maintain friendly ties with all Latin American republics. Benton underscored his willingness to resign his Senate seat to lead the peace effort in Mexico as a lieutenant general and noted his opposition to recently proposed Senate resolutions that would have permitted slavery in all new U.S. territories ceded by Mexico; the Senate actions, he believed, would have sectionalized partisan political divisions, thus endangering the Union.

21. Words uncertain.

22. Nashville *Union*.

23. Text here and below either absent or obscured by tape.

24. Winfield Scott.

25. After becoming the Democratic presidential nominee in 1844, Polk, borrowing a campaign vow long made by Whig presidential candidates, promised that he would not seek a second term.

TO JOHN CATRON

My Dear Sir:

Washington City June 17th 1847

I received two letters from you some days ago,¹ but have not had time to answer them earlier. In relation to our friend *Dr. Esselman*,² I can only say that it would give me sincere pleasure to gratify his desire to go abroad, if I could do so with propriety. In the present state of the foreign service this would be impossible. In the first place there is no vacancy, and, if there was, the pressure for such places is so great from other States, that I should incur the displeasure of many of my leading friends, if I were to make another appointment from Tennessee. It has been repeatedly stated within the last eighteen months that Mr *Wickliffe* charge d' affairs to Sardinia, intended to ask to be recalled. He has not however done so,³ and although he has no special claims to be continued, there are circumstances, which would render it extremely embarrassing to recal him. Should he return voluntary, there are at least half a dozen persons strongly presented for the place, by Senators, Representatives and others. I desire that you would explain the matter to *Dr. Esselman*, and say to him, that I regret that it is not in my power to gratify his wishes.

Mrs. Polk will set out on her long deferred visit to Tennessee on tuesday next the 23rd Instant, and will probably reach Nashville in eight or nine days thereafter.

My late visit to the University of N. Carolina was an exceedingly gratifying one.⁴ Not an unpleasant incident occurred, but on the contrary, my reception every where on the journey and at the University, was kind and candid. I propose, if the State of the public business will, permit, to make a short excursion next week, to the North. How far I may go will depend upon the daily advices which I may receive from Washington. I am much urged to make the visit, and conclude to do so, because if I do not go during the present summer, I cannot before the close of my term.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked "(Private)."

1. Catron to Polk, May 16, 1847; other letter not found.

2. Nashville physician John N. Esselman (c. 1812–1862), a native of North Carolina, included Andrew Jackson among his patients. He was appointed an army surgeon in September 1847.

3. Robert Wickliffe, Jr., asked to be recalled late in 1847. Polk granted the request.

4. Polk's diary entries for his May 31–June 3, 1847, visit to Chapel Hill duplicate the sentiments expressed in this brief account of that visit. In his entry for May 31, recounting the welcome he received at his alma mater on the first day of his visit, Polk records, "I have never spent a more pleasant or delightful afternoon & evening."

FROM JOEL B. SUTHERLAND¹

My dear sir

Philada. Friday night [June 18, 1847]²

I have just left the meeting held at our Court House to make arrangements for your reception. John Swift Esq³ Mayor of the City Presided. I lifted my hat to him, in the chair, when he said I suppose you are astonished to see me here. Not at all said I, as you are the Mayor of *the city*, and therefore ought to preside. He made a neat speech on taking the chair. And the resolutions proposed for the occasion passed *unanimously & so declared* by his honor the Mayor. You are to *come by water* in the manner I proposed. The idea of bringing you through the dust from Wilmington in the car⁴ being abandoned. The meeting was large & enthusiastic. On my way home, I took a few minutes to write this at the House of our friend Jenks,⁵ who came up with me from the meeting.

J B SUTHERLAND

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received June 19, 1847.

1. Pennsylvania surgeon and educator Sutherland (c. 1792–1861) left the medical profession after serving in the military during the War of 1812. He served in the Pennsylvania House, 1813–15, 1821–22, and 1824; in the Pennsylvania Senate, 1825–27; and, as a Jacksonian, in the U.S. House, 1827–37. He failed to win reelection as a Whig in 1836 and 1838. From 1842 to 1845, he served, after appointment by Pres. John Tyler, as naval officer at Philadelphia.

2. Date identified through content analysis.

3. Lawyer and Whig Swift (1790–1873) was admitted to the bar in 1810. He served as Philadelphia mayor, 1832–38, 1839–41, and 1845–49.

4. Train car.

5. Democrat Daniel T. Jenks (c. 1798–1860) in 1845 relocated from Bucks County, Penn., to Philadelphia and in 1847 was appointed through Polk's influence to a clerkship in the Philadelphia Customs House.

FROM JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT

My Dear Sir,

Steamboat Palo Alto¹ June 19th 1847

I find that in the hurry of leaving² I forget to ask for the return of Mr. Frémont's letter to Father.³ Will you have the kindness to send it to Mother,⁴ who will take care of it for me.

The despatches are advancing as we reach Cincinnati this evening.

JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked Cincinnati, June 21. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 25, 1847. Polk's AEs: "Search for the letter & if found give it to me"; "The letter referred to I returned to Col. Benton in person; Augst — 1847."

1. Jessie Frémont and her daughter Elizabeth Benton Frémont—"Lily"—were en route from Washington City, which they had departed on June 15, to St. Louis, where Jessie's father Thomas H. Benton was then staying. Traveling with them were Kit Carson and navy officer Edward Beale, both men then en route to California carrying various government dispatches to U.S. officials there.

2. On June 7, Jessie Frémont, accompanied by Kit Carson—recently returned from California, where he had acted as an exploration guide to her husband John C. Frémont—met with Polk at the Executive Mansion. Carson returned alone for another meeting with Polk that evening. Both conversations dealt, in large part, with U.S. military affairs in California, including John Frémont's recent clashes with Stephen W. Kearny. Polk observes in his diary entry of that day, "Mrs. Fremont seemed anxious to elicit from me some expression of approbation of her husband's conduct, but I evaded [making any]. In truth, I consider that Col. Fremont was greatly in the wrong when he refused to obey the orders issued to him by Gen'l Kearney."

3. Insufficient information renders it impossible to confirm the letter to which Jessie Frémont alludes. Possibly, however, she refers to John C. Frémont to Thomas H. Benton, [February 3, 1847], in Mary Lee Spence and Donald Jackson, eds., *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont*, vol. 2 (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1973), pp. 281–84, a letter that discusses California, Kearny, et al.

4. Elizabeth McDowell Benton.

FROM LOUIS McLANE¹

My dear Sir,

Baltimore June 19. 1847

I am happy to learn from my son² that you propose to be in our city on Tuesday, and that Mrs. Polk will accompany you. I am quite aware that the demands of your fellow citizens will fully engross your own time, and that I can have little opportunity of personally testifying my own feelings upon the occasion than as one of the multitude who will

cheerfully unite in the honors so justly your due. To Mrs. Polk however, it may not be so agreeable or imperative to mix with the attentions of which you must be the object; and I write to assure you both of the great satisfaction it will afford Mrs. McLane³ and myself, and I may add my daughters,⁴ if she will refresh herself at our house, and after dining with us join you at the hotel⁵ at your mutual convenience. I wish I could add the inducement which Mrs. McLane's personal attentions might offer, but the great calamity which her protracted indisposition has brought upon me still continues, and she is yet unable to leave o[u]r⁶ chamber, or even to walk across it. In that chamber however she will be most happy to see Mrs. Polk; and all the rest of us will do our best to make Mrs. Polk as comfortable as possible.

If this or any other attention in my power be acceptable to you or Mrs. P. I would be glad to be informed of it; and have the honor to be, . . .

LOUIS McLANE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 19, 1847.

1. Louis McLane (1786–1857), a Delaware lawyer, began his political career as a National Republican and concluded it as a Democrat. He served in the U.S. House, 1817–27; in the U.S. Senate, 1827–29; as minister to the United Kingdom, 1829–31 and 1845–46; as secretary of the Treasury, 1831–33; and as U.S. secretary of state, 1833–34. After moving to Baltimore, he served as president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, 1837–48.

2. Attorney Robert M. McLane (1815–98), son of Louis McLane, served as a Democrat from Maryland in the U.S. House, 1847–51 and 1879–83. An 1837 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, he served in the army's Corps of Topographical Engineers, 1838–43, before being admitted to the bar in 1843. He later occupied various diplomatic posts and several offices in Maryland's state government, including the governorship, 1884–85.

3. Catherine Mary Milligan (1791–1849) married Louis McLane in 1812.

4. Louis and Catherine McLane had six daughters, all born in Delaware and three married by this time: Rebecca Wells McLane Hamilton (1813–93), Sally Jones McLane Tiffany (1820?–1887?), Lydia McLane Johnston (1822–87), Juliette McLane (1826–85), Catherine M. McLane (1829–53), and Mary McLane (c. 1833–1897).

5. Polk stayed at the Exchange Hotel at the Merchants' Exchange near the harbor.

6. Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

TO LOUIS McLANE

My Dear Sir:

Washington City June 19th 1847

I have received your kind letter of yesterday.¹ *Mrs. Polk* is grieved to hear of the continued indisposition of *Mrs. McLane*,² & during her short

stay in Baltimore, will not fail to do herself the pleasure to call and see her. As she is to separate from me so soon, to make her long deferred visit to her friends in Tennessee, she thinks she should take rooms at the Hotel³ where I may stop. To you as an old friend I think I may with safety, venture to make a suggestion as to the hour of the day, I should arrive in Baltimore on tuesday next. I believe there are two trains of cars leaving Washington for Baltimore, the one at 6. A.M. and the other at 12. M. I would prefer the latter hour, if it should be agreeable to my friends in Baltimore. It would be a more convenient hour to leave than 6. A.M. and I think on other accounts is to be preferred. Will you make the suggestion to your son *Robert confidentially*, and request him to write me, by which of the trains I will be expected.

It would give me sincere pleasure my Dear Sir: to have your company on my tour north. Can you not accompany me, at all events to Boston, if not further?

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Baltimore. Published in *NU*, p. 113.

1. Polk erroneously refers to McLane to Polk, June 19, 1847.
2. Catherine Mary Milligan McLane.
3. Exchange Hotel.

FROM WASHINGTON D. MILLER

Sir,

Washington City, June 19, 1847

Not that I suppose my acts or opinions can be deemed by your Excellency of any particular importance, *but only* that I may indicate, in some sort, how fully sensible I am of your Excellency's kind consideration,¹ as manifested by the personal visit I had the honor to receive from Col. Medill² and the communication he made to me of your Excellency's wishes, it is perhaps allowable for me thus to obtrude myself for a moment on your attention. Indeed, were I not to attempt an acknowledgment of this very favorable disposition of your Excellency towards me, I might very justly be classed among the most disingenuous.

In plain truth, I did not exactly understand how the distinction could be made between the accounts of the Commissioners³ and my own; unless by a technicality, which I thought might be obviated, if the proper inclination existed to remedy omissions which occurred solely for the want of information. But on this point I am altogether satisfied. Indeed, I may truly say, I am more than satisfied; for the course of your Excellency about the matter has induced me to yield very willingly to

sacrifices, personal and pecuniary in other respects, in order *to show* that I *am satisfied* in this particular.

Though I believe it to be *physically impossible* for one hand to accomplish the labor yet to be done in the Commission, before the period fixed for its dissolution,⁴ according to the plan I have hitherto pursued in making up the record of its proceedings; still I hope, by abridging and condensing, and by working in all hours, to be able to place the business in a condition to be closed up finally, and I trust forever; for I cannot conceive of a more complicated and unpleasant, or indeed more important concern connected with the Government. I shall certainly heartily rejoice when it is over and done with.

W. D. MILLER

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally; marked "*Private.*" Polk's AE: "W. D. Miller Secretary to the cherokee commission: Recd. June 19th 1847: He had tendered his resignation; but now agrees, to continu to discharge the duties of the commission, until its termination."

1. For context of this letter, see Polk's AE in headnote.

2. Delaware native William Medill (1802–65) and Lancaster, Ohio, lawyer served in the Ohio House, 1835–38, and in the U.S. House, 1839–43. A Democrat by 1840, he was appointed by Polk second assistant postmaster general in 1845 and commissioner of Indian affairs the same year; he held the latter post until 1849. He later became Ohio governor, 1853–56.

3. Edward Harden and Benjamin H. Brewster of the Cherokee Commission.

4. July 22, 1847. See letter and notes in Harden to Polk, February 15, 1847.

TO ISAAC TOUCEY

My Dear Sir:

Washington City June 19th 1847

I received your friendly letter of the 8th Instant, some days ago, but have been so much occupied with my public duties, that I have been unable to give an earlier answer. You express for yourself and others of my friends, a strong desire that I will visit Hartford. I hope my Dear Sir: to have it in my power to spend a few hours, at that city, on my contemplated tour to the North. According to arrangements which I understand have been made by my friends, I may be expected to arrive in New York on friday next the 25th Instant. On the monday morning following I will leave New York for Boston, *via* the *New Haven & Hartford route*. It is calculated that I will not reach Boston until tuesday: so that, if the hours of departure and arrival of the public conveyances in which I will travel will permit it, I will take pleasure in spending a few hours at *New Haven*, and Hartford. I should be much pleased to have you join

me at *Hartford* and accompany me on my short excursion to the North of that [place]¹ and especially as far as *Boston*, if you could continue with me beyond it.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Hartford, Conn. Published in *NU*, pp. 111–12.

1. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.

TO LEVI WOODBURY¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City June 19th 1847

I have recived your note of the 14th Instant, enclosing one from *Mr Barstow* of Salem.² Should it be in my power, during the short excursion which I propose to make to the North, to visit Portsmouth, (which is at present uncertain) I shall certainly accept your kind invitation, and am sure that I would feel quite at home at your house. Mrs. Polk will not accompany me to the North, but leaving Washington with me, will seperate from me at Baltimore, and proceed to the West, to make a long deferred visit to her friends in Tennessee. She regrets that she cannot have the pleasure of visiting *Mrs. Woodbury*³ and *yourself* at your own house. *Mrs. Woodbury* has always been esteemed by her as among her best frieds, and she would have taken sincere pleasure in making the visit, if she could have done so, consistently with her previous arrangements.

I will leave this City on tuesday next the 22nd Instant and according to my present arrangements expect to reach Boston on the tuesday following the 29th Instant. I should be highly gratified to meet you at Boston, and have your company to *Concord*⁴ and such other points North of that place as I may have it in my power to visit. Can you not accompany me?

Will you do me the favour to address a note to *Mr. Barstow* of Salem, informing him, that I fear it will not be in my power, during the very brief excursion which I propose to make, to accept his invitation to visit his house?

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Portsmouth, N.H. Published in *NU*, pp. 112–13.

1. Levi Woodbury (1789–1851), a New Hampshire lawyer and Democrat, served as a justice of the state superior court, 1816–23; as governor, 1823–24; in the U.S. Senate, 1825–31 and 1841–45; as secretary of the navy, 1831–34;

as secretary of the Treasury, 1834–41; and as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 1845–51.

2. Benjamin Barstow to Polk, June 14, 1847. Barstow (1823–93), after receiving his bachelor of arts degree in 1842 and his law degree in 1844 from Harvard University, became a Salem, Mass., lawyer and Democrat.

3. Elizabeth Williams Clapp (1796–1873) of Portland, Maine, married Levi Woodbury in 1819.

4. Concord, N.H.

FROM JEFFERSON DAVIS

My Dear Sir:

Warren county, Miss., June 20, '47

Your very kind and complimentary letter of the 19th May last, was received in New Orleans, together with the commission to which you therein referred.

To be esteemed by you as one whose services entitled him to promotion, is to me a source of the highest gratification; which will remain to me undiminished, though my opinions compel me to decline the proffered honor.

I will this day address to the Adj't. Gen'l. U.S. Army,¹ an official note informing him that the commission has been received, and is declined. To you I wish to give an explanation, being too sensibly affected by your expressions of honorable estimation and friendly regard, willingly to run any hazard of a misapprehension of the motives which have decided my course.

You inform me that my command will consist of volunteers. I still entertain the opinion expressed by me, as a member of Congress, in May and June 1846, that the "volunteers" are militia.² As such they have a constitutional right to be under the immediate command of officers appointed by State authority: and this I think is violated by any permanent organization made after they have passed into the service of the United States; by which they lose their distinctive character of State troops, become part of a new formation, disciplined by, corresponding and only recognized through the head, which the federal government has set over them.

Such I consider the organization of Volunteer regiments into Brigades, under Brigadiers appointed by the President, as provided for in the law of June 1846³; and entertaining this opinion, my decision, as stated to you was the necessary result.

For the gratifying notice you have taken of myself and the regiment I had the honor to command; for the distinction you have been pleased

to confer upon me by this unsolicited appointment; and for the kind solicitude you express for my welfare, receive, Sir, my sincerest thanks.

JEFFERSON DAVIS

PL. Published in Vicksburg (Miss.) *Weekly Sentinel*, October 6, 1847. Also published in *PJD*, pp. 185–86.

1. Roger Jones.

2. The *Congressional Globe* did not record any remarks by Davis on the topic at that time.

3. "An Act to provide for the Organization of the Volunteer Forces, brought into the Service of the United States, into Brigades and Divisions, and for the Appointment of the necessary Number of General Officers to command the same." *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 33.

TO BENJAMIN B. FRENCH ET AL.¹

Gentlemen:

Washington City June 21[st 1847]²

In your letter of the 17th Instant³ addressed to me in your character as "a committee of the Jackson Monument commi[ttee]" you request "permission to place the con[tem]plated Equestrian Statue of Jackson in [the] center of La Fayette Square," in this City.⁴ C[on]c[ur]ring with you in the opinion, that the proposed monument, would advance the pub[li]c grounds, near the President's mansion, and that the spot indicated by you, would be [a] proper one, on which to place it, I am yet [not] satisfied that I possess the legal authority to [. . .] the appropriation of any portion of the pub[li]c grounds, for this or any other purpose. I [do not] however doubt, that Congress, would upon [. . .]⁵ application made for that purpose, grant the p[er]mission you ask, whereby you propose to "do honour to *Genl. Jackson's* memory," and "[. . .] same time decorate the public grounds [. . .] memorial destined to render [. . .] service to the public in the patriotic spirit it will impart." Did I possess the power I would not hesitate to grant the request which you make.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Letter addressed to French, John C. Rives, and John W. Maury. A Virginia native, Rives (1795–1864) lived in Kentucky and Illinois before moving to Washington City in 1824. He worked as a clerk in the Treasury Department, then founded the *Congressional Globe* with Francis P. Blair in 1830. He was its sole owner from 1845 until his death. Maury (1809–1855), also a Virginia native, served on the Washington City Common Council, 1835–38; as an alderman, 1838–40 and 1841–52; and as mayor, 1852–54. He was president of the Bank of the Metropolis from 1846 until his death.

2. Unless noted otherwise, brackets indicate text illegible or uncertain due to a light ink transfer. Year identified from location in press-copy book.

3. Letter not found.

4. The Jackson Monument Committee was established at a meeting of Washington City citizens in September 1845 to raise money to erect an equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson in the capital. With Postmaster General Cave Johnson as its chairman, the Committee enlisted local postmasters to collect donations. The U.S. House voted to give the committee brass cannons to melt to build the statue in February 1847; the Senate did not immediately concur, but both houses passed similar resolutions in 1848 and 1850. On June 10, 1847, the Committee chose the Lafayette Square location and appointed the three recipients of this letter a committee to seek a rock for the statue's base. Clark Mills sculpted the statue and it was inaugurated at a public ceremony on January 8, 1853.

5. Word or words either absent or illegible due to a light ink transfer.

FROM LOUIS McLANE

My dear Sir,

Baltimore June 21. 1847

I beg leave to make you my thanks for your invitation to go North¹; and it would give me pride & pleasure to accompany you if it were in my power. The original doom of our race, however, has fallen with full might upon me. My destiny is to labor, and that in which I am now engaged is not a garden of roses. It so happens that we are fully occupied in determining our route to the Ohio; and the reports of the Engineers, which are to have an important influence upon the decision, may be daily expected.² A temporary absence, even to Boston and back would be scarcely excuseable on my part, so that I am compelled to forego an opportunity, which otherwise I would greatly embrace.

I presume you will have been made acquainted last night, with the Mayor's³ arrangements for your reception: he called upon me yesterday to state the embarrassment it would occasion him if you left Washington before 12. o'clock, it having been intimated that 10. might be a more convenient hour to you. The arrangements of the R.R. to, could have been adapted to either hour, but as I was sure your convenience would be promoted by not attempting to interfere with the order of the military, I advised him to set upon his plans as previously formed. The superintendant has been instructed, and has made his arrangements to assign to you and your suite, a new and official car, to leave W. at 12. o clk., and to place it in charge of particular officers to attend to your comforts and prevent intrusion. It will be entirely consistent with his arrangements that you should regulate the speed and stopping of the train to suit your

own pleasure; and I have instructed him to conform in all respects to your wishes and orders.

I sincerely wish you an agreeable journey; and a reception from your fellow citizens, wherever you may go, suitable to a patriotic Chief Magistrate.

Tendering my respectful regards to Mrs. Polk, . . .

LOUIS McLANE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received June 21, 1847. Published in *NU*, pp. 113–14.

1. Polk to McLane, June 19, 1847.

2. McLane refers to the construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. See letter and notes in Charles F. Fletcher to Polk, June 11, 1847. The Railroad reached the Ohio River in 1852, four years after McLane resigned as its president.

3. Democrat Jacob G. Davies (c. 1796–c. 1857) served as Baltimore mayor, 1844–48. A colonel in the Maryland militia, he had served as a director of canal and railroad companies; he had become president of an insurance company by 1850.

FROM ANONYMOUS

[between June 22 and July 7, 1847]¹

After offering you the congratulations due to your rank of chief magistrate and bidding you *welcome* to this Beautiful City² allow me to address *you* on a subject equally important to *you* and to the *People*.

You are aware that two thirds of your Army called into service at *your* Command, are men without, Father, Mother, Wife, or children, But are men who have Sisters dependent on them. Certainly you did not intend to exclude any portion of those gallant soldiers who laid down their lives on the alter of their Country from a participation in the munificent gift of the government. Every man in the Army, and those who have been Killed hazarded their lives in the belief that the Bounty land would be given to their lawful heirs. It was stated *in all* the Papers favourable to the administration that Wife, Child, Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, would inherit in Case of Death to the Volunteer or Soldier. The People have been *deceived* and it is *due* to them that reparation be made and a Clause inserted that those who have fallen leaving no other heirs but *Sisters* that the Sisters shall receive the Bounty land or the equivalent.³ Or it will be a serious injury to the progress of the War as it will be made the subject of Political disension.

You as an old House Keeper must be aware that thousand of Irish Women Labour at \$1.25 per week and deny themselves many comforts for years to accumulate money enough to enable them to send for and bring out to this happy Country their beloved Brothers.

Those very Brothers are now in Mexico or in the next world. Are not such Women entitled as well as wife, Child, Father, or Mother, to inherit their Brothers land? I have had in *my house* two instances of which I have mentiond and I have only jept⁴ House for a few years. I feel assured that you who acted so *Justly* during the *Riots*⁵ will Grant Justice to your Gallant Soldiers who have crowned *your administration* with an imperishable Wreath and that you will be jind to that unfortunatate class of Women who have no Protectors and have lost every thing in this War with Mexico.

EAST, WEST, NORTH, SOUTH,
IRISH AND AMERICAN SISTERS⁶

L. DLC-JKP.

1. Date range identified through content analysis.

2. Polk evidently received this letter while on his Northern trip of June 22 to July 7, 1847. During that trip he visited Baltimore; Wilmington, Del.; Philadelphia; South Amboy, N.J.; New York City; New Haven, Conn.; Hartford, Conn.; Springfield, Mass.; Boston; Charlestown, Mass.; Concord, N.H.; Lowell, Mass.; Portland, Maine; Hallowell, Maine; Augusta, Maine; Gardiner, Maine; Portsmouth, N.H.; Fall River, Mass.; Princeton, N.J.; and Trenton, N.J. Polk's diary includes only a general summary of the trip and a cursory entry for each day. John Appleton, his private secretary during the trip, kept a detailed journal at the president's request. Polk intended to insert that journal in his diary but never did. Appleton's journal has been published as Wayne Cutler, ed., *North for Union: John Appleton's Journal Of a Tour to New England Made by President Polk In June and July 1847* (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1986).

3. The Ten Regiment Bill, in granting land or Treasury scrip to soldiers, stipulated that a dead soldier's land or scrip would go to "his family or relatives, according to the following rules: first, to the widow and to his children; second, his father; third, his mother." It made no specific mention of siblings. See also letter and notes in George W. Ross to Polk, June 7, 1847.

4. Here and below, the author wrote "j" in place of the lowercase "k" at the beginning of a word.

5. The author probably refers to the food riots at Youghal, Dungarvan, and elsewhere in Ireland in late 1846 during the potato crop failure. For the U.S. government's and Polk's contributions to Irish relief, see letters and notes in Robert Gray to Polk, February 22, 1847; Uriah P. Levy to Polk, February 27, 1847; and Sampson S. Sealy to Polk, June 1, 1847.

6. To the right of the signature appears a stamp of a diamond enclosing the text "Act promptly."

FROM JAMES R. MCGEE ET AL.¹

Sir

Brooklyn [N.Y.]² June 23. 1847

At a meeting of the Mechanics and Laborers of this City to take into consideration the propriety of addressing a communication to your Honor, soliciting the privilege of having one of the Government Steam Ships built at this place,³ the undersigned were appointed a committee to carry out the objects of the meeting.

In compliance with our duty we would respectfully solicit that one of the war steamers about to be constructed, may be built at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where the facilities are equal if not superior to any other station in the United States.

The frame of a Steamer is now complete at this navy Yard, labor and materials are as low as elsewhere, and Steam Engines & machinery are constructed in New York unsurpassed by any other place in quality &c.

We would respectfully represent that the Yards at Boston & Norfolk, having Dry Docks, draw nearly all the naval work from this place, and necessarily keep employed a large number of men, while here for want of facilities for repairing large vessels, but little has been done for several years past.

In consideration of these facts we trust that you will cause such measures to be taken as will ensure the construction of one of the Steamers at this station.

We do not profess to have any extra claims but desire to call your attention to the facts that there are a large number of skilful mechanics in this vicinity, and respectfully solicit that this station may have allotted to it as large a proportion of the ship work as its magnitude will warrant, and the good of the service may require.

JAMES R MCGEE

NS. DLC-JKP.

1. Letter signed by McGee and three others. Born in Ireland, McGee (c. 1805–1860s?) was a carpenter at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

2. State identified through content analysis.

3. On March 3, 1847, Polk signed a law authorizing the construction of four naval steamships. "An Act providing for the Building and Equipment of four naval Steamships." *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 62. In July, Secretary of the Navy John Y. Mason assigned one of the ships to the Brooklyn Navy Yard; construction began on July 15.

FROM JOHN PETTIT¹

Sir:

Lafayette, Ind. June 23. 1847

By a late proclamation the lands in the Miami reserve are to be sold in September next.²

The object of this letter is to earnestly urge (if not entirely incompatible with your views of propriety) a postponement of the sale, till December or Jany.

This is very desirable and is the unanimous wish of the settlers on the lands. Many of them must fail in their presumptions unless they can get their this years crops to market befor the sale which they can not do if the sale is made in Sept. & it will worke great mischief to the settlers.

Besides, these lands are situated in three Congressional districts, Mr. Wick's, Mr. Cathcart's³ & my own. We are all candidates for re-election. The Whigs are seizing upon this sale with great warmth & bitterly denouncing the Administration for bringing on the sale so early & at so unpropitious a time, & it may be the cause of changing many votes unless the sale is postponed & that promptly in order that the action of the government may be known before the election which is the first Monday in August.

JOHN PETTIT

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 2, 1847.

1. Born in New York, Pettit (1807-77) became a Lafayette, Ind., lawyer and served in the Indiana House, 1838-39; as U.S. district attorney for Indiana, 1839-43; and, as a Democrat, in the U.S. House, 1843-49, and the U.S. Senate, 1853-55.

2. Treaties with the Miami Indians in 1838 and 1840 opened to white settlement the Indiana land previously reserved for the Miami people. A law of August 3, 1846, gave the subsequent white settlers on this land preemption rights. Pursuant to that law, settlers hoped to purchase their plots gradually as they acquired the necessary cash. Polk's proclamation of May 25, 1847, however, mandated the immediate sale of the land for cash on September 6. Residents petitioned Polk on June 12 to postpone the sale one year, and late in the summer he agreed to their request.

3. William W. Wick and Charles W. Cathcart. Born in Pennsylvania, Wick (1796-1868) became a lawyer in Connersville and Indianapolis, Ind. He served as president judge of the fifth judicial state circuit, 1822-25, 1831-34, and

1850–53; as Indiana secretary of Cathcart (1809–88) was born in Funchal, Madeira, while his father was U.S. consul there. He became a La Porte, Ind., farmer and a U.S. surveyor in the 1830s. He served in the Indiana Senate, 1837–40, and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1845–49, and the U.S. Senate, 1852–53. He was a presidential elector in 1844.

FROM JANETT RICHARDS¹

Honoured Sir

Lowell [Mass.]² June. 23, —47

I have heard with pleasure that you are soon to visit *Boston* the metropolis of our happy new-england, and believing that your principles are not so aristocratic that you will think it beneath your dignity to call on the labouring class I most sincerely hope you will extend your visit to Lowell the City of spindles that I may for once have the honour of seeing the ruler of our nation. Where now stands the pretty city of Lowell scarcely a quarter of a century since stood the leafy wilderness through which the picturesque Merimac wound its way. It is really wonderful to observe what the energy and enterprise of man, have done; where stood tall trees laden with verdure, factories now stand, and spindles almost continually revolve, and the sound of the loom is heard where once was heard the savage yell of the Indian. With a wish that you will deign to visit our City and a hope that you will not be offended with this simple scroll from a factory girl I remain your humble subject.

JANETT. RICHARDS

LS possibly in another's hand. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Philadelphia, New York City, or Springfield, Mass.

1. Richards worked in one of the textile factories of Lowell, Mass., which, since the 1820s, had employed large numbers of women and men. The factories provided dormitories in which to house and supervise unmarried female workers.

2. State identified through content analysis.

FROM JOEL B. SUTHERLAND

My dear Sir

Philada., June 23 '47

When I was speaker of the House of Representatives of the state of Penna. it became part of my duty to address Genl La Fayette.¹ It being difficult for him to *answer*, an address without understanding *in advance*, what [. . .]² who had to address him, had to say he requested me to send my speech to him a few hours before he met in the chamber of our state Legislature. I did so & he made a most appropriate reply

to the admiration of all who heard him, none of whom knew that I had previously send my address to him. A President cannot expect to get speeches *in advance* in his journey, or through the Union.³ He has therefore to seize upon *prominent* matters connected with history of each particular place *as he advances*, & blend them with what he has to say. A President *travelling* surrounded constantly with a crowd, has no time, to prepare himself for every emergency. I thought therefore I would send the enclosed.⁴ Look at it. If you think it worthy of notice you can use it. If not enclose it to me. It is made to suit the Hall of Independence, Our City &c, & drawn up with some care. I think it covers all the ground necessary, & is calculated to be of service. Your Excellency, will be the best Judge on this subject; & I send it for as much as it is worth, with good intentions, & if you are already fully prepared, for *Philada.*, & the Hall of Independence it will reach me through our post office.

J B SUTHERLAND

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Philadelphia.

1. Marie Joseph Paul Roch Yves Gilbert Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, (1757–1834) was a French military officer and politician who participated in the U.S. Revolutionary War, 1777–81, and later in the French Revolution. Americans celebrated him for his part in the former during his visits to the United States in 1784 and 1824–25. It was during the latter visit that Sutherland was serving as Speaker of the Pennsylvania House.

2. Word obliterated, ink blot.

3. Sutherland may be referring to the United States or, more likely, to the Washington *Union* newspaper, the Polk administration's organ, which frequently published the texts of speeches.

4. Sutherland enclosed a speech for Polk to deliver at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the building where America's independence had been declared and the Constitution adopted. The speech proposed that the city construct a mausoleum or memorial near the Hall to the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Such a structure, the speech asserts, would make Philadelphia a "*Mecca*" to which all Americans would travel. D. DLC–JKP. Polk did not give this speech when he appeared at Independence Hall on June 24.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Dear Sir.

Washington Wednesday night 23 June '47

There is nothing of importance to communicate. The N.O papers¹ of to night contain a long-winded proclamation of Santa Anna,² which you will have seen, it amounts to nothing. There seems to be much confusion in the Capital of Mexico. There is nothing to Mr Buchanan & nothing

to Gov. Marcy.³ Nor is there anything requiring attention in any of your letters since you left.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Philadelphia.

1. On New Orleans's newspapers and their role in Mexican War coverage, see letters and notes in James Buchanan to Polk, May 28, 1847; Walker to Polk, June 27, 1847; and Walker to Polk, June 28, 1847.

2. In a manifesto of May 22, 1847, Santa Anna described his recent military actions and claimed that he had temporarily resumed the presidency on May 20 owing to Pedro María Anaya's desire to leave office. He stressed the importance of holding Mexico City, called on all Mexicans to unite against the American forces, and rejected a peace that involved a large cession of land. The manifesto appeared in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* of June 15 and in other American newspapers.

3. William L. Marcy.

FROM JOHN FAIRFIELD¹

My Dear Sir,

Saco [Maine] June 24th 1847

It has afforded me great pleasure to communicate to you the invitation of my friends and neighbors, the citizens of Saco and Biddeford,² and I really hope you may not find it inconsistent with your arrangements to accept it. In addition to the suggestions in our "official" letter let me say, that if you pass the sabbath in Portland, you can come from there to this place (15 miles only) by the 8 O'clock train of cars on Monday morning and remain until 1/2 past 3 O'clk in the afternoon, and then reach Boston at 8 O'clk in the evening.

Mr. Clifford,³ however, understands the whole matter, and can aid you in making arrangements.

An early reply is desirable on account of giving information to neighboring towns.

JOHN FAIRFIELD

[P.S.] If you could spare two or three days I should tempt you with a proposition to go off our harbor in a boat, catch some fish, go on to one of the Islands, and make and eat a *Yankee Chowder*—in the manufacture of which I claim to be as great an adept as Mr. Webster.⁴ Upon this point I could call Judge Woodbury⁵ for a witness.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to New York City; marked "(Private)."

1. A Saco, Maine, Democrat, Fairfield (1797–1847) worked as a merchant and lawyer before serving as reporter of decisions of the Maine Supreme Court, 1832–35; in the U.S. House, 1835–38; and as governor, 1839–40

and 1842–43. He served in the U.S. Senate from 1843 until his death on December 24, 1847.

2. Fairfield et al. to Polk, June 24, 1847.

3. Democrat Nathan Clifford (1803–81) was U.S. attorney general under Polk, 1846–48. A New Hampshire native and a Maine lawyer, he earlier had served in the Maine House, 1830–34; as Maine attorney general, 1834–38; and in the U.S. House, 1839–43. Polk sent him to Mexico, 1848–49, first to negotiate the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and then as minister. He later became an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 1858–81.

4. Daniel Webster had been known since at least 1841 for his interest in making fish chowder. He delivered a speech on the topic in New York City in 1842 and his recipe was published shortly after his death in S. P. Lyman, *The Public and Private Life of Daniel Webster: Including Most of His Great Speeches, Letters from Marshfield, &c., &c.* (1852).

5. Levi Woodbury.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

My dear Sir,

Washn. 24. June 47. 4 Oclk.

I have nothing from the army. You will probably have seen in the Bal. Sun¹ of this mornng. some account of an attack on our train² not far from Vera Cruz. We have nothing further or other than that account. I think it is exaggerated. I expect news this eveng. and if I get any I will send it to you by Telegraph tomorrow mornng.

W. L. MARCY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Philadelphia.

1. Arunah S. Abell founded the Baltimore *Sun* in 1837 as a party-independent “penny press” newspaper.

2. For “train” usage, see note in Polk to Gideon J. Pillow, May 25, 1847.

FROM JAMES ROBERTSON¹

Dear Sir:

Phil. Pa. June 24 1847

I desire you to attend my lecture this evening at 8 Oclock in Franklin Hall, 6 st. below arch. Please answer this without delay. . . .

JAMES ROBERTSON

N.B. You will See the nature of it by the enclosed card.² J.R.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Mailed with Robertson’s other letter of June 24, 1847; addressed to Polk “at The Hon. G. M. Dallas’s Walnut St. Phil. Pa.” From Polk’s AE: “Lecturer & crazy.” John Appleton’s AE: “No answer.”

1. Robertson (c. 1811–1880s?) was an itinerant Baptist preacher from Scotland.

2. Robertson enclosed a printed broadside, with his printed signature and a date of June 24, 1847, announcing, "THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, Is expected to come and hear my Lecture upon his admitting Santa Anna into Mexico—Its influence upon our Institutions, showing that he aided and abetted the enemy of our country by it." It lists five specific topics: the cabinet meeting of May 13, 1846, when the action was discussed; the action's being "contrary to previous instruction of the 17th of April, and . . . to common sense"; its having "been injurious to both countries, and the Commerce of the world"; "The way to end the war"; and "The way to perpetuate our institution, until the Angel shall declare time to be no longer." DLC—JKP.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Dear Sir. Washington Thursday Evening June 24th 1847

The mail of this evening brings nothing new or important. Nothing official as I learn either to the State or War Departments. There are rumors as you will see of the train up from Vera Cruz being attacked and some pack-mules being taken. It does not appear that much loss was sustained, but it is all vague & you will have as much means of understanding it as we have here. Nothing of importance in any of your letters. Mr Buchanan says he will not write unless he has a communication from Mexico, in which event he will inform you immediately & in the contingency mentioned of anything of importance coming, I shall not forget to telegraph you. All Well.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to New York City. Published in *NU*, pp. 114–15.

FROM JOHN D. AND RICHARD G. RADWAY¹

Dear Sir 2. Courtland St. NY—June 25th 1847

Enclosed we have presented you with a box of our Toilet Soap. It is an article highly appreciated by Ladies and Gentlemen in all parts of our union. As an Emolient of the cuticle it is pleasant and agreeable. Hoping it will receive the approbation of your Lady and self, at the same time wishing you a prosperous career . . .

JOHN & R. G. RADWAY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally.

1. In 1847, English-born John D. Radway (1824–70) and his brother Richard G. Radway (c. 1830–1884) operated a drugstore at Cortlandt Street and Broadway, New York City. That year, they entered the patent medicine business. The brothers produced soaps, but were best known for various pills

and tonics, most prominently “Radway’s Ready Relief,” a tonic that purported to relieve myriad pains. This letter exemplifies the spirited self-promotion that drove the patent medicine industry, an enterprise that advertised extensively—in the new “penny” newspapers as well as signage painted on buildings—and produced great fortunes for the Radways and others. The industry had its roots in the eighteenth and thrived during the mid-nineteenth century. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, consequent to growing public wariness and government regulations, the industry faced its demise.

FROM GEORGE W. THOMPSON¹

My Dear Sir

Wheeling [Va.]² June 25th 1847

I have just had the pleasure of an hours conversation with Mrs Polk and am happy to *corroborate* the information which she gives you by her letter of this evening³ of her safe arrival here and her very good health. She meets here the steamer Clipper,⁴ a large boat of excellent accommodations of fine character as to boat captain⁵ & crew and to crown all, a very fine June flood so that she has the promise of a pleasant and speedy voyage.

I was much gratified in finding Mrs Polk in so good health and excellent spirits and in learning that your own partook of the same character.

I hope Sir you will have cause to be gratified with your visit to the North, and that our Eastern friends will in the freeness and kindness of a social intercourse with you, yield much of their political prejudices and in the prosperity of our country, and in the freedom of the seas which gives them the necessary markets of the world for their products, and manufactures, admit the wise tendency of the principles of your administration & the faithfulness with which the interests of the whole people have been asserted, protected and extended.⁶

GEO. W. THOMPSON

ALS. DLC–JKP.

1. Ohio-born attorney Thompson (1806–88) studied in Pennsylvania and Virginia, then practiced law in his native state. He moved to Wheeling, Va., in 1837 and, in 1838, was appointed deputy postmaster there. In 1848–50, he served by appointment from Polk as U.S. attorney for the Western District of Virginia. He served, as a Democrat, in the U.S. Congress, 1851–52.

