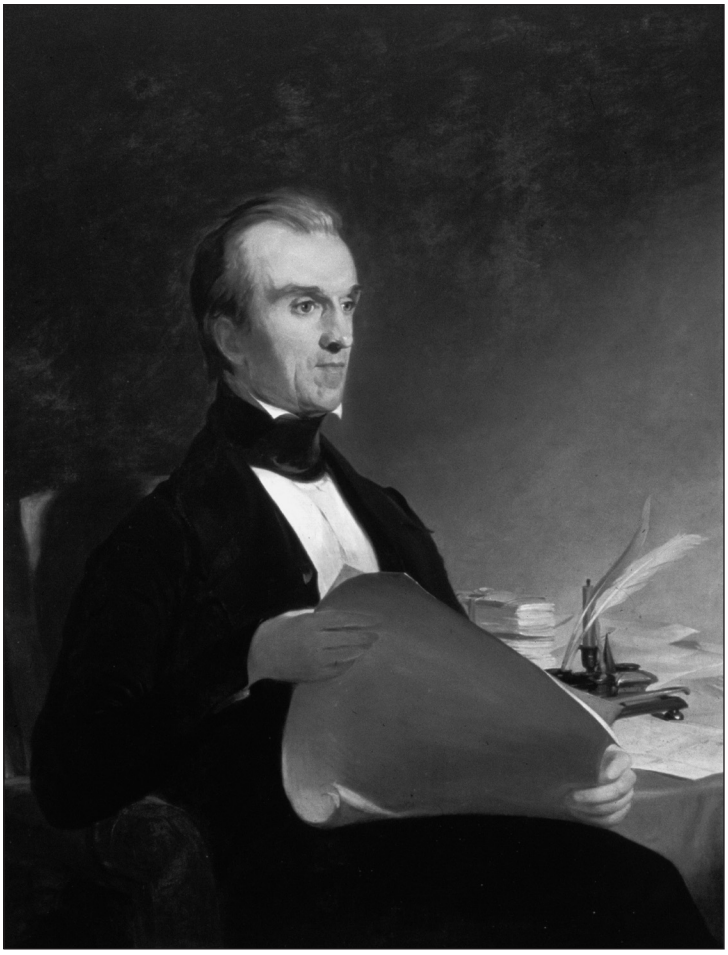
# Correspondence of James K. Polk

VOLUME XI, 1846



JAMES K. POLK

*Oil on canvas by Thomas Sully, 1783–1872*
*Dialectic Society Room*
*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

# Correspondence of
# JAMES K. POLK

*Volume XI*
*1846*

WAYNE CUTLER
Editor

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*To*

*James L. Rogers II, Benjamin H. Severance,*

*Brian E. Crowson, Cynthia J. Rogers, Trevor S. Smith*

*and William K. Bolt*

# PREFACE

Early in the first year of his administration Polk advised George Bancroft that he had set four goals for the new administration: resolution of the Oregon boundary dispute with Great Britain, acquisition of California, creation of an Independent Treasury system, and reduction of tariff duties on non-luxury imports. Polk's correspondence in 1846 mirrored his efforts to achieve those goals and more; that the new president did not include a fifth objective, friendly relations with Mexico, probably reflects his recognition that the issue lay very much beyond his control.

Polk's efforts to resume diplomatic relations with Mexico proved futile, for he would not agree to pay her indemnity for the annexation of Texas. In his private 1845 correspondence with John Slidell, his secret emissary to Mexico, Polk had anticipated President José Herrera's difficulty in resuming diplomatic relations with the United States. Herrera's demand for indemnity for the annexation of Texas bespoke the controlling weaknesses of his government, which included large unpaid debts foreign and domestic as well as military and church conspiracies to restore authoritarian rule. Even had Polk been willing to consider Herrera's indemnity demands, Congress would not, could not, reverse its annexation resolution or repudiate Texas' rights of separation and self-determination; to do so would deny the legitimacy of the United States' break with the British crown in 1776. Polk could and did offer to purchase Upper California and New Mexico as a means of relieving Herrera's financial embarrassments and fending off the overthrow of constitutional government.

Perhaps a stronger government in Mexico might have given up its claims to Texas, backed off its war threats, and still suppressed further fragmentation of the Mexican state. Yet Herrera's fragile government could not alienate Mexico's frontier lands for the same reason it could not accept the independence of Texas. In any case, the military overthrow of the constitutional government in early January 1846 ended further indirect negotiations undertaken to resolve the Texas question peacefully. In his inaugural address Mariano Paredes, leader of the military coup, reasserted Mexico's sovereignty over Texas, called for the suppression of the revolutionaries, and pledged to protect Mexico's borders, the eastern boundary of which lay along the Sabine River. To those ends Paredes sent Manuel Arista to head a force of nearly 15,000 troops with instructions to engage Zachary Taylor's 4,000 troops encamped on the northern shore of the Rio Grande opposite Matamoras. The resumption of warfare in Texas did not arise from a simple border dispute or the failure of the two states to accept the partition of Texas at the Nueces; rather the underlying causes of dispute lay deeply rooted in conflicting national pride, internal divisions, and international insecurities.

On April 24 a Mexican cavalry unit crossed the Rio Grande River and attacked a U.S. army unit patroling the eastern shore of the river, the boundary line claimed previously by the Republic of Texas. When Polk learned that eleven American soldiers had died in the attack, he advised the Congress that "Mexico has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil." On May 13 Congress acknowledged that a state of war existed between the two countries. Parallel diplomatic contention with Britain over control of the Oregon Country and reports of British military mobilization heightened the possibility of Polk's having a land war with Mexico on his southwestern frontier and a British naval blockade of its commercial Atlantic and Gulf ports.