2. State identified from John Appleton’s AE.

3. Letter not found.

4. Built in 1846, this sidewheel wooden hull packet belonged to the Pittsburgh and Cincinnati Daily Line of Steam Packets. It was the second steamer by the name *Clipper*, the first having exploded in 1843. On June 21,

1847, as the *Clipper* was leaving Cincinnati, a man drew a knife on the engineer in an unsuccessful attempt to commandeer the boat.

5. Horatio Nelson Crooks (1801–73), captain and co-owner of the *Clipper*, had entered the rope-making profession in Pennsylvania as a twelve-year-old orphan and had worked aboard boats since age fourteen. In addition to owning and captaining various boats, he purchased farms in western Virginia and Ohio and, during the Civil War, served in the first legislature of the new state of West Virginia.

6. Reference is apparently to tariff reductions enacted in 1846 by the United States and the United Kingdom. See letter and notes in George Bancroft to Polk, January 4, 1847.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Dear Sir.

Washington Friday Evening June 25. 1847

Your mail of to-night contains nothing. There is nothing of interest from the South except vague & contradictory accounts of Col McIntosh's¹ train being attacked by a pretty formidable body of guerilla Mexicans. Gov Marcy² received a letter from Mr Dimond³ Vera Cruz, 11th Inst which I have seen. He says Col McIntosh went down to Col Wilson⁴ for re enforcements & Gen Cadwallader⁵ had gone two days before with 500 men, making with Col McIntosh's force 1300 men. He had heard nothing from them since. This train had 400 thousand dollars of specie, but up to latest accounts the Mexicans had been repulsed & no money lost. Nothing through from Gen Scott or Trist. Mr Buchanan leaves here to-morrow at twelve. Gov Mouton⁶ of La goes with him. Nothing in your letters. All Well

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New York City.

1. James S. McIntosh.

2. William L. Marcy.

3. Born in Rhode Island, Democrat Francis M. Dimond (1796–1859) served stints as consul at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and, at the start of the Mexican War, as consul at Veracruz. After the U.S. Army took Veracruz in March 1847, he served as interpreter for the army and collector of the port. He was Rhode Island governor, 1853–54.

4. Henry Wilson.

5. George Cadwalader.

6. Alexander Mouton (1804–85), a Lafayette Parish, La., lawyer and planter, served in the Louisiana House, 1826–32 and 1836–37; as a Democratic presidential elector, 1828, 1832, and 1836; in the U.S. Senate, 1837–42; and as Louisiana governor, 1842–46.

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

Sir: Treasury Department June 25. 1847

At the request of the Hon. John Y. Mason, Secretary of the Treasury,¹ I have the honor to enclose, for your signature, an order for the temporary transfer of the U.S. Revenue Schooner Yancy,² to the orders of the Navy Department.³

R J WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to New York City.

1. Walker probably meant to write “Navy.”

2. Walker apparently refers to the revenue cutter *Isaac Yancy*. Since 1790, the Treasury Department had operated revenue cutters along the U.S. coast to enforce tariffs and anti-smuggling laws. During the Mexican War, at least five revenue cutters, due to their shallow drafts, were transferred to the navy to assist in amphibious landings. Other revenue cutters were transferred to the navy to assist in the U.S. blockade of Mexican ports. In 1915, with the creation of the coast guard, the operation of revenue cutters fell to that new service branch.

3. Enclosure not found.

FROM ALFRED E. BEACH¹

Honored Sir; New York, 26th June 1847

Understanding it your purpose to extend your present visit to Boston, I take great pleasure in enclosing invitations for yourself and friends, to a ceremony expected to occur during your stay in that city.²

Your attendance, though but for a short time, will add greatly to the enjoyment of those present, and ever be remembered with pleasure by the parties to the ceremony and their friends, who would remain under still greater obligations, could you enter farther into the festivities, by performing the nuptial ceremony.³

I need not add that the honor conferred in the latter instance, would command the highest sentiments of respect and esteem from its recipients.

ALFRED E. BEACH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From John Appleton’s AE: “answd” (reply not found). Published in *NU*, pp. 115–16.

1. Born in Massachusetts, Alfred E. Beach (1826–96), a son of Moses Y. Beach, was a prominent New York City inventor and publisher. In 1846, he and two partners purchased the *Scientific American*, a new journal with limited circulation and at that time devoted to science, religion, morals, and poetry.

The three boosted the journal's circulation and refocused its editorial content to coverage—and, in many cases, promotion—of new inventions. Beach developed extensive contacts in the U.S. Patent Office, where he became a frequent advocate for individual inventors and their works. He and his magazine are considered to have played key roles in the increase in American patent applications between 1846 and 1886, from 600 to 20,000. Among Beach's own many inventions were a prototype car and tunnel, developed in the late 1860s, for what, decades later, became the New York City subway system.

2. Formal invitations not found. Moses Y. Beach to Polk, June 26, 1847, also enclosed.

3. Polk did not preside over Alfred E. Beach's marriage to Harriet Eliza Holbrook, which took place on June 30. Nor, evidently, did he attend the ceremony, as John Appleton's journal of the president's trip makes no mention of the wedding.

FROM MOSES Y. BEACH¹

Esteemd Sir.

New York 26 June 1847

I take the liberty of adding, under envelope of my Son, a second cordial invitation to the ceremony alluded to, from myself and the members of my family; not only that the ceremony may be honored by your presence, but in your performance of the usual rites.

The parties are my third Son, Alfred, to Harriet, daughter of Jno F. Holbrook Esq² Boston, one of its first merchants. Unless something quite important interferences to prevent, I trust we shall not be disappointed in your attendance, expecting to be present myself, if but to bid you a sincere Welcome.

The compliments of Mr & Mrs Holbrook who join in the invitation.

M Y. BEACH

ALS. DLC—JKP. Enclosed in Alfred E. Beach to Polk, June 26, 1847.

1. Connecticut native Moses Y. Beach (1800–1868), the father of Alfred E. Beach, began his career as an inventor and, in 1835, purchased the *Sun*, a pioneer publication of New York City's soon thriving "penny press." As a journalist, editor, and publisher, he developed far-flung contacts in the Democratic party. Polk, in January 1847, dispatched Beach to Mexico on a secret mission, ultimately unsuccessful, to negotiate an end to the Mexican War. During that same period, Beach, whose newspaper often promoted U.S. expansionism, participated in intrigues in Cuba and New York that sought to annex Cuba to the United States.

2. Harriet Eliza Holbrook (1828–1905) and John F. Holbrook (?–1878?). John was a partner in the Boston dry goods business of Holbrook, Carter & Co.

FROM PETER C. DUMAS¹

Mr President

New-York 26th June 1847

I hope, that you will not reject the favour which I am to ask you. As the *Father* of our *Country*, to you, I call for redress. "Three long years have Elapsed, Since our *Flag* has been trampled upon, by *British Feet*," and which is now, at the State Department. The People have not yet forgotten the insult, and our Government is quite silent. The Hon. H. Wise, J. C. Calhoun, L. McLane² have proved to be true-Americans, and I am ready to do justice to their Successors,³ if England give us satisfaction. Here I am, deprived of my vessel, money & without any Employment, and all that for the honor of my Country. As a good Louisianan; & Democrat, please to listen to my call, and see if the Hon. Secretary of State, has given notice to our Ambassador Mr Bancroft, to force England to settle my claim, which is a just one.

Remember Sir, that the British officer has seized my Papers, and violated the treaty in searching by force. I made abandon of my vessel, for the honor of the *united states Flag*; and for our Country. The act, is of piracy; therefore I call on you for protection, and that Justice must be done to me. Please sir, cast your Eyes on this Pamphlet⁴; and you will soon perceive that I am the sufferer.

I feel sorry to say, that I have had the honor to read both of your *Messages*,⁵ and found nothing respecting; the *Seizure* of the *Brig Cyrus*. I hope that said claim will go before the *Senate* this year. Please do me the favor to take this in to consideration; and to do all what is in your power, to obtain satisfaction. If I had an office; I then could wait, longer. I should feel very happy; if I could be honored with an answer, expressing your opinion on the subject.

P. C. DUMAS

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally. From John Appleton's AE: "No ans."

1. Dumas (c. 1804–?) was a New Orleans merchant captain and owner of the ship *Cyrus*. In June 1844, his ship, while off Africa's coast, was boarded and its cargo seized by officers and crew-members of the British naval ship *Alert*, on suspicion of engaging in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. British and U.S. law by then banned that trade, though the Webster-Ashburton Treaty did not allow British searches of U.S. ships. The *Cyrus* had sailed from Cuba, a possession of Spain and a frequent violator of treaties between the United Kingdom and Spain that banned Spain's participation in the trade. Dumas paid off his crew and gained passage for himself aboard a French merchant ship to Rio de Janeiro. There, in August 1844, he pressed his case for the recovery of his ship to the U.S. minister to Brazil, Henry A. Wise, and to British officials. During the

boarding of the *Cyrus*, Dumas alleged, an officer and a crew member from the *Alert* had trampled upon a U.S. flag that had been stretched across the doorway to his cabin to prevent their entry to seize a ship log-book. Wise relayed Dumas's grievances to Washington City but, so far as records indicate, Dumas never recovered his ship or won compensation for his loss. As late as 1854, he unsuccessfully petitioned a British commission for compensation.

2. Henry A. Wise, minister to Brazil (1844–47); John C. Calhoun, secretary of state (1844–45); and Louis McLane, minister to the United Kingdom (1845–46).

3. David Tod, James Buchanan, and George Bancroft, respectively.

4. Enclosure not found.

5. Dumas refers to Polk's First (1845) and Second (1846) Annual Messages to Congress.

FROM A. LEFOGNAIN¹

New York June 26. 1847

The bearer of this note A. Lefognain has been in a tour with Dr A Walters. He has now gone away. He says he has lost his free papers.² He is desirous to have you take him as your servant when you return to Washington, as he cannot go home without his papers. He prays that you will grant him his request. He says he was born in Nashville, Tennessee.

A LEFOGNAIN HIS X MARK

[P.S.] Enclosed is a certificate from Dr Waltes.³

NS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by hand in New York City. John Appleton's AE: "Wants free papers, & to be Presdts Servt."

1. This Nashville-born black man, whether born in bondage or as a freeman, claimed to have carried papers affirming his freedom. Before the Civil War, the legal rights of even free African Americans varied among states. In New York, for instance, a black man could vote only if he owned \$250 in property. The fugitive slave clause of the U.S. Constitution required the return of escaped slaves to their owners. In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that no African American was a citizen and that a slave brought to a free state remained enslaved. Only with the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution in 1868 and 1870 did African Americans legally win citizenship and voting rights nationally.

2. Free papers were documents issued to free persons of color by courts in all slaveholding states. Generally, any white person enjoyed the right to ask any black person at any time for such papers. A person with dark skin was legally presumed to be a slave unless he or she could produce free papers; those to whom the papers were issued were expected to carry them at all times. To safeguard the papers, free black people often carried them in tin containers

topped with waterproof lids that, affixed with belt loops, were carried along the bearers' waists.

3. Enclosure not found.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

My dear Sir:

Washn. June 26. 47. 6 O'clock. P.M.

The southern mail is just in and I have received a letter from Mr Dimond¹ at Vera Cruz dated the 15. and a dispatch from Genl Scott dated the 4th inst at Puebla.

Mr D.'s account about the train is remarkably confused but it appears that it has passed on. The guerrillas made a stand at the national Bridge and there was a fight or skirmish at that place in which we lost some 8 or 10 men but they the guerrillas were routed. Mr D. does not say that the train had reached Jalapa but he speaks as if there would be no difficulty in doing so.

Genl Scott has ordered Jalapa to be evacuated & the forces there to pass on to him in Puebla. This appears to me to be a very strange order, & I fear it will expose the recruits & reinforcement which are on the way to his column. The Genl represents his army to be greatly reduced—say to about 6000. He is in very bad humour. He has sent me the copy of another letter to Mr Trist. It is exceedingly *scurrilous*.

The last sentence in his dispatch is so remarkable that I will copy it.

"Considering the many and² disappointments & mortifications I have been made to feel since I left Washington or the total want of support & sympathy on the part of the war department which I have so long experienced I beg to be recalled from this army the moment it will be safe for any person to embark at Vera Cruz which I suppose will be early in November. Probably all field operations will be over long before that time."

Beautiful Extract

The Genl says in relation to the state of things in the City of Mexico but little. "It is understood he says that a new government will be installed on the 15th inst. & there is good ground to hope under Herrera & Trias³—both understood to be desirous of peace with the U States," &c.

Genl Pillow⁴ had, as Mr Dimond says arrived at Vera Cruz, a considerable number of troops. It was sickly there but he does not speak of the vomito being among the troops, who are encamped three miles north of the City on the beach.

W. L. MARCY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to New York City. From Polk’s AE: received June 26, 1847; “Addressed to me, while I was on my Northern tour.”

1. Francis M. Dimond.

2. Marcy probably omitted a word here.

3. José Joaquín Herrera and Ángel Trías Álvarez. Born in the city of Chihuahua, Mexico, and educated in Europe, Trías (1809–67) became governor of the state of Chihuahua in 1846. A general, he unsuccessfully defended his state against Alexander W. Doniphan’s forces in early 1847.

4. Gideon J. Pillow.

FROM JAMES S. CAMPBELL¹

Most excellent sir— No 255 Pearle st NY. [c. June 27, 1847]²

A lady is desirous of Having a perrsonal interview with you previ-
ous to your leaving town. She regrets to intrude upon the *sanctuary*
of the *sabbath*. But circamstances compel Her to do so. It is about Her
Husband now engaged in the Mexican War. If you will Be so good as
to grant Her this request you will [. . .]³ your Humble servt—

JAMES S. CAMPBELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably delivered by the “lady” mentioned in New York City. From John Appleton’s AE: “Answd verbally.”

1. This was likely the same James S. Campbell who had cowritten a letter to Polk on September 4, 1845. A farmer and a Democrat, that Campbell (c. 1812–1860s?) lived in Salem Township, Luzerne County, Penn., both before and after 1847. He served in the Pennsylvania House, 1845–46. This letter is in similar handwriting to his, though it has not been confirmed that he traveled to or lived in New York City in 1847.

2. Approximate date identified through content analysis. Continuing his trip north, Polk left New York City on Sunday, June 27, 1847.

3. Word illegible.

FROM JEREMIAH GEORGE HARRIS

My Dear Sir— U.S Ship Albany Off Tabasco [Mexico]
June 27, 1847

Comme. Perry¹ with 1000 men from the fleet has taken and gar-
risoned San Juan Bautista, the capital of Tabasco. You will no doubt
have all the particulars through official channels. The frigate Raritan²
leaves this anchorage for Norfolk to-morrow morning; by her I forward
this letter. It is said next day we go to Vera Cruz, thence home, and will
probably be at Norfolk about one week after her arrival there.

I think the taking of Tabasco and *garrisoning* it, as has been done
by Comme. Perry one of the most important movements since the com-

mencement of the war, not only in a national and political point of view, but in an agricultural and commercial view. I made a report of some commercial researches which he ordered me to make at Tabasco, and he has informed me by letter, acknowledging my report in handsome terms that he shall forward it to the Department as a portion of his report.³

We have had stirring times here in the fleet for the last year—especially since November last—there have been many hardships and privations, which I am told are unusual to the Navy, but which have been borne with comparative cheerfulness.

When we shall arrive at Norfolk I hope to find permission from the Dept lodged with the Commandant of the yard⁴ for me to visit Washington on two or three days “leave,” immediately on our arrival. I can return to Norfolk, settle my a/c, and then I trust I may be permitted to visit my family in Tennessee. Such is my wish, and if in the discharge of your arduous duties you can steal a moment to aid me in this I shall feel thankful.

I have been so entirely out of the “world political” that I know nothing of the *leading* movements at home. It will require some time to *post up*⁵ the events of the last year.

In the Navy we have a great majority of federalists—old federalists of the Hartford Convention stamp who would like, honestly, to see the Union dissolved.⁶ It is so—though I blush to say it. I therefore refrain from political conversations on ship board as much as possible—yet sometimes I cannot refrain from open disapprobation. I think there may be made many wholesome alterations in the regulations of the naval service without impairing its discipline, and greatly promoting its efficiency, certainly elevating its character—on which I hope to converse with you one of these days.

I shall deem it a great favor if I am permitted by the Dept to visit Washington immediately on our arrival at Norfolk.

I am afraid this continual absence from home—this living almost entirely out of the world—will not be suitable for me—of this however I shall no doubt have the liberty of conversing with you.

If you have ever had leisure to give thoughtful attention to the law of 1842 establishing the pay of Pursers⁷ and the existing *regulations* for their corps, you cannot have failed to discover that the latter has entirely failed to carry out, or rather meet the objects of, the former—which omission is severely felt by Pursers in service.

J GEO. HARRIS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Born in Rhode Island, Matthew C. Perry (1794–1858) joined the navy in 1809 and became a commodore in 1841. During the Mexican War, he was

given command of the USS *Mississippi* in 1846 and of the Home Squadron in March 1847. He participated in the campaigns against Tampico, Veracruz, and Tabasco. Perry's many other accomplishments at sea included selecting the location of Liberia in 1819 and leading an expedition to Japan in 1852–54 that forcibly ended Japan's isolation from much of the world. That expedition resulted in a March 1854 U.S.-Japan treaty, negotiated by a U.S. delegation led by Perry and by their Japanese counterparts. Among other provisions, the treaty opened two Japanese ports to U.S. ships and commerce.

2. A frigate launched in 1843, the USS *Raritan* became part of the Home Squadron during the Mexican War. It served as the flagship for Cdre. David Conner, Perry's predecessor in command of the Squadron, and was involved in the landing at Tabasco in June 1847.

3. Perry addressed his report on the attack on Tabasco of June 13–16, 1847, dated June 24 to Navy Secretary John Y. Mason. He wrote additional reports to Mason on the captured city on June 25, June 28, July 4, and July 28. In none of these did he enclose or mention Harris's report. See Perry's reports in House Executive Document No. 1, 30th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 1209–33.

4. New Jersey native Lawrence Kearney (1789–1868) joined the navy in 1807. Captain Kearney commanded the Norfolk, Va., Navy Yard, 1847–48.

5. To "post up" means "to bring oneself up to date on a subject," or, in a usage that is now rare, "to update (a book such as a ledger)."

6. The Hartford Convention was a meeting of New England Federalists in Hartford, Conn., in 1814–15. They gathered out of opposition to the War of 1812 and Democratic-Republican president James Madison's economic policies. The Convention proposed several constitutional amendments but did not call for New England's secession from the Union. Nonetheless, some Federalists had suggested such a move. Thus, the Convention soon became identified with secession and discredited the Federalist party. References to the Hartford Convention persisted among Democrats seeking to disparage Whigs as treasonous latter-day Federalists.

7. This law of August 26, 1842, laid out the pay of pursers assigned to various navy yards and types of ships. "An Act to regulate the pay of pursers and other officers of the navy." *SL*, 27th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 206.

FROM WILLIAM A. HARRIS¹

Buenos Aires, June 27, 1847

Harris reports that when he arrived, the Argentines had a poor opinion of the United States. His predecessor's² support for them against the English and French had convinced them that the United States would use "force, to drive the Blockaders out of the River."³ They interpreted Harris's assertion of American friendship but neutrality "as deceptive, and as proving that the friendship . . . was not sincere." He managed to persuade them otherwise, until the Mexican War. The Argentines now support Mexico as "a sister Republic." They publish U.S. Whigs' anti-war speeches and a government official has equated U.S. actions in Mexico with English and French ones in Argentina. Harris believes

the Argentine government is withholding key facts from the people, so he has translated the part of Polk's Second Annual Message to Congress about the war into Spanish and hopes to publish it. He asks for money to cover this project as a war expenditure. The translation also will enlighten other South American countries, all of which share Argentina's opinion. Harris will send copies to his counterpart in Chile⁴ to distribute and publish. He encloses fifty⁵ for Polk to send elsewhere in South America and suggests Polk order a reprint for distribution in Mexico.

Harris believes that Juan Manuel de Rosas,⁶ who corresponds with the Mexican and all South American governments, aims to create "a great Congress of Representatives" that will organize "a common defence" and a common policy toward "estrangers"—"foreigners." Rosas, in his negotiations with John Hobart Carodoc, Lord Howden, and Alexandre-Florian-Joseph Colonna, Count Walewski,⁷ will insist on nearly all his demands.

Asserting that only fear will force Mexico to accept peace, Harris recommends that Polk "prosecute the war with the most unabating vigor" instead of proposing peace. The Whigs, whose newspapers and speeches have motivated the Mexicans and hurt South Americans' opinion of the United States, Harris asserts, are guilty of not merely "'moral treason,'" but "the 'overt act.'"⁸

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received October 1, 1847.

1. A Virginia lawyer, Harris (1805–64) served in the state house, 1830–31; as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1841–43; as editor of the *Washington Spectator* and its successor the *Constitution*, which ceased publication in 1845; and as chargé d'affaires to Argentina, 1846–51.

2. William Brent, Jr., (1783–1848) a Virginian, served as chargé, 1844–46.

3. France and the United Kingdom blockaded the province of Buenos Aires, including the Río de la Plata, from 1845 to 1850 in response to the efforts of Argentine dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas to establish control over Uruguay. The blockade ended after Argentina agreed to withdraw its troops from Uruguay.

4. William W. Crump (1819–97) of Virginia served as chargé d'affaires to Chile, 1844–47.

5. Enclosures not found.

6. Rosas (1793–1877) became captain general of Buenos Aires in 1831 and united the Río de la Plata states into the Argentine Confederation in 1835. He was its dictator until being overthrown in 1852 and escaping to the United Kingdom.

7. These men arrived in Buenos Aires in May 1847 as a commission to negotiate for peace and the end of the blockade; they failed. Born in Dublin, Howden (1799–1873) became a lieutenant general in the British army. He succeeded his father as second baron in 1839 and served as British minister to Brazil, 1847–50, and to Spain, 1850–58. Walewski (1810–68), an illegitimate son of Napoleon Bonaparte, was a diplomat and writer. He spent time in Poland and England before becoming a French citizen and soldier in the 1830s. In the 1840s he was sent on missions to Egypt and Brazil. He held cabinet positions under Napoleon III in the 1850s and 1860s.

8. The Constitution requires proof of an “overt act” for a conviction of treason. Beginning in late 1846, Democratic newspapers described Whigs’ sympathy for and encouragement of Mexican resistance as “moral treason.” The *Washington Daily Union* used that term on December 10 when defending Polk’s Second Annual Message against Whig attacks. See also Polk to Robert Armstrong, April 29, 1847, and Polk to Hopkins L. Turney, May 15, 1847, on Felix Grundy’s use of the term during the War of 1812.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear sir [Yalobusha County, Miss.]¹ June. 27th 1847

I nough take the oppitunity of ritin you a few lins to inform you the situation of youre farm and people.

We are all well and gitin on as we think for the best. We have at this time afine crope of corn in good order. We have afine stand of coten. Coten is in ginerly small at this season of the yeare but yours is as good as eny I have sean. We have just had afine rane las evenig. I am at this tim in good sperits of a crop if the season is faverabl frome this out.

The stook all locks well as well as could be exspect.

I have noth ing Mor to right worth youre Attention. Only remane

[JOHN A. MAIRS]

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received July 10, 1847; “Relates to my private business, on my plantation in Mississippi.”

1. Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Dear Sir. Washington Sunday night June 27th [1847]¹

After writing to you yesterday evening² I found that Gov Marcy³ had despatches from Genl Scott. He wrote to you himself.⁴ There is nothing special to night as far as I can learn. A package came through by express I suppose from the endorsement on it at Mobile & Montgomery, but it contained nothing but applications for office. I send you the *Courier extra & Vera Cruz Eagle*,⁵ for information in regard to the train &c.

I received a letter from Gen Shields aid⁶ 4 June Jalappa. He was walking about & would leave in a few days direct for Washington.

Nothing in your letters of importance. All Well.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Boston.

1. Year identified through content analysis.

- FROM EDWARD EVERETT¹

EDWARD EVERETT

2. Harvard University, a Unitarian institution in Cambridge, Mass., was founded in 1636. It is the oldest college in the United States.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Dear Sir. Washington June 28th 1847 Monday night

There is nothing in your mail of to-night. The train under McIntosh & Cadwallader¹ has no doubt gone through without any further serious molestation after joined by Cadwallader. There was a verbal report brought over by the Galveston which is published in the Balt Sun from the Delta² that Gen Scott had pushed on to Rio Frio & was there met by some kind of offers for peace which he declined. I can find it no where else & know not how much of truth there is in it.

The Stevenson³ draft I paid to day. Nothing of interest in the City.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Concord, N.H.

1. James S. McIntosh and George Cadwalader.

2. The New Orleans *Delta*, with daily and weekly editions, was established in 1845 by former staff members of that city's *Picayune* as a competitor to that paper.

3. Vernon K. Stevenson.

FROM FRANCIS JACKSON¹

Sir,

Boston, June 29. 1847

The Board of Managers of the Masstts. Anti-Slavery Society² request an audience at such time during your visit as shall suit your convenience, for the purpose of presenting an address on the subject of Slaveholding, a copy of which is enclosed.³

FRANCIS JACKSON

ANS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Boston. Published in *NU*, p. 121.

1. A prominent abolitionist born in Newton, Mass., Jackson (1789–1861) was for many years president of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. He had served on the Boston Common Council, 1823–24, and as an alderman, 1826.

2. Founded by William Lloyd Garrison in 1832 as the New England Anti-Slavery Society, this organization renamed itself the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in 1834 in response to Garrison's formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Both of the above named organizations promoted the immediate abolition of slavery and the expansion of equal rights to African Americans through such activities as speeches and publications aimed at the general public.

3. Jackson et al. to Polk, c. June 29, 1847.

FROM FRANCIS JACKSON ET AL.¹

Sir,

[Boston, c. June 29, 1847]²

Your visit to Boston presents a suitable opportunity to ask of you the immediate performance of an act, which is demanded alike by inflexible justice, the natural instinct of the human soul, and the unchangeable law of GOD.

We address you simply as the friends of liberty and equality, in no partisan state of mind, and for no political object³; with all the respect that may be considered due to your elevated station, yet with that frankness of manner and plainness of speech which an occasion like this demands.

You are a slaveholder. Men, women and children are by you held in slavery—recorded in your ledger as chattels personal—worked like brutes, without wages or stipulation, under the lash of a driver,⁴ and fraudulently and tyrannically deprived of all their just earnings.

No greater sin can be committed against GOD, no more atrocious crime against man, than this. He who commits it in this age of the world, and especially in a land so full of light and knowledge as our own, is pre-eminently guilty. It is man-stealing—an act, in comparison with which, the crime of theft, burglary or arson “whitens into virtue.”⁵

It is fair to measure you by your own standard. You claim to be a genuine democrat, and have been placed in the Presidential chair by a party claiming to be purely democratic. Is not this the fundamental doctrine of democracy, that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”?⁶ Yet you hold men as your property, “to all intents, purposes and constructions whatsoever,”⁷ and do not blush! You kidnap human beings, and, like Pharaoh of old, refuse to liberate your miserable victims!⁸ With you, practicably, democracy is synonymous with man-stealing; for no man would be regarded by you, or by the party to which you belong, as a true democrat, who should venture to denounce slaveholding as a crime. This is the extreme of human inconsistency—the acme of human criminality.

But, more than this—you profess to be a follower of Christ, and are, we understand, connected with a professedly Christian church, as a member of his spiritual body.⁹ How, then, dare you to make merchandise of those, for whom Christ suffered and died, that they might be redeemed in common with the rest of mankind? Did not he come expressly to set the captive free, and to put an end to all oppression? Has he not taught us to do unto others whatsoever we would that they should do unto us?¹⁰ What greater outrage can be perpetrated upon Christianity, than to make the profession of it compatible with holding our fellow-creatures in hopeless bondage?

The Bey of Tunis is no Christian; yet, “for the glory of GOD, and to distinguish man from the brute creation,” he has nobly emancipated all his slaves, and made slavery unlawful throughout his dominions.¹¹ Henceforth, every slave fleeing from any part of the world to Tunis is declared to be free, as soon as he touches the soil.

The Autocrat of all the Russias is no democrat; yet, with many of his nobles, he has emancipated a numerous serf-population, and designs to extirpate serfdom in every part of his immense empire.¹²

You claim to be a democrat and a Christian; yet you are a slaveholder—to this hour, an incorrigible slaveholder! Before the whole world, the Bey of Tunis and the Russian Autocrat put you to open shame.

The fact that you occupy a high station is no proof of your worthiness, but only demonstrates the gross wickedness which prevails in the land. Truly it may be affirmed at this day, as of old—"The rulers of the people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed."¹³

Emancipate your slaves. Every one of them is your equal by birth, and an eternal destiny. The act may be attended with difficulties; but, be assured, it will redound to your imperishable renown, and in life and in death be to you a source of exhaustless felicity. But, while you hold them in bondage, your hands will be stained with blood, and your garments with pollution; and their cries against you will continue to enter the ear of the Lord of Sabaoth,¹⁴ until his judgments shall be fully executed upon you.

As President of the United States, if an American citizen should be caught in the act of reducing a native-born African to slavery, whether by purchase or violence, on the coast of Africa, you would officially pronounce him to be a pirate, and order him to be hanged, under the law of Congress.¹⁵ With what epithet, then, should you be characterised, and what should be the punishment, on the score of impartial justice, meted out to you, who are keeping in bondage scores of native-born *Americans*?

Reflect! GOD is no respecter of persons, and He is just! Hear, and obey His voice: "Undo the heavy burdens, break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free."¹⁶ In behalf of the Massachusetts AntiSlavery Society

FRANCIS JACKSON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in Jackson to Polk, June 29, 1847. Published in *NU*, pp. 121-23.

1. Letter written by Jackson, who signed his own name and those of two secretaries, ten managers, two counselors, and the general agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. The managers included William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Maria Weston Chapman, and Charles L. Remond; the counselors included James Russell Lowell. Garrison (1805-79), a leading abolitionist born in Newburyport, Mass., was an editor at the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* in Baltimore, 1829-30, before founding the *Liberator* in Boston in 1831. He continued to edit that paper until 1865 and served as president of the American Anti-Slavery Society, 1843-65. Phillips (1811-84), a Massachusetts lawyer, became a prominent abolitionist lecturer in the 1830s. He contributed to the *Liberator* and championed such other reform causes as women's rights and temperance. Chapman (1806-85), of Massachusetts, was principal of a girls' high school before turning to abolitionism in 1834. She assisted Garrison in editing the *Liberator*. Her husband having died in 1842, she moved in 1848 to Paris, where she continued to write in support of the abolitionist cause. Remond (1810-73) was an African American abolitionist orator

from Salem, Mass. He represented the American Anti-Slavery Society at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, but he and Garrison sat in the gallery because women were excluded from participation. Lowell (1819–91), a Cambridge, Mass., poet, published his first volume, *A Year's Life*, in 1841. He later taught modern languages and literature at Harvard University, 1857–86; edited the *Atlantic Monthly*, 1857–62, and the *North American Review*, 1863–72; and served as minister to Spain, 1877–80, and to the United Kingdom, 1880–85.

2. Place identified through content analysis. Approximate date identified from cover letter.

3. Garrison and his followers eschewed engagement with formal politics and political parties. Considering the Constitution a proslavery document, they believed that voting or otherwise participating in the political system it had established would compromise their abolitionist principles.

4. Polk's overseer was John A. Mairs.

5. The phrase "whiten into Virtue" appears in act 5, scene 5 of William Thompson's *Gondibert and Bertha, a Tragedy* (1757), but Jackson et al. probably quote it from Thomas Corwin's speech in the U.S. Senate, February 11, 1847, opposing the Mexican War: "It is a crime of such infernal hue, that every other in the catalogue of iniquity, when compared with it, whitens into virtue."

6. Slight misquotation of the Declaration of Independence, which refers to "unalienable Rights."

7. Legal terminology dating back to the eighteenth century.

8. Jackson et al. refer to the Egyptian pharaoh who refused to free the Israelite slaves in Exodus.

9. On Polk's religion and church membership, see letter and notes in Anonymous to Polk, January 1, 1847.

10. On the golden rule, see letter and notes in Anonymous to Polk, January 1, 1847.

11. Ahmad Bey (1806–55) reigned as Tunisia's sovereign, 1837–55. He instituted numerous reforms, including the elimination of restrictions on Jews, the opening of European schools, and the hiring of European military instructors. He outlawed the international slave trade and freed his own slaves in 1841; he abolished slavery altogether in 1846.

12. Czar Nicholas I opposed serfdom, but did not abolish it. In November 1847, he did decree that serfs whose masters' estates were sold for debt could purchase their own freedom. Alexander II abolished serfdom in 1861.

13. Paraphrase of Isaiah 9:16: "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed."

14. Hebrew for "Lord of Hosts," this name for God appears in Romans 9:29 and James 5:4.

15. The authors refer to a law of 1820 that defined such an act as piracy. "An Act to continue in force 'An act to protect the commerce of the United States, and punish the crime of piracy,' and also to make further provisions for punishing the crime of piracy." *SL*, 16th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 113.

16. Paraphrase of Isaiah 58:6: "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Dear Sir.

Washington Tuesday night June 29. 1847

Judge Mason of the State Department¹ & Gov Marcy² from the War, each promise to write you if they receive anything official or important from the seat of War, while I am left to advise you of your own mail & what else I can pick up, which may be new to you.

Judge Mason received last night (addressed to Mr Buchanan) a letter or despatch from Mr Trist Puebla June 3d. It informs the Govt of little, except a very bad state of things between himself & Genl Scott. He encloses extracts from Mexican papers which look more favorable to peace. He had not heard from Mexico (the City) since 29th May but *understood* Genl Scott had received *something* a day or two later.

The mail of to-night brings nothing of importance. A package came through by express dated Mobile 24th June but as usual contains nothing but applications from the army for office & C. I infer from it there must be an arrival at N.O.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Portland, Maine, and forwarded to Augusta, Maine.

1. Navy Secretary John Y. Mason was tending to mail for Secretary of State James Buchanan, who was traveling with the president in the Northeast.

2. William L. Marcy.

FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON WARREN¹

Sir,

City of Charlestown [Mass.]² June 29th 1847

I herewith respectfully enclose to you a copy of the Address which I shall have the honor to deliver to you at the reception on Bunker Hill.³

As a large number of citizens will probably be assembled on the occasion, it will be highly gratifying to them to have the privilege of hearing as extended a reply as you may have strength and leisure to make, consistently with the pressing demands which are made upon them during your tour.

G. WASHINGTON WARREN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Boston. John Appleton's AE: "Shewn to the President No answer."

1. A lawyer, Warren (1813–83) became a master in chancery in 1840 and served in the Massachusetts House, 1844–45, and Senate, 1853–54. After running unsuccessfully for Congress as a Whig in 1846, he served as Charlestown mayor, 1847–51. He was president of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, 1847–75.

2. State identified through content analysis.

3. Enclosure not found. The Battle of Bunker Hill was fought during the Revolutionary War on June 17, 1775, on Breed's Hill near Bunker Hill. The Bunker Hill Monument Association was formed in 1823 to build a monument to commemorate the battle. The monument, a granite obelisk on Breed's Hill, was completed in 1842 and dedicated in 1843. The Association then turned its attention to landscaping the area and preserving an older monument to the battle on the same hill.

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

My Dear Wife:

Boston June 30th 1847

The reception at Boston on yesterday, was highly respectful and gratifying. The day was hot and uncomfortable, but still the procession was large. Of all this as well as of the reception on the day before at *New Haven & Hartford*, you will see an account in the newspapers. I am becoming much fatigued, but think I will continue my tour to Augusta in Maine, where I expect to be on Saturday the 3rd of July, & from that point will return direct to Washington. I received your letter last evening written at *Wheeling*,¹ and was glad to learn that your journey had been pleasant and agreeable. Almost all my leading political friends of New England seem to have congregated here, and will accompany me to *Lowell* to day. Among others *Gov. Woodbury Gov. Hubbard, Gov. Anderson, Gov. Fairfield Gov. Toucey, Senator Atherton*² & many members of Congress, with whom I served in former years. In a word all my political friends are warm & enthusiastic, while, in justice to my political opponents I must say they have extended to me every mark of respect & attention, which my most ardent political friends could have desired. Thus far I am much gratified with my visit.

I received the enclosed *Telegraphic* despatch last night. I have no doubt it is true. He informed me that he would take his wife with him to Tennessee, and will probably return with you.³ I have no time to write more.

Your affectionate Husband

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

1. Letter not found.

2. Levi Woodbury, Henry Hubbard, Hugh J. Anderson, John Fairfield, Isaac Toucey, and Charles G. Atherton. Anderson (1801–81), a Maine lawyer and Democrat, served as clerk of the Waldo County courts, 1827–37; in the U.S. House, 1837–41; and as Maine governor, 1844–47. He ran for the U.S. Senate in 1847 but withdrew before the election. Atherton (1804–53), a New Hampshire

lawyer and Democrat, served in the state house, 1830 and 1833–36; the U.S. House, 1837–43; and the U.S. Senate, 1843–49 and 1853.

3. Enclosure not found. Polk probably refers to William H. Polk and Mary Louise Corse Polk, who married in New York City on June 29, 1847. Mary (1816–51) was a daughter of a wealthy Quaker tanner, Israel Corse, of New York City. William had been a widower since Belinda G. Dickinson Polk's death in 1844.

FROM JOSEPH KNOX WALKER

Dear Sir.

Washington Wednesday night June 30th 47

There is nothing in your mail of to night of interest, or in the papers from the South. A short note from Gen Pillow Vera Cruz June 17th¹ says he "will leave the next day for the interior." Nothing of interest in the City. All Well.

J KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Portland, Maine.

1. Gideon J. Pillow. Letter not found.

JULY

FROM JAMES EDMONSTON¹

Sir: Colemans Hotel² Washington City July 1/47

I have the honor of two introductory letters to you from Co'l Benton & Co'l R. M. Johnson³ which Co'l Laughlin⁴ informs me have been presented to you through Co'l Wm. Polk.⁵

Appointed by Governor Johnson⁶ as Lieu't Co'l of cavalry of the Militia of Louisiana for five years, and mustered into the service of the U.S. by Gen'l Scott at the Island of Lobos to serve at the Gen'l Head Quarters of the Army in Mexico, I desire to be continued in the service during our occupation of that country, through an Appointment from yourself; & to be transferred to serve connected with Mr Trist's Mission there.

My thorough knowledge of the Spanish language, of the character of the people, & resources of that country, lead me to believe that in our future relations with it, I may prove useful in assisting to carry out the views & policy of the Administration.

Agreeable to app't, I shall have the honor of waiting upon you to day at one o. clock.

JAS. EDMONSTON

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed locally. From E possibly in Hampton C. Williams's hand: received July 1847.

1. A surveyor alternately living in Louisiana and Mississippi, Edmonston in 1838 claimed a land grant in Louisiana from the Spanish government. After

the military service he describes in this letter, he returned to Mexico in August 1847 and sailed, in 1848, to Yucatan as an army captain.

2. Coleman's Hotel, a prominent Washington City hotel, counted among its guests James K. and Sarah Childress Polk before his inauguration in 1845.

3. Letters not found. References are to Thomas H. Benton and Richard M. Johnson. Johnson (1780–1850), a Kentucky lawyer, served in the U.S. House, 1807–19 and 1829–37; in the U.S. Senate, 1819–29; and as vice president under Martin Van Buren, 1837–41. Originally a Democratic Republican, he became a Jacksonian Democrat in the 1820s.

4. Samuel H. Laughlin.

5. The grandson of William Polk of Raleigh, N.C., and a distant relative of the president, this William Polk (1821–98) was born in North Carolina and became a major sugar planter in Rapides Parish, La.

6. Isaac Johnson.

FROM FRANKLIN PIERCE

Vera Cruz, Mexico

My dear Sir—

July 1, 1847—Thursday night 11 o'clock

Agreeably to my promise when at Washington I communicate to you the true state of things in this Country so far as I have been able to ascertain them during the four days that have elapsed since my arrival. Genl Cadwallader left here on the 7th inst. with about 2000 men, Genl Pillow with an equal force on the 18th. Neither train since Genl Cadwallader joined the command of Colo' McIntosh¹ have encountered any serious opposition altho' both have been attacked—yesterday at 12 o'clock Genl Cadwallader was at Perote, and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon Pillows command was within less than 20 miles of the same place. Genl. Alvaris² and another Mexican General whose name I do not recollect, were in the rear of Genl Scott between Perote & Puebla, threatening to give battle to Genl Cadwallader, but rumour says, that the two *chiefs* have quarrelled & separated their commands. This I doubt. The united force consisted of about 2500 Cavalry & 4 pairs of artillery. Whether separated or united I am satisfied that they cannot arrest Genl Cadwalladers March for two hours. At the National Bridge and at other points I shall probably meet with some resistance, but unless I greatly misjudge it will be readily overcome. Genl Scott was at Puebla yesterday, but will soon (I fear before I can possibly join him) advance upon the City of Mexico, which from all the information I have received, I think, he will take without great loss altho' the Mexicans are busily engaged in erecting fortifications and threatening as usual a sort of Palifox resistance.³ All this information is derived from Capt. Varasa, who came in this evening with the express for the British Steamer now

in port. So much for *arms*. I cannot but regard the indications so far as diplomacy is concerned as favorable (altho' I deem it utterly impossible to draw any safe conclusion from what mexicans from the highest to the lowest say). I inclose copies of the notes which have passed between Mr Trist & Santa Anna.⁴ They perhaps indicate but little except so far as consenting to receive a communication from our Govt is concerned. Capt Varasa, who is a man of the highest respectability, assures me, that while at Mexico he saw Santa Anna often and that he is stongly inclined to negociate, but fears to take the responsibility without the sanction of Congress for the convening of which he has issued a proclamation. It is doubtful whether a quorum for action can be induced to assemble. Santa Anna left the City of Mexico day before yesterday to pass a few days as he announced for his health and that he might have an opportunity undisturbed to confer with his Secy's of War & Foreign affairs.⁵ A word touching my own command. I arrived here four days since after a voyage of 30 days from Newport. Troops have been arriving almost daily since. My camp is about 2 1/2 miles from the City upon the Gulf shore on the route to Jalapa. Yesterday there were about 1800 bayonets in the line. The mules & mustangs to be provided for my baggage train are perfectly wild or at least have never been in harness. The process of breaking them is going on as fast as possible, but five or six days at least will be required to prepare even tolerably for my march. So far as our men are concerned the Vomito has not made fearful ravages. But the best men as usual have been most exposed to the rays of the sun & due's of the night and unsubdued by all other trials have fallen before the climate. The consequence has been, that men of less experience in the various departments have succeeded to places of the greatest labor & responsibility. Major Hetsel⁶ Quartermaster, (broken down in health) has left today and is succeeded by Major Smith⁷ but at this West Depot with the labors incident to it there ought at least to be double the force of competent men in that Department—at least such is my judgment. And I think I should be warranted in saying the same with regard to the Commissarys Department. This opinion is formed from the difficulties I encounter myself, in preparing for my march. As to supplies they are *more* than abundant. I hope to leave in five days. I shall do so if any labor on my part can achieve the necessary preparations. My command will probably consist of about 2500 men. Thus, 2 Companies of Dragoons, 1 Company of Artillery under the commad of Major Galt,⁸ 1 Company of Voltigeurs, the balance Infantry. I can obtain here no mountain Howitser, but shall have one field Howitser and three 12 pounders. I shall have next day after tomorrow a well appointed and efficient force and if I can obtain the requisite means of

transportation and march thro' the fever region without serious diminution of my strength, no force that I am likely to meet will, impede my march for a day. I have reason to anticipate some resistance at the National Bridge & one or two other points, but the remark above is based upon a pretty thorough knowledge of the route & my ability to overcome obstacles. I shall have independent of the train for my own command a pretty heavy train of supplies for the Army. Capt Varasa informs me that Genl Scott was very particular in his enquiries with regard to my arrival at this place, & expressed much anxiety for me to join him. He cannot be more anxious for my approach than I am to join him. In my force enumerated above I forgot to mention 50 Marines under the comand of Colo' Watson.⁹ They will disembark & go to the Camp tomorrow. I have necessarily passed every day in the City since I arrived here and from present indications shall be obliged to do so till I leave. Altho' it is unquestionably very sickly I think the rumours of the Vomito are exaggerated.

Still it is certainly not a place to be sought as a salubrious summer retreat by a Northern man. I am weary having been either writing or upon my feet since 6 oclock, and I must close without having said half that I could desire to say & that I fear hardly intelligably. Lt Colo' Wilson acting Governor & Mr Dimond Collector¹⁰ are both excellent, efficient men & have rendered me every aid in their power.

FRANK PIERCE

[P.S.] "My kindest regards to Mrs Polk."

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked New Orleans, July 13. From Polk's AE: received July 20, 1847.

1. George Cadwalader, Gideon J. Pillow, and James S. McIntosh.

2. Juan Álvarez (1790–1867), a Mexican soldier and major landowner, fought in conflicts stretching from the Mexican War for Independence, 1810–21, to the war with the United States. Promoted to division general in 1841, he commanded the cavalry defending Mexico City in 1847. He briefly served as Mexico's president, 1855–56.

3. Pierce refers to the famous defense of Saragossa, Spain, against an invasion by Napoleonic France in 1808–9, by José Rebolledo de Palafox y Melci, Duke of Saragossa (1780–1847). Under his leadership as governor of the city, Saragossa's inhabitants successfully expelled the French after they had breached the city's exterior defenses. Additional French forces, however, soon arrived and defeated the city.

4. Enclosures not found.

5. Lino José Acorta and Domingo Ibarra. General Acorta (1787–1854) was currently Mexico's minister of war and navy under President Santa Anna. In September 1847, he became an aid to Santa Anna's successor, Manuel de la

Peña y Peña. Ibarra (1804–50), a lawyer and a former senator and governor of the state of Puebla, served as Mexico's minister of foreign relations, June 18–July 6, 1847. He resigned his office amid Mexico's internal instability and the American invasion.

6. Abner R. Hetzel.

7. Henry Smith.

8. Patrick H. Galt (1798–1851) of Virginia had been in the army since 1814. He was promoted to major with command of the Second Artillery Regiment on February 16, 1847, and brevetted lieutenant colonel for his service at Contreras and Churubusco that August.

9. Samuel E. Watson (?–1847), an officer in the marines since 1812, earned the brevet rank of lieutenant colonel in 1830 and the permanent rank of major in 1834. He and the First Battalion of Marines arrived at Veracruz on July 1, 1847, and participated in the assault on Mexico City that September. He died on November 16.

10. Henry Wilson and Francis M. Dimond.

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

My Dear Wife:

Lowell Mass. July 2nd 1847

I have only time before the cars leave for Portland,¹ to say that I am well & that I had a most gratifying and brilliant reception at Concord² on yesterday. I expect to at Washington on the 7th Instant.

Your affectionate Husband

[JAMES K. POLK]³

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Murfreesboro, Tenn. Published in *NU*, p. 124.

1. Train cars to Portland, Maine.

2. Concord, N.H.

3. Signature cut out of letter.

FROM JAMES K. POLK AND JAMES BUCHANAN TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

My Dear Wife:

Portland Maine Sunday July 4th 1847

After I wrote to you at Lowell on the morning of the 2nd Inst., I proceeded to this place, where I was handsomely recived, and proceeded the same evening to *Augusta* (the seat of Government of the State), and arriving about 1. o.Clock on the 3rd found the capitol & the whole City brilliantly illuminated.¹ On the 3rd (yesterday), I had perhaps as gratifying a reception as I have received on my tour. I was recived by both branches of the Legislature, in the Hall of the Ho. Repts and was addressed by the Governor²; to which I of course responded in one of my happiest efforts. Afterwards I was introduced to as many of the

immense crowd and especially of the ladies as could have access to me. *Senator Evans*³ met me at Augusta & behaved very handsomely. At 5. o.Clock I visited his family, in the town in which he lives (5. Miles from Augusta), and afterwards, on a platform, erected on the wharf, just before going on board the Steam-Boat to return to this City, *Mr Evans* addressed me in the presence of some 2.000, male & female, in a very handsome manner and in a very kind spirit, to which of course I responded, and my friends say I made the best speech of the tour. I can give you no more details, but content myself by saying, that my whole visit has been of the most gratifying character. The reception given me by the Legislatures & Executives of New Hampshire & Maine, in their official character as such, were highly honorable to me, and were all that my friends could have desired. Nothing of a party or of an unpleasant character has occurred any where. I reached here about midnight, last night & have spent a very quiet day, having been twice to church. *Mr Buchanan*, *Mr Clifford*, Judge Woodbury, Gov. Hubbard, Gov. Anderson, Governor Dana, and Gov. Fairfield of Maine, Gov. Mouton of Louisiana, Commodore Stuart,⁴ besides many members of Congress, with whom I have served, have been with me for several days. In a word I am highly delighted with my visit. On tomorrow I proceed on my return, dining at *Portsmouth* (Judge Woodbury's residence); expect to reach Boston at 5.oClock P.M. and proceed immediately to New York, where I will arrive the next morning, and expect to arrive at Washington on wednesday morning. My health has been good, but my fatigue has been so great, that I have been at some times almost wore down, & hence some of the Newspapers have represented me to be in bad health.

*Mr Burke*⁵ tells me he has written to you to day, & I send you several newspapers,⁶ which will furnish you with many incidents connected with my tour, which I have not time or opportunity to write. I have recived no letter from you, except the one you wrote at Wheeling.⁷ I hope you reached the end of your journey safely, and I calculate that you are to night with your mother & sister⁸ at Murfreesborough.

Your affectionate Husband

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I cannot omit this opportunity of presenting you my kindest regards. There was nothing wanting to make our party every thing it ought to have been but your presence. We have got along as well as could have been expected in yours absence. The President has every where been received with enthusiasm & has pleased Republican[s]⁹ in grand style. He has made a decided impression on New England. One of the prettiest exhibitions on both sides I have ever witnessed came off

last evening between him & Mr. Evans of Maine. The speeches of both were excellent; but I think the President's impromptu reply surpassed the studied effort of the Ex Senator who has behaved himself extremely well throughout. With my love to Mrs. Catron, Mrs. Benson & above all to Miss Rucker¹⁰ I remain sincerely & respectfully your friend

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville and forwarded to Columbia, Tenn. Published in Anson and Fanny Nelson, *Memorials of Sarah Childress Polk: Wife of the Eleventh President of the United States* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1892), pp. 106–8. Portion by Polk published in *NU*, pp. 124–26.

1. See letter and notes in Polk to Buchanan, May 8, 1847, on usages of the term “illuminated.”

2. John W. Dana (1808–67), a businessman and antislavery Democrat from Fryeburg, Maine, served in the Maine House, 1841–42; in the Maine Senate, 1843–44; briefly as acting governor, 1844; and as governor, 1847–50. He later became chargé d'affaires and then minister to Bolivia, 1853–59.

3. A lawyer and Whig from Gardiner, Maine, George Evans (1797–1867) served in the Maine House, 1829; the U.S. House, 1829–41; and the U.S. Senate, 1841–47. Having lost his bid for reelection, he left the Senate on March 3, 1847. He served on the commission to examine claims against Mexico, 1849–50.

4. James Buchanan, Nathan Clifford, Levi Woodbury, Henry Hubbard, Hugh J. Anderson, John W. Dana, John Fairfield, Alexander Mouton, and Charles Stewart. Stewart (1778–1869), a native of Philadelphia, commanded a merchant ship before becoming a navy lieutenant in 1798 and a captain in 1806. His commands included the USS *Constellation* during the War of 1812; the Mediterranean Squadron, 1817–20; and the Home Squadron, 1841–43. He served as commissioner of the navy, 1830–32, and commanded the Philadelphia Navy Yard, 1838–41, 1846, and 1854–61.

5. Edmund Burke.

6. Enclosures not found.

7. Letter not found.

8. Elizabeth Whitsitt Childress and Susan Childress Rucker. Born in North Carolina, Elizabeth Whitsitt (1781–1863) married Joel Childress, probably in Virginia. They had moved by 1790 to Sumner County, Tenn., and later to Rutherford County. Widowed in 1819, she moved from her farm to Murfreesboro after her daughter Sarah's 1824 marriage to Polk. Susan Childress (1802–88), educated at the same schools as her younger sister Sarah, married Dr. William R. Rucker in 1819. They lived in Murfreesboro.

9. Letter cut off side of page.

10. Matilda Childress Catron, possibly Mary A. Benson, and Johanna L. Rucker. Benson (c. 1812–1850s?), a Tennessee native and Rutherford County resident, was married to farmer John Benson.

FROM BENJAMIN BOSTON¹

My Dear Sir

Greenville I[ndian]a² July 7th 1847

I take the Liberty to Rite you a few Lines. It has Ben meny years Since I have Sean you and I Expect you have forgotten me But I am Now in my 80th year and I have not Forgotten you. I have Ben Living in Indiana 25 years.

I have heard that you had Declined Being a Candidate for the Presidency.³ I hope it is not So for the Country Canot Do Without your Services four years Longer and I hope you Will consent to Run a Second time.

I am old tis True But I hope to Live Long a nuffe to vote for you again and I have five Sons⁴ that Gave you ther Support and Will do it again.

I Want you to do Me the favor to Rite to Me if you will not Be a Candiate again⁵ it Will Be a Pleasure to me in my old days to hear or to have a Letter from you. . . .

BENGMIN BOSTON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 17, 1847; "an old man, says he was once an acquaintance." Polk's AE: "Wishes me to be a candidate again."

1. A former resident of Kentucky and possibly Virginia, Boston (c. 1768–c. 1850) had settled in Greenville, Ind., by 1840. Despite signing his first name here as "Bengmin," he is identified by other historical sources as Benjamin.

2. Letters inserted to complete meaning; state identified through content analysis.

3. See letter and notes in West H. Humphreys to Polk, June 16, 1847.

4. David L. Boston (1786–1878); Thomas Boston (1794–1860); Josiah Boston (c. 1811–1850s?); possibly Jackson Boston (c. 1816–1880s?), who may have been a grandson; and possibly Younger Boston. All except Younger lived in Greenville in 1850.

5. New sentence may begin before or after "if . . . again."

FROM SIDNEY BREESE

Dr Sir.

chicago Illinois July 8. 1847

The great "Harbor & River Convention"¹ adjourned on last evening before I reached here, and as I am informed by those who were present and as you will see by the published account of the proceedings including the resolutions, that nothing of a party character seemed calculated to divide and distract us on reflecting upon your course. I endeavored to impress upon the minds of those I knew would be here, the importance

of avoiding any committal upon the subject of internal improvements by the general govt. which I believed was the object of the whigs, who comprised three fourths of the meeting. No attack was made upon you, and nothing of a party character brought before the convention. Our friends here say that every thing was conducted in the most satisfactory manner. The material results to flow from it, I cannot well see. It is said there were 10.000 persons present—the largest part from this state.

All are anxious for a speedy, but honorable termination of the war. When can it be looked for? The principles of the Wilmot proviso I do not think, meet with the concurrence of the democratic party here. Your administration is popular, and if the war was ended, all parties would be satisfied.

SIDNEY BREESE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private*” on the cover.

1. Steamboat agent William M. Hall organized the River and Harbor Convention to win support in the press and in Congress for navigation improvements in the West. Held in Chicago, July 5–7, 1847, the Convention attracted delegates from nineteen states and, according to Horace Greeley of the New York *Tribune*, twenty thousand attendees. Speakers included Greeley, Illinois Whig congressman Abraham Lincoln, and former New York Whig congressman Millard Fillmore. The Convention adopted resolutions affirming that Congress had the authority to improve rivers and harbors and that it was in the nation’s interest for Congress to do so.

FROM CHARLES FERGUSON¹

Philadelphia, July 8, 1847

Ferguson explains that his brother and business partner, Alexander C. Ferguson,² provided transportation for Alexander W. Doniphan’s regiment at Chihuahua to join Zachary Taylor at Saltillo. He encloses the duplicate certificate for \$1,950³ with which Acting Asst. Quartermaster Edmund F. Chouteau⁴ paid Alexander. Charles first sent the duplicate on June 24 to Quartermaster Gen. Thomas S. Jesup,⁵ who refused to pay it without the original certificate. Charles responded that he could not present the original but could provide security against fraud. Jesup answered that his department required both copies of the certificate. Charles then wrote to the comptroller of the Treasury,⁶ to whom Jesup had referred the case. The comptroller refused payment, citing the risk that both copies of the certificate would be presented separately for double payment.

Ferguson guesses that guerillas, who, he asserts, kill most mail bearers on the road in Mexico, destroyed the original certificate. He recommends that Jesup ban the writing of duplicate certificates because, if both copies are required for payment, the practice doubles the risk of loss. He reports that other traders at

Chihuahua also provided wagons and mules in exchange for these certificates, which they assumed the government would honor. Ferguson adds that he has been unable to pay creditors because of the government's failure to redeem Alexander's certificate. He asks Polk to review the quartermaster general's and comptroller's decisions and order payment.

ALS. DNA-RG 92. Probably addressed to Washington City. From E in an unknown hand: received by Jesup July 12, 1847; answered by the War Department (see Ferguson to Polk, July 14, 1847). From Jesup's AES: "I have had no authority in the matter"; the Treasury's accounting officers require both copies of the certificate or an accounting for one's disappearance; Ferguson might legitimately complain if Jesup could take a bond of indemnity, but the law does not permit Jesup to do so and he would risk losing the money if he did. From E in another unknown hand: received July 13, 1847.

1. Charles Ferguson worked in the Philadelphia Customs House in 1844. He accompanied a caravan of traders along the Santa Fe Trail from Independence, Mo., to Santa Fe in mid-1846 and returned to Independence that fall. The Santa Fe Trail was a trade route from Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Under Spanish rule, restrictions had been imposed on U.S. merchants who sought to use the trail. In 1821, however, in the wake of Mexico's winning its independence from Spain, those restrictions were lifted. Subsequent commerce between Santa Fe and American merchants soon sparked calls for the American conquest of the Mexican province of New Mexico.

2. In 1844, Alexander C. Ferguson (c. 1819–?) lived in Philadelphia with Charles and worked as a clerk. Later he was part of the Santa Fe caravan, which, in the winter of 1846–47, accompanied Alexander W. Doniphan's regiment from Valverde to Chihuahua. Along the way, Doniphan organized the traders and teamsters into the Traders Battalion, which participated in the Battle of Sacramento. Some of the merchants, including Alexander, left with the regiment for Saltillo in April 1847. According to an 1853 account, a trader named Mr. Ferguson then lived in Santa Fe and had spent ten years in Mexico.

3. Enclosure not found.

4. Known as "Gesso," Chouteau (1821–53) worked as a store clerk in St. Louis, a steamboat clerk on the Mississippi, and a fur trader in the West. In 1843 he accompanied Sir William D. Stewart of Scotland on an expedition from New Orleans to the Wind River Mountains in present-day Wyoming. He joined the Missouri volunteers in 1846 as a junior first lieutenant of artillery.

5. Born in Virginia and raised in Ohio, Jesup (1788–1860) joined the army in 1808. He commanded several units in the War of 1812 as a captain and major, then in 1818 rose to brigadier general. He served as quartermaster general from 1818 until his death. He commanded the American forces among the Creek Indians, 1836, and in Florida, 1836–38.

6. Ferguson probably refers to the second comptroller of the Treasury, Albion K. Parris (1788–1857), who oversaw military accounts. A Maine lawyer, Parris served as congressman from Massachusetts, 1815–18; governor of the recently formed state of Maine, 1822–27; U.S. senator from Maine, 1827–28; Maine Supreme Court justice, 1828–36; and second comptroller, 1836–50.

Originally a Democratic Republican, he became a Jacksonian Democrat in the 1820s.

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

My Dear Wife:

Washington City July 8th 1847

I returned last night from my Northern tour, in usual health but much fatigued. I have been during my whole absence constantly in a crowd, and have found any thing but rest or recreation. I am much gratified however that I made the visit. I was received every where and by all parties not only with marked consideration and respect, but with great kindness. I have seen many hundreds of thousands of people of all ages and sexes. The newspapers, though they give a general account of the tour, furnish, but an imperfect idea, of it. The manner of my reception & the consideration paid me far exceeded any thing which I had anticipated. I could not go into details without writing a volume and therefore I will not attempt it. I found brother *William and his wife*¹ here on my return. She appears to be pleasant and intelligent, and is manifestly a lady, in her manners, though *I cannot say she is handsome*.

I was much disappointed, in reciving no letter from you on my return. The only one which I have received from you, was written at Wheeling, only two or three days after we separated.² I saw however a notice in the newspapers of your arrival at Louisville, on the 28th and of your departure on the 29th of June in the Stage for Nashville. I hope you got on well & without an accident. I am sure you must have written on the River or at Louisville and I cannot account for the failure of your letter to reach me. You must write to me, when you calculate to set out on your return.

Your affectionate Husband

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. *Brother William* speaks of setting out for Tennessee with his wife early next week. yrs. &c.—J.K.P.

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville and forwarded to Columbia, Tenn.

1. William H. Polk and Mary Louise Corse Polk.

2. Letter not found.

TO JOHN CATRON

My Dear Sir:

Washington City July 10th 1847

I have receivd your letter of the 1st Instant, and was glad to learn that Mrs. Polk had reached Nashville, in good health.

In regard to the tittle to the *Grundy*¹ property I have no information or knowledge, but took it for granted when I purchased that it was a good one. I thank you for the investigation of it which you have made. I have unlimited confidence in your judgment, and must ask the favour of you to see that the conveyances are properly made. You state [that]² *Mr Bass*³ will convey by general warranty Deed, [that] part purchased from him, and that the Executo[rs] will convey *as such*, the part purchased fro[m] them. I have understood from some source (perhaps from *Mr Stevenson*⁴) that the latter was sold in pursuance of a Decree of the chancery Court of Franklin. Of course you will be [. . .]⁵ this letter [. . .]⁶ is [. . .] made. I presume the statute of limitations, will make the title to the 30 feet to which you allude, good. It is a matter of great importance to me, that I should have no trouble hereafter about the title, and from your statement I have no idea that I will have any. I beg leave to suggest that the property should be [. . .] ably and fully described in the conveyances. Thanking you for your attention to the matter: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Felix Grundy.
2. Text here and below uncertain or missing, light ink transfer.
3. John M. Bass. He and Jacob McGavock were the executors of Grundy's estate.
4. Vernon K. Stevenson.
5. Most of one line illegible, light ink transfer.
6. Word here and below illegible, light ink transfer.

TO THOMAS S. JESUP

Washington, Saturday July 10th 1847

The President presents his respects to Genl. Jesup Quarter Master Genl. of the army, and requests that Genl. J. will do him the favour to call on him, between 7. & 8. O.Clock this afternoon.¹

[JAMES K. POLK]

AN. NcD. Probably addressed locally.

1. Polk recorded in his diary on July 10, 1847, that he had requested a meeting with Jesup and Commissary Gen. George Gibson at William L. Marcy's suggestion in response to Gideon J. Pillow to Polk, July 15 and 17, 1847, and a letter written by Additional Paymaster Robert B. Reynolds at New Orleans, not found. Polk read to them the parts of the letters about "enormous abuses in the Quarter-master's & commissary's Department," so that they could prevent recurrences of "the careless and wasteful, if not corrupt conduct, in the conduct of some of their subordinates." Polk did not reveal to them the authors of the letters, though Jesup "petulantly" demanded that he do so.

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

My Dear Wife: Washington City Sunday July 11th 1847¹

This morning I received your letter of the 2nd Instant, written at Murfreesboro',² & wish I could have spent the day with you. I calculate that you are to day at Columbia, and have probably attended church, with mother.³ I suppose you will return to Nashville in about a week, and that after paying another visit of two or three days to Murfreesboro', you will set-out on your return to Washington. You see I am calculating your movements for you, with a good, deal of exactness. The truth is I miss you very much, and am already becoming impatient for your return. I have literally no news, except, such as relates to public affairs, and that I cannot undertake to communicate, farther than to say, that there is nothing of extraordinary intrest. I attended church to day, in company with Wm. H. Polk's wife.⁴ He had other engagements—what I do not know—and did not attend. I invited Augusta⁵ to go with us, but it was communion-day, in her church, and as you know she is very pious. She declined, and so I went with Mrs. Polk alone. She is a lady in her deportment & conversation, is well educated and intelligent, but is far from being pretty; but that I suppose is a matter of taste.

Your affectionate Husband

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Wm. & his wife will return to New York in two or three days, & expect to leave that City for Tennessee in the course of the week. From what I can learn it is not fully settled whether she will accompany him to Tennessee or not. That they will determine when they get to New York. Yrs. &c.—J.K.P.

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

1. Polk dated this letter correctly, but it bears an erroneous postmark of July 10.

2. Letter not found.

3. Jane Knox Polk.

4. Mary Louise Corse Polk.

5. Augusta Adams Tabb Walker.

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

My Dear Wife: Washington City July 12th 1847

I wrote to you on yesterday, and after closing my day's labour, write again to night, not that I have any thing of intrest to communicate, but to comply with my promise & to let you know how much I miss

you in the White House. When I went down to breakfast this morning none of the family appeared. They are all fine-sleepers except *Wm. Polk's* wife¹ who is an early-riser. I asked *Henry*,² if he had notified them. He answered, *Yes Sir, but things was a heap straighter when Miss Sarah was here*, and so I thought. I gave a small dinner-party to *William's* wife to day. It consisted of *Mr Buchanan, Mr & Mrs. Mason, Mr & Mrs. Marcy, Mr & Mrs. Graham, Senator Downes*³ of Louisiana & two young ladies who were with him,⁴ *Judge Woodworth*⁵ of N. York, and one or two other gentlemen.⁶ The Dinner was well got up. *Bowman*⁷ you know would attend to that.

The weather is extremely warm, & I fear you will have a disagreeable journey on your return.

Your affectionate Husband
JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville. E possibly in Sarah Childress Polk's hand: "Worth reading this letter." Published in Gerard W. Gawalt, *My Dear President: Letters Between Presidents and Their Wives* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2005), pp. 312-13.

1. Mary Louise Corse Polk. Also living in the White House were Joseph Knox Walker, Augusta Adams Tabb Walker, and their children, Maria Polk Walker (1843-72), Henry Tabb Walker (1844-1928), and Sally Walker (1846-1903).

2. Polk's slave Henry.

3. James Buchanan, John Y. and Mary Ann Fort Mason, William L. and Cornelia Knowler Marcy, Daniel and Maria M'Iver Graham, and Solomon W. Downs. Mary Ann Fort (1803-70), whose middle name is occasionally spelled "Anne" in secondary sources, including the notes to Volume 8 of this series, was the daughter of Virginia planter Lewis Fort and an alumna of the Warrenton Female Academy in North Carolina. She married John Y. Mason in 1821. Cornelia Knowler (c. 1802-1889) was the daughter of merchant and banker Benjamin Knowler, a member of the Albany Regency. William L. Marcy's second wife, she married him around 1825. Downs (1801-54), a Tennessee native and a New Orleans lawyer and planter, served as U.S. attorney for Louisiana, 1845-47, and U.S. senator, 1847-53. A Democrat, as a presidential elector in 1844 he helped to secure Polk's nomination.

4. Polk identified these guests in his diary as Miss Barrett and Miss McCaleb.

5. Polk refers probably to William W. Woodworth, or possibly to John Woodworth. Born in Connecticut, lawyer and businessman William (1807-73) of Hyde Park, N.Y., served as supervisor of that town and was appointed a Dutchess County judge in 1838 and 1843. He served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1845-47; denied renomination, he left Congress on March 3, 1847. New York native John (1768-1858) practiced law in Troy before moving to Albany in 1806. He served in the state house, 1803; in the state senate, 1804-7; as state attorney general, 1804-8; as a commissioner to revise the state laws, 1811-13; and as a justice of the state supreme court, 1819-28.

6. New York native Arnold S. Harris (c. 1809–1866), the other guest at Polk's party, served in the army, 1834–37, then became an Arkansas merchant and served as U.S. agent for removing the Choctaw, 1845–47. In 1847 he won the contract to carry mail from Panama to Oregon, but transferred it to William H. Aspinwall.

7. Henry Bowman, a native of Germany, was Polk's steward during and after his presidency.

FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

Dr Sir,

Berlin. July 13' 1847

Mr Buchanan will tell you the grounds on which I can make a Treaty.

I am anxious that you should be able to say that you have opened a new market to our Tobacco, salt provisions, rice, & cotton twist.¹ This can be done if you will allow me to make some slight concession to German manufactures that are not in competition with our own.² But to do so it is important that I should act early, as a discussion is now in progress between this Governmt & that of Great Britain respecting a new commercial convention, in which the Zoll verein³ insist upon the indirect trade. Send me the necessary powers and I will give you a good Treaty for the confirmation of the next senate.

Mrs. D⁴ has given me another boy,⁵ and in this manner is keeping up the American stock here.

There is no European news of importance. All eyes have been turned upon your Mexican war, and it is admitted that you have added to the military renown of our country. I have great faith in Trist, and hope that through him you will be able to announce a peace that will be satisfactory to th country.

My family unite in th kind remembrance of Mrs. P, Mr & Mrs. Walker⁶ & yourself.

A J DONELSON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Private*" on the cover. From Polk's AE: received August 5, 1847.

1. Thread wound from cotton fibers.

2. Since January 1846, the United States had been negotiating a trade reciprocity treaty with the Zollverein modeled on an 1828 treaty with Prussia. (The Senate, in 1844, had denied its consent for an earlier trade treaty with the Zollverein. Such a treaty would have lowered tariffs on American goods throughout the Zollverein, but no such pact was ever enacted.)

3. The Zollverein, or Deutscher Zollverein (German Customs Union), was established in 1834 under Prussian leadership. It enabled free trade and common tariffs among most German states. Governing authority rested in a General Congress of representatives from all member states.

4. Elizabeth Martin Randolph (c. 1816–1870s?), the widow of Meriwether Lewis Randolph and a cousin of widower Andrew J. Donelson, married the latter in 1841.

5. Martin Donelson (1846–89), born in Berlin, was Andrew J. Donelson's sixth child and fourth son.

6. Joseph Knox Walker and Augusta Adams Tabb Walker.

FROM JOHN CATRON

dr sir/

Nashville, Wednesday 14 July 1847

I left Mrs. Polk very well at Columbia, with your Mother,¹ on Sunday evening, having accompanied her there. The truth of affection your Mother displayed Strangely contrasted, with the Smiles of office seeking and fawning for place. I found your Mother very firm, both in health, and mind, and well informed in passing events—strangely well. Mrs. Walker was some unwell. Mr. Walker² is ten years younger than he was when you left here, and is carrying on his Furnace almost in person, except rough details, is selling his pig-metal at \$28. the ton, & says he could sell ten times as much on the Tennessee's Bank. He keeps his own books, knows the expense to a dollar each week—the produce is about \$100, a day, the expense, within a fraction of \$40. How deep an interest I have taken in this gentleman's affairs you may not be aware of—& hence this detail. He owns 5/8ths. Has sold out the 3/8ths of Saml W. & Johnson,³ to *Just* such men as Suit him—practical mechanics, at the place, one the founder. His profits will be about \$8000, per annm.

You have had a great time, over which we & *yours*, have made merry; and wished these “glittering rewards of vulgar ambition,”⁴ had fallen on heads better capable of appreciating them. Ye Gods!, should Houston⁵ or Scott succeed you and take the same tripe, this chapter of your history must be burnt. Still it must be admitted the Yorkers, and Yankees have done up the thing in taste, and in a style of ambitious rivalry, so as to do you service at home, and certainly abroad; at home it will go far to suppress ribaldry, & arrogant pretension—abroad, it will be deemed the sanction of public opinion to your great changes of policy, on the tariffs, & subtreasury plan—& an endorsement of the War measures, with the exception of a small and croaking minority. And such is obviously, pretty much the truth, and but for party lines wd. be *exactly* true, in the West and South.

Mrs Polk tells me that Mason made a Splendid Speech at Chapel Hill in matter & manner. I have heard him deliver before the Supreme Court Obituary notices with a pathos and eloquence, not equalled at that place in my day—not by John Nelson,⁶ who is 2d to no man I have ever heard as an advocate.

I fear my frd. Buchanan will be like Falstaff was behind the hedge this hot weather.⁷ Give him my felicitations, should he come through the campaign *alive*; and being helped on by Bill Day,⁸ I have great faith that he will again Set under his own vine & figtree,⁹ and Sing the old hundred, as it was sang at Plymouth rock of yore,¹⁰ an accomplishment he has long been in need of, to dissipate brooding anxiety about politics & a wife.¹¹

It is hardly possible crops could be more promising than they are here—nor do I think that this country will in my day be in greater prosperity.

All your friends are in good health and spirits.

J. CATRON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received July 22, 1847.

1. Jane Knox Polk.

2. Jane Maria Polk Walker and James Walker. Jane (1798–1876), Polk's oldest sibling, was born in Mecklenburg County, N.C., two years after the future president. In 1813, she married James Walker in Maury County, Tenn.

3. Samuel P. Walker and John B. Johnson. These two men formerly had operated a general store in Columbia named Johnson & Walker. Johnson (c. 1809–1860s?), a Democrat, left Columbia around 1845; by 1850 he was working as a merchant in Nashville.

4. Phrase from John Lord Campbell, "Conclusion of the Life of Lord Bacon," chapter 56 in *The Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Keepers of the Great Seal of England, from the Earliest Times till the Reign of King George IV*, vol. 2 (1845).

5. Sam Houston.

6. A Maryland lawyer, Nelson (1791–1860) served in the U.S. House as a Democratic Republican, 1821–23; as chargé d'affaires to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, 1831–32; as U.S. attorney general under John Tyler, 1843–45; and as U.S. secretary of state, *ad interim*, 1844.

7. In William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I*, act 2, scene 2, Poins steals Falstaff's horse and hides it behind a hedge. The overweight Falstaff cannot travel far on foot. After he regains his horse, he and the other thieves rob some travelers. Catron apparently alludes to Buchanan's 1848 presidential aspirations.

8. Polk nominated William Day of Pennsylvania as consul at Lyon, France, in 1849, but the Senate did not give its consent. Nominated again by Franklin Pierce, Day served in that office, 1854–57.

9. Paraphrase of Micah 4:4: "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree." This image connotes peace and prosperity.

10. The "Old Hundred," or "Old Hundredth," is a sixteenth-century musical version of Psalm 100. It was included in a psalter used by the Pilgrims; according to tradition, they sang it and other songs of thanksgiving when they arrived at Plymouth in 1620. Plymouth Rock is the rock that Americans, beginning in

the eighteenth century, believed to be the first land on which the Pilgrims had set foot. It thereafter became a symbol of U.S. patriotism.

11. Though engaged to Ann C. Coleman in 1819 before she ended the engagement and subsequently died, James Buchanan never married.

FROM WALTER F. LEAK¹

My Dr Sir.

Rockingham Richmnd Cty N.C. July 15./47

You may recollect, that in march/45 I expressed to you my desire to fill the Consulate at Havanna,² and that I handed you when in Washington such recommendatins as I then and there obtained, which I did principally for the information of the Secty of State³ with whom, I had not even a personal acquaintance.

Shortly after I had made known to you my wishes, I learned from my friend (the late Jesse Speight) that there had been got up, a strong remonstrance against the removal of Mr Campbell⁴ signed by Messrs McDuffie & others,⁵ and that although he had some reason to think that you were inclined to give me the appointment yet that he feared if I pressd my claim, it might somewhat embarrass your administration, particularly as the remonstrance came from the source it did.

Genl Speight suggested to me to postpone my application for the time being, and your Excellency will recollect that I addressd you a note while in Washington,⁶ informing you that in consequence of the remonstrance aforesaid and its supposed ulterior effect (in the event of my getting the appointment,) that I was no longer an applicant for the Consulate.

In this course, I was actuated from a desire, that your Administration should come forward, under such auspices, as would most likely secure to it the support in question.

The reason, which induced the withdrawal of my name, being no longer sufficiently potent, I now see no impropriety in again forwarding it.

I was induced to make the application originally from two considerations, I thought it not only an honorable but a profitable one, and I thought a residence there would improve the declining health of Mrs Leak.⁷

The same reasons still exist, but the latter to a much greater extent, so much so, that I have been compelld. to decline invitations from meetings in the Western part of my District to suffer my name used, as a Candidate, in opposition to Col. Barinjewr,⁸ and although I have it in view to visit Havanna for the purpose aforesaid, I should like very much to be placed in a situation to "pay my way."

My circumstances in life are entirely independant, though not affluent.

Mr Campbell the incumbent was appointed by Mr Tyler,⁹ and has had the appointment about 6 years.

Allow me to say in conclusion and that with a familiarity & fondness justified, (I hope) by an acquaintance of some 30 years, that there is something in applying for office, that to me is humiliating, which you can better appreciate, than I describe yet I try to find a salvo' in the fact, that I have never before sought office, although I have had reasons to believe, that under Genl. Jacksons administration, it was in my reach.

Should you have it in your power to serve me, consistent with your sense of propriety, and a just regard for the interests of the country, I would gladly accept the appointment or any other highly honorable one, within the reason of your estimate of my competency.

I should be pleased to hear from you, at your convenience, and any communication, which you may make, may be done (if desired) in perfect confidence.

W F LEAK

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received July 24, 1847. Published in ULNCP-A, pp. 161-65.

1. Walter F. Leak (1799-1879), a schoolmate of Polk's at the University of North Carolina and later a farmer, represented Richmond County in the North Carolina House, 1831-32, and Senate, 1832-33. A Democrat, he ran for governor as an independent in 1846 after losing the party's nomination, but withdrew before the election. (Volumes 9 and 11 of this series erroneously identify Leak as Walter F. Leake. An ancestor of his had dropped the "e.")

2. Leak refers to a conversation of March 6, 1845.

3. James Buchanan.

4. Robert B. Campbell.

5. The letter, whose signatories included George McDuffie and Daniel E. Huger, has not been found. Born in Georgia, McDuffie (1790-1851) became a South Carolina lawyer and planter and a major general in the state militia. A Democrat and friend of John C. Calhoun, he served in the South Carolina House, 1818-20; in the U.S. House, 1821-34; as governor, 1834-36; and in the U.S. Senate, 1842-46. Huger (1779-1854), a South Carolina lawyer and planter, served in the state house, 1803-19 and 1830-31; as a state court judge, 1819-30; in the state senate, 1838-41; and in the U.S. Senate, 1843-45. Huger entered politics as a Federalist and later became a Democrat.

6. Leak to Polk, March 11, 1845.

7. Mary Cole Leak (1799-1871), a North Carolina native, survived her illness.

8. A Concord, N.C., lawyer and Whig, Daniel M. Barringer (1806-73) served in the North Carolina House, 1829-35, 1840-43, and 1854-55; in the U.S.

House, 1843–49; and as minister to Spain, 1849–53. Leak enclosed a newspaper clipping of his own letter of July 1, 1847, to John H. Wheeler et al. in which he declined to run for Congress. DLC–JKP.

9. John Tyler.

FROM ANTHONY W. BUTLER¹

Sir,

City of Washington 16 July 1847

By your recommendation I have procured and carefully read the report to which you referred me, and find that it was made to Congress on the 2d of March 1839 and not in 1832 as you seemed to believe.² On reading that report, it is at once perceived that it does not touch the subject on which we conversed; All the documents presented and the whole of the report is confined exclusively to the object of a communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean to be opened across the Isthmus of Panama; nothing is said of any other route, not a word, not even the slightest reference to a route across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.³ I was not surprised at this, but I confess some surprize when you informed me that Genl. Mercer⁴ had made a Report to Congress on that subject as I felt convinced that no one in the U.S. except myself, and that no one in Mexico now living was in possession of data upon which such a report could be founded. I commend that report and the documents accompanying it, to your special consideration. Upon the route from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, I am satisfied that up to the present moment no reconnoissance has been made, except the one made by myself, and one other by my direction and for my use, and all the information collected being still in my possession, and no part of it as yet, communicated to any one. Memoranda, topographical sketch, drawings &ca. are all in my hands. You will recollect my informing you, by what means my attention was first attracted to the subject, the original letter being now in my possession and ready to be exhibited and translated for your satisfaction. I profited by the suggestions the letter contained and the fruits gathered are now at the service of my Government if it will avail itself of them. The section of the Country in which this reconnoissance was made, hitherto has been, and is yet as a sealed book, the greater part of the route is a wilderness, uninhabited, and all the information you obtain must be procured by patient personal examination, subjected to daily hazard of life, and suffering from exposure, fatigue, and all the privations incident to travel through such a Country. And I am equally well satisfied that no reconnoissance directed by the Government will be made for a less sum than four times what it cost me, such is the difference between the economy

of individual enterprize and a Government contract, and I am moreover convinced that after the time consumed, and expence incurred in making the indicated reconnoissance the information collected will be neither so full, accurate, or minute as that conveyed by the documents in my hands, and not because there will be less talent engaged, or less fidelity on the part of the Agent, but because the circumstances of the time, and the want of aid in selecting proper guides must interpose difficulties which were not encountered by myself.