In his first annual message to Congress Polk had called for prompt action in giving Britain the required one-year's notice for terminating the 1827 convention providing for joint-occupancy of the Oregon Country. Ardent expansionists, of course, reasserted the United States' original claims to all of Oregon, that is, all lands west of the Rocky Mountains to the sea and north to the 54º 40' parallel. Those congressmen and senators who feared a two-front war with Mexico and Britain found ample grounds for dividing Oregon at the 49º parallel. Polk repeatedly urged Congress to give the required notice first and talk later, for without such prior action the British ministry need undertake no discussions whatever to settle the conflicting claims. Ignor-

ing Polk's wishes members of both houses of Congress engaged in an extended four-month debate over the wording of the termination notice; the hawks and doves and those in between each wanted language most conducive to their end goals.

Finally on April 23rd Congress voted to give the required notice of termination; in London the U.S. minister, Louis McLane, had convinced the British ministry that Polk and the Congress would accept a partition of Oregon at the 49º parallel. Even before the official notice had come to hand, instructions to negotiate an Oregon compromise had been sent to the British minister in Washington, Richard Pakenham. That the British could and did choose to partition Oregon in lieu of war may be attributed to the political, economic, and military strength of the British government both at home and abroad.

For his part Polk had calculated correctly that Britain would not go to war over Oregon at the expense of its commercial interests in the North American and Caribbean trade. The young American president, almost wholely unknown to the British ministers, had to prove himself in actions as well as words before final decisions would be made in adjusting the Oregon question. Polk's determination to end the convention of joint-occupancy, his refusal to eqivocate in the face of British war preparations, his low-tariff trade advocacy, and his decision to defend the annexation of Texas brought the British ministry to a reconsideration of earlier proposals to divide the Oregon country at the 49º parallel.

Patronage difficulties caused Polk just as many headaches as the negotiations with Mexico and Great Britain in 1846. "We have twenty eight states in the union, and there are usually half a dozen, and often twenty applicants, to fill any vacancy which is worth having," Polk wrote to A. O. P. Nicholson. "All cannot be served, and I most sincerely wish that I had no office to bestow." In October, Polk and Silas W. Wright, governor of New York, exchanged letters in which each articulated his views on how the patronage system should function. Polk told the New York governor that he did not want to grant favors or give preference to any faction of the Democratic party—to do so might allow one branch to obtain an unfair advantage over another in choosing the presidential nominee in 1848.

Pennsylvania Democrats became a particular thorn in Polk's side. Both James Buchanan and George M. Dallas harbored presidential ambitions and struggled with each other for control of the patronage in Pennsylvania. In January, against Buchanan's wishes, Polk appointed Pennsylvanian George Woodward to a seat on the Supreme Court. Behind the scenes Buchanan lobbied his Senate friends to reject

Woodward's nomination. When Polk chose Henry Horn to be the customs collector at Philadelphia, the Senate again refused consent to the President's nomination. Buchanan then hinted that he himself would accept the vacant position on the Supreme Court; Polk desired to oblige him but delayed the appointment so that Buchanan's departure from the state department would not jeopardize the Oregon negotiations and Polk's domestic agenda. Polk planned to replace Buchanan with Louis McLane, who had proven instrumental in settling the Oregon boundary dispute while serving as minister to Great Britain. By the time Polk could offer Buchanan the position, he had changed his mind and asked to remain at his post as secretary of state. When McLane decided to vacate his position in London, Polk offered the London mission to George Bancroft, and the navy secretary accepted. Robert Armstrong, consul at Liverpool, wrote Polk that the dapper young Bancroft had arrived in London and likely would make quite an impression on British society. To replace Bancroft, Polk offered the navy portfolio to his attorney general, John Y. Mason, who accepted. In his place Polk turned to Franklin Pierce, but "Young Hickory of the Granite State" declined the appointment. Maine's Nathan Clifford joined the cabinet as the new attorney general. Polk's cabinet remained unchanged until 1848.

On January 15, 1846, Adams Huntsman, one of Polk's early Tennessee confidants, warned him that "there is one subject my Dear Sir that you must lend all the energies and influence you have to get out of your way. I mean the Tariff." Early in his administration Polk had instructed his cabinet that he would lower the tariff to a revenue standard and replace specific duties with *ad valorem* duties. Polk worked with James I. McKay, chairman of the House Ways and Means committee, and Robert J. Walker, secretary of the Treasury, to craft a bill that embodied those principles. McKay delayed debate on the bill until receipt of news that Great Britain had agreed to settle the Oregon boundary dispute and had repealed her corn laws. On July 3 the House passed the Walker Tariff by a vote of 114 to 95. The real drama, however, had yet to take place. It took all of Polk's skill and determination to ensure that the bill passed the Senate.

Presidential involvement at such a level had rarely been seen in the nation's capital. Polk met with numerous Senators and tried to convince them of the importance of lowering the tariff. He dispatched members of his cabinet to reassure wavering Senators that the bill would not ruin the economy as the Whigs alleged. From the very beginning Polk sensed that passage of the bill might come down to one or two votes, and he suspected that Vice President George M. Dallas

might have to play a part. Polk told Robert Armstrong on July 13 that he had not conversed with Dallas on the tariff but believed that if called on, Dallas would "represent the Democracy of the nation and not the State of Pennsylvania." On the motion to engross the measure and read it a third time, the Senate deadlocked and Dallas voted to save the bill. The Senate then approved the bill by a vote of 28 to 27. Pennsylvanians burned Dallas in effigy, and the nervous vice president sent the Senate's sergeant at arms to Philadelphia to protect his wife and children. The Walker Tariff of 1846 settled the rancorous tariff issue for a decade, and so commenced an era of low tariffs designed solely for revenue. The nation did not return to protectionism and high tariffs until the Morrill Tariff of 1861.