Whatever has been done by me in this matter was as an Object of individual enterprize, my own time devoted to it, my own funds employed to meet the expences incurred; and the result is now offered to the disposition of my own Government for no greater consideration than a fair reimbursement for money expended, and time and labor bestowed on it—the amount, although trivial and insignificant to a Government, is of some consequence to an individual who has neither time nor money to spare, and if the Governmt. declines the advantage which this preference places within its reach, the Individual making the tender will feel himself at liberty to employ the materials in his possession in any other mode which may promise him the greatest return for his outlay.

The consummation of an Enterprize of such Magnitude as that which shall connect the Atlantic and the Pacific, either by Canal or Rail Road will confer immortality of fame upon him whose Name is associated with the work, and which I desire to see enjoyed by my own Country is one motive, whilst the advancement of its great interests, Commercial and Political the inevitable consequences to flow from the measure, is another motive for the tender I have made. The suggestion which you made of submitting this matter to Congress, is so far as I am concerned inadmissible. I have never been a hanger on upon Congress. I will not become one now. It is a sort of “waiting upon Providence”⁵ which you must excuse me for saying is not to my taste, and utterly opposed to my habits—all the appointments I have hitherto held under the General Government, Military or Civil, were in *every instance* offered to me, without any solicitation on my part, and I will not place myself in any attitude now, that wears even the appearance of being an applicant for any thing. I am not so. I desire not to be so considered. The offer made by me to the Government if accepted, is one from which it will derive much more advantage than I shall do, and cannot therefore consider myself the obliged party, as incurring any Obligation. Besides long before Congress may be in a Condition to act upon the subject, I may have made a different disposition of the affair. I return to Baltimore today where I shall be compelled to remain about three weeks or a

Month on business in that place, and where any Communication will find me. And I shall be ready to return to the seat of Government to confer further on this subject whenever you may summon me to do so, but with the direct understanding that if I am called here, it must be at the expence of the Government.

ANT.Y. BUTLER

[P.S.] Gen. Mercers report makes the Cost of Communication by Panama \$20,000,000. I undertake to say that the way of Tehuantepec it will not exceed \$5.000.000.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received July 17, 1847.

1. Butler (1787–1849), a lawyer and banker, served in the legislatures of South Carolina, 1801–4, Kentucky, 1818–19, and Mississippi, 1827; as an army officer in the War of 1812; as U.S. chargé d'affaires to Mexico, 1829–36; and in the Texas republic's House, 1838. He offered his services to Zachary Taylor at the outbreak of the Mexican War. Arrested in Boston for a civil offense in 1848, he died in a steamship fire the following year.

2. House Report No. 322, 25th Congress, 3rd Session. Butler met with Polk about a passage through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec on July 15, 1847, according to Polk's diary entry of that date.

3. Contrary to Butler's claim, the report did mention other routes, including, on p. 95 and in map 4, that across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

4. Charles F. Mercer (1778–1858), a Virginia lawyer and canal company president, rose to the rank of brigadier general in that state's militia in the 1810s. He served in the Virginia House, 1810–17, and the U.S. House, 1817–39. First a Federalist and later a Whig, he was a prominent opponent of slavery.

5. Phrase originating in Sir Robert Filmer, *The Anarchy of a Limited or Mixed Monarchy* (1648): "wait upon God's providence." It refers to subjects' patiently accepting a distasteful government.

FROM WILLIAM D. MOSELEY

Tallahassee [Fla.] July 16. 1847¹

I have so much to write, that I scarcely know what to say first. Then the idea of punishing you, with a tedious and prosy letter, adds to my embarrassments. Upon the whole, I have concluded for the present, to write but *little*, as your late Northern tour, has doubtless left you in condition very illy calculated to be pleased with any thing; either in the way of speech making, or letter writing. I mean, in plain language, you are tired & want repose.

But to my object in writing this letter. I owe you many apologies, for not having replied to Your kind invitation, to meet you at chapel Hill,

at the last commencement.² I know of no event, within the course of my life, that would have given me more heartfelt satisfaction. I traced you from Washington, to Raleigh, where you met Green³; and when I read the account of the meeting, it really did seem to me, that I would have consented to have died immediately, if I could not have witnessed, it, on easier terms, and then your journey to chapel Hill, and your stop at Moring's,⁴ and visting our old room, and the chapel, and the society⁵ rooms, and the rock-spring, and vaux-hall or, as we used to call it fox-hall, and old Major Henderson's⁶ and Mrs Nunn,⁷ and the "big Poplar," and the Grave yard, and last, though not least, "the Greasy monkey's" alias, Miss Nancy.⁸ The idea that I might have revisited all these, with you, once more in this life; and that the opportunity has passed forever, unnerves me; what adds to my regrets, is the fact, that you, yourself, was innocently the principal agent in keeping me, away. "List, whilst I tale unfold."⁹ This same visit, to our Alma mater, I had been feasting on (in anticipation) for at least a year; and after receivg your letter, and Anderson's,¹⁰ so certain was I, of realizing this anticipated Happiness; that I had applied to the Tailor, boot-maker &c. to rig me out, to visit the President; (and by the way, I but do them justice, when I remark; that he of the shears, as well as of the lasts, acquitted, *each himself*, very creditably.) Well, now then imagine, that you see me, critically eyeing my wardrobe &c. in which I was to appear before the assembled "magnates" of the "states"; and while in this state of real bliss, from fancied greatness: My son,¹¹ without one word of explanation, lays before me, a Letter in yellow paper, with the Post Mark "*Washington*"; which on examination I found to be a commission in the army, requiring *him* to proceed without delay, to head quarters &c. Now, if ever any person, fell from the house-top, to the cellar, at one blow, it was your old friend, and humble servant. I then knew, without a moments reflection: "that the thing was up." (I will here take time, to tender you my most hearty thanks, for the *confidence in him*, which the commission implies.) I have rcd several letters from him since his arrival in mexico, one as late as the 15th June. He writes that he was in the unfortunate train, under the diretion of Col. McIntosh¹²; save the Col.—that he fought, and drove the Mexicans; and, that when he found himself and Company, within range of the Mexicans; and his men falling around, him; to use his own expression, his first idea, was, that he would rather have been, *a little further off*. He of course says but little of the gallantry of his company. The newspapers, and letter writers however; compliment his (Duperus¹³ company) in the most flattering terms; when they all say, that the train was entirely indebted to that company, for its successful deliverance from total defeat, and Slaughter. Now, let me return to that period, at which, I commenced this uninteresting episode. I remarked

"that when I saw that commission; I knew the thing was up." Let me explain how I knew it. I have a plantation within about 30 miles of this place, where I resided previously to my late election; accompanied by my three little children.¹⁴ I have on it, some eighty or hundred slaves, without an overseer; when I was elected, I requested my son, who was then living in Newyork, and my oldest daughter, (who was then at school, at Pittsborough;)¹⁵ to come on, and take charge of my younger children, and plantation. They did so. This enabled me, to spend most of my time in this city, and to be absent, wherever duty, or inclination, might lead me. It was from this state of things, that I felt at liberty to go as far as N Ca, my children, and plantation, having in *him*; a sufficient head, and protector. Not so, when he was far removed from them. They were *then*, entirely without protection had I been absent. I was too poor to take them with me; apart from other considerations. The sickly season was appoaching; if I left them during my absence, they might sicken and die, for the want of a Fathers attention. Thus situated, I had but the one alternative; *not to leave them*. I believe you will approve my decision. I know you would, if you knew all the circumstances, and especially, if you had a child.

NB. (I do not mean to reflect, by the last line.)

I rcd. a letter from W. Anderson on his way from Washigton which only increased my desire to be with you. Among other matters, he remarked, (I think) that you expressed a wish, that my daughter, (if she should ever visit Washington, during *your* term,) would for the time, become, an inmate of the W. Hous[e].¹⁶ We certainly would all feel honored, by such evidence of your esteem (and I may say friendship). I have however no expectation, at present, that either of them, will ever be there, but for a very short period. I have one in Brooklyn, who has been there for the last five years at school.¹⁷ She, possibly, may returne this fall, by the way of Washington. If she shall, her accompaning frind, will be instructed to introduce her to the President, as the old, and very good friend, of her father. Mr Thompson¹⁸ a whig lawyer and a catholic of this city, of distinction, in [his pr]ofession, has promised to take my, youngest daughter; (now, eleven years old), to Emmitsburg to school¹⁹ in some two weeks. If I can prevail upon him, to go through the city, I will endeavor to get his consent to take her to the W. House; merely to shake your hand; and, then be off.

Since my sons departure, I spend a large portion of my time, at my plantation, in the society of my children; and always think with sorrow, upon the hour when I am compelled to leave them, to attend to my official duties, *here*. The uncertainty of his fate, is not the least of my anxieties.

I find that I have unintentionally written, (or more properly speaking, scribbled[)]²⁰ five pages. Excuse it. It was not so intended.

W D. MOSELEY

PS. Judge Hawkins²¹ of this state, will visit you, this summer. I have given him a letter of introduction.²² He is smart, and *fought* like a man, in the Florida War.²³ He is a Democrat, and the warm friend of Broockenbrough.²⁴ W.D.M

July 17

Broockenbrough sends his love.

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Marked "*Private*" on the cover and "Private" at the top of the letter.

1. Concluding section of letter is dated July 17, 1847.

2. Polk to Moseley, April 9, 1847.

3. William M. Green.

4. Moring's was a dinner house eight miles from Chapel Hill, N.C.

5. Dialectic Society.

6. Pleasant Henderson (1756–1842) was a native of Virginia and a major in the North Carolina militia during the Revolutionary War. He served as clerk of the North Carolina House for many years until 1830. He lived in Chapel Hill before moving to Tennessee in 1831.

7. Elizabeth Copeland Nunn (1759–1851) was a Maryland native and the widow of Revolutionary War militia captain William Nunn. She kept a boardinghouse in Chapel Hill for half a century until her death. William H. Polk boarded there during his college years.

8. Ann S. Hilliard.

9. Possible paraphrase of William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 1, scene 5: "I could a tale unfold . . . List, list, O, list!"; or of Charles Churchill, *Ayliffe's Ghost; Or, The Fox Stinks worse Than ever* (1763): "Then list! O list! while I a tale unfold."

10. Walker Anderson.

11. William D. Moseley and Susan Hill Moseley, who died in 1842, had six children. William G. Moseley (1823–85), the eldest, was born in North Carolina. He was appointed a second lieutenant in the Third Dragoon Regiment on April 12, 1847. After his discharge on August 4, 1848, he became a farmer in Jefferson County, Fla.

12. James S. McIntosh.

13. Alphonse M. Dupere.

14. William D. and Susan Hill Moseley's three youngest children were Alice H. (c. 1836?–1888), Matthew (1836?–1900s?), and Alexander (1839–1880?). All three had been born in North Carolina. Although her father gives Alice's age as eleven in this 1847 letter, other sources give her birth year as 1830, 1834,

and c. 1844 (the last, from the census of 1870, is unlikely given her attending boarding school in 1847).

15. Elizabeth H. Moseley (c. late 1820s–1880s or 1890s?) may have been a student at the Pittsboro' Female Academy or the Kelvin School in Pittsborough, N.C. She married Judge Tippo S. Haughton of North Carolina in 1848.

16. Letter or letters here and below either cut off side of page or absent.

17. Susan H. Moseley (c. 1830–1915), a North Carolina native, was a student at the Brooklyn Academy, Brooklyn, Ala.

18. South Carolina native Leslie A. Thompson (1806–74) moved to Tallahassee in 1827. There he practiced law and briefly edited the *Florida Advocate* in 1829 and the *Floridian* in 1831. A Whig for much of his career, he was a member of Florida's constitutional convention of 1838–39 and had been a Leon County judge since the 1830s. He published a digest of Florida laws in 1847.

19. Alice H. Moseley went to study at St. Joseph's Academy, Emmitsburg, Md.

20. Closing parenthesis missing.

21. George S. Hawkins (1808–78) was a New York-born Florida lawyer. In 1837, he served as a captain in the Second Seminole War. He later served in Florida Territory's Legislative Council and, after Florida achieved statehood, in the state senate, before becoming U.S. attorney for the state's Apalachicola District in 1842. He served as associate justice of the Florida Supreme Court, 1846–50, and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1857–61.

22. Moseley to Polk, July 16, 1847.

23. Second Seminole War.

24. William H. Brockenbrough.

TO SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

My Dear Wife:

Washington City July 16th 1847

I received a letter from *Mr V. K. Stevenson*¹ this morning, dated at Nashville on the 8th Instant, in which he says, "Mrs. Polk reached here from Murfreesborough about two hours since, and is quite well and in fine spirits. Goes to see the President's House on tomorrow. It is now 6. O.Clock P.M." It is very remarkable, as I said to you in my letter of yesterday,² how your *whereabouts*, verifies my predictions made some days ago.³ I have but little doubt you are to day at Nashville, receiving company, and considering the Bills or estimates of the workmen of the repairs of the House. It is probable you will return to Murfreesborough on tomorrow (saturday), and come to Nashville on your way to Washington on *tuesday* or *wednesday* next.

I have not a word of news to communicate to you. All is still and quiet here. I am exceedingly busy in my office, but that is nothing new. I shall calculate to receive a letter from you from Nashville on the eve

of your departure for Washington and another on board the Boat from Louisville to Cincinnati. I regret extremely to hear of *Mary's*⁴ precarious health, and fear it may have marred the pleasure of your visit. I am in excellent health.⁵

Your affectionate Husband
JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville and forwarded to Murfreesboro, Tenn.

1. Vernon K. Stevenson.
2. Letter not found.
3. Polk to Sarah Childress Polk, July 11, 1847.
4. Polk may refer to Mary Berkley Childress or to Mary A. Benson.
5. Polk would die two years later, on June 15, 1849.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

My Dear Sir:

Washington City July 16th 1847

I have received your two letters of the 6th and 8th Instant. I believe that I have neglected to state to you, that your Bill for the last payment for the *Grundy*¹ property, was paid on presentation. *Judge Catron*² had written to me in relation to the title, and especially as to the [aspect]³ of the lot, to which you allude.⁴ I wrote to the Judge some days ago, to take the Deed, concurring as I do with him in opinion, that the statute of limitations will cover any apparent defect of title.⁵ I have but little apprehension on that point. I thank you again for your attention to my business. The appointment in *William Armstrong's*⁶ place has been made. Four Western states claimed it, and I appointed *Mr Rutherford*⁷ of Arkansas, upon the earnest solicitation of *Senator Sevier*⁸ and numerous other friends in that quarter. It would have subjected me to severe censure if I had mad[e]⁹ the selection from Tennessee. I have been sincerely desirous to gratify the wishes of my friend *Esselman*,¹⁰ and would do so, if I could with propriety. I was glad to learn from you that *Mrs. Polk* had returned to Nashville, from Murfreesborough, in good health. She wrote me on the 6th from the latter place.¹¹

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Felix Grundy.
2. John Catron.
3. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.
4. Catron to Polk, July 1, 1847.
5. Polk to Catron, July 10, 1847.

6. William Armstrong (c. 1800?–1847) of Nashville, a brother of Robert Armstrong, was in 1832 appointed a special agent to oversee the removal of the Choctaw to land west of the Mississippi River. In 1835, he became a Choctaw agent and the acting superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Western Territory. The Senate confirmed him as superintendent in 1843 and he held the post until his death on June 12, 1847.

7. Virginia native and Western trader Samuel M. Rutherford (c. 1797–1860s?), after settling in Arkansas, held offices including those of sheriff, 1825–30, and representative in the territorial house, 1831–33. A Democrat, Rutherford was, in 1835, appointed by Andrew Jackson register of the land office at Little Rock. He served as a Choctaw agent and the superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Western Territory, 1847–49.

8. A Tennessee-born lawyer and Democrat, Ambrose H. Sevier (1801–48) served in the Arkansas territorial house, 1823–27, and as territorial delegate to the U.S. House, 1828–36. After statehood, he served in the U.S. Senate, 1836–48; he chaired the Committee on Indian Affairs, 1839–41 and 1845–47, and served as president *pro tempore*, 1845–47. Polk appointed him minister to negotiate a peace treaty with Mexico in 1848.

9. Letter obscured by tape.

10. John N. Esselman.

11. Letter not found.

FROM NATHAN B. WHITFIELD¹

Dear sir

Demopolis Ala July 17th 1847

Permit me to introduce to your acquaintanc[e]² the bearer Doctor James G Rowe³ of this state.

Doctor Rowe is a gentleman of respectability and worth and stands deservedly high in our midst as a citizen and planter. He has for some-time been engaged in experiments on the cotton gin, with a view to render the “Whitney[”]⁴ or saw gin capable of preparing the “long staple” or “sea island” cotton, and improving the common kinds, for market, a desideration, the want of which has compelled many to abandon the cultivation of “sea island cotton” entirely, The old process of cleaning it by the common roller gin being exceedingly tedious and expensive. How far he has succeeded he will be best able to inform you. His object in visiting Washington is to obtain a patent for an improvement in the cotton gin, which is highly spoken of here, and which he will no doubt take pleasure in explaining to you. Should he succeed in perfecting his improvement, (of which I have great hope from his well known mechanical skill and sagacity) Our common country will be materially benefited in the increased facility of preparing the great southern staple thereby rendering the production more advantageous to the planter as well as making it cheaper to the manufacturer and consumer. I cannot but

believe that any aid you may give Doctor Row in this matter will tend to advance the interest of the cotton growing region generally.

NATHAN B WHITFIELD

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and delivered by James G. Rowe. From Polk's AE: received August 1847.

1. Whitfield (1799–1868) served as a major general in the North Carolina militia; in that state's house, 1821–22; in its senate, 1822–24, 1825–26, and 1827–28; and on its Council of State, 1828 and 1830. He moved to Alabama in the 1830s and subsequently set up a plantation near Demopolis.

2. Letter cut off side of page.

3. Rowe (c. 1805–1860s?), a physician born in North Carolina and at this time living in Alabama, previously had invented Rowe's Prize Crusher, a mill for crushing corn more efficiently. He had moved to Florida by 1849 and to Nashville by 1852, continuing to sell the Crusher.

4. Closing quotation mark missing. Eli Whitney (1765–1825), a Massachusetts native, invented the cotton gin in Georgia in 1792. This machine, which mechanized the painstaking process of removing the cotton seed from the fiber, revitalized cotton agriculture and facilitated the expansion of slavery in the South. Whitney's gin, which employed a series of saws, was effective on short-staple (or short-fibered) cotton but not on the high-quality long-staple cotton whose area of cultivation included the Sea Islands off the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina.

FROM THOMAS B. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir U.S. Ship Jamestown¹ Boston Harbour July 19th 1847

I presume you are well aware, that I have again been ordered to sea, and you are also aware of the promise you made me, when I was at Washington last Winter, and that was, if I would go to the Naval School, that I should remain there a year, and at the expiration of that time, you would get me a leave of three months, and when I again went to sea, you would have me ordered to whatever station I wished to go. Having full confidence in your promise, I determined to remain at the School, and so did, but instead of remaining there a year, I had not been there more than five months, when I received orders to sea, and in place of whatever station I wished to go it was to the Coast of Africa, the last place under the heavens, that I wished to go. I would not have been here now had I not expected to see you here, believing that you would see your promise fulfilled. You can now, do me a favour by having me detached from this ship, which I hope you will do. I attended the Naval School merely to gratify your request, and with the expectation of remaining there long enough to improve myself. I must confess that I did not get along very well, while I was there, though I had determined to remain

a year, at the sacrifice of my daily pleasures, and had not more than got underway when I received my orders. Hoping that you will excuse me for taking the privilege of addressing you I remain

T. B. CHILDRESS

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received July 24, 1847; "Has been ordered to Sea on the Jamestown—dont want to go—ship sailed on the 23d." From Polk's AE: answered August 9, 1847.

1. The USS *Jamestown* had, months earlier, been returned to the navy after completing, in civilian hands, a relief mission (March–May 1847) to famine-ravaged Ireland.

FROM JOHN NORVELL¹

Dear Sir,

Detroit, July 19, 1847

By this mail, I transmit to you an official copy of the proceedings of a public meeting, at which I had the honour to preside, looking to the election of General Taylor as the next President of the United States.²

The meeting was composed of about one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons, the most of whom were of the intelligent mass of the people. The speakers at the meeting were all friendly to General Taylor; but two of them were ultra party men; one of whom³ said he should vote for no person for President, who was not a whig, a whole whig, and nothing but a whig; and he added, that he hoped that General Taylor possessed other qualities to recommend him for the presidency than the murder of Mexicans. The other,⁴ a democrat, said all that could be said in favour of General Taylor, but had some hesitation about pledging himself to support him until he saw how the democratic convention could go.

The resolutions are my own. They are such as meet my deliberate feelings and judgment, and cannot, I think, so far as principles are concerned, but realize a corresponding approval in the heart of every real patriot.

Your respected public and private declarations, your firm and persevering determination, that you would, under no circumstances, consent to become a candidate again, left me a full range of choice as to your successor. I believed that nothing could prevent the onward tendency of public sentiment for General Taylor. I believe him to be a patriot, a republican, and a man who will never suffer himself to be misled into the vices or excesses of ancient federalism or modern whigism. I believe that the moment, in the face of persevering efforts to use him as a whig instrument for the prostration of the democracy⁵

of the country, he declared his resolution to become a candidate for the presidency, not as a party man, but as the free and spontaneous choice of the American people, was the moment for us to take him out of the hands of the whigs, to take him at his word, to give his feelings and views the direction which was given to those of General Jackson, when old federalism, Boston stump federalism, attempted to use the venerable hero and patriot for their unholy purposes. It was in pursuance of sentiments such as these, that as soon as I read General Taylor's letter to the Cincinnati Editor,⁶ I determined on my course. The resolutions, unanimously adopted, universally applauded, were thought to be the best means, comprising the right spirit, to condense to the great end in view. A later period would have been better; but the letter required action, immediate action. And while I candidly believe, that with the southern interests and biasses of General Taylor, with the inheritance of Jeffersonian principles belonging to him, he would administer the government in a sound spirit, I am perfectly certain that he cannot now be used by the leaders of the whig party.

I have said, publicly and privately, often and again, that the present administration of this government will constitute the most brilliant page in the history of the country since the close of the revolutionary war. Its measures for peace have been wise. Its war with Mexico, unavoidable and just, has been splendid and glorious. And, closing as you have commenced, you may retire to the shades of private life, blest in the additional character and prosperity which you have conferred upon your country; doubly blest in the approving voice of your own patriotic conscience.

And I must confess, that the deeds of General Taylor in the field, aiding in strikingly casting lustre upon the period of your presidency, as well as upon the army and the nation, have essentially stimulated me to the adoption of the course which the proceedings herewith transmitted indicate.

JOHN NORVELL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received July 26, 1847; the Detroit meeting that "nominated" Zachary Taylor "was a mixed meeting of Whigs & Democrats. I am opposed to any such amalgamation, in which [h] principle is lost sight of" (letter in brackets obscured by tape).

1. Norvell (1789-1850), a former newspaper editor in Maryland and Pennsylvania, moved to Michigan Territory in 1832. A Democrat, he served in the state constitutional convention, 1835; in the U.S. Senate, 1837-41; in the state senate, 1841; and in the state house, 1842. Appointed by Polk and reappointed by President Taylor, he served as U.S. district attorney for Michigan, 1846-50.

2. Norvell enclosed the printed resolutions of the meeting of July 8, 1847, in the Michigan state capitol building in Detroit. Bearing the printed signatures of chairman Norvell and secretary David E. Harbaugh, the resolutions promoted Zachary Taylor as a nonpartisan candidate for the presidency. DLC–JKP.

3. A native of New York, Halmer H. Emmons (1815–77) assisted in the office of a newspaper edited by his father before becoming a lawyer and moving to Michigan. By 1840, he had settled in Detroit.

4. Born in Virginia, Charles B. Flood (1810–87) edited and published the Marietta (Ohio) *Democrat*, 1835–38. He was appointed register of the Marietta land office in 1837 and reported for the Columbus (Ohio) *Statesman*, 1841–45. He edited the Detroit *Free Press* from 1845 until May 1847, then returned to the *Statesman* later that year.

5. Democratic party.

6. James W. Taylor (1819–93), a lawyer born in New York, moved to Cincinnati in 1842 and edited the *Morning Signal*, 1846–48. He later held government offices, including the consulate at Winnipeg, Canada, 1870–93. He sent Zachary Taylor an editorial from the *Signal* of April 13, 1847, promoting the general as a nonpartisan candidate. The editorial also advocated the extension of the Northwest Ordinance (1787), which had banned slavery in some territories, to lands obtained from Mexico; promoted a higher tariff; and, in deference to the war debt, recommended suspending the distribution of land-sale proceeds. The editorial predicted that the Whigs would not promote the reestablishment of a national bank. General Taylor responded to the editor on May 18. He denied any interest in the presidency and refused to express his opinions on specific issues during the war. But he added that he would not “refuse if the country calls me to the presidential office” and expressed general “approval of the sentiments and views embraced in your editorial.” Many newspapers published this letter in late June and July.

TO PASCHAL P. MORRELL¹

Dear Sir:

Washington City July 20th 1847

The *Hon. Mr Fairfield*² transmitted to me a few days ago, two certifi[cates]³ of Life-Membership in the “*Maine Conferenc[e] Missionary Society, auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal church,*” on[e] for Mrs. Polk, and one for myself.⁴ My acknow[ledg]ments are due to the *Conference* of which you are a member, for so distinguished a mark of their respect. It appears from a note, appen[ded] to the certificates, that they were *presented* by you, [. . .] which I beg to return to you my sincere thanks.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Polk to John Fairfield, July 20, 1847, to be forwarded if approved by Fairfield.

1. Morrell (1804–1864), a native of Gardiner, Maine, became a Methodist minister in 1827, a deacon in 1829, and an elder in 1831. He preached in towns including Saco, Exeter, and Skowhegan.

2. John Fairfield.

3. Text here and below missing or illegible, light ink transfer.

4. Neither Fairfield's letter to Polk of July 6, 1847, nor the enclosures have been found.

FROM HENDERSON K. YOAKUM¹

Dear Sir,

Huntsville, Texas July 20th, 1847

I hope you will not consider me troublesome; but there is a matter so intimately connected with the security and prosperity of the citizens of our state, that I have thought it my duty to address you directly upon the subject.

There are several Indian tribes on our borders, that are constantly stealing our property, endangering our peace and even murdering our citizens. A Treaty was made with them, by the United States, and much money expended to no purpose.² The reason is, that they had no acquaintance with or confidence in the commissions. It is not the paper writing they regard so much as the power or authority with whom they treat.

If our government has the present power and will appoint Gen Sam Houston a commissioner to treat with those tribes, he has such influence with them and over them, that in two or three months he can settle every thing and bring peace to the whole frontier, and that too, at a very trifling expense. He is personally acquainted with most of the chiefs. They know he will keep his word and they fear him. In fact they have not yet learned, nor will they, till he informs them himself, that he is not still the great chief of this country.

In conversation with the General this morning I suggested the matter to him, and he said it would afford him a pleasure to act, if Govt. desired. As he will not be re elected to the Senate till the meeting of our Legislature in December, he will have ample time to pacify the Indians during the three months preceeding.

Should these suggestions meet the views of the president, I have no doubt of the good that will result.

Wishing you much happiness & prosperity

H. YOAKUM

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received August 10, 1847.

1. A lawyer and a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, Yoakum (1810–56) served in the Black Hawk War of 1832. He became mayor of Murfreesboro,

Tenn., 1837, and a Tennessee state senator, 1839–41. Yoakum moved to Texas in 1845 and served as a first lieutenant in the Texas Mounted Rifle Regiment in 1846.

2. On May 15, 1846, U.S. commissioners concluded a treaty with ten Texas Indian tribes at Council Springs, Tex. The treaty stipulated U.S. protection of the tribes and regulation of their trade. It called for peace among the tribes and between them and the United States. The Indians agreed to stop stealing horses and to surrender anyone who had killed or robbed a U.S. citizen. The United States promised to make monetary payments and to send blacksmiths, teachers, and preachers to the Indians. The Senate approved the treaty on February 15, 1847.

FROM PETER BURUM¹

Respected sir. Near Rock Island White Co. Ten. 21" July 1847

The object of this letter may not be within the range of your official duties, if not, permit me to appeal to you, as an individual who, feels a deep interest in all, that may concern the welfare of the People of Tennessee.

In this neighbourhood, among the young people, there is a strong tendency to mental culture, an increasing desire to strengthen, enlarge and improve their minds. Their friends wish to place within their reach the means of advancing an object so proper & usefull.

For this purpose a Sunday School has been organized & thus far prospered with unusual success. The scholars are anxious to obtain one or more copies of "Capt J C Freemont's Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, Oregon & North California in 1842, 43, & 44"² and the last "Reports of the Patent Office."³

These Reports, being Public documents, are attainable only thro' official sources.

As a friend & patron of the School & Scholars I am authorised by them to solicit the above favour & hope the application may meet your approbation & attention.

PETER BURUM

[Washington City]⁴ Aug 10, 1847

The commissioner of Patents,⁵ is requested to forward to *Mr Burum*, a copy of his Report as requested; and also a copy of *Col. Fremont's* Report. If the commissioner will place them under cover of an envelope I will frank them.

J. K. P.

ALS and AEI. DLC–JKP. ALS addressed to Washington City. Later enclosed in Edmund Burke to Polk, August 11, 1847.

1. A farmer and Methodist minister born in Virginia, Burum (c. 1790–1850s?) served as postmaster at Rock Island, Tenn., in 1819 and 1830. He ran unsuccessfully as a Democrat for the U.S. House in 1837.

2. John C. Frémont's *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843–'44* was published by the order of Congress in 1845. See House Document No. 166 or Senate Document No. 174, 28th Congress, 2nd Session.

3. See note on this publication in John H. Linam to Polk, June 7, 1847.

4. Place identified through content analysis.

5. Edmund Burke.

FROM ANDREW LOCKRIDGE¹

Yalobusha County Miss. July 21st 47

By a resolution of the Baptist church of [Rehoboth]² I was requested to inform you that we were endeavoring to build a spire of worship. This said church is convenient to your plantation and several of your servants are members thereof. This church is the only place where your servants have any membership that I have any knowledge of. We have an excelent minister imployed to preach to the black population at [Rehoboth] monthly, who with the assistance of a few of the white member that go to preserve order among them I believe have done much good. The Church is by no means strong in a pecuniary point of view and will no doubt be hard pressed if she succeeds in the interprise though it is indispsinsible For the present house is entirely unsuitable to entertain a congregation. We design building a good, comfortable frame House.

This letter is to request your aid in this good work by such contribution as you may see fit to give to this object. Please answer this letter and let me know your mind about it as soon as convenient, as we cannot enter into the arrangement without knowing whether we are able to pay for it or not. I am

ANDREW LOCKRIDGE

P.S. Your overseer³ requests me to say to you that all is well, that his prospects for a fine crop is better than he has ever had since he came to this your place &c, &c. A Lockridge

P.S. Direct you letter Oakachickama Miss.

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received August 4, 1847; "Wrote to my overseer *Mr John A. Marrs* on the subject Sept. 3d 1847."

1. Lockridge (c. 1797–1850s?), a planter in Yalobusha County, Miss., had moved there from his native North Carolina in the 1830s.

2. Word here and same word below uncertain, ink bled through paper. Research has identified no place by this or a similar name in or near Yalobusha County.

3. John A. Mairs.

FROM SAMUEL R. CURTIS

Sir

New Orleans La July 22 1847

I have recently arrived from Buena Vista where I left all quiet and the troops in good health. The Mexicans are sufficiently hostile, but all reports concurred in showing that their most desperate efforts are directed against the southern line.

I have taken the liberty of addressing th President on a matter which more regards to myself than the public service: though I certainly would not do so, if I considered my communication inconsistent with that service.

I have now twice received an honourable discharge from the duties of Soldiers, first as Lt. of the 7th Inf and now after having served more than a year in Mexico. I have been appointed to command all the important places on the North line in Mexico—Mattamoros Camarg[o]¹ Monterray and Saltillo and without arrogance beli[eve] I had the best equiped, organised, and drilled regiments in Mexico. I was promised by General Taylor and General Scott that my [. . .] should be relieved and carried to the head [. . .] the line in time to participate in more distinguished service. Both of these Generals owing to reasons relating to their own intercourse with each other; failed to comply with their promises to me. They have both given me reasons which I am obliged to regard as entirely sufficient [as they have no relation] to [my worth].² I do not therefore mention this as a reflection on them but to show that patient endurance of orders which were consigning me to a stagnant and sickly position has only rendered it possible for me to attain the reputation of a faithful officer in positions every way disagreeable.

When my regiment left for Ohio there was some prospect of a movement on the city of San Luis and the Commanding General³ ordered me on staff duty for the purpose of aiding in organising new levies then expected in considerable force from the United States.

The General now thinks he cannot march for the want of sufficient force, and the exigency does not therefore exist that could justify him in my retention without the exercise of executive appointment.

I have therefore asked my time having fully expired & received my discharge and am now on my way to ohio.

I feel it my duty and desire however to serve while my country is involved in war; and I therefore report that Should my services be needed either in recruiting my [o]ld regiment, raising a new one, or in an honourabl part in the staff I can be commanded by adressing me at Wooster ohio.

SAML. R CURTIS

ALS, copy. CU-BANC.

1. Text here and below missing, tear.
2. Curtis struck out the bracketed text in this sentence.
3. Winfield Scott.

TO JOHN T. LEIGH

My Dear Sir:

Washington City July 22nd 1847

I wrote to you early in the last month authorizing & requesting you to compromise (if it was practicable to do so) the suit which *Mr Rayburn* has brought for 40 acres of my land.¹ As I have not received an answer to that letter, I fear you may not have succeeded in affecting an adjustment with him. You informed me in a former letter that the case would stand for trial at your August Court, and as I am anxious, to avoid litigation about, so small a property, I hope you may yet succeed in settling it, and thus avoid the expense and trouble of a trial. The land was entered by my brother-in-law *Dr. Caldwell*² at Government price, and I would prefer paying *Mr Rayburn* that price, as well as all the expenses he may have incurred, however unjust this would be, rather than put my friends to trouble & be subject to the annoyance of having to defend the suit. *Mr Rayburn* can test the validity of tax sales under your laws, in a suit against some resident citizen, and if he is a reasonable man he will do so. I informed you in my last letter, that fearing I might put you to too much trouble, I have written to my old friend *Mr James Brown* of Oxford Miss. & requested him to call on you, and co-operate with you, with an aim to a compromise.³ *Mr Brown* has not answered my letter. You are authorized to make the compromise upon the terms stated, unjust to me, as they would be, if no better can be obtained. Indeed you are authorized to give even more, if you think it best to do so. If the suit

goes on, my lawyer's fees & Court expenses, would probably be greater, if I gain the case, than the price I would now have to pay, *to buy my peace*. May I ask the favour of you to write me on the subject, on the receipt of this letter.

[. . .]⁴ approved the compromise you had made [with]⁵ *Mr Rayburn* in the second case. I will send you, at any moment you may state to me that [. . .] matter is settled, the amt. you may agree to pay.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Polk to Leigh, June 8, 1847. The plaintiff was John K. Rayburn, but Polk evidently thought he was Davidson M. Rayburn. See letter and notes in Polk to Leigh, April 24, 1847, and calendar entry for Leigh to Polk, July 22, 1847.

2. Silas M. Caldwell.

3. Polk to Brown, May 18, 1847.

4. One line is missing from the press copy because Polk misaligned the letter in the press.

5. Word here and below uncertain or illegible, light ink transfer.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Dr Sir:

[Washington City]¹ July 22nd 1847

*Mr Kettlewell*² and the other gentlemen who will hand you this note, are very anxious, for the appointment of *Dr. Spence* as asst. surgeon, to accompany the Baltimore & D.C. troops.³ I have referred them to you, supposing it may be possible to appoint him with propriety, to one of the existing vacancies. It is proper that I should state, that the physician presented by *Mr Rhett*,⁴ has high claims on account of his emminent qualifications, and familiar acquaintance with Southern diseases. I hope you may be able to see the gentlemen from Baltimore for a few minutes this morning.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. PBL. Delivered by John Kettlewell and others.

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. John Kettlewell (c. 1809–1860s?), a Baltimore merchant, served as sheriff, 1845–48, and by 1850 co-owned Kettlewell & Davidson's Agricultural Depot. A delegate to the Democratic National Conventions of 1844 and 1848, in 1844 he was the first to introduce Polk's name for the presidential nomination.

3. Robert T. Spence of Baltimore received this appointment to the Ninth Infantry Regiment on July 22, 1847, and served until August 1848. He then became resident physician at the Marine Hospital in Baltimore, 1849–51.

4. Robert Barnwell Rhett (1800–1876)—he changed his surname from Smith in 1837—was a South Carolina lawyer and planter. A Democrat, he served in

the South Carolina House, 1826–32; as South Carolina attorney general, 1832–36; in the U.S. House, 1837–49; and in the U.S. Senate, 1850–52.

FROM HENRY WATSON¹

City Limerick Grand Jury Chamber,
Limerick [Ireland] July 22 1847

Sir,

I have much pleasure in sending herewith the unanimous thanks of the City Limerick Grand Jury (assembled at Summer assizes) to your generous nation assuring you that we all feel deeply grateful for the considerate munificence displayed to this country during the famine with which Divine Providence visited the land.²

HENRY WATSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received August 21, 1847.

1. Watson (1788–1860), the foreman of the City Limerick, Ireland, Grand Jury and an alderman, earlier had served as a charter justice and then as mayor of Limerick, 1823–25.

2. Watson enclosed the Grand Jury's resolutions of July 22, proposed and signed by Watson and seconded by John Watson Mahony. The resolutions thank England, the United States, India, and the Society of Friends for their generosity to Ireland during the potato famine. They also express hope for a good Irish harvest in 1847. ADS. DLC–JKP. See letters and notes in Robert Gray to Polk, February 22, 1847; Uriah P. Levy to Polk, February 27, 1847; Rose Savage to Polk, May 13, 1847; Jane Hickey Sealy to Polk, June 1, 1847; and Sampson S. Sealy to Polk, June 1, 1847.

FROM JOHN GREGG¹

Sir: Shreveport La. July 24/47

As an humble member of "the Party" that placed you in power, I take the liberty to address you a few lines in relation to a case of peculiar hardness and unjustness.

Josiah Gregg² had proceeded with the Missouri Caravan of Traders, *en route*, for Santa Fé, about one hundred miles beyond the western border of that State, where he was overtaken by two letters from members of Congress, advising him that it was the desire of the President (or they said) that he should join Gen. Wool's³ division of the Army at San Antonio Texas. At which place he would meet a communication from the Government making honorable provision for him. Accordingly he left the Caravan and proceeded with all haste (overtaking the Ark. Regiment near this, with which he continued) to that place. But, to his

mortification, he met there no provision for him. Through the kind influence of the Officers of the Ark. Regt. (particularly Col. Yell)⁴ Gen. Wool was induced to give him a mere temporary and nominal appointment in his Staff, which he was constrained to accept, for the time, hoping something might still be done for him. Yet to this day, as far as I can learn, he remains unprovided for, and perhaps forgotten. It is clear that he has been deceived by your mutual friends or greatly neglected. Col. Ashley⁵ of Ark. in a letter to me, now before me says, "In relation to your brother Josiah Gregg—I had written the President a strong letter in his favour before I left Washington City,⁶ and called on him in person and delivered the letter. He then told me your brother should be well provided for—that he had a most honorable opinion of his abilities . . ."⁷ Gov. Yell told me, as he passed here with his Regiment, much the same, and gave me assurances that my brother would meet an honorable appointment at San Antonio.

If it proved inconvenient to provide for him, or if he had been *forgotten*, in the case [re]ferred⁸ to, I have thought strange some provision had not been made, for him in filling the appointments under the act of the last Session of Congress increasing the Army.⁹ Unless they have despaired of success, Some of his numerous friends must have reminded you of his case.

He is now in Philadelphia on private business of some importance, and I know not whether he would accept an appointment from the Government—it is certainly its duty to offer him one equal to his qualifications.

He has been long a trader to Mexico and suffered much from that people (which you will have observed, provided you have chanced to see his work entitled "Commerce of the Prairies") hence his great desire to take part in the war against that Country.

I cannot close this communication without saying a word in regard to the Post Office at this place. It is believed here that the present Post Master¹⁰ received his appointment thro' the influence of a very worthy acquaintance and personal friend of yours. I will add *beware* of your *friends*, you are in no danger from your enemies. The P. offices should, when-ever practicable, be placed with persons, in this *back country*, whose private business kept them constantly at their Offices. No one at this place would have the office unconnected with other business. The business of the present incumbent does not require his attention on Sundays, so that the citizens of the surrounding country suffer a great inconvenience on those days. But worst of all, he is wholly incompetent. I see no necessity for subjecting the people to an inconvenience when it can be avoided, which could be well done here by placing the P.O. in

either of three Drug Stores that are in the place, either of which would give general satisfaction.

JOHN GREGG

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “(Private).” From Washington Curran Whitthorne’s AE: received August 14, 1847; “states the case of Josiah Gregg, who, he says, was promised an office” (Whitthorne, if skeptical of the claim, may simply not have been privy to such information).

1. Born in Tennessee, John Gregg (1800–1887) moved to Missouri in 1812, traded along the Santa Fe Trail in the 1820s, and became an Arkansas merchant in the 1830s. In 1844 he purchased a plantation near Shreveport, La.

2. Trader and physician Josiah Gregg (1806–50) of Missouri, John’s brother, made numerous trips, leading trade caravans, along the Santa Fe Trail between 1831 and 1846. He published accounts of those travels as *Commerce of the Prairies: or the Journal of a Santa Fé Trader During Eight Expeditions Across the Great Western Prairies, and a Residence of Nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico* (1844). He continued trading along the Trail after the book’s publication. In early 1847 he went to Mexico with John E. Wool’s forces as an unofficial war observer. He went to California in 1849 after learning of the discovery of gold.

3. John E. Wool (1784–1869) entered the army in 1812 and rose to the rank of brigadier general in 1841. He was brevetted major general in February 1847 for his services at Buena Vista, where he was second-in-command to Zachary Taylor. During the Civil War he attained the permanent rank of major general.

4. Archibald Yell.

5. Born in Massachusetts and raised in New York, Chester Ashley (1790–1848) practiced law in Illinois before moving to Little Rock, Ark. Terr., in 1820. He represented the state of Arkansas as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate from 1844 until his death.

6. Ashley to Polk, June 1, 1846.

7. Ellipsis in manuscript.

8. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

9. Ten Regiment Bill.

10. Robert W. Legrand (c. 1825–1850s?) was Shreveport postmaster, 1847–49.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear Sir [Yalobusha County, Miss.]¹ July 25th 1847

I nough Rite you a Few lins concerning youre farm and people. Youre people are all well.

I hade the finest prosspect for a crop of coten and corn that I have ever had sins I have bin on the farm but the Worms has commensed on it and I am fearfull that the will inger it ceriously.

I heard of the worms making there appearensen all though this naberhood.

We are at this tim clearing Making the negros winter clothin baskets &.

Jams Brown² was doune to sey Me a few days Ago sed he would rite to you in a few days.

Youre stock all luoks well as well as could be exspected.

I have nothin Mor worth youre attention only remane . . .

[JOHN A. MAIRS]

AL. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received August 9, 1847; "Relates to my private business, on my plantation in Mississippi."

1. Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

2. James Brown.

TO JAMES H. THOMAS

Dear Sir:

Washington City July 26th 1847

The House and lot in Columbia [. . .]¹ at present, and for many years past, occupied by my mother,² belongs to her during her life. Aft[er] her death, it was to be the joint property of *William H. Polk* and myself. *William H. Polk* some years ago, made a Deed of Trust for his reversionary interest in it, being one undivided half of the property, at his mother's death to secure a debt which he owed to the Bank [of] Tennessee. Under this Trust Deed his interest was sold by the Trustee (*J. Knox Walker*)³ about the 1st of February 1845, and was bid off, by [the] Bank at \$1500. The Bank as I learn, afterward transfered the purchase to *Lucius J. Polk*.⁴ [*J. Knox Walker*, the Trustee, informs me, that he ha[d] never been called on to convey the property. [. . .] I own one half the House and lot at mot[her's] death, I am willing, to pay the \$1500. for *William H. Polk's* half, provided [. . .] the title is made to me, or secured to be made to me. If the Bank or *Lucius J. Polk* shall be willing to take \$1500. for it, and will first transfer the property to me, and direct the Trustee to make the title to me, you are authorized to pay that sum for it. In the event the proposition is agreed to, you can draw on me *at sight* at this place, or at *ten days after sight* payable at Philadelphia or New York, for an amount which, with the premium or difference of Exchange upon it, (if any) will nett in Tennessee the \$1500. Before you draw on me however, you must be certain to take the proper transfer of title, authorizing the Trustee to make the conveyance of the property to me. As *J. Knox Walker*, has no copy of the Trust Deed here, I request that you will, in the event the arrangement is made, prepare a Deed from the Trustee to me, to be signed by him, and forward it to me. You will find the Trust Deed recorded in Maury County.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Should any thing occur to prevent *Mr Thomas* from Executing my wishes, as expressed, in the foregoing letter, *Col. Robert Campbell Jr* of Columbia, is authorized and requested to do so in his stead. Should *Col. Campbell* act, he will cause the transfer and authority to convey the title to me to be prepared by some lawyer. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. Text here and below missing, illegible, or uncertain, light ink transfer.

2. Jane Knox Polk.

3. Joseph Knox Walker.

4. A son of William Polk of Raleigh, N.C., and a cousin of the president, Lucius J. Polk (1802–70) moved from North Carolina to Tennessee in 1823 and set up a plantation in Maury County. He served in the Tennessee Senate, 1831–33.

FROM JOHN S. YOUNG

Dear Sir

Nashville 26 July 1847

The impression prevails in this city that there will be a call for volunteers after our elections in August are over. The most of our young men are anxious to have another chance. You could in a very short time get ten thousand choice troops. In fact there is now nearly that number organized into companies.

Should you determine to make a requisition on our state it would be a favour to Governor Brown¹ to give him a private intimation that it will be made some two or three weeks before it is made. It would enable him to select his agents and make all his arrangements and would ensure greater promptitude in meeting the requisition.

JNO S YOUNG

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*Confidential*" on the cover and "*private & confidential*" at the top of the letter. From Polk's AE: received August 3, 1847.

1. Aaron V. Brown.

TO WILLIAM MOORE

My Dear Sir:

Washington City July 27th 1847

The summer session of the College at Georgetown closed to day, and your nephew *DeWitt Clinton Yell*, who is now with [. . .]¹ will leave here on tomorrow morning, on a [visit] to his relations in the West, and will proceed directly to your house. He informs me that he has some money, and I have furnished him with some more to pay his expenses. His

college [ex]penses, since I heard of the death of his father² I assumed to pay, and will do so in the course of a day or two. There was an amount due the college prior to the death of his father, of which I advised you in a former letter³ which has no[w] been paid. I still think that *Clinton* ought to go to *West Point* in June next. If yourself & his other friends concur with me in this opinion, I will appoint him, next spring and he [will] be at the institution on or before the 1st day of June next. In the mean-time he ought to be placed at school, and instructed in the preparatory studies. These studies are very simple, and may be taught at the schools in Tennessee or Arkansas, where his relations reside as well as here, and at much less expense. I will procure and enclose to you, in a day or two, addressed to *Mulberry P. office*, a list of the studies in which it will be necessary for him to stand, an approved examination before he can enter the institution. You are aware that after he enters the Academy at West Point, his Education will cost him nothing, and that at the close of the course of studies there, he will hold the commission of brevet 2nd Lieutenant in the army. I cannot too strongly urge upon you, the importance of sending him to that institution, wher he can acquire as good an Education as can be conferred at any college in the Union. He is himself desirous to go there, and in every sense, of his case, I repeat that it is the best thing which can be done for him. He is a fine boy and I take great intrest in his future welfare.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. *Clinton* informs me that he has \$50., which would be sufficient to take him to your house, but to guard against accidents I have given him \$50. more. What he does not spend will be useful to him in Tennessee. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Lincoln County, Tenn., and delivered by Dewitt Clinton Yell.

1. Text here and below missing or uncertain, light ink transfer.
2. Archibald Yell.
3. Polk to Moore, April 29, 1847.

FROM LEVIN H. COE

Sir

Memphis July 29th '47

I am just in recpt of a letter from Mr E. Dickinson¹ of Somerville Te requesting me to learn whether the 500 acres of Land, belonging to one of the children of M. T. Polk, decd.² could be purchased.

I have replied that I supposed the owner was still a minor & probably that the power to alienate did not exist, but that as requested by

him I would advise you of his wish to purchase. Mr Dickinson is not only solvent but can be relied on for punctuality.

The land alluded to lies on Muddy Creek about six miles North from Somerville.

Land in Fayette has advanced 50 p.c. in the last two years, such as it is worth \$10. p. acre.

L. H. COE

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: answered August 7, 1847.

1. Edwin Dickinson (1815–1900s?), a native of North Carolina, was a merchant and farmer in Somerville.

2. The land belonged to Marshall T. Polk, Jr.

TO WILLIAM MOORE

My Dear Sir:

Washington City July 29th 1847

Your nephew *De Witt Clinton Yell*, left here on yesterday morning, on a visit to his friends in the West. He will proceed directly to your house, and will probably be with you before you receive this letter. He was accompanied by some young men of the college¹ & by *Dr Darby*² of Lexington Ky. In the letter which I addressed to you by *Clinton*,³ I advised you, as the best thing which in my judgement can be done for him, that he should be sent to West Point on the 1st of June next, that being the commencement of the Academic year. I suggested to you also, that he should in the meantime, be placed at school, so as to perfect himself in the preparatory studies. He can be instructed in these studies, quite as well at any good school in the West, as he could be at the college in Georgetown, and perhaps better instructed for the reason that more attention is paid in the college to the [. . .]⁴ Languages, than to the Mathematical & other studies, in which he should be well-informed, before he enters the Academy.

I transmit to you herewith a printed catalogue of the preparatory studies, and also of those for the first year after entering the Academy.⁵ The greater the progress he can make in these studies, the easier he will find his duties to be when he joins the Academy.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Lincoln County, Tenn.

1. Georgetown College.

2. John C. Darby (c. 1812–1880s or 1890s?), a native of Virginia, was a physician and slaveholder in Lexington.

3. Polk to Moore, July 27, 1847.

4. Word illegible, blurred ink transfer.
5. Enclosure not found.

FROM ANONYMOUS

Sir.

Savannah [Ga.],¹ July 30th 1847

It has afforded me great pleasure that you have commenced your Tour through the principal Citys of the Union, and that your reception has been so flattering. It shews that the people are not unmindful, of the important Services, you have rendered your Country, since you have been Elevated, to the Chief Magistracy of these United States. I have no doubt you will find it to your advantage, in making yourself known to the *people*. I trust you will not neglect to pay us, a Visit, in the Spring, or at such time as it will suit you, as you have some Strong friends here, who will go any length to serve you.

Be pleased permit me to suggest the propriety, of your having some notice taken of the neglected States, in which the Grave of that distinguished Man Mr. Jefferson is now to be found.² I have no doubt it would be a popular act, on your part, and at the same time, render an act of Justice to the Memory of one, who has done much, for the honor & prosperity of his Country, to recommend in your annual Message to congress, to have the Ashes of this *great Man*, removed, and Interred at Washington, and a suitable Monument, Erected.³ To shew you what great neglect has been shewn, as you descend the Mountain, you pass an Enclosure without a gate, that contains the *Grave*, of Mr. Jefferson whose name is identified, with his Country's history, as a devoted patriot, and a distinguished President. A more neglected, wretched burial place you will seek in vain. A Granite obelisk, battered much by wandering pilgrims, but without name, or Epitaph, is doubtless the Monument of Mr. Jefferson.

The panel on which was to be inscribed, the Epitaph which it is said he wrote for himself, has never been Inscrbd, in the Stone.⁴ It is lying, with the Iron Gates, designed for the Enclosure on the Banks of the River, where they were landed, and no Man, has troubled himself, that they reach, their destination. No doubt these articles having been lying upon the banks of the River, for many years. *What a reflection, and a disgrace to the Country!* With my best wishes for your Successful termination of your Administration. I sub-scribe myself,

A FRIEND TO YOUR AD-
MINISTRATION, AND
ONE OF THE OLD JEF-
FERSONIAN SCHOOL

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received August 12, 1847; “In a friendly spirit.”

1. State identified from postmark.

2. By “the neglected states,” the author apparently refers to those Southern states (all except North Carolina) that Polk had not recently visited. Thomas Jefferson’s grave was at his estate of Monticello (Italian for “Little Mountain”) in Charlottesville, Va., on the Rivanna River. Uriah P. Levy purchased the estate, which had become vacant and fallen into disrepair since Jefferson’s 1826 death, in 1834. He lovingly restored it and, upon his death in 1862, bequeathed it to the American people.

3. The federal government did not elect to build the Thomas Jefferson Memorial in Washington City until 1934. Jefferson’s grave remains at Monticello.

4. Jefferson did write his own epitaph: “Here was buried Thomas Jefferson Author of the Declaration of American Independence of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom & Father of the University of Virginia.”

FROM WILLIAM B. CONE ET AL.¹

DEAR SIR—

DALTON, GA., JULY 30, 1847

At a meeting of the citizens of Dalton and vicinity, held on the 28th instant, it was Resolved to give a Public Barbecue, in honor of the completion of the Western and Atlantic Rail Road² to this place, on the 18th of August next, and the undersigned were appointed a Committee of Invitation.

In the discharge of the duty assigned us, we respectfully invite you to attend and partake of the festivities of the day.

WILLIAM B. CONE

PC. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Letter bears printed signatures of Cone and the four other members of the committee. Cone (1814–91), a Dooly County, Ga., farmer and Democrat, had become a county court judge by 1841 and served in the Georgia House, 1847–49.

2. The Georgia legislature chartered the Western and Atlantic Railroad of the State of Georgia in 1836. Construction began, at a spot soon called Terminus, in 1839. The rail line reached from there to Dalton in 1847 and finally to Chattanooga, Tenn., in 1849. It enabled the rapid expansion of Terminus, renamed Marthasville in 1843 and Atlanta in December 1847.

FROM THOMAS M. HAMER

Sir.

Louisville Kentucky July 30th 1847

I received your letter¹ (in which you speak of me entering the navy,) with extreme pleasure, and owing to circumstances I have neglected

answering it untill now. I am now en route for the seat of war, where I shall remain for a short time, intending however to return in time to enter the naval school.

The sword of which you speak will be received with heartfelt thanks and preserved carefully unto last hour of my existance.

TH. M. HAMER

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received August 5, 1847; "This letter, is written in a manner to be scarcely intelligible. I suppose it to be from the son of the late *Genl. Hamer* of Ohio, to whom I had written, notifying him of the sword voted by Congress, to the nearest male relative of his father. In my letter to him I said nothing about the Navy."

1. Polk to Hamer, May 14, 1847.

FROM ANONYMOUS¹

Newberry District, S.C. July 31, 1847

The author claims that God revealed to her at night the answer to the slavery question. She worries that "this . . . question . . . will destroy our Union intiarly if it goes on" as a consequence of calls by Americans and Europeans for the abolition of slavery. The Bible, she observes, often refers to slaves and never promotes freeing them, except for those who are Abraham's descendants. She urges Polk, whom she hopes is a Christian, to settle the slavery question by "being a peas maker" and alerting Americans—especially "all the Mails"²—to the Bible's approval of slavery. Otherwise, the next president "will be a real Abalutionist" and "the states will be all one aganist another." She asks Polk to address Congress, urging legislators to govern according to the will of God and referring them to Revelation 22:18³ if they wish to pass laws different from His.

L in author's son's hand. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. The author's son, who wrote the letter for her, signed it "and Aged Widow N. B."

2. The author probably means "males."

3. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

CALENDAR

N.B. Items entered in *italic* type have been published or briefed in the Correspondence Series.

1847

- [1847 or 1848]
[between 1 Jan
and 26 Feb 1847] *From Mary Barnes Tutt Throckmorton.*
- 1 Jan *From Seth A. Elliot.*
- 1 Jan *From Anonymous, signed "Quaker Woman."*
- 1 Jan *From [Andrew Lane], signed "Amor Patriæ."*
- 1 Jan To James H. Thomas. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Expresses uncertainty about the location of a land deed; wishes Patrick Maguire to defend against Polly Bledsoe Weatherhead's suit in Polk's stead; asks Thomas to give Jane Knox Polk money, hire out the slave Elias, and handle other plantation tasks.
- 1 Jan *From James Walker.*
- 3 Jan From Linn Boyd. ALS. DLC-JKP. Withdraws Nathan Gaither's name from consideration for a foreign mission or other office.
- 4 Jan *From Robert Armstrong.*
- 4 Jan *From George Bancroft.*
- 4 Jan From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses a letter to Pennsylvania governor Francis R. Shunk or secretary of state Jesse Miller (not found) concerning two appointments. From Polk's AE: disapproves of a passage in the letter.
- 4 Jan From Robert B. Gilchrist et al. NS. DNA-RG 45. South Carolina citizens recommend Clement H. Stevens of South Carolina for a navy pursership.
- 4 Jan From William W. Holden. ALS. DLC-JKP. Raleigh (N.C.) *Standard* editor recommends Gaston H. Wilder of Raleigh

- to replace the "unsettled and deranged" David W. Stone as army paymaster. Published in ULNCP-J, p. 57.
- 5 Jan From Chester Ashley. ALS. DLC-JKP. Hopes that Peter T. Crutchfield, receiver of public monies at Little Rock, Ark., will receive the expected appointment as army paymaster. From Polk's AE; denies having promised the appointment.
- 5 Jan From Asa Biggs. ALS. DLC-JKP. North Carolina congressman quotes a letter from an unnamed man in Raleigh, N.C., describing Assistant Paymaster David W. Stone as insane but doubting he will resign. Published in ULNCP-J, p. 58.
- 5 Jan *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 5 Jan From Henry L. Hopkins. ALS. DLC-JKP. Powhatan County, Va., lawyer asks Polk to appoint John W. Nash of Boonville, Mo., impoverished former Speaker of the Virginia Senate, to a judgeship or other office.
- 5 Jan *From Henry Horn.*
- 5 Jan From Amos Lane. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Indiana congressman acknowledges receipt of Polk's Second Annual Message; solicits a permanent appointment for his son, James H., currently with the army in Mexico; asks if Polk would seek reelection "under any circumstances."
- 5 Jan From William A. Scott. ALS. DLC-JKP. New Orleans Presbyterian minister endorses Charles C. Lyon or Mifflin P. Denny for chief coiner to the U.S. mint at New Orleans.
- 6 Jan From John Fairfield. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends Abner B. Thompson for a colonelcy in one of the proposed regiments. Five congressmen from Maine added their signed concurrence on January 7.
- 6 Jan From Henry Horn. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces Nathan Nathans of Philadelphia.
- 6 Jan From Sarah Bella Ludlow Garrard McLean. ALS. DLC-JKP. Follows up a dinner conversation with Polk by offering her son's name, Kenner Garrard, for an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy.
- 6 Jan From Frederick P. Stanton. ALS. DLC-JKP. Expresses concern that the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee, chaired by James I. McKay, opposes an appropriation for Memphis requested by John Y. Mason and now under consideration.
- 6 Jan From Charles James Weale. ALS. DLC-JKP. Bedford, England, resident "verging on 17 years," like other Britons, approves of Polk's war policy as expressed in the president's Second Annual Message; seeks a commission in the U.S. military.

- 7 Jan To Joseph G. Heney et al. N in Hampton C. Williams's hand. DLC–LW. Informs Youngstown, Ohio, men that the term of service of the late Gen. Thomas L. Hamer's volunteers expires in five or six months and no successor need be appointed.
- 8 Jan *From Thomas Allen.*
- 8 Jan From Auguste G. V. D'Avezac (signed "Auguste Davezac"). ALS. DLC–JKP. Chargé d'affaires to the Netherlands thanks Polk for sending him Polk's Second Annual Message; reports that Europeans admire it.
- 8 Jan From John A. Dix. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Mr. McCarthy, inventor of "a military machine" with "extraordinary power of destruction."
- 8 Jan From William Henry Foote. ALS. DLC–JKP. Romney, Va., educator and minister encloses his book, *Sketches of North Carolina* (not found).
- 9 Jan *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 9 Jan *From Jeremiah George Harris.*
- 9 Jan To William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Quotes the Raleigh man whom Asa Biggs quoted on January 5; asks Haywood to inform him if David W. Stone is incompetent and, if so, to ask Stone to resign as paymaster; in that event, will probably appoint David Turner of North Carolina.
- 9 Jan From Henry Willis Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Virginia man under the influence of cantharides, morphine, and arsenic claims God-given nobility; critiques American democracy; encloses a letter to Nicholas I of Russia in which he claims "the power of influencing the atmospheric changes."
- 9 Jan From J. Fred. Simmons. ALS. DLC–JKP. Editor of Granada, Miss., newspaper *Harry of the West* reports that in late December, on receiving Polk's letter to Col. Ives (not found), he contacted the sheriff about redeeming Polk's land; Robert Campbell, Jr., then arrived and took over.
- 9 Jan From John H. Wheeler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in David S. Reid to Polk, January 11, 1847. Former superintendent of the U.S. mint at Charlotte, N.C., seeks reappointment to that post; expresses concern that Gov. William A. Graham and other Whigs have slowed enlistment in the North Carolina regiment. Published in ULNCP–J, p. 59.
- 10 Jan From David W. Stone. ALS. DLC–JKP. Offers his resignation as army paymaster "*on account of ill health*"; begs for a clerkship in Washington City. Published in ULNCP–J, pp. 59–60.

- 10 Jan To James Walker.
- 11 Jan From Lewis W. Jordan. ALS. DLC-JKP. Withdraws his resignation as surgeon of the Fourteenth Infantry Regiment, if Gideon J. Pillow is ordered to the United States. From Polk's AE: approves the withdrawal.
- 11 Jan To Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Asks McNeal to pay the enclosed bills for the Jackson *Republican* (not found).
- 11 Jan From John Y. Mason. L, copy. DNA-RG 45. Encloses the nomination of John V. B. Bleecker of New York to replace Edward Bissell as navy purser.
- 11 Jan From William Parmenter. ALS. DLC-JKP. Naval officer at Boston introduces Sylvanus B. Phinney, editor of the Barnstable (Mass.) *Patriot*.
- 11 Jan From David S. Reid. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former North Carolina congressman encloses John H. Wheeler to Polk, January 9, 1847.
- 11 Jan From Sylvester S. Southworth. AL, fragment. DLC-JKP. New York City journalist and Customs House surveyor repeats his request of April 8, 1845, for a navy pursership.
- 11 Jan To Vernon K. Stevenson.
- 12 Jan From Caleb Cushing. ALS. DLC-WWC. Recommends the application of Walter Freeman of Boston for an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy for his son.
- 12 Jan From Shepherd Leffler and Serranus Clinton Hastings. ANS. DLC-JKP. Iowa congressmen request a conference with Polk before he appoints a district judge for Iowa.
- 12 Jan From E. L. [Sessim] (surname uncertain). ALS. DLC-JKP. Old Point Comfort, Va., man asks Polk to meet his son, who is visiting Washington City; mentions a letter of introduction and another letter from himself to Polk (neither found).
- 12 Jan From Ambrose H. Sevier. NS. DLC-JKP. On behalf of the U.S. Senate Committee of Arrangements, announces the funeral of Senator Isaac S. Pennybacker on January 13; encloses the printed *Order of Procession*. From Polk's AE: "Attended the Funeral with my cabinet."
- 12 Jan From David W. Stone. ALS. DLC-JKP. Seeks appointment as superintendent of the U.S. mint at Charlotte, N.C., because of the health problems that prevent him from going to Mexico as army paymaster. Published in ULNCP-J, pp. 60-61.
- 12 Jan From Charles E. Wortham et al.
- 13 Jan From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC-JKP. Responds to Polk's letter of January 9 that David W. Stone is "not deranged" but is "not a proper man for the place"; will

- encourage Stone to resign; recommends David Turner for a "higher station" than paymaster, such as brigadier general. Published in ULNCP-J, pp. 61-62.
- 13 Jan From Sullivan Hibbler. ALS. DLC-JKP. Hope, N.J., Democrat writes that he named his one-year-old son James Polk.
- [c. 13 Jan 1847] From Benjamin Stout. ALS. DLC-JKP. Boston man urges caution in the Mexican War to protect against Polk's political enemies; asks for money.
- 13 Jan From D. S. Witherby. ALS. DLC-JKP. Middlebury, Vt., resident seeks Polk's autograph.
- 14 Jan From Andrew Beaumont. ALS. DLC-JKP. Commissioner of public buildings in Washington City summarizes a letter from Dutee J. Pearce urging the reappointment of William G. Hammond as surveyor of customs for the port of Newport, R.I.
- 14 Jan *From Robert H. Morris.*
- 14 Jan From James A. Pearce. ALS. DLC-JKP. U.S. senator from Maryland withdraws his complaint of this morning, having received part of Mr. Rich's manuscript and learned that the rest is forthcoming.
- 15 Jan *From Gouverneur Kemble.*
- 15 Jan From Lorain T. Pease. ALS. DLC-JKP. Connecticut former judge requests an interview to set a time to present his charges against James L. Edwards, commissioner of pensions.
- 15 Jan *From Pickett, Perkins & Co.*
- 15 Jan From Richard A. Washington. ALS. DLC-JKP. Washington City dry goods merchant reminds Polk of his letter of "some weeks" ago (not found) citing James Maher's refusal to pay a dry goods bill; begs Polk to intercede.
- [c. 16 Jan 1847] From Anonymous, signed "A. B." ALI. DLC-JKP. Cites widespread opposition to the Mexican War in New England; blames Polk for this "flagrant crime."
- 16 Jan From Robert P. Flenniken. ALS. DLC-JKP. New chargé d'affaires to Denmark thanks Polk for appointing him.
- 16 Jan From William Smith. ALS. DLC-JKP. Protests the appointment of Richard L. Bohannon as surgeon in the Virginia volunteer regiment; recommends John M. Bell as assistant surgeon; protests the granting of patronage for staff appointments to members of Congress instead of the governor.
- 16 Jan *From James H. Thomas.*
- 17 Jan From Anonymous, signed "mrs B D." ALI. DLC-JKP. New Bedford, Mass., woman asks for money.

- 17 Jan From George Shaver. ALS. DLC-JKP. Geneva, N.Y., man laments the deaths of his wife and five of his children; mentions an earlier letter (not found) about some of their deaths; encloses obituaries of two daughters (not found); asks Polk, as a Freemason and as president, for a job.
- [c. 18 Jan 1847] *From [James Buchanan].*
- 18 Jan From Timothy Jenkins and William J. Hough. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York congressmen assert that Henry Campbell, postmaster at Rochester, N.Y., should not be removed until charges are proven and he has read and answered them.
- 18 Jan From Thomas S. Jesup. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends Thomas Corneal of Cincinnati for a first lieutenancy.
- 18 Jan From James N. Smith. ALS. DLC-JKP. Corresponding secretary announces Polk's election to honorary membership in the Philophronian Society of Vermillion Institute, Hayesville, Ohio; seeks his "influence" on behalf of the Society and Institute.
- 19 Jan *From George Bancroft.*
- 19 Jan From W. B. Hawkins. ALS. DLC-JKP. Henderson, N.C., man seeks the superintendency of the U.S. mint at Charlotte, N.C., or a position in the army such as the paymastership vacated by David W. Stone. Published in ULNCP-J, pp. 62-63.
- 20 Jan From Pickett, Perkins & Co. L in William S. Pickett's hand. DLC-JKP. Encloses an invoice for supplies for Polk's plantation (not found); reports having today given Robert Campbell, Jr., information about Polk's account so he can buy slaves for Polk.
- 21 Jan From Archibald Atkinson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports that, having seen William Smith's letter of January 16, four of Virginia's congressmen recommend Polk withdraw the nomination of Bohannon as army surgeon; recommends John B. Butler for the position.
- [21 Jan 1847] From John Kettlewell. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces Wells Lathrop of Massachusetts.
- 21 Jan From George S. Mann. L, copy. CtY. New York City merchant recommends James W. Webb for appointment as a general officer in the army. Elijah F. Purdy's and New York City typefounder James Conner's signed concurrences follow Mann's letter.
- 21 Jan From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses "dispatches from Gen. Taylor and mine to him" (not found); announces that a U.S. Senate committee will meet at the War Department on January 23.
- 21 Jan *From Elijah F. Purdy.*

- 21 Jan From James A. Seddon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Virginia congressman, having seen William Smith’s letter of January 16, defends his support for Dr. Bohannon; has written to Bohannon of Smith’s opposition; believes most Virginia congressmen still will support Bohannon.
- [21 Jan 1847] From Wilson Shannon and Robert H. Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former Ohio governor and St. Clairsville (Ohio) *Gazette* owner enclose the *Gazette* (not found) containing the preamble and resolutions of a Democratic meeting held in St. Clairsville on January 20. (Erroneously calendared in Volume 11 at January 21, 1846.)
- 21 Jan From James H. Thomas. ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Encloses a payable account (not found); “Rogers is very *trifling*.”
- 22 Jan From Anonymous, signed “A looker on in Vienna.” AL. DLC–JKP. Warrenton (Va., Ga., or N.C.) resident advises Polk to recall Henry A. Wise, minister to Brazil.
- 22 Jan From Marcellus Duval. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seminole subagent requests a meeting to discuss “Seminole business.”
- 22 Jan From Benjamin B. French. ALS. DLC–JKP. Transmits John Sergeant’s receipt for the binding of congressional documents for Polk’s library.
- 22 Jan From Arthur Haire. ALS. DLC–JKP. Cassville, Ga., lawyer criticizes the appointment of Edward Harden to the Cherokee Commission.
- 22 Jan From Cornelius P. Van Ness.
- 23 Jan To Robert Campbell, Jr.
- 23 Jan From Willard P. Hall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Missourian soldier reports from San Diego, “The state of this country was altogether different” from what they had expected.
- 23 Jan From Walter G. Kearney. ALS. DLC–JKP. Corresponding secretary announces Polk’s election to honorary membership in the Union Literary Society of Centenary College, Jackson, La.
- 23 Jan From John C. Mullay. ALS. DLC–JKP. Indian Office clerk encloses a letter from Dr. G. W. Stuart (not found) regarding elections in East Tennessee.
- 23 Jan From Wilson Shannon and Robert H. Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclose the St. Clairsville *Gazette* (not found) containing a corrected version of the meeting proceedings they enclosed on January 21.
- [c. 24 Jan 1847] From West H. Humphreys. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Nelson McClanahan and Robert Humphreys for appointments in the army; reports pro-war sentiment in Tennessee.

- 24 Jan From Stephen B. Leonard. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former New York congressman introduces Jacob M. McCormick; urges Polk to reappoint McCormick as postmaster at Ithaca, N.Y.
- 25 Jan From Samuel T. Allen. ALS. DLC-JKP. Palmyra, Tenn., Democrat complains about Whig sentiment in Palmyra; asks Polk to send him a Democratic newspaper.
- 25 Jan From William M. Green. ALS. DLC-JKP. Solicits an army captaincy or lieutenancy for his nephew, James F. Waddell. Published in ULNCP-J, pp. 63-64.
- 25 Jan From Robert Smith. ALS. DLC-JKP. Illinois congressman encloses a letter from Rev. Adiel Sherwood to Rep. John H. Lumpkin soliciting a letter from Polk to carry while visiting mission stations and schools in Indian Territory.
- 25 Jan From James Thompson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Expresses pleasure that Polk and Mr. Plumer agree; believes Congress could pass a 15 percent tax on tea and coffee.
- 26 Jan From Samuel D. Ingham. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Treasury secretary introduces his son-in-law, Rev. George Hale.
- 26 Jan *From James G. Read.*
- 26 Jan From Richard Rush. ALS. DLC-JKP. Seeks "a diplomatic appointment." From Polk's AE: "I understand the mission to *France* would be preferred."
- 26 Jan *To James H. Thomas.*
- 26 Jan From Reuben Wood et al. L, copy. OHi. Former Ohio Supreme Court judge and others recommend Isaac Davis of Ohio for a colonelcy in one of the new regiments.
- 27 Jan From Pierce M. Butler. LS in James Cantey's hand. DLC-JKP. Colonel of South Carolina's Palmetto Regiment, before sailing for Mexico, writes to advise a vigorous war strategy; believes the army can take Veracruz and Mexico City.
- 27 Jan *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 27 Jan From John C. Haswell. ALS. DLC-JKP. Bennington *Vermont Gazette* editor asks for a clerkship under the loan bill, citing Polk's promise of a job last year; encloses a copy of a letter from Robert J. Walker to Paul Dillingham, Jr., August 8, 1846, promising Haswell a job.
- 27 Jan *To Pickett, Perkins & Co.*
- 27 Jan From William Smith. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces Maj. Walter Gwynn of Virginia.
- 27 Jan From Aaron Vanderpoel. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York City Superior Court judge introduces John Bigelow of New York City.
- 28 Jan From John V. B. Bleecker. ALS. DLC-JKP. Thanks Polk for appointing him navy purser.

- 28 Jan From James L. F. Cottrell. ALS. DLC-JKP. Alabama congressman expresses regret over having missed dinner with Polk yesterday.
- 28 Jan From Thomas H. Hopkins. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Tennessee legislator encloses a letter on Tennessee politics and other topics from Lorenzo D. Mercer of McMinnville, Tenn. (not found).
- 28 Jan From William Sawyer and Francis A. Cunningham. ALS. DLC-JKP. Ohio congressmen cite their meeting with Polk yesterday, in which he expressed "a disposition to do justice to Ohio" in appointments; recommend John A. Bryan, recalled from Peru, for the mission to Brazil or, otherwise, that to Portugal, Sardinia, or Chile; note that no Ohioan heads any mission.
- 29 Jan *To Mary Berkley Childress.*
- 29 Jan From Samuel S. Ellsworth. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York congressman lists candidates for postmaster at Ithaca, N.Y.; asks Polk to postpone the appointment until Ellsworth presents relevant documents.
- 29 Jan From Alexandre de Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. ALS in French. DLC-JKP. Italian prince living in England recommends for U.S. lieutenant general an unnamed officer of Napoleon's, who could bring to America officers to lead the army and two to four thousand Swiss troops to fight the Mexican War. See also ALS, copy, in French. DLC-JKP.
- 29 Jan *From Daniel Graham.*
- 29 Jan *From James G. M. Ramsey.*
- 30 Jan *To George Bancroft.*
- [c. 30 Jan 1847] From William C. Dusenbery. NS. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in Dusenbery to Orlando B. Ficklin, January 30, 1847. New York City lawyer seeks appointment as U.S. commissioner at New York City; encloses a printed circular containing endorsements of him and law partner William A. Woodward.
- 30 Jan From James J. Faran et al. ANS. DLC-JKP. Democratic congressmen from Ohio recommend David A. Starkweather as minister to Brazil.
- 30 Jan From John K. Kane. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces Cornelius C. Vanarsdale, a Dutch Reformed pastor in Philadelphia.
- 30 Jan From Mumford Smith. ALS. DLC-JKP. Maury County, Tenn., sheriff reports local dissatisfaction with Columbia postmaster Jeremiah Cherry; recommends Polk replace him with Thomas Voorhies.
- 31 Jan *From Caleb Cushing.*

- 31 Jan From Archibald W. O. Totten. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Edward H. Day for admission to the U.S. Military Academy; praises Polk’s Second Annual Message and Robert J. Walker’s report on the tariff and free trade of December 3, 1845.
- 31 Jan From Claiborne A. Watkins. ALS. DLC–JKP. New Orleans physician and scientist seeks appointment as agent or minister to Brazil to resolve the diplomatic crisis; urges Polk to bring religion and education to the Mexicans.
- [c. Feb 1847] From Anonymous. AD. DLC–JKP. Urges Polk to end the “murder” and turn to “Peace”; encloses a newspaper clipping of an article that originally appeared in the *London Times*, December 31, 1846, criticizing Polk’s Second Annual Message and the Mexican War. From Polk’s AE: “An English Fanatic.”
- [c. Feb 1847] From Anonymous, signed “Yankee Doodle.” AL. DLC–JKP. Washington City resident accepts appointment as colonel in the new dragoon regiment.
- [c. Feb 1847] *From Simon Cameron et al.*
- [c. Feb 1847] From Alfred P. Edgerton et al. NS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Charles Wolcott to David A. Starkweather [c. February 1847]. Democratic Ohio legislators recommend Ohio congressman Starkweather as minister to Brazil.
- [c. Feb 1847] From James J. Faran. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces John Creagh of Cincinnati, who has contributed to the relief of Ireland.
- [c. Feb 1847] From Margaret Selden Hetzel. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks the promotion of her husband, Asst. Quartermaster Gen. Abner R. Hetzel, from captain to major under the Ten Regiment Bill.
- 1 Feb From John D. Hawkins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a meeting. From Polk’s AE: “Saw Col. Hawkins same day” about “a Pension case.” Published in ULNCP–J, p. 65.
- 1 Feb From Amos Kendall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Kentuckian Thomas P. Moore, former minister to Colombia, for a South American ministry or other position.
- 1 Feb From Charles W. Moseman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Bridgeport, Conn., merchant seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 1 Feb *From Richard M. Young.*
- 2 Feb From Thomas S. Drew. ALS. DLC–JKP. Arkansas governor encloses letters to Ambrose H. Sevier (not found) and Robert J. Walker; criticizes Chester Ashley for securing John Miller’s removal as register of the land office at Batesville, Ark.
- 2 Feb *From Ezekiel P. McNeal.*

- 2 Feb From John Norvell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Alpheus Felch was elected U.S. senator from Michigan yesterday over Epaphroditus Ransom and himself.
- 2 Feb *From James Walker.*
- 3 Feb From Thomas M. Acton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests payment for subscriptions to the Jackson (Tenn.) *Republican* and for publishing a speech from Polk’s gubernatorial campaign of 1843.
- 3 Feb *From George Bancroft.*
- 3 Feb From Augustus A. Chapman et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Congressmen from Virginia recommend George W. Hopkins for a diplomatic post.
- 3 Feb From John Y. Mason. LS. DLC–JKP. Encloses for Polk’s signature a commission as navy purser for Joseph C. Eldridge (not found).
- 3 Feb From William Scott. ALS. DLC–JKP. Upper Marlborough, Md., man accuses John M. Moore, Joseph S. Wilson, and John Wilson of aiding Whigs and injuring Democrats from within the General Land Office.
- 3 Feb From William Smith. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses pleasure at the withdrawal of Richard L. Bohannon’s nomination as army surgeon.
- 4 Feb From Robert Armstrong. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends George Peabody as a government banker; urges a postal arrangement with the United Kingdom; complains of the lack of news about the Mexican War.
- 4 Feb *From Alfred Balch.*
- 4 Feb From Henry L. Ellsworth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Indiana land agent encloses a letter to Sarah Childress Polk about the death of his wife, Nancy Allen Goodrich Ellsworth.
- 4 Feb From Clement R. de la Fontaine. ALS. DLC–JKP. Appended to Fontaine to Thomas Ritchie, May 6, 1845. Claims Louis Philippe “is calling a congress of sovereigns, for the purpose of interfering with American affairs”; predicts European interference if the war continues much longer; criticizes Zachary Taylor’s actions at Palo Alto and Monterrey; encloses letters to Thomas Ritchie of July 20, 1845, and February 17, 1846.
- 5 Feb *From Samuel H. Laughlin.*
- 6 Feb *From George Cadwalader.*
- 6 Feb From John T. Edgar. ALS. DLC–WA. Recommends John W. Scott of Ohio for a navy chaplaincy. See also L, copy. PHI–JB.
- 6 Feb *From William L. Helfenstein.*
- 6 Feb *From John A. Mairs.*

- [c. 6 Feb 1847] From Jesse T. Payne. ALS. DLC-JKP. Ohio orphan philosophizes about the human heart and asks for a loan.
- 7 Feb From Charles E. Shober et al. ALS. DLC-JKP. Committee of the Dialectic Society of the University of North Carolina asks Polk to sit for a portrait. Published in ULNCP-J, p. 65.
- 8 Feb *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 8 Feb From Jefferson Davis. Auction listing for ALS of unknown current location. Encloses and endorses William H. H. Patterson's application for a commission in the dragoons (not found).
- 8 Feb From William Dobbins. ALS. DLC-JKP. Poor man in Carrollton, Ohio, asks for money, promising that Jesus Christ will reward Polk's generosity.
- 8 Feb From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports a conversation with Howell Cobb about arranging for Henry R. Jackson to resume his post as U.S. district attorney for Georgia on his return; asks Polk to delay appointing a superintendent of the U.S. mint at Charlotte, N.C., pending the development of "a similar arrangement."
- 8 Feb From Pickett, Perkins & Co. L in William S. Pickett's hand. DLC-JKP. Encloses a draft for one thousand dollars (not found). From Polk's AE: "part of the proceeds of my cotton crop."
- 8 Feb *From Jonathan R. Torbert.*
- 8 Feb *From Townsend N. Underhill.*
- 9 Feb *From Benjamin B. French.*
- 9 Feb From Spencer Jarnagin. ALS. DLC-JKP. U.S. senator from Tennessee requests a commission as colonel for William B. Campbell.
- 9 Feb From Thomas J. Morgan. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports that he wrote to David Tod that Polk was considering Tod for the mission at Brazil; encloses Tod's response (not found). From Polk's AE: submitted Tod's nomination on March 2 before reading this letter; "too late now to withdraw it."
- 10 Feb *From Owen Connolly.*
- 10 Feb From John H. Harmanson et al. (written by Isaac E. Morse). ALS. DLC-JKP. Louisiana congressmen recommend Polk reappoint Robert Benguerel as receiver of public monies at Opelousas, La. From Polk's AE: "To be reappointed Feby. 16th 1847." Hampton C. Williams's AE: "appointed 6. Jan '47."
- 10 Feb From Henry Horn. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces and recommends an army commission for Augustus De Kalb Tarr of Philadelphia.