Having settled the tariff controvery, Congress turned its attention to Polk's other domestic goal—the creation of an Independent Treasury system. Polk always referred to this measure as the "Constitutional Treasury" because he believed that this was the only system of regulating and maintaining the federal government's finances sanctioned by the Constitution. Under an Independent Treasury, the federal government would keep its revenues in subtreasury buildings located in the major commercial cities. Payments to and from the subtreasuries would have to be made in specie or its equivalency. Congress completed action on the bill in August, and with Polk's signature the general government's finances were divorced from the banking industry. The Independent Treasury system ushered in a period of economic prosperity that lasted throughout the early 1850s. Creation of the Independent Treasury system represented the final act in the protracted battle over banking in America, which had begun in 1832 with Andrew Jackson's veto of the bill to recharter the Second Bank of the United States. The Independent Treasury system managed the government's finances until 1921 when the Federal Reserve dissolved the subtreasury system.

Before adjourning, Congress also passed an appropriations bill for improving rivers and harbors. Polk vetoed the internal improvements bill; and Northern Democrats, still angered over the tariff reduction, cried foul because this bill would have provided aid to their section. Having helped Polk win election and then provided the necessary votes for the admission of Texas, Northern Democrats felt betrayed. In the fall elections these disgruntled Democrats suffered a series of defeats at the polls and attributed their losses to the new tariff bill, the rejection of Western improvements, and the rising influence of the slave-holding South. Reflecting on the defeats of Northern democrats at the end of November, Francis W. Pickens informed Polk that a dan-

gerous trend had begun; and if continued, the trend might destroy the Democratic party or perhaps the Union itself.

Though committed to his policy goals, Polk also found time in 1846 to focus his attention on matters outside his political concerns. He arranged for his ward, Marshall Tate Polk, Jr., to attend Georgetown College, located near the President's House where Polk could keep close watch on his nephew's studies. Laura Wilson Polk Tate resisted her son's matriculation at a college administered by Catholic priests, but the president dismissed her worries. Polk increased the size of the slave workforce on his plantation, but he only added those who were either husband or wife to the slaves he already owned. When it came to paying his slaves, Polk informed Robert Campbell, Jr., that his slaves preferred to be paid in gold or silver and not worthless bank paper. In the fall of the second year of his presidency Polk purchased the Grundy mansion in Nashville for his retirement years. Although Whigs charged him with planning to stand for a second term, Polk harbored no such intention. "I shall return to Tennessee at the close of my term, and spend the remainder of my life, in quiet retirement," Polk wrote to his mother on Christmas day.

### *This Volume*

Always concerned that the reader's primary focus fall on the text of the document, the editors have limited their annotations to textual criticism and identifications. Persons, subjects, and oblique references have been noted on the occasion of their first mention in this volume; for the full name of persons mentioned subsequently in the text only by surname, the reader will want to consult the index. The editors have transcribed the text faithfully with a strict regard for original spellings, punctuation, and text placement, except for the following rules of normalization:

1. initial words of sentences have been capitalized and ending punctuation marks have been supplied when the syntax is clear (uncertain constructions are noted and rendered without normalization);
2. conventional spellings have been followed except when misspellings have been clearly written;
3. conventional upper and lower case usage has been followed when the writer employed multiple and/or irregular forms of the same character, thus indicating no discernible meaning behind the writer's use of capitals;

4. interlineations, cancellations, and unintentional word repetitions have been ignored unless something more than writing errors may have been indicated;

5. short dashes on the base of the line have been transcribed as commas or periods as the syntax may suggest;

6. redundant punctuation and random flourishes or ink marks have been ignored;

7. superscripts have been brought down to the line, and markings beneath or beside superscripts have been transcribed as single periods;

8. punctuation marks following the abbreviations *st, nd, rd,* and *th* have been deleted;

9. regardless of their position in the original manuscript, the salutation, place of composition, and date have been set on the line or lines immediately below the document's heading;

10. place of composition and full date, if omitted but known to the editors through content analysis, have been supplied in brackets and noted, and misstatements of place and date have been corrected and supplied in brackets with the misinformation noted;

11. the complimentary closing has been omitted, and the omission of same has been indicated by an ellipsis if the closing was written as part of the ending paragraph;

12. the author's signature has been rendered in capitals and small capitals at the end of the text (or supplied within brackets if unwritten or clipped);

13. the inside address has been omitted, but the information has been stated in the head note, along with the document's classification and repository location;

14. textual interventions (ie., words supplied within brackets) have been made only to complete probable meanings (garbled texts have been transcribed without intervention and so noted); and

15. bracketed ellipses have been added to indicate that a portion of the text has been obliterated by ink blots, sealing wax, or some other kind of damage, and the nature and extent of same has been noted.

The editors' identification and explanatory annotations often have been assembled from standard reference and monographic sources that are so well known and reliable as to obviate the need for citation. These considerations, coupled with a desire to ensure that the endnotes do not overwhelm the presentation of the textual material, have persuaded the editors to forego the naming of sources in their endnotes.

*Acknowledgments*

As was the case with prior volumes of the Correspondence series, the eleventh bears the imprint of a truly collaborative effort, and I acknowledge with thanks the able assistance of my two associate editors, James L. Rogers II and Benjamin H. Severance, in the selection, transcription, and annotation of the letters published in full. Each contributed over a year's service before moving on to careers in college teaching. In addition, three part-time assistant editors made valuable contributions to this volume: Cynthia J. Rogers and Trevor A. Smith researched and calendared the unpublished letters; and William K. Bolt proofed the text and compiled the name/subject indexes. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission, together with the Tennessee Historical Commission, provided financial support for the Project's part-time editorial staff.