- 10 Feb From Philip Barton Key. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia encloses a grand jury presentment (not found).
- 11 Feb From Hugh W. Dunlap. ALS. DLC–JKP. Lieutenant colonel of Louisiana volunteers accepts Polk’s offer of a regimental command; discusses his preferences for subordinate officers, including surgeons.
- 11 Feb *From James Thompson.*
- 12 Feb From George C. Dromgoole. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses the Petersburg (Va.) *Republican* (not found) with an article marked; wishes to send the editor Dromgoole’s letter supporting the appointment of a Dr. Panson.
- 12 Feb From Charles H. Kimball. ALS. DLC–JKP. Bath, Maine, man seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 12 Feb From Shepherd Leffler and Serranus Clinton Hastings. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclose a table of navy officers’ pay by state, showing Iowa receives less than its fair share; seek a pursership for Mr. Pick of Iowa.
- 12 Feb From James Ross Snowden. ALS. DLC–JKP. Ousted Pennsylvania treasurer asks for an appointment.
- 12 Feb From James H. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses an account statement; reports “serious apprehensions” about Polly Bledsoe Weatherhead’s suit and notes Columbians’ intent to defend against it; reports Jane Knox Polk’s “improving . . . health.”
- 12 Feb From John H. Wheeler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks reappointment as superintendent of the U.S. mint at Charlotte, N.C.; lists men who support his application. Published in ULNCP–J, pp. 65–66.
- 13 Feb From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC–GW. Recommends Jesse Hartley Strickland of Tennessee for a midshipmanship.
- 13 Feb *From John Y. Mason.*
- 14 Feb *From Charles J. Ingersoll.*
- 14 Feb From Thomas P. Moore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Cites Polk’s “assurance” to Lewis Cass that he would give Moore a regimental command after the Ten Regiment Bill passed; will not withdraw his application in deference to, or serve under, John W. Tibbatts.
- 15 Feb From Erastus S. Comstock. ALS. DLC–JKP. Menomonee, Wisc. Terr., man urges Polk to release Wisconsin land withheld from the market and exempted from taxes.
- 15 Feb *From Edward Harden.*
- 15 Feb From John Y. Mason. L, copy. DNA–RG 45. Encloses the proceedings and decision of the court martial of Cmdr. Edward W. Carpender (not found).

- 15 Feb From James A. Seddon. ALS. MeHi. Encloses a letter from Joseph Allen (not found) recommending Overton Bernard of Portsmouth, Va., for a chaplaincy under the Ten Regiment Bill.
- 15 Feb *From James Thompson.*
- 16 Feb From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports that Abraham Rencher wishes to resign as minister to Portugal this spring and has been told Polk will appoint a replacement during this Senate session.
- [16 Feb 1847] *From Jessie Benton Frémont.*
- 16 Feb *From William L. Helfenstein.*
- 16 Feb From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Asks Polk to return papers regarding Binghamton, N.Y., probably about the appointment of a deputy postmaster there, so that U.S. senator Daniel S. Dickinson of New York may see them.
- 16 Feb *From Andrew T. McReynolds.*
- 16 Feb From Elijah F. Purdy. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses the proceedings of the New York City, Tenth Ward, Democratic Committee's meeting (not found).
- 17 Feb *From Samuel R. Anderson.*
- 17 Feb From Caleb G. Brinton. ALS. DLC-JKP. Philadelphia shoemaker asks for Polk's autograph.
- 17 Feb From J. C. Marrick. ALS. DLC-JKP. Seeks an audience at Robert M. McLane's request.
- 17 Feb From Richard Ricketts. ALS. DLC-JKP. Washington City Democrat thanks Polk for his kindness when they met; asks for a job.
- 17 Feb From Ambrose H. Sevier et al. LS. MiU. U.S. senators recommend James D. Blair of Mississippi for a captaincy under the Ten Regiment Bill.
- 17 Feb From William Smith. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses and endorses resolutions in support of the Mexican War adopted by the Virginia General Assembly on February 13. See also L, copy. Vi.
- 18 Feb From Anonymous, signed "Alabama." AL. DLC-JKP. Argues that replacing Generals Scott and Taylor would make one of them president; claims Southerners oppose making Thomas H. Benton a lieutenant general; advocates "more vigor" in conducting the war; bemoans "despotic" U.S. government and congressmen who do not care about the troops.
- 18 Feb From Elias N. Conway. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports having redeemed and paid taxes on Polk's and William H. Polk's lands in Johnson County, Ark., which had been sold for taxes in 1845; encloses records of the sale, quitclaim

- deed for the lands' redemption, and receipt for taxes and penalties paid.
- 18 Feb *From James Pinckney Henderson.*
- 18 Feb From James W. Jeffreys. ALS. DLC-JKP. Polk's college friend praises his presidency, especially his Mexican War policy; seeks a cadetship for his son James at the U.S. Military Academy.
- 18 Feb From Charles S. Jones. ALS. DLC-JKP. Withdraws his criticism of James S. Gunnell as a candidate for commissioner of public buildings in Washington City in the event the Senate rejects Andrew Beaumont's nomination; prefers Charles P. Sengstack for the position.
- 18 Feb From Daniel Nietshe. ALS. DLC-JKP. New Orleans patent medicine store owner asks for a job; encloses a copy of a letter he received from a doctor (not found).
- 18 Feb From Jane Lockridge Yorke Taggart. ALS. DLC-JKP. Andrew Jackson, Jr.'s sister-in-law reminds Polk that he promised her husband, James B. Taggart, a job last November; wrote a similar letter on February 12 (not found).
- 19 Feb *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 19 Feb From James H. Donegan et al. Partly printed C. DLC-JKP. Committee of the Philodemic Society of Georgetown College invites the recipient to a Washington's Birthday celebration on February 22.
- 19 Feb To Pickett, Perkins & Co. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Recounts business figures from prior letters; requests payment of a loan owed to Polk for sales of his cotton.
- 20 Feb From Patrick Calhoun. ALS. DLC-JKP. Colonel of the Fifth New York Volunteer Regiment, which Polk has not accepted for service, withdraws his name from consideration for a majority in a regiment of dragoons.
- 20 Feb From Edward Devlin. ALS. DLC-JKP. Louisville, Ky., merchant withdraws his application for a navy pursership; complains that John Tyler appointed prominent men's relatives and that Polk, upon becoming president, appointed political opponents instead of friends.
- 20 Feb From Joseph Hall. ALS. DLC-JKP. Naval agent at Boston reports on the presentation of a sword to Caleb Cushing in Boston on February 18; observes that few Wilmot Proviso supporters attended; mentions having sent Polk yesterday's Boston *Post* (not found).
- 20 Feb From James Lee. ALS. DLC-JKP. Criticizes Robert J. Walker's loan plan and suggests an alternative plan.
- 20 Feb From Abraham Nichols. ALS. DLC-JKP. Newark, N.J., man asks for payment for "Taken charge of your carriage."

- 20 Feb From William Tharp. ALS. DLC–JKP. Delaware governor introduces William N. W. Dorsey, postmaster at Milford, Del.
- [20 Feb 1847] From Archibald Yell. L, typed copy. DLC–WLM. Encloses a draft for four hundred dollars (DLC–JKP), half for his son Dewitt Clinton Yell's education at Georgetown College, the other half for Lawson Moore to use for two of Yell's daughters (of three, Jane, Ardamisa, and Elizabeth) in Danville, Ky.
- [c. 22 Feb 1847] From Simon Cameron. ALS. DNA–RG 45. John Y. Mason having recommended the replacement of officers in charge of the public stores in foreign ports, recommends Horatio N. Crabb of Pennsylvania for the post in Hawaii.
- 22 Feb *From Robert Gray.*
- 22 Feb From John D. Matthews. ALS. DLC–JKP. Notes William T. Sprole's appointment as chaplain and professor at the U.S. Military Academy; quotes a letter from Henry T. Duncan of Kentucky about the chaplaincy; seeks a more lucrative clerkship.
- 22 Feb *To James H. Thomas.*
- 23 Feb *From Mary Berkley Childress.*
- 23 Feb From Johnson Merritt. ALS. DLC–JKP. Ohioan asks Polk and Sarah Childress Polk to name his new triplets.
- 24 Feb From William Anderson and L. A. Harris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Students at the College of New Jersey seek Polk's autograph.
- 24 Feb From Charles G. Greene. ALS. DLC–JKP. Boston editor introduces Dr. George B. Loring of Chelsea, Mass.
- 24 Feb From Charles S. Palmer. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City auctioneer seeks Polk's autograph on the enclosed "Scrap" (not found).
- 25 Feb From William J. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Ausburn Birdsall, congressman-elect from New York, who wishes to see some papers relating to Birdsall.
- 25 Feb *From John Y. Mason.*
- 25 Feb From Jane Lockridge Yorke Taggart. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests an answer to her letters of February 12 (not found) and 18.
- 25 Feb From Elias Wamph. ALS. DLC–JKP. Trenton, N.J., businessman complains of Mr. Yard's (probably Joseph A. but possibly James S.) betrayal of him; asks for a job as navy purser, army paymaster, Indian agent, or missionary to Oregon.
- 26 Feb *From William Anderson.*

- 26 Feb To John Y. Mason. ALS. MH–H. Asks Mason to bring Matthew C. Perry to the White House today. From Mason's AEI: will bring Perry.
- 26 Feb From Robert M. McLane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces [Barclay Gaurbé] (name uncertain), a Delaware lawyer.
- 26 Feb From Samuel Medary. ALS. DLC–JKP. Ohio editor endorses David A. Starkweather.
- 27 Feb From Anonymous, signed "Democrat of the old School." AL. DLC–JKP. Petersburg, Va., resident recommends Polk replace the Whig tidewaiter at Petersburg with Democrat Edmund Burkett.
- 27 Feb From Hamilton C. Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. Polk's college friend, a lawyer and humorist, recommends John Hoke of North Carolina for an army captaincy. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 141–42.
- 27 Feb *From Uriah P. Levy.*
- 27 Feb From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports having received twenty-two claims from Florida.
- 28 Feb From Anonymous to James K. Polk and Congress. AL. DLC–JKP. Hamptonburgh, N.Y., "prophet" forecasts God's destruction of the United States in 1860.
- 28 Feb *From Cornelius P. Van Ness.*
- 1 Mar From Howell Cobb et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Members of Congress recommend Edward Harden for a permanent job at the expiration of his term as Cherokee commissioner. See also L, copy. NcD. Appended to Harden to Mary Ann Elizabeth Randolph Harden, March 6, 1847.
- 1 Mar From Washington Greenhow. ALS. DLC–JKP. Accepts the consulship at Buenos Aires, despite lower rank and pay than he was told; warns he may resign within two months; would prefer commission as major under the Ten Regiment Bill.
- 1 Mar *From Jacob Latting.*
- 1 Mar *From Henry Simpson.*
- 1 Mar From Frederick Swann. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports having called at the White House today to ask a favor; will come back tomorrow.
- 1 Mar *From John W. Tibbatts.*
- 1 Mar From Richard D. Wills. ALS. DLC–JKP. Virginia youth composes an acrostic on the name "James K. Polk."
- 2 Mar From Anonymous to James K. Polk and Congress. AL. DLC–JKP. New York City resident criticizes Congress for slow action in the Mexican War.

- 2 Mar
[c. 2 Mar 1847] *From Samuel R. Curtis.*
From Allegheny Hardin. ALS. DNA-RG 156. Perryopolis, Penn., inventor encloses his plan of a battery for defending American cities, destroying foreign ones, or capturing Quebec, Gibraltar, or other places.
- 2 Mar
From Seth M. Leavenworth. ALS. DLC-JKP. Indiana railroad owner has asked Polk to call for a congressional joint resolution for his relief; because Nathan Clifford argued that Polk lacks the authority, asks Polk to suspend his case until Leavenworth examines that opinion.
- 2 Mar
From Louis McLane. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends James McHenry Boyd, former legation secretary to the United Kingdom, for a captaincy in Mexico.
- 2 Mar
From Thomas Robinson Warren. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York City traveler and merchant seeks Polk's autograph.
- 3 Mar
From James W. Simmons. ALS. DLC-JKP. Unemployed Texan asks for a job in the army or elsewhere.
- 3 Mar
From James Thompson.
- 4 Mar
From Anonymous. AL. DLC-JKP. Georgian recommends William Cumming of Augusta, Ga., for a command under the Ten Regiment Bill.
- 4 Mar
From Owen Connolly.
- 4 Mar
From Enos D. Hopping. ALS. DLC-JKP. Thanks Polk for appointing him a brigadier general.
- 4 Mar
From David S. Kaufman et al.
- 4 Mar
From Pickett, Perkins & Co. L in William S. Pickett's hand. DLC-JKP. Encloses Polk's account statement and a check for \$2,104.26 for the sale of his cotton (check not found), as instructed in his letter of February 19.
- 4 Mar
From David H. Wheeler. ALS. DLC-JKP. Ohio Methodist minister seeks a consulate or other office to support his medical education.
- 4 Mar
From David Wilmot. L, copy. PHi-JB. Reminds Polk, in light of the law of March 3 authorizing the appointment of additional army paymasters, of his promises to appoint Victor E. Piollet a paymaster.
- 5 Mar
From John R. Jones. ALS. DLC-JKP. Editor of the Vincennes (Ind.) *Western Sun* requests the publication of land sales and mail lettings in his paper; notes having sent Polk an issue of it last week (not found); recalls his unsuccessful application for the secretaryship of Wisconsin Territory in 1845; solicits an appointment to civil or military office.
- 5 Mar
From G. H. C. [Labab] (surname uncertain). ALS. DLC-JKP. Baltimore resident mentions an earlier letter to Polk (not found); criticizes Mexico's leaders; supports Matthew C. Perry's plan to win the Mexican people's

- goodwill by administering the areas in American possession instead of taking new ones; proposes the United States aid the Mexicans in forming a new government.
- 5 Mar From Seth M. Leavenworth. ALS. DLC-JKP. Requests a copy of Nathan Clifford's opinion on his case.
- 6 Mar *From Thomas H. Benton.*
- 6 Mar From Richard Brodhead. ALS. DLC-JKP. Pennsylvania congressman introduces James Burns, a Pennsylvania canal commissioner.
- 6 Mar *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 6 Mar *From Robert C. Grier.*
- 6 Mar From Romulus M. Saunders. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces and recommends for a position in a foreign ministry Arthur L. Payson, acting legation secretary to Spain. Published in ULNCP-A, p. 142.
- 6 Mar From Francis R. Shunk. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces S. B. Lowry of Crawford County, Penn.
- 6 Mar From Pierre Soulé. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends Seth Barton, solicitor of the Treasury, for the ministry to Brazil if David Tod declines the appointment; argues for the importance of appointing a Southerner and specifically a Louisianan.
- 7 Mar From Virginia L. Beusley. ALS. DLC-JKP. Spotsylvania Court House, Va., woman seeks a lieutenancy under the Ten Regiment Bill for her brother, F. C. Beusley of Virginia.
- 7 Mar From Edward Cantwell. ALS. DLC-JKP. Wilmington, N.C., lawyer and editor offers his "legal, or military services in Mexico." From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: "Jas B. Craighead presents Edwd. Cantwell an applicant for office, who makes good references."
- 7 Mar From George R. Powel. ALS. DLC-JKP. Tennessee circuit court clerk recommends his brother, Thomas J. Powel of Mississippi, for the trading post with the Comanche; notes the "condemnation" in Hawkins County of Andrew Johnson's speech against taxing tea and coffee.
- 8 Mar From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC-JKP. Expresses interest in the consulship at Liverpool, England, should Robert Armstrong resign.
- 8 Mar From Owen Connolly. ALS. DLC-JKP. Offers to "find friends" to pay "bail for the new commissioner."
- 8 Mar From Horatio N. Crabb. ALS. DNA-RG 45. Former marine lieutenant and U.S. House clerk suggests Polk replace the late Cary Seldon as naval storekeeper at Washington City with a member of Seldon's impoverished family, despite the Pennsylvania Senate's having recommended Crabb for the position.

- 8 Mar From Spencer Jarnagin. ALS. DLC-JKP. Asks why his relative Richard T. Queen was dismissed as Treasury clerk and if decision is final; encloses a related document (not found).
- [c. 8 Mar 1847] From Andrew Kennedy. ALS. DLC-JKP. Refers to a recent conversation among Polk, Senator Jesse D. Bright of Indiana, and himself; asks Polk to delay payments to Mr. Webster, pending reinvestigation of the claim.
- 8 Mar From [Linneaus P. Noble]. AL. DLC-JKP. Publisher of the abolitionist Washington *National Era* applies for his newspaper to print executive department notices and federal laws; encloses two issues of the paper and affidavits confirming its circulation (none found).
- 8 Mar From Timothy Pilsbury. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends Leander H. McNeel to replace the late John M. Allen as U.S. marshal for Texas; argues that former opposition to Sam Houston should not keep men out of office.
- 8 Mar From Albert Smith. ALS. DLC-JKP. Northeastern boundary commissioner introduces Sylvanus B. Phinney.
- [c. 8 Mar 1847] From Ebenezer Starnes. ALS, fragment. DLC-JKP. Georgia lawyer recommends William Cumming for an office.
- 8 Mar *From John Addison Thomas.*
- 8 Mar *To John Tyler.*
- 8 Mar From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC-JKP. Relays Ransom H. Gillet's objections to James B. Taggart's appointment as clerk in the Register's Office of the Treasury Department; offers to appoint Taggart on Walker's "own responsibility."
- 8 Mar From Nicholas L. Williams. ALS. DLC-JKP. University of North Carolina trustee expresses the trustees' expectation that Polk and Sarah Childress Polk will attend commencement; invites them to his home thereafter.
- 9 Mar *To Thomas H. Benton.*
- 9 Mar *From Thomas H. Benton.*
- 9 Mar From Linn Boyd. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends Dunning R. McNair of Louisville, Ky., as naval storekeeper at Washington City.
- 9, 12 Mar From James Lee. ALS. DLC-JKP. Fears the eighteen-million-dollar loan will slow the economy; proposes the government instead pay claimants in low-interest treasury notes.
- 9 Mar From John Stewart. ALS. DNA-RG 45. Philadelphia taverner applies for an appointment in a navy yard or dry dock, preferring not to seek a pension for his War of 1812 naval service.

- 10 Mar From Halsey Cooper. ALS. DLC–JKP. Farmer, N.Y., youth seeks money for an unnamed man’s education.
- 10 Mar From Charles Douglas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Accepts appointment as commissioner of public buildings in Washington City.
- 10 Mar *From Felix Grundy, Jr.*
- 10 Mar *From John P. Helfenstein.*
- 10 Mar From William D. Lee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former chargé d’affaires from Texas applies for a position in a foreign legation or in Washington City; cites a recommendation by Texas’s representatives in Congress (not found).
- 10 Mar From Joseph J. Merrick. ALS. DLC–JKP. Maryland lawyer suggests Thomas H. Benton bring a fleet to Campeche, Mexico, and offer Yucatan its independence in exchange for an alliance.
- 10 Mar From Pleasant Nelson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Columbia, Tenn., hotelier defends Jeremiah Cherry against calls for his removal as postmaster; reports on Jane Knox Polk’s health and on former Whigs in the area who have switched to the Democratic party.
- 11 Mar From John Butler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Philadelphian thanks Polk for appointing him a captain in the Third Dragoon Regiment.
- 11 Mar *To William O. Butler.*
- 11 Mar From William D. Garrett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Homeopathic physician and son of Polk’s college classmate Martin R. Garrett asks for a job to support his family. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: “Treasury.”
- 11 Mar From Robert H. Morris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces New York City merchant Philip Speyer.
- 11 Mar *From Franklin Pierce.*
- [11 Mar 1847] From Nicholas P. Trist. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that Robert R. Ritchie would like to replace John W. Tyler as physician of the U.S. penitentiary in Washington City. From Polk’s AE: “Dr. Ritchie has been appointed a surgeon in the army. April ____ 1847.”
- 11 Mar From Francis Vespre. ALS. DLC–JKP. Georgetown College treasurer encloses Marshall T. Polk, Jr.’s semiannual bill for \$264.72. From Polk’s AE: “Paid March ____ 1847; Receipt within.”
- 12 Mar From Henry E. Eastman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Student at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, seeks an autograph.
- 12 Mar From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces William C. Wagley of Kentucky, who has letters to Polk from Edgar B. Gaither and the tender of the services of a

- company of dragoons he and Gaither raised (none found); Wagley desires a lieutenantcy.
- 12 Mar From Marcus Morton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Charles Howard of Massachusetts.
- 12 Mar From Kenneth Rayner.
- 12 Mar From Robert Barnwell Rhett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Maxcy Gregg to Milledge L. Bonham urging Bonham to accept a lieutenant colonelcy; recommends Gregg for the army. From Polk's AE: "*Genl. Bonham* hesitated about accepting in consequence of some previous understanding with Col. Gregg."
- 12 Mar From George Ticknor. ALS. DLC–JKP. Student at Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H., asks for a two-hundred-dollar loan to complete his studies.
- 13 Mar To James Brown. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Richard M. Young to Joseph Knox Walker (not found) noting the issue of a patent to Brown for a section of the Chickasaw cession; promises to have Ezekiel P. McNeal give Brown money to buy land for Polk; regrets how busy he was during Brown's visit to Washington City.
- 13 Mar From Edmund Burke. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses extracts from the New York *Express* reporting New Hampshire election returns; believes Democrats have won, including Jared W. Williams as governor.
- 13 Mar From William T. Forsyth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia forwarder offers to convey three million dollars to Mexico.
- 13 Mar From John Hogan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for the major generalship declined by Thomas H. Benton.
- 13 Mar From S. B. Lowry. ALS. DLC–JKP. Regrets his need to leave Washington City without seeing Polk; seeks the return of Francis R. Shunk's letter of March 6.
- 13 Mar To Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Instructs McNeal to give James Brown money to buy land for Polk in the Chickasaw cession; approves of the purchase of slave Maria Davis; asks McNeal for the annual statement of rents on the lands of Marshall T. Polk's heirs.
- 13 Mar From Albert G. Moon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Memphis man thanks Polk for appointing him a lieutenant.
- [15 Mar 1847] From Anonymous, signed "Democrats of Phila." L. DLC–JKP. Invite Polk to a dinner on April 16, 1847. Letter initially dated "Octr 1st," then changed to "March 15th."
- 15 Mar From Thomas H. Benton and John S. Phelps. NS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Richard M. Young to Polk, March 19, 1847. Senator Benton and U.S. House member Phelps, on behalf of Missouri's delegation to Congress, recommend replacing James H. McBride with Benjamin F. Massey as register

- of the Springfield land office and replacing Nicholas R. Smith with Thomas Polk as receiver of public monies there. Former congressman Leonard H. Sims's dissention follows the letter. From Polk's AE: knows of no "sufficient reason, why they should be removed. Apl. 16th 1847."
- 15 Mar From William M. Coffee. ALS. DLC-JKP. Columbia, Tenn., native asks for an office to support his legal career.
- 15 Mar *To William M. Green.*
- 15 Mar From Edward Harden. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses a recommendation (not found) signed by senators and others after they learned Congress would not further fund the Cherokee Commission; desires a furlough if it is continued.
- 15 Mar *To John T. Leigh.*
- 15 Mar To Pickett, Perkins & Co. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Acknowledges the firm's letter of March 4 and the enclosed check.
- 15 Mar From John P. Robinson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Missionary to seamen at Boston hopes Polk will "promote the temporal and spiritual comfort of" seamen and all Americans; sends separately a newspaper clipping titled "a voice from the Gulf of Mexico" (not found).
- 15 Mar *To Charles E. Shober et al.*
- 16 Mar From William C. Bouck. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former New York governor introduces Gen. Adoniram Chandler of New York City.
- [16 Mar 1847] From Walter T. Colquitt. ALS. DNA-RG 99. U.S. senator from Georgia asks for a leave of absence for his son, paymaster Alfred H. Colquitt; asks for a lieutenantancy in a new regiment for Lt. William L. Griffin of Georgia. From Polk's AEI: "Referred to the Paymaster General," Nathan Towson, for a decision and response on March 25. From Towson's AE: "request denied."
- 16 Mar From Robert Barnwell Rhett. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends Colonel Summer for a captaincy of dragoons, having learned that John S. Sitgreaves probably will decline it.
- 16 Mar *From John Tyler, Jr.*
- 17 Mar From Anonymous. AL. DLC-JKP. West Stockbridge, Mass., resident recommends Polk appoint to office only "those who do not apply for office."
- 17 Mar From John M. Brodhead. ALS. DLC-JKP. Second Comptroller's Office clerk seeks a meeting.
- 17 Mar *From Edmund Burke.*
- 17 Mar From Samuel Duncan. ALS. DNA-RG 45. Massachusetts physician and navy veteran seeks appointment as acting assistant surgeon in the navy or lieutenant of marines.
- 17 Mar *From Charles Goodyear.*

- 17 Mar From Arthur P. Hayne. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former army officer and South Carolina legislator applies for the major generalship declined by Thomas H. Benton.
- 17 Mar *To William S. Pickett.*
- 18 Mar From Isaac G. McKinley. ALS. PHi. Editor of the Harrisburg (Penn.) *Democratic Union* endorses James Ross Snowden as treasurer of the U.S. mint at Philadelphia.
- 19 Mar To Thomas Cowperthwait & Co. ALS. PHi. Thanks the Philadelphia publisher for a copy of Levi Carroll Judson's *Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, and of Washington and Patrick Henry*; praises the book. See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.
- 19 Mar From Andrew McDonald. ALS. DLC-JKP. Morgantown, Va., lawyer expresses his "fidelity" despite not being appointed U.S. attorney for the Western District of Virginia or an officer under the Ten Regiment Bill.
- 19 Mar From James G. Read. ALS. DLC-JKP. Seeks an appointment such as land offices examiner or Indian agent as an excuse to decline running for reelection to the Indiana Senate.
- 19 Mar From John F. Reinmund and J. H. Walker. ALS. DLC-JKP. Corresponding secretaries, repeating George Peters and John Balch to Polk, July 8, 1846, announce Polk's election to honorary membership in the Philosophian Society of Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio.
- 19 Mar From Richard M. Young. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses Thomas H. Benton and John S. Phelps to Polk, March 15, 1847.
- 20 Mar From Robert Campbell, Jr. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports purchase of two mules for Polk; urges Polk to help the indebted John B. Hays; inquires about a debt concerning Joseph Knox Walker; reports Evan Young's offer to buy Polk's house and lot.
- 20 Mar *To Alfred Flournoy.*
- 20 Mar From Henry Slicer. AN. DLC-JKP. Senate chaplain informs Polk that Methodist bishop Leonidas Hamline will preach tomorrow at the McKendree Chapel, that the Methodists' Baltimore Annual Conference ended today so no other churches announced appointments, and that Slicer is being retained at Washington City.
- 20 Mar *From Frederick P. Stanton.*
- 21 Mar *From Daniel Graham.*
- 22 Mar *To Elias N. Conway.*
- 22 Mar From William M. Green. ALS. DLC-JKP. Thanks Polk for James F. Waddell's appointment; asks the president to send the commission to Green's care. Published in ULNCP-A, p. 143.

- 22 Mar *To West H. Humphreys.*
- 22 Mar To William L. Marcy. Auction listing for ALS of unknown current location. Orders that Adj. Gen. Roger Jones prepare a description of General Taylor's forces on the Rio Grande; encloses back to Marcy "the returns of the forces under *Genl Scott's* immediate command" (not found).
- 22 Mar From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses an appointment for James B. Taggart (not found); complains about people's treating Walker and Polk "cavalierly"; asks Polk to inform Taggart of the Treasury's heavy workload.
- 24 Mar *From Henry Horn.*
- 25 Mar *To James Buchanan.*
- 25 Mar *From Edmund P. Gaines.*
- 25 Mar *From Charles J. Ingersoll.*
- 25 Mar *From Joel Turrill.*
- 26 Mar From Aaron R. Cass. ALS. DLC-JKP. Student at Gilmanton Academy, N.H., asks Polk for money to support his studies.
- 26 Mar From Franklin H. Elmore. ALS. DLC-JKP. Rescinds his letter about Mr. Davis (not found), which he wrote under the influence of Mr. Douglass.
- 26 Mar *From Edmund P. Gaines.*
- 26 Mar To William L. Marcy. Auction listing for ALS of unknown current location. Asks if Marcy will have a list of all officers under the Ten Regiment Bill; wishes to see Roger Jones's order for recruiting Mexicans into the U.S. Army.
- 26 Mar From Harriet Chase Read. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York City woman thanks Polk for pardoning her nephew, J. F. Barnard.
- 27 Mar From William C. Bouck. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces Robert Dodge of New York City and recommends him as bearer of dispatches to Europe.
- 27 Mar From John B. Fry. ALS. DLC-JKP. Washingtonian cites a letter of March 23 in which he enclosed a letter from Henry Clay to Winfield Scott (neither found), requesting its return, and asked for an interview; requests a military appointment in Mexico. From Polk's AE: "Returned the letter to Mr Fry, who called in person, Apl. 1847."
- 27 Mar From Charles J. Ihrle. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former New Jersey state senator seeks reappointment to U.S. Military Academy of his son, future Civil War general George P., who was dismissed following a court martial.
- 27 Mar From Edmund S. Janes. ALS. DLC-JKP. Methodist bishop recommends Charles A. Davis, a Washington City Methodist minister, for a clerkship. From Polk's AE: "Mr Davis has been appointed."

- 27 Mar From M. B. Lawrence. ALS. DLC-JKP. Spotswood, N.Y., Democrat asks for a letter to prove to others that Polk is not "of . . . over-bearing tyrannical disposition."
- [28 Mar 1847] From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses a draft note to John M. Shively, deputy postmaster of Astoria, Ore. Terr., (not found) affirming the administration's commitment "to hold" Oregon and "provide for" its residents; reports that, according to Shively, the Hudson's Bay Company has influenced many there to support independence.
- 28 Mar From Preston Capshaw. ALS. DLC-JKP. Huntsville, Ala., physician claims he predicted early that Polk would become president; asks for an office paying over two thousand dollars for himself or a lieutenancy for his brother, Caswell C. Capshaw.
- 29 Mar *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 29 Mar *From Thomas B. Childress.*
- 29 Mar *To Charles Goodyear.*
- 29 Mar *From Jeremiah George Harris.*
- 29 Mar From Linneaus P. Noble. ALS. DLC-JKP. Repeats his application of March 8.
- 29 Mar From Evertt M. Patterson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Nashville area physician complains of Polk's not replying to his application to be Tennessee marshal (not found); complains of not receiving an army appointment in Mexico; discusses the Tennessee election, predicting Gov. Aaron V. Brown's reelection.
- 29 Mar *To William H. Polk.*
- 29 Mar From Lewis Sanders, Jr. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends John Rowan, Jr., to replace Robert Wickliffe, Jr., as chargé d'affaires to Sardinia.
- 29 Mar *From Lewis Sanders, Jr.*
- 30 Mar *From Edmund P. Gaines.*
- 30 Mar From Ransom H. Gillet. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports having "learned who engraved the false seals used by" Hosea H. Smith, convicted of "frauds upon the Treasury."
- [30 Mar 1847] *From John M. Patton.*
- 31 Mar From Orlando Dorsey. ALS. DLC-JKP. Woodville, Miss., lawyer praises Polk; complains about Democratic infighting and alludes to a party unification plan; encloses the first issue of his published defense of the Mexican War (not found).
- [31 Mar 1847] From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC-JKP. Sends papers regarding cadet appointments; will call tomorrow; reports that Roger Jones says the list of recent military appointments is not ready.

- [31 Mar 1847]
[c. Apr 1847] *From Robert J. Walker.*
From Anonymous, signed "A Virginian." AL. DLC-JKP. Criticizes Polk for retaining Whigs in government offices and for appointing Whigs such as Walter H. Jenifer to new military offices under the Ten Regiment Bill.
- 1 Apr *From John S. Young. ALS. DLC-JKP.* Recommends Frank N. McNairy for a lieutenancy; mentions Aaron V. Brown's recommendation letter for McNairy (not found); asks Polk to write Richard H. Allen, whose son William B. died at Monterrey, a letter of condolence, and to have Richard's two sons' claims looked into.
- 2 Apr *From Thomas H. Hopkins. ALS. DLC-JKP.* Mentions two or three letters his wife, Eliza Rowan Hopkins, sent Polk (not found); encloses a letter from Mary E. Grundy Scott and Stokely D. Rowan (not found); fears "R. J. Walker has forgotten me, officially." From Polk's AE: "Letter enclosed returned . . . : Apl. 16th 1847."
- 2 Apr *From John Speed Smith. ALS. DLC-JKP.* Kentucky state senator argues that Polk must send more troops to Mexico; discusses options for enlisting or drafting men; mentions John M. McCalla's letter to Polk (not found) offering "my services."
- 3 Apr *From Anonymous, signed "A Democrat." AL. DLC-JKP.* Alexandria, Va., politician urges an end to the war; claims Americans no longer support it and Virginia's Democratic leaders fear election losses; reports that John C. Calhoun's supporters say to supply the troops or recall them.
- 3 Apr *From Daniel Graham.*
3 Apr *From John H. Harmanson. ALS. DLC-JKP.* Reports Hugh W. Dunlap's anger at not receiving the colonelcy of dragoons; Dunlap originally had declined it, but then changed his mind in his letter to Polk of February 11 after Edward G. W. Butler received it; asks Polk to write Dunlap.
- 3 Apr *From Edmund S. Janes. ALS. DLC-JKP.* Recommends Pontiac, Mich., Methodist minister Samuel D. Simonds for an army chaplaincy. From Polk's AE: asked Henry Slicer to reply.
- 3 Apr *From John Y. Mason.*
3 Apr *From James C. Van Maanen. ALS. DLC-JKP.* British army bandmaster requests an answer to his and Mr. Berlyn's letter of January and the return of the enclosed music they dedicated to Polk (neither found) so they can publish it.
- 4 Apr *From Archibald Atkinson.*
6 Apr *From John J. Crittenden.*

- 6 Apr From Stephen D. Dobbins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Army captain convicted by a court martial claims he was tried unfairly; asks Polk to suspend his decision until Dobbins meets him. From Polk’s AE: “I re-appointed Capt. Dobbins—May.”
- 6 Apr From John A. McClernand. ALS. DLC–JKP. Illinois congressman reports that Joseph Heslep of Jacksonville, Ill., resigned his infantry lieutenancy because he wants to raise a cavalry unit; recommends Joab Wilkinson of Illinois to replace him.
- 6 Apr From Franklin Pierce. ALS. DLC–B/R. Urges Polk to retain Lt. Daniel D. Baker of New Hampshire upon the postwar reduction of the marine corps forces.
- 6 Apr *To Kenneth Rayner.*
- 6 Apr To Nicholas L. Williams. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Declines Williams’s invitation of March 8 to his home; will not go to Tennessee after Chapel Hill.
- 7 Apr From John Y. Mason. L, copy. DNA–RG 45. Encloses a copy of a letter from Cdre. James D. Smith about schooner *Walter M.*; recommends selling the ship as desired by chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks Joseph Smith.
- 7 Apr *From James S. Smith.*
- 7 Apr To Robert J. Walker. ALS. Private collection of Judy and Larry Moss. Asks Walker to see jobseeker Richard Ricketts, whom Walter T. Colquitt presented to Polk.
- 8 Apr From Sidney M. Barnes. ALS. KyLoF. Smithland, Ky., lawyer encloses and endorses applications from Patrick Barrett, George B. Cook, and Benjamin F. Egan for commands under the Ten Regiment Bill (not found).
- 8 Apr From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Instructs Polk to pay William W. Masterson \$166.25 for 47,500 shingles. Letter crossed out in unknown hand.
- 8 Apr From William McLain. ALS. DLC–JKP. American Colonization Society secretary seeks a letter of commendation for Rev. Henry M. Field of St. Louis, who is about to tour Europe. From Polk’s AE: sent McLain “a general letter, of introduction” on April 8 (not found).
- 8 Apr *From Ezekiel P. McNeal.*
- 9 Apr *To William D. Moseley.*
- 9 Apr From Robert Rautoul, Jr. ALS. DLC–B/R. U.S. district attorney for Massachusetts concurs with Franklin Pierce’s letter of April 6.
- 9 Apr From James Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Relays John B. Hays’s desire that Polk appoint his nephew, James C. Hays, a lieutenant. From Polk’s AE: “appointed.”
- 9 Apr *From Robert J. Walker.*
- 10 Apr *From John M. Bass.*

- 12 Apr To Robert Campbell, Jr.
 12 Apr To James Hamilton, Jr.
 13 Apr From Elihu Ferry. ALS. DLC-JKP. Carroll *Watchman* publisher encloses pro-war resolutions of Carroll Parish, La., Democrats printed in the *Watchman*.
 13 Apr From Alfred O. P. Nicholson.
 [14 Apr 1847] From Robert Campbell, Jr.
 14 Apr From John Louis Hayes. ALS. DLC-JKP. Baltimore architect asks for a job; encloses a letter from Thomas Ritchie denying Hayes a job at the *Washington Union*.
 14 Apr From Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports having today sent James Brown \$320, as Brown had requested in a letter of April 7. From Polk's AE: "Mr *Brown* is to invest this amt. for me in chickasaw lands in the Mississippi bottom, whih are now subject to entry at 12 1/2 cents pr. acre."
 14 Apr To Gideon J. Pillow.
 15 Apr To Caleb Cushing.
 15 Apr To Ezekiel P. McNeal.
 15 Apr To Gideon J. Pillow.
 15 Apr To John A. Quitman. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Informs Quitman of his appointment as major general, made and confirmed yesterday, one day after Gideon J. Pillow's appointment to same rank.
 15 Apr From James K. Polk and James Buchanan to Nicholas P. Trist.
 16 Apr From William P. Beatty. ALS. DLC-JKP. Chester, Penn., edge tool maker asks for Polk's autograph.
 17 Apr From Edward K. Collins. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York City shipowner thanks Polk for helping to adjust his contract for mail steamers to Liverpool, England.
 17 Apr From John N. Esselman. ALS. DLC-JKP. Forced by rheumatism to give up medicine, applies to replace Robert Wickliffe, Jr., as chargé d'affaires to Sardinia.
 17 Apr From Nathan Gilbert. ALS. DLC-JKP. Washington, La., postmaster applies for a lieutenancy; encloses his resignation, to be given to Cave Johnson if the appointment is granted. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: "not to be delivered."
 17 Apr From John D. Hawkins et al.
 [c. 18 Apr 1847] From Dewitt Clinton Yell. ALS. DLC-JKP. Appended above Jane Yell to Dewitt Clinton Yell, April 7, 1847. Transmits sister Jane's letter, in which she informs him that grandfather Lawson Moore says he should return from Georgetown College to Kentucky until father Archibald Yell's estate is settled; asks Polk what to do.

- [c. 19 Apr 1847] From Anonymous, signed "The Devil."
 19 Apr To John M. Bass.
 19 Apr From Frederick W. Horn.
 19 Apr From Samuel Ingham.
 19 Apr To [William L. Marcy].
 19 Apr From Linneaus P. Noble. ALS. DLC-JKP. Repeats his application of March 8 and 29; claims *National Era* has the highest circulation of any Washington City paper.
 19 Apr From John H. Savage.
 20 Apr To James Brown.
 20 Apr To William H. Haywood, Jr.
 20 Apr From John P. Heiss. ALS. DLC-JKP. Transmits the "Documents of the 1st session of the 29 Congress" (not found).
 20 Apr From Haym M. Salomon, Jr. ALS. DLC-JKP. Mobile, Ala., citizen claims that Polk promised Rep. Edmund S. Dargan of Alabama in July 1846 that Salomon would receive the third vacant navy pursership. From Polk's AE: "I made no such promise."
 20 Apr From W. P. Wightman. ALS. DLC-JKP. Brighton, Iowa, man asks for a job so he can support his father.
 21 Apr From Michael Duffy. ALS. DLC-JKP. Tennessee legislator asks for a job, such as Indian agent, consul, or chargé d'affaires, to pay his debts.
 21 Apr From John Y. Mason. L, copy. DNA-RG 45. Encloses the proceedings of the court martial of Midshipman Edward E. Stone (not found); agrees with court's recommendation of a pardon.
 [21 Apr 1847] From Elisha Mitchell. ALS. DLC-JKP. Acknowledges Polk's two letters (not found); was happy that Polk took Marshall T. Polk, Jr., as a ward; expects Polk at the University of North Carolina's commencement. Published in ULNCP-A, p. 148.
 21 Apr To Unknown.
 21 Apr From Archibald Wright. ALS. DLC-JKP. Pulaski, Tenn., lawyer requests copies of federal laws, congressional journals, and various government documents relating to Mexico and Texas.
 22 Apr To Robert Campbell, Jr.
 22 Apr From John W. Davis. ALS. DLC-JKP. Having learned he will not return to Congress, seeks a "civil, or military" office "in Mexico, or elsewhere."
 22 Apr From William Scraggs. ALS. DLC-JKP. Cork, Ireland, lithographer and bookbinder presents a print of the USS *Jamestown* (not found).

- 23 Apr From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for the return of a letter to Maj. Gen. Walter Jones of the District of Columbia militia about the raising of three companies; will send it today if Polk approves.
- 23 Apr From Marcus Morton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces lawyer William Sawyer of Charlestown, Mass.
- 24 Apr From John S. Barbour. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former Virginia congressman describes an electoral debate in Culpeper County, Va.; reports son John S. Barbour, Jr.’s election to the state legislature and results of congressional elections; apologizes for pressing a pension case “perhaps too importunately” when in Washington City but affirms its justice.
- 24 Apr From Isaac G. Farlee. ALS. DLC–JKP. New Jersey state senator introduces Charles J. Ihrie.
- 24 Apr To John H. Harmanson. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Responding to Harmanson’s letter of April 3, asks him to tell Dunlap that Polk would have appointed Dunlap had he initially accepted or written sooner.
- 24 Apr *To John T. Leigh.*
- 24 Apr *To John A. Mairs.*
- 24 Apr *From David L. Swain.*
- 25 Apr From Archibald G. Carter. ALS. DLC–JKP. Polk’s college friend announces plan to see Polk in Chapel Hill, N.C.; invites Polk to his home in Mocksville, N.C., afterward. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 146–47.
- 25 Apr From Mahlon Dickerson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Andrew Jackson’s secretary of the navy introduces a relative, lawyer David Robinson of Bennington, Vt.
- 25 Apr From W. M. Y. Keady et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Committee announces Polk’s election to honorary membership in the Mechanics’ Independent Literary Society of Washington, Penn.; asks for a donation to support their library for apprentice boys.
- 25 Apr To Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges McNeal’s letters of April 8 and 14.
- 26 Apr From Richard Brodhead. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Charles J. Ihrie.
- 26 Apr From Milton Burns. ALS. DLC–JKP. Milam, Tex., Democrat reports that the Democratic party is popular in Texas; reports that he served in Mexico last year and wants to again; asks Polk to send “a brace” (pair) of revolving pistols with Polk’s name engraved on it and to subscribe him to “the best democrat paper” in Washington City.

- 26 Apr From Elias N. Conway. ALS. DLC–JKP. Responding to Polk’s letter of March 22, agrees to pay the taxes and to try to sell the land; reports that William H. Polk sold his land in Johnson County, Ark.
- 26 Apr From Francis A. Cunningham. Auction listing for ALS of unknown current location. On reverse of James George et al. to Cunningham, April 25, 1847. Endorses George et al.’s recommendation of William B. Van Hook of Hamilton, Ohio, for an appointment as assistant commissary.
- 26 Apr *From Benjamin B. French.*
- 26 Apr From Benjamin B. French. ALS. DLC–JKP. On behalf of the Freemasons’ Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, asks Polk to have the executive departments closed for the laying of the Smithsonian Institution’s cornerstone on May 1.
- 26 Apr *To Daniel Graham.*
- 26 Apr *From George S. Houston.*
- 26 Apr From John Y. Mason. L, copy. DNA–RG 45. Encloses the proceedings of the courts martial of Passed Midshipmen Samuel C. Barney and James M. Ladd and related documents (none found).
- 26 Apr From Mitchell H. Miller. ANS. DLC–JKP. Washington City Bible Society secretary invites Polk and his family to the Society’s anniversary tonight.
- 26 Apr From David S. Reid. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that the University of North Carolina’s commencement will be on the first Thursday in June; announces Stephen A. Douglas’s marriage. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 147–48.
- 27 Apr From John S. Barbour. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports the defeats of Shelton F. Leake and Edmund W. Hubbard for reelection to the U.S. House; discusses other, yet uncertain, Virginia elections.
- 27 Apr *To Lawson Moore.*
- 28 Apr *To Robert Armstrong.*
- 28 Apr *To John D. Hawkins et al.*
- 28 Apr *To Charles J. Ingersoll.*
- 29 Apr *To Robert Armstrong.*
- 29 Apr To William M. Green. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Responding to Green’s letter of April 15 (not found), gives Polk’s schedule for traveling to Raleigh and Chapel Hill, N.C.; wishes his movements at Raleigh to “be controlled . . . by . . . my friends at the University”; looks forward to seeing Green.
- 29 Apr *To William H. Haywood, Jr.*
- 29 Apr To Elisha Mitchell. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Responding to Mitchell’s letter of April 21, expresses his respect for

- Mitchell and desire to see him in Chapel Hill, N.C.; notes that Marshall T. Polk, Jr., "is under my care."
- 29 Apr To William Moore. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Summarizes Archibald Yell to Polk, February 20, 1847; reports having "executed his wishes" and spoken with Dewitt Clinton Yell and Marshall T. Polk, Jr.; recommends Clinton attend the U.S. Military Academy; offers to pay for Georgetown College until he is ready; suggests preserving Yell's letter for his children.
- 29 Apr To David L. Swain. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Thanks Swain for his letter of April 24 but declines the invitation to his house to avoid inconveniencing Swain; believes "a public house" will be better for Polk and "the crowd."
- 30 Apr *From Charles J. Ingersoll.*
- 30 Apr From Zebina J. D. Kinsley. ALS. DLC-JKP. Principal of the Classical and Mathematical School, West Point, N.Y., at William T. Sprole's request, encloses printed circulars of the School in case Polk wishes to enroll his wards.
- 30 Apr From Henry Slicer. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends Washington City justice of the peace Benjamin K. Morsell as inspector of the U.S. penitentiary in Washington City, because he needs the income.
- [c. May 1847] From George T. Baskerville et al. Partly printed AN. DLC-JKP. Party "Managers" invite Polk to a party for the University of North Carolina's graduating class on June 3. Facsimile published in ULNCP-A, p. 159.
- 1 May *From Anonymous.*
- 1 May From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC-JKP. Refers Polk to James G. M. Ramsey's letter (not found) recommending William L. Goddard for a lieutenancy; reports Ramsey's promise yesterday to write Polk about the campaign; claims, after having given a very good campaign speech, to be having "about *your* usual success."
- 1 May From Robert Campbell, Jr. ALS. DLC-JKP. In response to Polk's letter of April 22, reports having surveyed Polk's stable lot, signed a contract with Evan Young for the sale of Polk's Columbia property, and taken bonds from Young for two thousand dollars due January 1, 1848, and one thousand due January 1, 1849; encloses several documents (not found) to help Polk write a title bond for the property; reports having attempted to sell Polk's storehouse.
- 1 May From Margaret O'Brien Freeman. ALS. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in Freeman to William O'Brien, May 1, 1847. Tennessee widow asks for a job for her brother, O'Brien of

- Washington City, and for "any writing I could do for any of the dept."
- 1 May To William M. Green. ALS. NNPM. Emends the schedule in his letter of April 29. See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.
- 1 May To John D. Hawkins et al.
- 1 May From William H. Haywood, Jr.
- 1 May To William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Emends the schedule in his letter of April 29.
- 1 May From John Hutt. ALS. DLC-JKP. Davenport, Iowa, man proposes a new system of currency, land sales and rents, and loans that will benefit poor farmers, discourage speculation, and aid the federal government; recommends the repeal of the loan bill of January 28, 1847, because of the high interest, which, if avoided, could allow defrayment of costs for the war and enable soldiers' bounties in either produce or land.
- 1 May From Charles D. McLean. ALS. DLC-JKP. Memphis founder John C. McLemore's agent, having learned that McLemore's office "has been discontinued," recommends him for another in Louisiana, Texas, or elsewhere in the South.
- 1 May From Marcus Morton.
- 1 May From Henry C. Pope.
- 3 May From Daniel Graham.
- 4 May From Benjamin V. French.
- 4 May From Daniel Graham.
- 4 May To Louis Philippe.
- 5 May From Alfred Balch.
- 5 May From Joel D. Battle. ALS. DLC-JKP. University of North Carolina Dialectic Society president informs Polk that the Society wants a kit-kat portrait of him by Thomas Sully. Published in ULNCP-A, p. 151.
- 5 May From Isaac Davis.
- 5 May From Hugh D. Waddell. ALS. DLC-JKP. Asks for an army appointment for George Wortham of Granville County, N.C.; notes the unusual "interest" in the University of North Carolina's commencement owing to Polk's visit and his own hope to see Polk there. Published in ULNCP-A, pp. 151-52.
- 5 May From Edward Walker. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York City bookbinder and publisher asks if Polk received the copy his actuary sent from Russia of *The Statesman's Manual: The Addresses and Messages of the Presidents of the United States, Inaugural, Annual, and Special, from 1789 to 1846; with a Memoir of each of the Presidents, and a History of their Administrations.*

- 6 May From Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that James Brown returned Polk’s \$320 yesterday because the land Polk wanted to purchase had been sold; acknowledges Polk’s letters of April 15 and 25 and promises to do as instructed in the former; asks Polk to pay McNeal’s five dollars to the *Washington Union*.
- 6 May *From William L. Marcy.*
- 6 May *From John Y. Mason.*
- 6 May From Frederick Robinson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Charlestown, Mass., state prison warden invites Polk to extend his New York trip to Massachusetts; claims most people in the state would be pleased.
- 6 May From Richard M. Young. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports approvingly on the work of the General Land Office, per Polk’s circular of April 11, 1845, requiring such reports.
- 7 May From Archibald Atkinson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Christopher C. Robinson of Norfolk County, Va., to replace Thomas Gatewood as naval officer at Norfolk; cites other recommendations of Robinson that Polk has received (not found); urges against retaining Whigs in appointed offices.
- 7 May From James Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges Polk’s letter of April 20 but reports having returned Ezekiel P. McNeal’s check because the land Brown planned to purchase for Polk had been sold; holds little hope of finding other land for Polk; reports in a postscript the execution of Polk’s deed for “Section 23.”
- 7 May *To William W. Corcoran.*
- 7 May From William W. Corcoran. ANS. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges Polk’s letter of today and reports the retransfer of Polk’s public stock to Corcoran & Riggs. See also ANS, press copy. DLC–WWC.
- 7 May From Charles O. Moore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Lawson Moore’s son and deputy thanks Polk for his letter to Lawson of April 27; reports that Lawson concurs with Polk’s suggestions regarding Dewitt Clinton Yell and that they rescind instructions to Clinton to return home.
- 8 May *To [James Buchanan or Cave Johnson].*
- 8 May From William Dallas Haywood. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses the proceedings of a meeting of Wake County, N.C., citizens today regarding preparations for Polk’s reception at Raleigh. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 152–53.
- 8 May From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Gives a rough schedule for Polk’s visit to Raleigh and Chapel Hill, N.C., pending the official schedule that Polk will receive soon; asks Polk to share this letter with John Y. Mason. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 153–55.

- 8 May From John W. Overton. ALS. DLC-JKP. Lexington, Ky., Democrat introduces Waller Bullock, a Lexington church elder and delegate to the Presbyterian General Assembly in Richmond, Va.
- 8 May From Joseph Philips. ALS. DLC-JKP. Relative of Sarah Childress Polk recommends James L. Armstrong, Jr., of Bedford County, Tenn., for a lieutenancy; approves of the appointments of Gideon J. Pillow and John A. Quitman as major generals; praises Zachary Taylor.
- 8 May From an impostor of George W. Thompson. L. DLC-JKP. Asks for "some office."
- 9 May *From Aaron V. Brown.*
- 9 May From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC-JKP. Seeks appointment as quartermaster or commissary with the rank of captain for his nephew William McEwen of Pontotock, Miss.
- 9 May From Robert E. H. Levering. ALS. DLC-JKP. Ohio archaeologist and abolitionist encloses a clipping of his prowar poem "The Poor Men Heroes," reprinted from the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, to be forwarded to Washington *Union* editor Thomas Ritchie; seeks employment to support research at the Library of Congress for the fifth volume of his work comparing American and Old World antiquities, or passage on a naval ship to Europe to facilitate that research.
- 9 May *From William M. Lowry.*
- 9 May From George P. Upshur. ALS. DLC-JKP. U.S. Naval Academy superintendent reports on Midshipman John D. Rainey's medical condition.
- 10 May To Elias N. Conway. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Responding to Conway's letter of April 26, notes that William H. Polk had not told Polk that he had sold his land in Arkansas; states that the power of attorney Polk gave Conway does not cover that land, but asks Conway "to take a *very low price* for" the president's land.
- 10 May From William Davidson et al. PN. Published in Raleigh *North Carolina Standard*, June 23, 1847. Invite Polk to visit Mecklenburg County, N.C., during his trip to the University of North Carolina.
- 10 May *From Joseph Mortimer.*
- 10 May From James H. Walker. ALS. DLC-JKP. Army assistant quartermaster wishes to be a paymaster, instead.
- 11 May *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 11 May *From Andrew J. Donelson.*
- 11 May From George P. Upshur. ALS. DLC-JKP. Transmits U.S. Naval Academy surgeon John A. Lockwood's report on the improving health of John D. Rainey, now under the care of

- a female nurse; cites Polk's order of May 7 for daily reports from Lockwood. From Polk's AE: he was "accidentally" wounded at the U.S. Naval Academy.
- 11 May *From [Robert J. Walker].*
- 11 May From Stephen D. Whittle et al. (written by Richard B. Baptist). ALS. DLC-JKP. Committee encloses the proceedings of a meeting of Mecklenburg County, Va., citizens and Randolph Macon College faculty and students inviting Polk to Randolph Macon's commencement in Boydton.
- 12 May To William O. Butler. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Encloses March 2 congressional resolution of gratitude to the officers and soldiers at Monterrey (not found); notes that Zachary Taylor will receive a medal and that Butler and other officers will receive swords.
- 12 May From Granville H. Frazer. ALS. DLC-JKP. Bedford County, Tenn., farmer encloses the laws and other documents of Austin's Colony (not found), the first U.S. settlement in Texas—planned by Moses Austin and founded by his son Stephen F.—which he may want returned; offers Polk information on Mexico's and Texas's boundaries; criticizes Thomas H. Benton.
- 12 May From Granville H. Frazer. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses "An Act, To define the Boundaries of the Republic of Texas" (1836), from that republic's statute book; claims that Frazer, if back in Mexico, "could find other Boundrys for Col. Thomas H Benton to have Bound to his Whig Brothers in the Congress" and also could "Enlighten" John C. Calhoun and Daniel Webster.
- 12 May To James Pinckney Henderson. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Nearly identical to Polk to William O. Butler, May 12, 1847.
- 12 May *From John Hogan.*
- [12 May 1847] From John C. Mullay. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses a letter from John McCallon of Meigs County, Tenn., who wants a job, to Mullay (not found); reports brother William H. Mullay's and Joseph Patterson's murders in Mexico; quotes the Nashville *Union's* prediction that Gov. Aaron V. Brown will win reelection.
- 12 May To John A. Quitman. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Nearly identical to Polk to William O. Butler, May 12, 1847.
- 12 May *To Zachary Taylor.*
- 12 May To David E. Twiggs. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Nearly identical to Polk to William O. Butler, May 12, 1847.

- 12 May To William J. Worth. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Nearly identical to Polk to William O. Butler, May 12, 1847.
- 13 May *To Robert Armstrong.*
- 13 May *To [William L. Marcy].*
- 13 May *From John Y. Mason.*
- 13 May From William Medill. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces Post Office Department clerk Cranston Laurie, who wishes to discuss District of Columbia military appointments.
- 13 May From Francis E. Rives. ALS. DLC-JKP. Invites Polk and John Y. Mason to stay at his house the night of May 28 before proceeding to Gaston, N.C.
- 13 May *From Rose Savage.*
- 14 May *To Thomas M. Hamer.*
- 14 May To [William L. Marcy]. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Transmits copies (not found) of letters to Zachary Taylor, William O. Butler, James Pinckney Henderson, John A. Quitman, David E. Twiggs, and William J. Worth of May 12, 1847, and probably to Thomas M. Hamer of May 14, to be filed or recorded in the War Department.
- 14 May *To [William L. Marcy].*
- 14 May *From William W. Payne.*
- 14 May From Charles S. Wallach. ALS. DLC-JKP. Lawyer and Treasury clerk, having read that a law clerk will become secretary of a foreign legation, asks for the clerkship.
- 15 May *From Daniel Bryan.*
- 15 May *From George M. Dallas.*
- 15 May From Daniel Graham. ALS. DLC-JKP. Discusses his being replaced at the Bank of Tennessee; expresses doubts about whether Polk will go to Chapel Hill, N.C., or Sarah Childress Polk to Tennessee; notes that chief clerk Michael Nourse is now acting register of the Treasury; inquires about lodging in Washington City.
- 15 May To Daniel Graham. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Approves of Graham's letter of May 4, so that three appointments will occur on June 4: Seth Barton as chargé d'affaires to Brazil, Ransom H. Gillet as solicitor of the Treasury, and Graham as register of the Treasury; states that Sarah Childress Polk will visit Tennessee in late June and return with Maria M'Iver Graham; mentions Polk's trip to North Carolina.
- 15 May *To Francis E. Rives.*
- 15 May *To Hopkins L. Turney.*
- 15 May From Nathan Weston. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Maine chief justice requests the return of his letter of July 18, 1845.

- From Polk's AE: asks someone to search for it. Joseph Knox Walker answered on July 28, enclosing the letter.
- 16 May From John Catron. ALS. DLC-JKP. Explains that John N. Esselman wishes to be chargé d'affaires to Sardinia, but that Esselman and Catron understand this may make too many U.S. diplomats with Tennessee origins in Italy.
- 17 May *To Stephen Adams.*
- 17 May From Thomas N. Cameron et al. PL. Published in Fayetteville *North Carolinian*, May 29, 1847. Committee invites Polk to visit Fayetteville during his visit to the University of North Carolina; encloses resolutions of a citizens' meeting of May 15 published in the *North Carolinian* of May 22.
- 17 May From John W. Childress. ALS. DLC-JKP. At Joseph Philips's request, recommends James L. Armstrong, Jr., for an army commission.
- 17 May From Owen Connolly. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses his deposition to Benjamin K. Morsell about being cheated by James Maher; hopes Polk will take action before Connolly initiates criminal proceedings.
- 17 May *To William M. Green.*
- 17 May *From Henry Hubbard.*
- 17 May From Edward J. Mallett. ALS. DLC-JKP. Asks if Polk and John Y. Mason will attend the University of North Carolina's commencement and when they will leave Washington City; will try to go if they do and would like to travel with Polk.
- 17 May From David Levy Yulee. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses a draft letter (not found) for Polk to edit and return. From Polk's AE: the letter was to "Charles A. Wickliffe of Kentucky advising him to become a candidate for Congress."
- 18 May *From George Bancroft.*
- 18 May *To James Brown.*
- 18 May From William J. Brown. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports that Indianans are forming more army companies than called for, so more troops could be raised now if wanted.
- 18 May *From Robert B. Forbes.*
- 18 May *From George S. Houston.*
- 18 May *To Gideon J. Pillow.*
- 18 May *From Jonathan D. Stevenson.*
- 18 May To David Levy Yulee. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Returns the letter (not found) Yulee enclosed yesterday, having found it "judicious" and made no changes.
- 19 May *To Jefferson Davis.*
- 19 May From Cornelius W. Lawrence. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses a letter from wife Lydia Ann to Sarah Childress Polk (not

- found) inviting the Polks to stay at the Lawrences' house while visiting New York City.
- 19 May From J. Sappington Pearson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Corresponding secretary announces Polk's election to honorary membership in the Philomathian Society of Cumberland College, Lebanon, Tenn.
- 19 May From William C. Whitehead. ALS. DLC-JKP. Norfolk, Va., Democrat protests the removal of Thomas Gatewood as naval officer at Norfolk.
- 20 May From Charles A. Ingersoll. ALS. DLC-JKP. New Haven, Conn., lawyer notes that his brother, Minister Ralph I. Ingersoll, wants son Colin M. Ingersoll appointed legation secretary to Russia; affirms Colin's qualifications; cites other legation secretaries who were ministers' relatives.
- [20 May 1847] *To Cave Johnson.*
- [c. 20 May 1847] To [Roger Jones]. AN. DNA-RG 94. Directs Jones to inform James J. McFarlane, an expert on vomito, of his appointment as army surgeon.
- [c. 20 May 1847] *From Margaret M. Leahy.*
- 20 May *To James G. M. Ramsey.*
- 21 May From Robert Campbell, Jr. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports having given Evan Young the title bond for Polk's Columbia, Tenn., property and accepted payment for it; reports that McCord (possibly merchant Andrew J. or physician J. E. McCord) found all well on Polk's plantation; details Polk's account with Campbell.
- 21 May From Joseph E. Cox. ALS. DLC-JKP. Physician and meeting chairman encloses resolutions of Petersburg, Va., citizens inviting Polk and John Y. Mason to visit Petersburg on their trip to North Carolina.
- 21 May *To William Davidson et al.*
- 21 May From David Hayden. ALS. DLC-JKP. Surveyor and inspector of revenue for the port of New Orleans encloses two letters from George T. M. Davis to Hayden describing the wounded James Shields's "suffering" and expressing concern for "his military reputation"; reports that other officers praise Shields and that his "friends" think he deserves a brevet.
- 21 May *To Cave Johnson.*
- 21 May *To James G. M. Ramsey.*
- 21 May *From William P. Rowles.*
- 21 May From John Rutherford et al. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Virginia governor and fellow committee members enclose resolutions of a meeting of Richmond citizens; invite Polk to stay in Richmond on his way to North Carolina.
- 21 May *From James Walker.*

- 22 May *To John Catron.*
- 22 May To Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Responding to McNeal's letter of May 6, instructs McNeal to keep Polk's money until Polk or James Brown asks for it; encloses a receipt for McNeal's subscription to the *Washington Union* (not found).
- 22 May *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*
- 22 May From Hugh D. Waddell. ALS. DLC-JKP. Expresses regret over having asked Polk to give his brother Haynes Waddell a job in his letter of October 18, 1845; reports having heard that Polk found Haynes "wholly unworthy" and was "hurt" by Hugh's recommending him. Published in ULNCP-A, pp. 155-57.
- 22 May *From John Williams.*
- 24 May From Lucinda Bolin. ALS. DLC-JKP. Jamestown, Ky., orphan dying of tuberculosis asks Polk to appoint Private Hector Owens of Kentucky an army surgeon; asks for a letter from Polk with which to be buried.
- 24 May From William O. Butler. ALS. DLC-JKP. Thanks Polk for his letter of May 12.
- 24 May From John F. Callan. ALS. DLC-JKP. Washington City druggist and seedsman denies having written today's *Washington National Whig* editorial about the appointment of inspector of the U.S. penitentiary in Washington City.
- 24 May To Thomas N. Cameron et al. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Declines their invitation of May 17 owing to his pressing work in Washington City. Published in *Fayetteville North Carolinian*, May 29, 1847.
- 24 May To Joseph E. Cox. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. In response to Cox's letter of May 21, explains that he can stay in Petersburg only briefly on May 28 but will meet local citizens.
- 24 May *To George M. Dallas.*
- 24 May *From George S. Houston.*
- 24 May *To Cornelius W. Lawrence.*
- 24 May *From John A. Mairs.*
- 24 May *To [William L. Marcy].*
- 24 May *To [William L. Marcy].*
- 24 May From William Moore. ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Acknowledges Polk's letter of April 29; agrees with his advice regarding Dewitt Clinton Yell; asks Polk to choose Clinton's company on returning to Tennessee and to lend him money if necessary; notes that Archibald Yell made James McKisick and Moore executors and guardians of his children's estate.
- 24 May *From William Moore.*

- 24 May From Jonathan L. Scarbrough. ALS. DLC-JKP. Democratic Tennessee Senate candidate discusses Tennessee elections; notes that the Whigs have "taken up General Taylor as the last alternative."
- 24 May To Stephen D. Whittle et al. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Declines their invitation of May 11 to Randolph Macon College's commencement.
- 25 May To Jeremiah Cherry. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Encloses Polk's first letter of today to Gideon J. Pillow; asks Cherry to forward it to New Orleans if Pillow has left Tennessee.
- 25 May From John M. Herndon et al. (probably written by William A. Jackson). ALS. DLC-JKP. Committee communicates the invitation by a meeting of Fredericksburg, Va., citizens for Polk and his party to attend a dinner there during his trip to North Carolina.
- 25 May *To Gideon J. Pillow.*
- 25 May *To Gideon J. Pillow.*
- 25 May *From Richard Rush.*
- 25 May To John Rutherford et al. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Offers thanks for their invitation of May 21; regrets that he will only briefly be in Richmond but offers to greet as many people there as he can.
- 25 May *From Joel Turrill.*
- 25 May From Cornelius P. Van Ness. ALS. DLC-JKP. Complains that Michael Collington, an employee of public gardener James Maher, has not paid his rent; asks to take rent from his wages.
- 26 May From William Albright. AN. DLC-JKP. Charlbury, England, Quaker encloses an abolitionist petition of 1787 by American Quaker Patience Greene Brayton to King George III of Great Britain.
- 26 May From William Collins. ALS. DLC-JKP. Asks for leave of absence to visit his ill mother. From Polk's AE: "Leave Granted."
- 26 May *From George W. Draper.*
- 26 May To Brodie S. Herndon et al. LS, press copy, in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. DLC-JKP. Responding to John M. Herndon et al. to Polk, May 25, 1847, declines the invitation to Fredericksburg, Va.
- 26 May *From Samuel H. Laughlin.*
- 26 May *To Edward J. Mallett.*
- 26 May To [William L. Marcy]. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Reports having signed, on May 24 and today, commissions for officers under the Ten Regiment Bill, leaving to be signed two commissions for major, one for captain, and four for first lieutenant; notes that one of the remaining majors will

- be from Missouri; asks Marcy who the other major will be and to prepare the second lieutenant commissions for him to sign tomorrow.
- 27 May From Seth Barton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses his resignation as solicitor of the Treasury and a note from Ransom H. Gillet (neither found), probably regarding their change of jobs.
- 27 May From John Fairfield. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Dr. Amos Nourse of Maine as register of the Treasury, having read that Ransom H. Gillet has not yet been replaced.
- 27 May From George Howland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Newport, R.I., merchant and sailor seeks a postmastership or lieutenantcy in the Gulf of Mexico; cites a letter from Gen. Thomas F. Carpenter of Providence to Polk, c. February 1847, (not found) recommending him.
- 27 May To [William L. Marcy]. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Report today having signed commissions under the Ten Regiment Bill for one captain, two first lieutenants, and 199 second lieutenants, leaving two first- and one second-lieutenant commissions to sign, plus a replacement for Albert G. Blanchard, who declined a captaincy.
- [c. 27 May 1847] From Samuel C. White. ALS. DLC–JKP. Surveyor and inspector of revenue for the port of Accomack Court House, Va., asks for the charges and evidence on which he was removed from office and for a hearing; mentions having written to Robert J. Walker and to Polk (not found) asking to be notified if a charge were brought against him.
- 27 May From Richard M. Young. LS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a commission (not found) of James M. B. Tucker as receiver of public monies at Natchitoches, La., in place of Andrew J. Isaacks, who has neglected his duties. From Polk's AE: Isaacks was "appointed a second Lieutenant in the army"; Tucker's "appointment made."
- 28 May *From James Buchanan.*
- 28 May *From Harvey Curtis.*
- 29 May *From Alanson Billings.*
- 29 May *From James Buchanan.*
- 29 May *From Henry Dodge.*
- 29 May From Andrew H. Green. ALS. DLC–JKP. Corresponding secretary announces Polk's election on May 19 to honorary membership in the American Agricultural Association at New York City.
- 29 May *From William R. King and James E. Saunders.*
- 29 May From Edward J. Mallett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports having received Polk's letter of May 26 today, too late to meet Polk in North Carolina; sends greetings to William M.

- Green, Hugh D. Waddell, and John L. Bailey. Published in ULNCP-A, pp. 157-58.
From Vernon K. Stevenson.
- 29 May *From Hampton C. Williams.*
- 30 May From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports that Polk received no important mail today and that William L. Marcy's answer to Winfield Scott will go out tomorrow morning; sends his greetings to friend Weldon N. Edwards.
- 31 May *From Frederick P. Stanton.*
- 31 May [c. June 1847] *From Robert J. Walker.*
- 1 June *From James Buchanan.*
- 1 June *From Francis N. Fisk et al.*
- 1 June *From John H. Linam.*
- 1 June *From Jane Hickey Sealy.*
- 1 June *From Sampson S. Sealy.*
- 2 June *From James Buchanan.*
- 2 June *From James G. M. Ramsey.*
- 2 June *From James Russell et al.*
- 2 June *From James H. Thomas.*
- 2 June From Prosper M. Wetmore. ALS. DLC-JKP. Chamber secretary encloses yesterday's resolution of the New York City Chamber of Commerce, appointing a committee to arrange for the Chamber's participation in the city's reception of Polk; claims "those engaged in Commercial pursuits" will be especially pleased by his visit. Joseph Knox Walker answered on June 19, outlining Polk's travel schedule.
- 3 June *From Anonymous, signed "P. Ny."*
- 3 June *From George Bancroft.*
- 3 June *From James Buchanan.*
- 3 June *From Charles J. Fox.*
- 3 June From Andrew T. Judson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Connecticut federal judge claims that Polk's visiting New England would please its residents and benefit Polk's health; notes New England's prosperity and the growth of manufacturing during Polk's administration; invites Polk and Sarah Childress Polk to his house.
- 3 June From Thomas Caute Reynolds. ALS. DLC-JKP. Legation secretary to Spain introduces Don Juan de Silva Téllez Girón, attaché to the Spanish legation to the United States.
- [5 June 1847] *From Anonymous, signed "W P."*
- 5 June From Isaac H. Bronson. ALS. DLC-JKP. U.S. judge for the Northern District of Florida introduces George S. Hawkins.

- 5 June From Christopher Heydrick. ALS. DLC–JKP. Grand River Institute, Austinburg, Ohio, student asks Polk for money to support his education.
- 6 June From Thomas B. Eastland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks whether he and other “*Mustangs*” (volunteer officers) will be retained in the army after the war, which he expects will end soon; wishes to stay in the army, for the income, and to go to El Paso del Norte in Texas because “I want to stay away from the *White Settlements*.”
- [c. 7 June 1847] *From Anonymous.*
- 7 June From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Philadelphia manufacturer Charles V. Hagner.
- 7 June *From Gideon J. Pillow.*
- 7 June *From George W. Ross.*
- 7 June From Ellis B. Schnabel. ALS. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia lawyer introduces Dr. William P. Lambert, a Philadelphia Democrat.
- 7 June From James H. Wilson. L, copy. NWM. Franklin, Tenn., farmer asks for a leave from the U.S. Military Academy for his son, James H., Jr., to visit his dying mother. From Polk’s E, copy: “Referred to the Secretary of War” on June 15. From E in an unknown hand: referred to Engineer Department on June 16.
- 8 June *To John T. Leigh.*
- 8 June From Valentine Mott. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City surgeon and New York University medical professor asks Polk to appoint his son Alexander B. Mott consul at Le Havre, France, in place of the paralyzed Reuben G. Beasley.
- 8 June From Richard Rush. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports his plan to visit the U.S. Military Academy while waiting for his delayed ship to Le Havre, France; hopes the visit to Chapel Hill, N.C., restored Sarah Childress Polk’s health; invites the Polks to visit his family if they go to nearby Girard College in Philadelphia.
- 8 June *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*
- 8 June *From Isaac Toucey.*
- 9 June From John Appleton. LS. DLC–JKP. Encloses for Polk’s signature commissions for Midshipmen Thomas T. Houston, Thomas B. Childress, and Daniel L. Braine; Gunner Charles S. McLane; and Passed Midshipman Thomas B. Huger. From Polk’s AE: “commissions signed.”
- 9 June *From Gideon J. Pillow.*
- 10 June *From Alfred Blackman et al.*
- 10 June From James Carnahan et al. (written by Samuel Miller). ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in James S. Green to Polk, June 11, 1847. Trustees invite Polk to the hundredth

- anniversary and commencement of the College of New Jersey on June 29 and 30.
- 10 June From Archibald M. Davis. ALS. DLC-JKP. Unemployed Richmond, Va., Democrat asks for a job.
- 10 June From Isaac Toucey. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces his brother-in-law, Connecticut lawyer and former legislator Frederick Crittenden.
- 10 June From Robert J. Ward. ALS. DLC-JKP. Louisville, Ky., merchant introduces planter H. Miller and his wife, Ward's niece, to Polk and Sarah Childress Polk.
- 11 June From Moses Bigelow et al. (written by James Courter). ALS. DLC-JKP. Committee invites Polk to visit Newark, N.J., on behalf of last night's meeting of citizens, during his trip north. Joseph Knox Walker answered on June 19 that Polk could not visit on his way north but might on his return south.
- 11 June From Chauncey F. Cleveland. ALS. Current location of auctioned letter unknown. Connecticut legislator recommends Sgt. Thomas Grey of Connecticut for promotion; encloses testimonials by other state legislators (not found).
- 11 June To Corcoran & Riggs. ANS. RPB-JH. Requests the bank to balance Polk's bankbook.
- 11 June *From Charles F. Fletcher.*
- 11 June From James S. Green. ALS. DLC-JKP. U.S. district attorney for New Jersey and College of New Jersey trustee encloses James Carnahan et al. to Polk, June 10, 1847; claims "your friends in New Jersey" and "the literati" would appreciate Polk's visit to Princeton "as the friend of learning and morals."
- 11 June To William M. Green. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Thanks Green, David L. Swain, and the committee of students for his reception at the University of North Carolina; asks for a copy of the University's catalogue.
- 11 June From Charles Lane et al. NS in Charles B. Fletcher's hand. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in Robert H. Morris to Polk, June 14, 1847. New Hampshire House and Senate joint committee, by the House assistant clerk, expresses New Hampshire's pleasure at Polk's visit to New England; encloses New Hampshire House to Polk, June 11, 1847, and the House resolution appointing the committee. See also N in Fletcher's hand. DLC-JKP.
- 11 June From Uri Manly. ALS. DLC-JKP. Later enclosed in James L. Edwards to Polk, August 9, 1847. Springfield, Ill., lawyer for William Walter's heirs requests information and papers relating to Walter's pension claim, which

- was left "in your hands." From Polk's AEI: "Referred to the commissioner of Pensions," James L. Edwards, on August 7; "I have no recollection of the case."
- 11 June From the New Hampshire House of Representatives. N in John H. George's hand. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in Charles Lane et al. to Polk, June 11, 1847. By its clerk, announces the appointment of a joint committee with the New Hampshire Senate to invite Polk to visit Concord. See also N, copy, in Charles B. Fletcher's hand. DLC-JKP.
- 11 June From Cornelius P. Van Ness. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reminds Polk of his letter of May 25.
- 13 June *To Robert Armstrong.*
- [c. 13 June 1847] From John B. Dougherty et al. ANS. DNA-RG 94. Bloomington, Iowa, residents seek the discharge of Joseph J. Pettijohn, a mentally ill boy of fifteen, from the army; enclose a certificate by justice of the peace David C. Cloud affirming that Pettijohn enlisted while drunk. From Es in unknown hands: referred to Adjutant General's Office; referred to Col. George W. Morgan; "Discharged, 30th Nov., 47."
- 13 June From Daniel Saffarrans. ALS. DLC-JKP. Indian Territory trader reports the death of William Armstrong at Fort Towson, in Indian Territory; discusses Armstrong's finances and asks Polk to help settle them or order John B. Luce, Armstrong's clerk, to do so.
- 14 June From Benjamin Barstow. AN. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in Levi Woodbury to Polk, June 14, 1847. Invites Polk and Sarah Childress Polk to visit Salem, Mass., during the trip north and to stay at his home.
- 14 June *From John M. Bass and Jacob McGavock.*
- 14 June *From Edmund Burke.*
- 14 June From John W. Dana. LS. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in Ezra B. French to Polk, June 14, 1847. Invites Polk to visit Augusta, Maine, during his trip north, in accordance with the accompanying order from the state legislature (not found).
- 14 June From Ezra B. French. LS. DLC-JKP. Maine secretary of state encloses John W. Dana to Polk, June 14, 1847, and the accompanying order from the state legislature (order not found).
- 14 June From Robert H. Morris. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses Charles Lane et al. to Polk, June 11, 1847, which he opened by mistake; reports having heard that Polk will not visit the North but urges him to do so.
- 14 June From Stanhope R. Munford. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Indian Department clerk in the War Department, removed from

- his position, requests another; notes that deafness bars him from "any active business."
- 14 June From James Robertson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Denies having "insult[ed]" Polk in his lectures, though he does "investigate your acts by the light of Truth"; affirms his respect for any president, but scorns John Quincy Adams's opposition to the Gag Rule in the U.S. House; repeats his invitation of June 5 (not found) to a lecture, inviting Polk to respond after the lecture.
- 14 June *From Henry Simpson.*
- 14 June *From Vernon K. Stevenson.*
- 14 June *From Richard A. Townes.*
- 14 June From Levi Woodbury. AN. DLC-JKP. Encloses Benjamin Barstow to Polk, June 14, 1847; invites Polk and Sarah Childress Polk to stay at his and wife Elizabeth Williams Clapp Woodbury's house if they visit Portsmouth, N.H.
- 14 June From John S. Young. ALS. DLC-JKP. Informs Polk that Benjamin F. Cheatham will decline the captaincy of voltigeurs due to ill health on returning from Mexico; recommends Cheatham for a civil service job, praising him and Samuel R. Anderson, the new cashier of the Bank of Tennessee; predicts Aaron V. Brown's reelection as Tennessee governor. Robert B. Turner, Brown, and Jesse B. Clements append their signed concurrences.
- [15 June 1847] *From Anonymous.*
- 15 June From Elias N. Conway. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses vouchers for 1846 and 1847 taxes on Polk's Crawford County, Ark., lands, dated May 24, 1847, and for the 1847 taxes on Polk's Johnson County, Ark., land, dated June 7, 1847; asks Polk to use the thirty dollars he owes Conway to pay for newspaper subscriptions for Conway and his two brothers; notes that William H. Polk sold his lands to Mr. Taylor of New York; is trying to sell the president's lands but thinks it unlikely he can do so soon.
- 15 June From Josiah G. Hadley et al. LS. DLC-JKP. Portsmouth, N.H., selectmen invite Polk, on behalf of a meeting of Portsmouth citizens, to visit the town during his trip north. Joseph Knox Walker answered on June 19 that Polk probably could not visit.
- 15 June *From John K. Kane.*
- 15 June From Edward J. Mallett. ALS. DLC-JKP. Seeks appointment as commercial agent and superintendent of the U.S. mails at Bremen or as consul at Bremen.
- 15 June From Andrew Miller et al. PC. DLC-JKP. Philadelphia Democratic committee invites Polk to the party's celebration of the Fourth of July in Philadelphia on Monday, July 5.