All of the Polk editors owe a standing debt to those librarians who have assisted us in our research in the University of Tennessee Library, the Tennessee State Museum, the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Library of Congress, and the National Archives. Our special thanks go to the administrators of the University of Tennessee and the University of Tennessee Press for their sustaining efforts in behalf of the long-term goals of the Polk Project.

Volumes ten and eleven have been prepared in large measure by a small cadre of able young scholars "doing history" without just compensation for their talents and labors. It is with profound appreciation and high regard that I dedicate this the eleventh volume of the Polk Correspondence to my colleagues Jim Rogers, Ben Severance, Brian Crowson, Cindy Rogers, Trevor Smith, and Will Bolt.

Knoxville, Tennessee WAYNE CUTLER
*July 2008*

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# SYMBOLS

*Document Classification*

| | |
|---|---|
| AC | Autograph Circular |
| ACI | Autograph Circular Initialed |
| ACS | Autograph Circular Signed |
| AD | Autograph Document |
| ADI | Autograph Document Initialed |
| ADS | Autograph Document Signed |
| AE | Autograph Endorsement |
| AEI | Autograph Endorsement Initialed |
| AES | Autograph Endorsement Signed |
| 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, press copy | Autograph Letter Signed, press copy |
| ALsS | Autograph Letters Signed |
| AN | Autograph Note |
| ANI | Autograph Note Initialed |
| ANS | Autograph Note Signed |
| C | Circular, authorship attributed |
| CI | Circular Initialed |
| CS | Circular Signed |

| | |
|---|---|
| D | Document, authorship attributed |
| DI | Document Initialed |
| DS | Document Signed |
| E | Endorsement, authorship attributed |
| EI | Endorsement Initialed |
| ES | Endorsement Signed |
| L | Letter, authorship attributed |
| L, copy | Letter, copy |
| L, fragment | Letter, fragment |
| LI | Letter Initialed |
| LS | Letter Signed |
| LS, copy | Letter Signed, copy |
| LS, press copy | Letter Signed, press copy |
| N | Note, authorship attributed |
| NI | Note Initialed |
| NS | Note Signed |
| NsS | Notes Signed |
| PC | Published Circular, authorship attributed |
| PD | Published Document, authorship attributed |
| PL | Published Letter, authorship attributed |
| PL, broadside | Published Letter, broadside |
| PN | Published Note, authorship attributed |

*Repository Designations*

| | |
|---|---|
| CSmH | Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino |
| DLC–AJD | Library of Congress, Andrew Jackson Donelson Papers |
| DLC–DPM | Library of Congress, Dorothy Payne Madison Papers |
| DLC–FP | Library of Congress, Franklin Pierce Papers |
| DLC–GW | Library of Congress, Gideon Welles Papers |
| DLC–JKP | Library of Congress, James K. Polk Papers |
| DLC–MVB | Library of Congress, Martin Van Buren Papers |
| DLC–WA | Library of Congress, William Allen Papers |
| DLC–WLM | Library of Congress, William L. Marcy Papers |
| DLC–WM | Library of Congress, William Medill 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 104 | National Archives, Records of the Bureau of the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia |
| DNA–RG 156 | National Archives, Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance |
| DNA–RG 192 | National Archives, Records of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence |
| ICU | University of Chicago, Chicago |
| MB | Boston Public Library, Boston |
| MHi | Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston |
| MiU | University of Michigan, Ann Arbor |
| NHi | New-York Historical Society, New York |
| NNPM | Pierpont Morgan Library, New York |
| NcD | Duke University, Durham |
| OHi | Ohio Historical Society, Columbus |
| PHi | Historical Society of Pennsylvania Philadelphia |
| PPAmP | American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia |
| T–JKP | Tennessee State Library, James K. Polk Papers |
| Tx | Texas State Library and Historical Commission, Austin |

*Published Sources*

| | |
|---|---|
| *NCHR* | *North Carolina Historical Review* |
| *THM* | *Tennessee Historical Magazine* |
| *THQ* | *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* |
| *TQ* | *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine* |

# 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 | Graduated from University of North Carolina |
| | Fall | Began reading law in office of Felix Grundy of Nashville |
| 1819 | Sept. | Elected clerk of the Tennessee Senate |
| 1820 | June | Admitted to the bar |
| 1823 | Aug. | Elected to the Tennessee House |
| 1824 | Jan. 1 | Married Sarah Childress of Murfreesboro |
| 1825 | Aug. | Elected to the U.S. House |
| 1827 | Aug. | Reelected to the U.S. House |
| | Nov. 5 | Death of his father, Samuel Polk |
| 1829 | Aug. | Reelected to the U.S. House |
| 1831 | Jan. 21 | Death of his brother Franklin, aged 28 |
| | April 12 | Death of his brother Marshall, aged 26 |
| | Aug. | Reelected to the U.S. House |
| | Sept. 28 | Death of his brother John, aged 24 |
| 1833 | Aug. | Reelected to the U.S. House |
| | Dec. | Chosen to chair the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1834 | June | Defeated by John Bell for Speaker of the U.S. House |
| 1835 | Aug. | Reelected to the 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 |
| 1837 | Aug. | Reelected to the 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 the 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 the Tennessee Democratic State Convention to be the party's 1844 vice-presidential nominee |
| 1844 | May | Nominated for the presidency by the Democratic National Convention |
| | Nov. | Elected President of the United States over Henry Clay |
| 1845 | Mar. 4 | Inaugurated President of the United States |
| 1849 | Mar. 4 | Yielded office to his successor, Zachary Taylor |
| | June 15 | Died in Nashville of cholera |

# Correspondence of James K. Polk

VOLUME XI, 1846

# JANUARY 1846

## FROM JOHN CATRON[1]

My dear Sir. Jny 1st, 1846

Some time before I left home I recd. a note from you, saying something about paying me some money.[2] I have no need for any. At the end of your *term,* will do me just as well. And if you had killed yourself by over labour during your Presidency, (& I feared you would) surely your *extrx*[3] would never have heard of it.

Thinking you might bear this matter in mind, it was deemed proper to say that I have no earthly use for money, and that you may have.

J. CATRON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court in the last days of Andrew Jackson's second term, Catron was one of Polk's closest political friends. A native of Tennessee, he assisted the *Nashville Union* financially and occasionally wrote political editorials for it.

2. Letter not found.

3. Reference is to Sarah C. Polk as probable executrix of Polk's will.

## FROM JOHN A. MAIRS[1]

Dear Sir [Yalobusha County, Miss. January 1, the 1846][2]

I nough take the oppitunity of writing you a few lins to inform you hough youre people are & ond youre platation Bisness are going on. We are all well at present. Hoping thes lins will find you an family injoy the sam. I would of riten to you some suner But I exspeted Col Robert Campbell[3] Down heare By this time or before & I wanted to gather the crops.

I have packed 97 Bags of coten.[4] We shd finish picking out coten in two days more & will have some 6 Bags more to pack. We have made a far crop of corn plenty & some to spar. We have killed a part of the pork hogs some 7000 thusands pounds. We will have I think 4000 thusands pounds more to cill. Pork is worth from 4 cents to five cents pur pound. I have let 1500 hundred pounds go at 5 cents pur pound. The stock all lucks well at present. I have a fine prospect for pork another year if I am luckey with them.

I am in hops we will have a good crop year, An I want to try and make more. We have had some vary cold wether in december. Snough lay on the ground 9 days. We have had a dry faul. Youre coten is yet in troy.

I am giting along with the negroes vary well An am trying to doing to youre intrests To the Best of my nolidge. I am in hops youre coten will sell well. The Bals are all wade an each Bal has it wate marked on the Bal. I have noth more woth your attention.

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover reads: "Plantation business weights of 29 bags of cotton— 14.472 pounds. Has sold 1500 lbs pork at 5 cents per lb, making $75.00. Rec'd Jany 14th 1846."

1. Mairs became the overseer of Polk's Mississippi plantation in 1845.
2. Place and date identified through content analysis.
3. Robert Campbell, Jr., served as Polk's business agent in Columbia. The son of John and Matilda Golden Polk Campbell, Campbell used the suffix "Junior" to distinguish himself from his uncle of like name.
4. Mairs included a table listing 29 cotton bales and their weights.

## FROM JAMES H. THOMAS[1]

Dear Sir, Columbia, Tenn. Jany. 1st, 1846

Inclosed please find the receipt for your mother[2] for Seventy Dollars 98 cents. Of this sum I paid $20.66 balance on her hack & the balance

for her groceries sugar coffee &c. I have charged you with the amt. on this day & charged myself with Joseph A. Walkers[3] note due to day.

I returned from Nashville last night. The supreme court had not *delivered an opinion* but it was understood they would decide for Black against Dr. Hays.[4] This is bad. I will hire your negroes to the same persons that had them last year. I am to see Capt. Helm[5] tomorrow. He has been burnt out at his leather store by our late fire, & desires to rent your store house, & I expect to let him have it.

Having received no directions from you & no one else attending to these matters I will give them my attention.

The particulars of our late fire you have seen in the papers.[6] It is quite a ruinous calamity to some of our citizens. The Observer[7] Office presses types &c are a total loss.

Our friend Mr. Kelly[8] is a considerable sufferer. Your mother and friends are all well.

JAMES H. THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on January 11, 1846.

1. A Columbia lawyer and district attorney, 1836–42, Thomas became Polk's law partner in 1843 and later won election as a Democrat to three terms in Congress, 1847–51 and 1859–61.

2. Jane Knox Polk.

3. Walker, a Columbia merchant, became Maury county clerk in 1836 and served as mayor of Columbia in 1865.

4. John B. Hays and James Black. Hays, a Columbia physician, married Polk's youngest sister, Ophelia Clarissa Polk. Black is not identified further. Thomas' reference is to an appeals case heard by the Tennessee Supreme Court during its 1845 December term, *Black vs. Caruthers, Harris and Co.*

5. An early Maury County settler, Meredith Helm established a tannery in Columbia in the early 1820s. He also owned a leather and shoe shop in Columbia, and served nine terms as mayor of Columbia between 1829 and 1852.

6. For the Columbia fire on the night of December 29, 1845, see the editorial in the *Nashville Union*, January 1, 1846.

7. *Columbia Observer*.

8. Thomas J. Kelly owned a dry goods store in Columbia.

## FROM SAMUEL P. COLLINGS[1]

Sir. Wilkes Barre P 2, January, 1846

The assaults upon George W. Woodward,[2] your nominee for the Office of Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, have their origin in a determination to force you to select some man for that station, whose

views upon constitutional questions shall correspond with the principles which the Federal party have always avowed and acted upon.

We have in Pennsylvania, attached, nominally, to the democratic party, a class of politicians whose motives of action are governed by theories as infamous as they are hollow and unsound. With them, the success of a party is regarded merely as a means of securing personal and pecuniary advantage. The triumph of candidates for office is looked upon as desirable, mainly, for the opportunity it affords to place government contracts within their control. They are ever ready to desert party landmarks and party usages, when the temptation of plunder is offered, or the certainty of a majority is assured to them.