- 15, 17 June *From Gideon J. Pillow.*
- 16 June *From Anonymous, signed "A Democrat."*
- 16 June *From George M. Dallas.*
- 16 June *To George M. Dallas.*
- 16 June *From West H. Humphreys.*
- [16 June 1847] *From Robert M. McLane. ALS. DLC-JKP. Announces that the Baltimore city council will today request Mayor Jacob G. Davies to accept Polk as the city's guest; discusses the schedule of Polk's visit, which Davies and James Buchanan will determine.*
- 16 June *From Garret D. Wall. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former U.S. senator from New Jersey invites Polk to stay at his Burlington, N.J., home during Polk's trip "to the Eastward." Published in NU, pp. 106-7.*
- 17 June *From William J. Brown. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends a letter by Gen. Joseph Lane of Indiana in yesterday's Washington Daily Union.*
- 17 June *From Edmund Burke. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces Vardry McBee of Greenville, S.C., at whose home Polk once stayed on his way home from college.*
- 17 June *To John Catron.*
- 17 June *From John T. Knox. ALS. DLC-JKP. Elizabethtown, Ill., merchant suggests he may be related to Polk; asks if Polk knows the location of Knox's lost family members.*
- 17 June *From James D. Oliver. ALS. DLC-JKP. Chairman of the reception committee of New York City's Common Council asks for details about Polk's visit; suggests the Council meet Polk at Perth Amboy, N.J., to escort him to the city. Joseph Knox Walker answered on June 19 that Polk's travel schedule was set but his route yet unknown.*
- 17 June *From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC-JKP. Asks Polk not to replace the late Robert H. Hammond as paymaster before hearing from Sutherland; discusses arrangements for Polk's visit to Philadelphia, recalling those for President Tyler's visit; will try to arrange for Polk to arrive by water.*
- 18 June *From Montgomery Blair. ALS. MoSHi. St. Louis judge encloses a letter from his brother, Mexican War private and St. Louis lawyer Francis P. Blair, Jr. (not found); asks Polk to act on Francis's request if he has not already.*
- 18 June *From William Grandin. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York lawyer, apparently now a U.S. Treasury employee, asks to bring dispatches or otherwise serve in Zachary Taylor's army.*
- 18 June *From Thomas J. Green. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Texas republic general and Texas state senator invites Polk, Sarah Childress Polk, and their friends to his and wife*

- Esther Sargent Ellery Green's summer home in Jamaica Plain, Mass., during their visit to Boston.
- 18 June From Robert Patterson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports that he informed Philadelphia friends that Polk would arrive on June 23 and that U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania Thomas M. Pettit, George M. Dallas, and collector of the port of Philadelphia James Page "are attending to the details"; offers to attend Polk during the visit.
- 18 June From Robert Patterson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses a letter from himself to Polk (not found), apparently seeking an appointment for his son, Francis E., in the Second Infantry Regiment; having learned from William L. Marcy, since writing that letter, that the desired regiment has no vacancy, asks instead for an appointment for his son in the First or Second Dragoon Regiment or an old infantry regiment.
- 18 June From [James or Joseph] Smith (forename uncertain). ALS. DLC-JKP. Washington City man encloses a fresh salmon from Joseph Hall of Boston.
- [18 June 1847] From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC-JKP. Quotes, from Philadelphia *Inquirer*, proceedings of last night's Philadelphia city councils, which resolved to welcome Polk to the city; adds that Daniel T. Jenks wants the reception to be "splendid"; encloses a newspaper clipping about Mexico and Henry Clay.
- 18 June From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC-JKP. Describes his efforts today to arrange for Polk to arrive in Philadelphia by water, as Presidents Jackson and Tyler did, instead of by rail as currently planned; reports that the Whigs will allow the use of Independence Hall for Polk to receive visitors; attaches a clipping about Gideon J. Pillow's appointment as major general from the *Madison Wisconsin Democrat*, June 5, 1847, for which Sutherland's son, Thomas W., writes the editorials. Published in *NU*, pp. 107-8.
- [18 June 1847] *From Joel B. Sutherland.*
- 18 June From William B. Whiting. ALS. DLC-JKP. Lieutenant at the naval observatory at Washington City encloses engraved sketches of Monterrey, Mexico, and army encampments by his brother, Capt. Daniel P. Whiting.
- [between 19 June and 2 July 1847] From A. B. Thompson. ANS. DLC-JKP. Maine Stage Company president, on behalf of the directors, offers Polk transportation "from Portland to Augusta and back."
- 19 June To James Carnahan et al. ALS. NjP. Declines their invitation of June 10. See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

- 19 June To John W. Dana. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Accepts Dana and the Maine legislature’s invitation of June 14.
- 19 June *From Jessie Benton Frémont.*
- 19 June From Daniel T. Jenks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Philadelphia held a meeting last night to plan Polk’s reception on June 23; recounts that Jenks and Joel B. Sutherland argued for Polk’s arrival by steamboat, while the customs house officials wanted him to be received on Broad Street; reports having written to a New Jersey Democrat about Polk’s coming to Trenton on June 25. Published in *NU*, p. 109.
- 19 June To Charles Lane et al. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges their letter of June 11; expresses hope that he will be able to visit Concord, N.H.
- 19 June *From Louis McLane.*
- 19 June *To Louis McLane.*
- 19 June From John Maclean. ALS. DLC–JKP. College of New Jersey vice president invites Polk to stay at his house if Polk attends the College’s commencement.
- 19 June *From Washington D. Miller.*
- 19 June From Ormsby M. Mitchel. ALS. DLC–JKP. Adjutant general of Ohio requests a meeting during his one-day visit to Washington City today.
- 19 June From Robert Patterson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Outlines the arrangements for Polk’s travel from Baltimore to Wilmington, Del., to Philadelphia; advises Polk “to give free access to all sections, creeds, factions, parties and fragments of parties,” citing the importance of making “a good impression” on the Whigs; notes he cannot “take a prominent station” because of his generalship. Published in *NU*, pp. 110–11.
- 19 June To Richard Rush. ALS. NjP–RF. Introduces “*Mr Sharp* and his brother” of Kentucky, who are visiting Paris during a European trip.
- 19 June From John Slidell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former minister to Mexico introduces his father-in-law, Archer Deslonde.
- [19 June 1847] From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses optimism about Polk’s reception in Philadelphia but disappointment that government officers, rather than the general public, are controlling it; encloses a soldier’s letter about Perote Castle in Mexico, printed in the Philadelphia *American Sentinel*, to read and forward to William L. Marcy.
- 19 June *To Isaac Toucey.*
- 19 June To Garret D. Wall. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Thanks Wall for his invitation of June 16; responds that he cannot visit

- Burlington, N.J., on his way north but may on his return and will call on Wall if he does.
- 19 June *To Levi Woodbury.*
- 20 June *From Jefferson Davis.*
- 20 June From Augustus C. French. ALS. DLC–JKP. Illinois governor discusses a petition he signed (not found) recommending Col. Edward D. Baker of Illinois for a brigadier generalship; asks Polk not to give French’s signature “any particular influence.”
- 20 June From Sackfield Maclin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Army paymaster announces the death of William Armstrong on June 12 at Doaksville, Indian Terr., near Fort Towson.
- 20 June From Nicholas L. Williams. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses two clippings from the *Raleigh Register*, and *North Carolina Gazette* about the University of North Carolina’s commencement; invites Polk and Sarah Childress Polk to Williams’s home. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 158–62.
- 21 June From Edmund C. Bittinger. ALS. DLC–JKP. Presbyterian minister encloses a clipping from today’s *Philadelphia Daily Sun* containing correspondence between Philadelphia lawyer Peter A. Browne and Philadelphia Presbyterian minister William L. McCalla; they claim Polk told McCalla, an unsuccessful applicant for an army chaplaincy, that he had appointed two Catholics as chaplains so they could serve as spies. From Polk’s AE: “an infamous falsehood.”
- [21 June 1847] *To Benjamin B. French et al.*
- 21 June From William P. Lynde et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. district attorney for Wisconsin Territory and two others recommend John A. Brown, editor of the *Milwaukee Courier*, to replace the late Alexander J. Irwin as receiver of public monies at Green Bay.
- 21 June *From Louis McLane.*
- 21 June From Nathaniel Niles. ALS. DLC–JKP. Vermont physician and diplomat calls Polk’s attention to the Sardinian mission.
- 21 June From James Page. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Philadelphia’s committee has sent John W. Forney, deputy surveyor of the port of Philadelphia, to inform Polk of the arrangements for his reception on June 23.
- [between 22 June and 7 July 1847] *From Anonymous, signed “East, West, North, South, Irish and American Sisters.”*
- 22 June From Jesse Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Miller to Welsh (forename unknown), June 22, 1847. Regrets his and Francis R. Shunk’s absence during Polk’s visit to Philadelphia; urges Polk to meet Shunk at Easton, then proceed to Harrisburg via Reading. From John Appleton’s AE: “Answd” (reply not found).

- 22 June From Richard D. Rice et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Committee appointed today by a meeting of Augusta, Maine, citizens invites Polk to visit Augusta; reports having arranged, with a committee of the state legislature, transportation from Portland to Augusta on July 2.
- [between 23 and 25 June 1847] From George H. Purser et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Members of the Committee of Arrangements of the Common Council of New York request an interview in Philadelphia to arrange Polk’s reception at South Amboy, N.J., on June 25; enclose a printed invitation for guests to that reception.
- 23 June From J. Baldwin et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in W. W. Peall to Polk, June 24, 1847. Syracuse, N.Y., area residents invite Polk to visit.
- 23 June From Daniel M. Bates. Partly printed ALS. DLC–JKP. Delaware secretary of state transmits “one copy of the Acts passed at the late session of the General Assembly of Delaware.” Joseph Knox Walker answered on July 21 with Polk’s thanks.
- 23 June From Peter Bergen et al. L, telegram. DLC–JKP. Committee of the Common Council of Brooklyn, N.Y., asks if and when Polk will visit Brooklyn.
- 23 June From John A. Dix. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses regret for his inability to travel to New York City for Polk’s visit.
- 23 June From John Dungan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia Democrat asks for a job to support his family, citing seven previous letters (that of July 17, 1846, is erroneously identified as John Dugan to Polk in Volume 11; others not found).
- 23 June *From James R. McGee et al.*
- 23 June From McGrath & Sarmiento. L. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia tailor’s shop presents a white vest, having learned from Joseph Knox Walker that Polk “occasionally” wears one.
- 23 June From John Mills et al. (written by Charles W. Chapin). ANS. DLC–JKP. Springfield, Mass., citizens invite Polk to their city and ask what day to expect him.
- 23 June *From John Pettit.*
- 23 June From Andrew H. Reeder et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Easton, Penn., lawyer and others invite Polk to visit there, where he could likely meet Francis R. Shunk.
- 23 June *From Janett Richards.*
- 23 June From Adam Stemmer et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Citizens of Norristown, Penn., invite Polk to visit.
- 23 June *From Joel B. Sutherland.*
- 23 June *From Joseph Knox Walker.*
- 23 June From Paul Willard. ALS. DLC–JKP. Chairman of the Charlestown, Mass., city council’s Committee of

- Arrangements transmits resolutions of the council of June 21 inviting Polk to visit.
- 24 June From Lueser Alderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wife of pickpocket Joseph Alderson, an inmate in Sing Sing Prison, Ossining, N.Y., seeks a pardon for Joseph.
- 24 June From Martin J. Daugherty. ALS. DLC–JKP. President of the Young Mens Democratic Association of the City and County of Philadelphia asks if a delegation may call on Polk at seven o'clock at George M. Dallas's house.
- 24 June From Henry A. S. Dearborn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Roxbury, Mass., mayor introduces the committee of Linus B. Comins et al. delivering "a communication" from Roxbury's government (probably Dearborn's other letter of the same date).
- 24 June From Henry A. S. Dearborn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably delivered with Dearborn's other letter of the same date. Informs Polk that the Board of Aldermen and Common Council of Roxbury, Mass., invite him to visit and offer to escort him to Boston.
- [24 June 1847] From James Donaldson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Polk's college classmate, now in living in New York City, offers to accompany the Polks and Masons from Albany, N.Y., or New York City to his brother Robert's estate of Blithewood on their return from Boston.
- 24 June *From John Fairfield.*
- 24 June From John Fairfield et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Fairfield to Polk, June 24, 1847. Committee appointed by a meeting of Saco and Biddeford, Maine, citizens invites Polk to visit their villages.
- 24 June From John Giles. ALS. DLC–JKP. Impoverished marines veteran seeks employment in the Brooklyn Navy Yard or Customs House.
- 24 June From Betsey Hawley. ALS. DLC–JKP. South Norwalk, Conn., woman wishes to examine State Department records about a claim against the Colombian government that William Henry Harrison collected for her in 1830; notes having written once to James Buchanan and twice before to Polk (not found) but received no answer.
- 24 June *From William L. Marcy.*
- 24 June From Jacob Nathans. ALS. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia broker applies for the consulship at Le Havre, having heard that Polk will appoint no pursers from Pennsylvania until he fills other states' "quota."
- 24 June From Comegys Paul. AN. DLC–JKP. Newton, Northern Liberties, Penn., merchant invites Polk to his home and possibly offers to show Polk Philadelphia's "environs";

- encloses his card. From John Appleton's AE: "answd" (reply not found).
- 24 June From W. W. Peall. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses J. Baldwin et al. to Polk, June 23, 1847. From John Appleton's AE: "Ansd" (reply not found).
- 24 June From James Polk. ANS. DLC-JKP. Irish immigrant in Philadelphia outlines his genealogy and asks if Polk is his cousin.
- 24 June From Josiah Quincy, Jr. LS. DLC-JKP. Boston mayor introduces the committee appointed by the city government to accompany Polk to Boston and to arrange his visit.
- 24 June From James Robertson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Mailed with Robertson's other letter of the same date. Quotes the Bible on repentance and reports having prayed for Polk; wishes to see Polk.
- 24 June *From James Robertson.*
- 24 June From Henry Vose et al. LS. DLC-JKP. Springfield, Mass., selectmen offer Polk the town's "hospitalities"; ask when he will arrive and how long he will stay.
- 24 June From Peter D. Vroom et al. ANS. DLC-JKP. Committee appointed by the citizens of Trenton, N.J., invites Polk to visit.
- 24 June *From Joseph Knox Walker.*
- [between 25 and 28 June or c. 6 July 1847] From Anonymous, signed "Elijah." AL. DLC-JKP. Jesus Christ's "special messenger" in New York City informs Polk that all nations will soon fall and God will reign over the earth; asks Polk to "surrender" his "power and authority."
- 25 June From Jefferson Bancroft and Fisher A. Hildreth. AN. DLC-JKP. Chairman and secretary of the Lowell, Mass., Committee of Arrangements announce that the Committee appointed Alpheus R. Brown and Abner W. Buttrick a subcommittee to invite Polk to Lowell in New York City.
- 25 June From Lathrop S. Eddy. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York City lawyer invites Polk and his party to see Forts Hamilton and LaFayette tomorrow. From John Appleton's AE: "answd" (reply not found).
- 25 June From Eliphalet Greely. ALS. DLC-JKP. Portland, Maine, mayor invites Polk to visit Portland; encloses related resolutions of the city council of June 24.
- 25 June From Benjamin F. Mudge et al. (written by Thomas Bowler). ALS. DLC-JKP. Lynn, Mass., selectmen invite Polk to visit. From John Appleton's AE: "answd" (reply not found).
- 25 June From William Parker et al. ANS. DLC-JKP. Committee of Boston city council offers to make arrangements for Polk's

- visit; asks to meet with him in New York City tomorrow morning.
- 25 June *From John D. and Richard G. Radway.*
- 25 June *From George W. Thompson.*
- 25 June From Richard P. Thompson et al. LS. DNA-RG 92. New Jersey attorney general and other Polk supporters in the state seek the appointment of Lt. Samuel G. French of New Jersey as a captain in the Quartermaster's Department.
- 25 June From Charles R. Thorne. ANS. DLC-JKP. Manager of the Boston Theatre solicits a visit by Polk and his party. From John Appleton's AE: "answd" (reply not found).
- 25 June *From Joseph Knox Walker.*
- 25 June *From Robert J. Walker.*
- 26 June *From Alfred E. Beach.*
- 26 June *From Moses Y. Beach.*
- 26 June From David M. Burford. ALS. DLC-JKP. Tennessee farmer and former legislator recommends Michael Duffy for an Indian agency or other job.
- 26 June From [Linus B. Comins et al.] AN. DLC-JKP. Request a meeting this morning in New York City; will deliver Henry A. S. Dearborn to Polk, June 24, 1847 (probably both such letters). From John Appleton's AE: "ansd verbally."
- 26 June From Richard Delafield. AN. DLC-JKP. Superintending engineer of the defenses of New York harbor invites Polk to examine the harbor's defenses; lists current repair and construction projects. From John Appleton's AE: "Ansd" (reply not found).
- 26 June *From Peter C. Dumas.*
- 26 June From John B. Elwood et al. NS. DLC-JKP. Rochester, N.Y., committee invites Polk to visit.
- 26 June From Pendleton G. Gaines. ALS. DLC-JKP. Memphis lawyer invites Polk to call on him and wife Nancy P. Gaines at the home of the family they are visiting in New York City. From John Appleton's AE: "answd" (reply not found).
- 26 June From Thomas J. Green. ALS. DLC-JKP. Enclosed in George B. Wallis to Polk, June 26, 1847. Invites Polk to his and Esther Sargent Ellery Green's home in Roxbury, Mass.; expresses disappointment that Sarah Childress Polk, visiting friends in Tennessee, cannot come. Published in *NU*, p. 117.
- 26 June From John Grigg. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former U.S. Senate chaplain complains of losing his chaplaincy; asks Polk to "reappoint me at the next vacancy"; includes "A Poetical Tributary Welcome to . . . Polk upon his Visit to the city of New York."

- [26 June 1847] From Frederick H. Hastings et al. NS. DLC–JKP. Members of the Democratic Republican General Committee of the City of Albany, N.Y., ask for a meeting.
- 26 June From A. Lefognain.
- 26 June From William L. Marcy.
- 26 June From Charles H. Marshall. ANS. DLC–JKP. New York City agent invites Polk to the launch of the *Isaac Wright*, a new packet on the Liverpool, England, line, in New York City on June 28. From John Appleton's AE: "Answd" (reply not found).
- 26 June From Daniel A. Mathews. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City auctioneer seeks Polk's autograph.
- [26 June 1847] From Henry C. Murphy. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York congressman reports that Brooklyn's committee of arrangements planned for Polk's visit today but that he heard last night that Polk will not come; asks Polk to come to avoid disappointing the city.
- 26 June From Fontaine H. Pettis. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City lawyer seeks an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy for his son Spencer, the bearer, who applied for one last spring.
- 26 June From James M. Porter et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Committee headed by a former secretary of war encloses resolutions of the Easton, Penn., government inviting Polk to visit Easton on his way back to Washington City.
- 26 June From Elijah F. Purdy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges Polk to attend Harriet Eliza Holbrook and Alfred E. Beach's wedding on June 30, noting that father Moses Y. Beach's New York *Sun* supports the administration. Published in *NU*, pp. 117–18.
- 26 June From James Robertson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses opposition to Polk's policies in Mexico and Oregon but forgives him, as does God; claims the ability to protect Polk from "any attack . . . in or out of Congress."
- 26 June From Simon W. Robinson. ANS. DLC–JKP. Massachusetts grand master invites Polk to visit the Masonic Temple in Boston.
- 26 June From Henry Storms. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York commissary general invites Polk to inspect the State Arsenal.
- 26 June From [George B. Wallis], signed "The Doctor." AL. DLC–JKP. Encloses Thomas J. Green to Polk, June 26, 1847; asks for "A word to me tomorrow through either of your suite." Published in *NU*, p. 116.
- 26 June From Andrew Warner. ALS. DLC–JKP. Colonel of the Thirty-Eighth Regiment, New York Artillery (militia), encloses today's orders from Maj. Gen. Charles W. Sandford

- to Warner and from Warner to his regiment to escort Polk when he leaves New York City on June 28.
From James S. Campbell.
- [c. 27 June 1847] 27 June From Catharine Duffy. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City boarding house keeper asks Polk to send her husband home from the military. From John Appleton’s AE: “Answd. verbally.”
- 27 June *From Jeremiah George Harris.*
- 27 June *From William A. Harris.*
- 27 June *From [John A. Mairs].*
- 27 June From John Murray. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City man believes his uncle, James Polk, is Polk’s father.
- 27 June From Sylvester S. Southworth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Apologizes for not visiting Polk in New York City due to his “official duties.”
- 27 June *From Joseph Knox Walker.*
- 27 June From William L. F. Warren et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Trustees of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., invite Polk to visit the village and enjoy the “Fountains of Health.”
- 28 June From George W. Barhelder et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Members of a committee of Gardiner and Pittston, Maine, citizens invite Polk to stop at Gardiner.
- 28 June *From Edward Everett.*
- [28 June 1847] From Susan Grundy Ewing, signed “Mrs Henry Ewing.” ANS. DLC–JKP. Felix Grundy’s sister sends flowers to Polk during his visit to New Haven, Conn.
- 28 June From Charles Hayward et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Committee of the Bangor, Maine, city council invites Polk to visit; quotes the council resolution assigning the committee to do so.
- 28 June From John C. Leach. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Thomas F. McAden to William J. Brown, July 14, 1847. West Middleburg, Ohio, dry goods merchant, having lost his home and store to fire, asks for money.
- 28 June From James Lee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends merchant William J. Staples for the consulate at Le Havre; urges New York’s claim to the post.
- 28 June From Charles Mays and Benjamin F. Hallett. ANS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Mays to Hallett [c. June 28, 1847]. Democratic Committee of the County of Suffolk, Mass., through its secretary and chairman, reports having followed Polk’s wishes to show “no distinction of party in the reception”; as Democrats, however, they praise him and the economic benefits of his policies to the Boston area. Published in *NU*, pp. 118–21.

- 28 June From William G. Smith. ALS. DLC–JKP. East Liverpool, Ohio, landowner encloses an act incorporating a seminary (not found); asks for a donation; wishes to educate his son, James K. Polk Smith.
- 28 June *From Joseph Knox Walker.*
- 29 June From John Barnard. ANS. DLC–JKP. Artist offers to show Polk a painting of the Mississippi River, “the largest picture in the world,” during his visit to Boston.
- 29 June *From Francis Jackson.*
- [c. 29 June 1847] *From Francis Jackson et al.*
- 29 June From Thomas Jackson. ANS. DLC–JKP. Society of Cincinnati of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through its secretary, invites Polk to dinner on its anniversary, July 5. From John Appleton’s AE: “answd.” (reply not found).
- 29 June *From Joseph Knox Walker.*
- 29 June From [George Washington Warren]. AN. DLC–JKP. Invites Polk and his party “to meet the members of the city Government immediately after the public reception on Bunker Hill.”
- 29 June *From George Washington Warren.*
- 30 June From Charles G. Eastman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Owner of the Montpelier *Vermont Patriot* expresses hope that Polk will visit Vermont after Maine; encloses a resolution of Montpelier citizens to invite Polk to Montpelier and notes that a committee, including himself, leaves the city today to do so.
- 30 June *To Sarah Childress Polk.*
- 30 June From James Ryan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former orderly sergeant of the siege train in Mexico protests his dishonorable discharge, which he blames on Lt. Peter V. Hagner; seeks an honorable discharge.
- 30 June *From Joseph Knox Walker.*
- 30 June From Samuel Wells et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Committee appointed by Portland, Maine, citizens invites Polk and his suite to the city.
- 30 June From Marshall P. Wilder. ANS. DLC–JKP. Massachusetts Horticultural Society, through its president, invites Polk and his suite to “the Exhibition of Fruits & Flowers in Horticultural Hall.”
- 1 July From John Catron. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Sarah Childress Polk and Johanna L. Rucker arrived at Nashville last night and left for Rutherford County, Tenn., this morning; reports that Vernon K. Stevenson paid Felix Grundy’s executors, John M. Bass and Jacob McGavock,

and that Catron and Bass traced the titles to the property, which was difficult for thirty acres; recommends that Polk take separate deeds for the land owned by Grundy and that owned by Bass; reports that land values have risen, so Polk is getting a good deal from Bass.

1 July

From James Edmonston.

1 July

From Peter Filbert. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reading, Penn., mayor encloses resolutions of the city council (not found) inviting Polk to visit Reading on his way back to Washington City. To Russell G. Hopkinson et al. LS in John Appleton's hand. VtHi. Acknowledges to the Montpelier inviting committee the enclosure in Charles G. Eastman to Polk, June 30, 1847; declines to visit Vermont, citing his limited time in New England due to "the state of our public affairs."

1 July

From Franklin Pierce.

1 July

From Reuel Williams. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former U.S. senator from Maine invites Polk to stay at his house when visiting Augusta, Maine.

2 July

From Joseph Bonney. ALS. DLC–JKP. Portland, Maine, Democrat and former state legislator regrets his inability, due to bad health, to meet Polk during the president's visit; hopes for the spread of America's "Liberal principles Civil and Religious . . . to all nations."

2 July

From Mark Richards Mucklé et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Committee invites Polk to the Great German National Jubilee celebrating American independence, in Lippincott Woods near Philadelphia on July 5.

2 July

To Sarah Childress Polk.

3 July

From Phineas C. Dummer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Jersey City, N.J., mayor, as ordered by the Common Council, invites Polk to visit Jersey City and asks when he will leave New York City; mentions having invited Polk verbally at South Amboy, N.J., on June 25.

3 July

From John N. Esselman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Notes having learned from John Catron and Daniel Graham that Polk would like to give Esselman a job but that "there was no vacancy abroad"; asks for the late William Armstrong's Indian agency.

3 July

From Enoch Louis Lowe. ALS. DLC–JKP. Maryland state legislator introduces lawyer Frederick A. Beelen of Pittsburgh.

4 July

From James K. Polk and James Buchanan to Sarah Childress Polk.

5 July

From Joseph W. Scott et al. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Enclosed in Samuel G. French to Polk, July 10, 1847. New Jersey State Society of Cincinnati recommends French for a captaincy in

- the Quartermaster's Department. From E in an unknown hand: Polk referred the letter to the Quartermaster General's Office.
- 5 July From Henry W. Meade. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York City photographer seeks Polk's autograph.
- 6 July From Joseph H. Brittain. ALS. DLC-JKP. Marshall County, Tenn., landowner reports that Willis Hopwood of Tennessee tried to collect seven dollars from him for a subscription to the defunct *Washington Globe* that he had bought through Polk; denies owing the money; asks Polk to clear up the matter. Joseph Knox Walker answered on July 17 that Polk had paid the bill and with details of Brittain's account with the *Globe*.
- 6 July From Vernon K. Stevenson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports having paid John M. Bass and Jacob McGavock, on Polk's behalf, \$6,770.17 on June 14 for part of the Felix Grundy property; recommends John N. Esselman for William Armstrong's Indian agency.
- 7 July *From Benjamin Boston.*
- 8 July *From Sidney Breese.*
- 8 July *From Charles Ferguson.*
- 8 July To Peter Filbert. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Explains that he could not accept Filbert's invitation of July 1 owing to his "duty to return" to Washington City as planned.
- 8 July From Allen McLane, Jr. ALS. DLC-JKP. Register of the land office at Plattsburg, Mo., encloses resolutions (not found) of a public meeting approving Polk's administration. *To Sarah Childress Polk.*
- 8 July From Vernon K. Stevenson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Suggests Polk wait to appoint John N. Esselman until after the Tennessee election because of "a strong feeling against both Nashville & Columbia in both ends of our state"; reports that Sarah Childress Polk arrived in Nashville from Murfreesboro today and will see the Polks' house tomorrow morning.
- 9 July From Robert A. Daleney. ALS. DLC-JKP. Jamestown, Tenn., man in his early forties, ineligible for recruitment under the Ten Regiment Bill due to his age, asks to serve in Mexico.
- 9 July From John Y. Mason. L, copy. DNA-RG 45. Encloses Edward Bissell's application for restoration as a navy purser (not found).
- 9 July From Tavener Rucker. ALS. DLC-JKP. Argues that the United States was right in protecting Texas and defending itself against a Mexican attack "on our soil" in 1846, but should not have invaded Mexico and should end the war now.

- 10 July From William P. Beatty. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 10 July *To John Catron.*
- 10 July From Samuel G. French. L, copy, probably in William A. Gordon’s hand. DNA–RG 92. Encloses Joseph W. Scott et al. to Polk, July 5, 1847, a copy of resolutions of the New Jersey legislature presenting French with a sword (not found), a letter from Gov. Charles C. Stratton (not found), and a letter from Garret D. Wall (not found) presenting French with a sword; describes his service in Mexico; applies for a captaincy in the Quartermaster’s Department; asks for the enclosures’ return after copies are filed in the War Department.
- [10 July 1847] From Nicholas Gentry. ALS. DLC–JKP. Columbia, Mo., man announces that his brother returned from the Mexican War last night and is going to Florida until next August; reports that General Scott is headed to Mexico City with fifteen thousand troops but that General Santa Anna has twenty-six thousand.
- 10 July *To Thomas S. Jesup.*
- 10 July From David Levy Yulee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Gen. Charles Byrne of the Florida militia.
- 11 July *To Sarah Childress Polk.*
- 12 July From Charles G. Atherton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reminds Polk of the application for a lieutenancy of Charles B. Fletcher, whom Franklin Pierce wants as his aide; discusses Polk’s trip to the North; laments Whig James Wilson’s election to the U.S. House in a special election in New Hampshire; cites interest there in Polk’s speech before the Maine legislature.
- 12 July From Andrew A. Kincannon. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. marshal for the Northern District of Mississippi applies to be superintendent of Indian affairs, succeeding the late William Armstrong.
- 12 July *To Sarah Childress Polk.*
- 12 July From William V. Shiver and George Haywood. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Mount Holly, N.J., men—the latter a judge—recommend the wounded Samuel G. French for a promotion and transfer to a “branch of the service . . . more consonant to his . . . health.”
- 13 July *From Andrew J. Donelson.*
- 14 July *From John Catron.*
- 14 July From Charles Ferguson. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Reiterates his letter of July 8 and asks for a prompt reply so he can stop the payment of the certificate discussed in that letter.

- From E in an unknown hand: William L. Marcy wrote to Ferguson on July 15.
- 15 July From Edmund Burk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Bank of New York porter asks for Polk’s autograph. A testimonial by Elijah F. Purdy follows Burk’s letter.
- 15 July *From Walter F. Leak.*
- 16 July *From Anthony W. Butler.*
- 16 July From William D. Moseley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces George S. Hawkins.
- 16, 17 July *From William D. Moseley.*
- 16 July *To Sarah Childress Polk.*
- 16 July *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*
- 17 July From Moses Y. Beach. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his brother Asahel, who would like a job “in the Revenue department at or near New York” but would accept one in Mexico.
- 17 July From Christian Ernst. ALS in German. DLC–JKP. Bridgeport, Va., man announces having named his son James K. Polk Ernst.
- 17 July From Daniel T. Jenks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses hope that Polk will appoint Thomas W. Sutherland to the land office in Wisconsin as expected; reports a “rumer” that James Page has given the job of revenue inspector “intended for me to some one else” and asks Polk to prevent that appointment.
- 17 July *From Nathan B. Whitfield.*
- 19 July *From Thomas B. Childress.*
- 19 July From Horace S. Cooley. LS. DLC–JKP. Illinois secretary of state encloses five copies of the Illinois laws of 1847 and three copies of volume 2 of Charles Gilman’s reports of the state supreme court (none found).
- 19 July From Preston Frazer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Tennessee physician reports his having moved from Sumner County to Bedford County; predicts Aaron V. Brown’s reelection as governor; recommends William R. George for William Armstrong’s office; reports on Meredith P. Gentry’s antiwar speeches.
- 19 July *From John Norvell.*
- 20 July To John Fairfield. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges Fairfield’s July 6 letter and enclosed certificates of membership in the Maine Conference Missionary Society (none found); encloses Polk to Paschal P. Morrell, July 20, 1847; acknowledges Fairfield’s letter that enclosed a letter from New York City railroad executive Amory Edwards (neither found); announces Polk’s appointment of Fairfield’s brother George I. Fairfield as consul at Buenos Aires.

- 20 July *To Paschal P. Morrell.*
- 20 July *From Henderson K. Yoakum.*
- 21 July *From Peter Burum.*
- 21 July *From Andrew Lockridge.*
- 21 July From William Moore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to lend Dewitt Clinton Yell money to return to Tennessee; speculates that Archibald Yell’s bequest will be sufficient to fund his children’s education; reports that John E. Wool wrote him “that Col. Yell’s Sword was lost in Battle” and that his body is in Arkansas.
- 21 July From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses plans for his “absence”; encloses a document for chief clerk McClintock Young, his replacement, for Polk’s signature; reports that James Buchanan will “aid” Young; recommends, if Mexico rejects America’s terms, that the army extend its line to Tampico.
- 22 July From Archibald G. Carter. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that the present postmaster at Mocksville, N.C., is a Whig and his proposed replacement a Democrat; encloses related letters to Cave Johnson (not found); discusses Carter’s and Polk’s visit to Chapel Hill. Published in ULNCP–A, pp. 164–65.
- 22 July *From Samuel R. Curtis.*
- 22 July From John T. Leigh. ALS. DLC–JKP. Responding to Polk’s letter of June 8, reports Rayburn’s offer to dismiss Rayburn’s suit over disputed ownership of forty acres of land if paid one hundred dollars, and Rayburn’s refusal to delay the suit while waiting for Polk’s answer; informs Polk that the plaintiff is John K. Rayburn, not Davidson M. Rayburn; refers Polk to son Armistead C. Leigh about the case during John T.’s visit to Virginia; reports the good condition of Polk’s crops and slaves and John A. Mairs’s good work.
- 22 July *To John T. Leigh.*
- 22 July *To [William L. Marcy].*
- 22 July *From Henry Watson.*
- 23 July From George W. Clinton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Newly appointed U.S. attorney for the Northern District of New York thanks Polk for the appointment.
- 23 July From Trasimon Landry. ALS. DLC–JKP. Louisiana lieutenant governor introduces former Louisiana state legislator Thomas Green Davidson.
- 23 July From Sylvester S. Southworth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses an anonymous letter to Southworth, accusing him of writing an article in the Baltimore *Patriot* criticizing Polk; denies writing the article and assures Polk of his support; describes the accusatory letter as evidence that some New York City politicians want to harm Southwark.

- 24 July *From John Gregg.*
- 24 July From Isaac Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Thomas Green Davidson.
- 24 July From Middleton G. Singleton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Corresponding secretary announces Polk’s election to honorary membership in the Athenaeum Society of the University of Missouri.
- 25 July From William J. Heady. ALS. DLC–JKP. Captured Kentuckian cavalry captain in Mexico City describes the Mexican landscape and cities between Saltillo and Mexico City; suggests military tactics; describes Mexican defenses; notes Spanish and French resistance to Mexican taxation of their citizens to support the war, a treaty violation; accuses British minister Charles Bankhead of violating neutrality by not objecting to the taxes.
- 25 July *From [John A. Mairs].*
- 26 July From Samuel H. Laughlin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Thomas Whalley as postmaster at Smithville, Tenn.; reports Hugh W. Dunlap’s and others’ recommendations of James Edmonston for an office.
- 26 July *To James H. Thomas.*
- 26 July *From John S. Young.*
- 27 July From Abner S. Harwood. ALS. DLC–JKP. Later enclosed in James L. Edwards to Polk, August 17, 1847. Baltimore resident and Mexican War veteran asks Polk to secure him his land bounty; writes that he was denied the bounty because he left the army early, in part due to ill health; notes that ten days ago he sent Polk his honorable discharge of January 18, 1846, (not found) and James L. Edwards’s letter of June 11, 1847, rejecting his claim.
- 27 July *To William Moore.*
- 27 July From John Slidell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Thomas Green Davidson.
- 28 July From Charles Ashley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Little Falls, N.Y., man seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 28 July From Richard M. Young. ALS. DLC–JKP. Summarizes and encloses clerk John W. deKrafft’s report of yesterday to the commission reviewing John Miller’s removal as register of the land office at Batesville, Ark., in December 1846; encloses many letters (not found) claiming that Polk was deceived into removing Miller and recommending his reappointment. From Polk’s AEI: ordered Miller “restored” on July 30.
- 28 July From David Levy Yulee. ALS. NjR. Reports, on Charles Byrne’s word, that Samuel J. Carr, storekeeper of the Pikesville, Md., arsenal, has cheated the government out

- of money and postage; urges his removal and replacement by Charles's brother Bernard M. Byrne.
- [c. 28 July 1847] From Edmund S. Zevely. ALS. DLC–JKP. North Carolina journalist asks for a job paying at least one thousand dollars; refers Polk to Third Assistant Postmaster General John Marron.
- 29 July *From Levin H. Coe.*
- 29 July From Nathaniel Dearborn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Boston engraver mentions Polk's letter of June 30 (not found); encloses, for Polk's approval, the description of Polk's visit to Boston that will appear in Dearborn's forthcoming history of that city (not found); describes Dearborn's *American Text Book for Letters*, of which he sent two copies with his letter to Polk of January 24 (not found) and which Dearborn hopes the U.S. Naval Academy will adopt.
- 29 July From Jesse Lorenzo Lyons. ALS. DLC–JKP. Montrose, Penn., Presbyterian clergyman seeks Polk's autograph.
- 29 July *To William Moore.*
- 29 July From Thomas G. Pratt. ALS. DLC–JKP. Maryland governor encloses a letter to be forwarded to George Bancroft.
- 30 July *From Anonymous, signed "A friend to your Administration, and one of the old Jeffersonian School."*
- 30 July *From William B. Cone et al.*
- 30 July *From Thomas M. Hamer.*
- 30 July From H. H. Harrison. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Charles Thomas to Polk, August 11, 1847. Captain of steamer *Ann Chase* reports that Charles L. Clark of the navy's Ordnance Department at Galveston, Tex., has preferred charges against Benjamin O. Payne, head of the Department and assistant quartermaster there; recommends men to investigate and possibly succeed Payne.
- 31 July *From Anonymous, signed "and Aged Widow N. B."*
- 31 July From John C. [Anson] (surname uncertain). ALS. DLC–JKP. Hillsborough, N.C., man cites his earlier offer (not found) to raise a military company; claims that Polk promised this spring to give him "the first vacant command" and notes three current vacancies in a North Carolina regiment; expresses pleasure at the recent marriage of William H. Polk, his old schoolmate. Published in ULNCP–A, p. 166.
- 31 July From Jesse D. Bright. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Col. James H. Lane of Indiana wishes to remain in the army until the end of the war; recommends him for "*any military office.*"
- 31 July From William D. Moseley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces daughter Alice H. Moseley, whom he sent to Washington

- City on her way to school so she could meet Polk; expresses support for Gideon J. Pillow against his critics.
- 31 July From William D. Moseley. LS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Leslie A. Thompson, who is escorting Alice H. Moseley.
- 31 July From Mayer B. G. Schmetzer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Danish immigrant and Pennsylvania Democrat encloses a letter of introduction from a Dr. Miller endorsed by John Tyler (not found); recounts the Whigs' injustices against him, including preventing Tyler's appointing him a consul in the West Indies; asks for any job.
- 31 July From Fanny G. Simpson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Rectortown, Fauquier County, Va., woman asks for two hundred dollars for her education so she can support her parents and sisters.
- 31 July From George Sykes. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Former New Jersey congressman recommends Samuel G. French for captain's rank in the Quartermaster's Department.

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