It was by a union of politicians of this class with the whigs in the last Pennsylvania Legislature, that Judge Woodward, the caucus nominee for U.S. Senator, was defeated. By the knavery and the stupidity of men of the same character, the democracy of Pennsylvania have been betrayed into that disgraceful position they occupy upon the tariff question. The howl for protection of the manufacturers, has been raised thro' out the state, and the self-elected leaders of the democratic party—composed of the most honest yeomany in the world as that party is—have responded, with empty emphasis, to that howl. The same men were the fathers of the long train of iniquities and abuses accompanying and succeeding the struggles of the U.S. Bank. In one word, Sir, every mischievous and vicious aberration from the path of principle, in the Commonwealth, has been induced by the same debasing motives and the same faithless men.

The organ of this body of conspirators is the "Harrisburg Union."[3] This paper has always been opposed to the policy of the party of which you are the head. Owned by men who would sacrifice every principle which democrats have been taught to cherish, it is always prepared to throw the weight of its influence into the scale of Federalism, when Federalism has tendered to it an equivalent. Published at the seat of government, and bound to reflect popular sentiment in the state, it has ventured to *assume* that the nomination of Judge Woodward is "unsatisfactory" and "unacceptable." Sir, the assumption is *false— utterly false.* In every democratic paper in the interior of the State, is found a prompt, pointed, denial. No nomination you could have made would have been so popular. For no man in the circuit combines so many of the qualities essential to an able and a useful Judge. I know George W. Woodward well. In his private character, in his intellectual capacity, in his legal learning, in his social manners, and in his political faith, *I know him to be above reproach.*

It is said that ten thousand names, are attached to remonstrances

from Philadelphia, against the confirmation of Judge Woodward. You, Sir, well remember the time when "a committee of ten thousand" were to march from Philadelphia to Washington to force General Jackson to restore the deposites. The removal of the Public moneys from the U.S. Bank was not a greater grievance to the Federalists and their allies, the "expediency" party, than would be the infliction upon them of a radical Judge. The motives of hostility in the one case are identical with those in the other. It is very easy to immagine whence springs the anxiety of those who claim "protection" for their capital against the labor of the country, for a Supreme Bench whose construction of the Constitution upon questions that must soon inevitably arise, could be stretched to the limits of the conscience of a manufacturer upon the Merrimack or an iron monger of the Alleghenies.

The Supreme Court has been an ally of Federalism in time past. The merciless attacks upon Judge Woodward are part of a system to preserve that Court in the same disgraceful position in time to come. The Constitution has almost become a legal fiction now. Under the rules that govern the Federal party, precedent and analogy are already looked to as the guides of Statesmen. The mischief is increasing with every year; and the annals of the republic will be stained and blotted when a democratic majority in the Senate, shall withhold its aid from the President to stay the advance of 'latitudinarianism' in the administration of the fundamental law of the land.

SAM. P. COLLINGS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Editor of the Wilkes-Barre *Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal*, Collings received appointment as consul to Tangiers in 1852.

2. A Wilkes-Barre lawyer, Woodward presided over Pennsylvania's Fourth Judicial District from 1841 until 1851. Polk named Woodward for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court in 1845, but the Senate rejected the nomination.

3. Owned and edited by Isaac G. McKinley, the Harrisburg *Democratic Union* urged Pennsylvania Democrats to nominate James Buchanan for president in 1840. See McKinley to Polk, June 3, 1844.

## FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN[1]

Dear Sir, Washington City, January 2nd, [1846][2]

Permit me in the full glow of national and state pride, which fills the bosoms of your friends, and especially Tennesseans, to present my respectful congratulations on the coming in of the New Year, and on the gratifying and cheering prospects of your Administration. This I

can do from my heart both in regard to the past, and the prospects of the future.

My daughter[3] being ill, and confined most of her time for a week or ten days past to her room and bed, I hope is a sufficient apology for her not calling to paying her personal respects, and her christmas and New Year's congratulations to Mrs. Polk and yourself. She must be the more readily excused not only because of her settled melancholly and seclusion, from which I find it impossible to withdraw her feelings and determination, but because in the midst of her griefs, she is as ardent a democrat, and as zealous a friend of yourself and Mrs. Polk as was her late unfortunate husband.

A letter received from Annapolis yesterday, from Mr. Buchanan, assures me that our young friend Felix Grundy is slowly by surely getting well.[4]

Myself, and two or three strangers, one a Virginia lady, were a few minutes too late yesterday in calling at the Presidents House to obtain admission.[5] One of the ladies in company, who occasioned the delay, took all the blame of disappointment on herself.

I have had several full and confidential interviews with Mr. Turney,[6] and have furnished him a mass of tabular facts in regard to the Proceeds of the sales of public lands. He will, on presenting certain Resolves of the Assembly of Tennessee, in relation to the land money of that State, define his position on the distribution question.[7] Having never said to friend or enemy that he *would vote* in any form for distribution, but only that in a certain condition of finances, he saw no objection to it, he *will say*, in presenting the papers in question, that he will not vote for any possible form of distribution in the present condition of the finances, and in the present foreign and domestic prospects of the Country. He will prepare, revise and publish what he says in the Senate as an answer to Watterson and his friends in their publication of charges against him.[8] Mr. Turney is aware that he mistook Gen. Jackson in what he quoted from him in his former publication.[9] Venable[10] was his authority—for in preparing his publication, he could not at Winchester find a copy of Gen. Jackson's Messages. What Gen. Jackson said of the Surplus Revenue, they supposed him to have said of the Proceeds of the Lands. This error, however, he will not acknowledge in his speech, but will *avoid* its effects. He intended to publish an answer to Messrs. Waterson and others, but I have urged him to answer in the Senate. Maj. Williams[11] gave the same advice. After considering of it, he will now take the course I have above stated. He is determined in all measures of the democracy—in every point of policy assumed by the Administration—to be a warm, decided, and unflinching supporter

of you and your cabinet. In his doing so I have the fullest faith. On the tariff he will follow out the Message, and Mr. Walkers Report to the letter.[12]

I hope the occasional communicating facts, which I have well ascertained, like the foregoing, in the strictest confidence, may not be unacceptable. In reference to Mr. Turney, I do it in justice to him because I see some democratic papers doubt him; and because he is most fully and entirely satisfied that you never by word, thought or deed, did anything to prevent his election. If Nicholson's[13] unwise friends had not used your name, assuming to express what they said *must* be your wishes—though they dared not to claim or have your authority for it—neither Turney nor his friends in the election would ever have complained of your supposed interference as I verily believe from all I learned on the spot, and what I now learn from him. All, however, is now buried in oblivion as to Turney, and he does you full justice. His assurances to you I am sure you may rely on.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally and marked "Confidential." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on January 2, 1846.

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

2. Laughlin mistakenly wrote 1845.

3. Reference is to Ellen Laughlin Kezer, the widow of Timothy Kezer, a Nashville merchant and hatmaker, who died in early 1845.

4. Franklin Buchanan and Felix Grundy, Jr. A Maryland native, Buchanan entered the U.S. Navy in 1815 and achieved the rank of commander in 1841 after many years of service on distant seas. Buchanan submitted plans for the organization of the Naval Academy and became its first superintendent in 1845. He commanded Oliver Hazard Perry's squadron that opened relations between the U.S. and Japan in 1853. In 1861 Buchanan joined the Confederate States Navy; received promotion to admiral in 1862; and was captured in combat in Mobile Bay in 1864. Grundy served as a midshipman until 1851.

5. Laughlin's companions are not identified futher.

6. A Winchester lawyer, Hopkins L. Turney served four terms in the Tennessee House, 1825–31 and 1835–37; three terms in the U.S. House, 1837–43; and one term in the U.S. Senate, 1845–51.

7. The Tennessee General Assembly resolutions instructed the state's representatives and senators to support the Administration's positions as outlined in the First Annual Message. Turney presented the resolutions in the Senate on February 18, 1846, and gave a speech clarifying his position on the proceeds of public land sales.

8. A lawyer and the founding editor of the Shelbyville *Western Freeman*,

Harvey M. Watterson served one term in the Tennessee House, 1835–37, and two terms in the U.S. House, 1839–43. Elected to one term in the Tennessee Senate, 1845–47, he presided over that body as its Speaker. From 1847 until 1851, he edited the *Nashville Union*; in 1851, he became editor of the Washington *Union*. Watterson led the opposition to Turney's election as U.S. Senator; see the *Nashville Union* of December 20, 1845, for the "Address of Thirty-one Democratic Members . . . ."

9. Reference is to Andrew Jackson's Annual Message, December 4, 1832.

10. Probably William E. Venable, a Winchester lawyer and educator, who represented Franklin and Lincoln counties as a Democract in the Tennessee Senate from 1847 until 1849.

11. Hampton C. Williams, a Democratic party operative in Washington City, served as a clerk in the Navy Department's Bureau of Construction.

12. Reference is to the "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury," Senate Document No. 2, 29 Congress, 1 Session, December 3, 1845.

13. A Democratic member of the Tennessee House from Maury County, 1833–37, and of the Tennessee Senate, 1843–45, A. O. P. Nicholson served an interim appointment in the U.S. Senate from December 1840 until February 1842. He moved to Nashville in 1844 and edited the *Nashville Union* before becoming president of the Bank of Tennessee in 1846.

## FROM DAVID CRAIGHEAD[1]

Dr Sir Nashville Jany 4 1846

If a few hostile war steamers were to enter the mouth of the Mississippi river when at high watter mark, they could in three days time assand to Batton rouge and in a few days more to Cairo. The fort St. Philip[2] would not avail against this new mode of propelling ships and the enemy by breaking the levee at proper points could with very little delay deluge the entire delta from the Balize to Cairo. By this slight effort he would place himself in a waste of waters between those points and of 80 miles average width.

The united efforts of all the land forces of the Union could not impede much less prevent this calamity. He who should attempt it would be drowned like Pharoah and his host in the waters of the red sea. The torrent once set in motion would hurry along the warder and his tower the horse and his rider the hero and the coward and all that is helpless and all that is lovely to one common inevitable destruction. The enemy proudly afloat in a litteraly dead sea might retire in perfect security or if he wished to push his fortunes further he would attack Batton Rouge. If successful a slight fortification with the command of the river below would give him a strong position near to Texas on the one hand and on the other very favorably situated for the execution of his long cherished

design of introducing negroe regiments into the slave states with hope of starting a servile war.

I do not know that the british have yet thought of such a movement. I take it for granted that our people have not, as nothing has been said on the subject. I know nothing as to the probability of a war but if that event is deemed possible I call your attention earnestly to this subject and suggest that a number of steam war ships built at Pittsburg Cincinatti St Louis and Memphis would not be an unreasonable preparation against even the possibility of such wide spread and irretrievable calamity.

Permit me to present my tardy but sincere and harty congratulations on the matter manner & success of your first regular message. On the tarriff which was my hobby partly on account of its importance but principaly because it best suited my position whilst batling in the cause of democracy you have been peculiarly hapy. You have made the subject plain to every capacity have placed all the strong arguments in a strong light and expressed them in forcible language. I have not met with one man whether whig or democrat of the rank and file who does not heartily agree with your views upon this subject.

I will not go over the other points of the message in detail. I concur totaly in every one of them and believe that they are concurred in by the great mass of the American People.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr Calhoun at Memphis.[3] His presence there has a magical influence on moderating the violence of your opponents and of strengthening and confirming your friends. Several highly respectable whigs came openly over to your support.

You are now in an untried and somewhat stormy ocean. You are confronted with the most enlightened and the most powerful of the sons of man. The eye of the universe is turned earnestly upon you. I know that your hand is strong that your eye is clear and your heart is sound.

For me I have not one moment of apprehension.

DAVID CRAIGHEAD

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Letter is marked "Private" on the verso of the second sheet. Polk's AE states that he received this letter on January 13, 1846.

1. A wealthy Nashville lawyer, Craighead served one term as a Democrat in the Tennessee Senate, 1835–37.

2. Located on the east bank of the Mississippi River at Plaquemines Bend, Fort St. Philip guarded the passage to New Orleans.

3. Craighead's reference is to the Memphis Convention of the South and West, held November 12–15, 1845, and chaired by John C. Calhoun. The

convention passed resolutions recommending federal funding for internal improvements in southern and western states.

## TO ANDREW J. DONELSON[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City Jany 5th [1846][2]

I enclose to you herewith a letter from my old Congressional acquaintance, the *Hon. Ralph I. Ingersoll* of Connecticut,[3] whom you met as a member of the Baltimore Convention in May 1844. Your wishes in regard to the object of his letter will be conclusive with me. I do not know the present Secretary of Legation, but understand, he has had some difficulty with *Mr Wheaton*.[4] If he was a proper man, he would be of great use to you, on your arrival, but of this I am unable to speak. Young *Ingersoll*[5] is I have no doubt worthy. He would be an agreeable companion, but without experience or knowledge, in diplomacy, or European manners. How far he may speak, as well as read the French language, I do not know. If there be any other whom you may prefer, you must have no delicacy in making it known to me. For the father of young *Ingersoll*, I have a very great regard, and would be pleased to gratify him if it can be done with propriety. I will probably make the nomination in February, that being the time which you intimated to me, would be agreeable to you. *Mr Wheaton* will expect to remain until the Spring, and that is as early as you could probably leave with convenience.

*Mr Ingersoll* will probably expect an answer from you, which you can make either directly or under cover to me as you may choose. I communicated *very confidentially*, to him, my intentions in regard to yourself. I knew he was entirely trust-worthy and would not disclose the fact to any one.

I am much pressed for time, to write you concerning other matters, as I would be pleased to do. With the respectful salutations of Mrs. Polk and myself to *Mrs. Donelson*[6] ....

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. If *Majr. D.* should be absent from home & this letter should be opened by *Mrs. D.* she will see the propriety of not mentioning its contents to any one. J.K.P.

ALS. DLC–AJD. Addressed to Nashville; marked "*Private*" on the cover and "*Confidential*" below the place and date line.

1. A nephew of Rachel Jackson, Donelson served as private secretary to Andrew Jackson, 1829–37; accepted appointment as chargé d'affaires to Texas

in the fall of 1844; and guided negotiations leading to its annexation in 1845. Donelson later served as U.S. minister to Prussia under Polk.

2. Polk mistakenly dated this letter 1845.

3. A lawyer from New Haven, Conn., Ingersoll twice won election to the state legislature, 1820–25; sat four terms in the U.S. House, 1825–33; and served as U.S. minister to Russia from 1846 until 1848. See Ingersoll's letter to Donelson, January 1, 1846. ALS. DLC–AJD.

4. Theodore S. Fay and Henry Wheaton. An author, Fay served as secretary to the Prussian legation from 1835 until 1853, when he received appointment as resident minister at Berne. A jurist and historian, Wheaton received an appointment as chargé d'affaires to Denmark in 1827, and in 1830 he secured a treaty of indemnity for American ships siezed by Denmark during the Napoleonic period. Wheaton also wrote essays on Danish law and literature along with his *History of the Northmen* and began work on his *History of Scandanavia*. In 1836 Wheaton published *Elements of International Law,* which aided his promotion in 1837 to the post of U.S. minister to Prussia. In 1844 Wheaton negotiated with the German states of the *Zollverein* an agreement providing for the reduction of duties on American tobacco and rice and the free admission of cotton. He also arranged a series of treaties with various German states securing the rights of German emigrants who had become citizens of the United States. Polk recalled Wheaton from Prussia in 1846.

5. A lawyer from New Haven, Conn., Colin M. Ingersoll served as clerk of the state senate in 1843; received appointment as secretary of the Russian legation in 1847; acted as chargé d'affaires in 1848; served two terms in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1851–55; and held the post of adjutant general of Connecticut, from 1867 until 1871.

6. Donelson married his second wife, Elizabeth Martin Randolph, in 1841.

## TO JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Jany 6th [1846][1]

I received some days ago, your letter,[2] enclosing to me a bill of repairs of my house and that of my mother, which I suppose is all right. I wish you to retain *Russell Houston's*[3] notes to me for the rent, and let his sub-tenants, if he desires to have such be accountable to him.

There is another small matter of business, to which I ask your attention. It is this. In the year 1839, *Gov. Wright* of New York, inclosed to me a claim (a receipt I think it was) on a *Dr. Tracy*, then residing, if I remember right near Bigbyville in Maury County.[4] I handed the claim to some one, (but do not now remember to whom) with a request that he would see *Dr. Tracy* on the subject. This was in the spring of 1839, when I was about entering on the canvass for Governor. In

August 1839, I wrote to *Gov. Wright*, that *Dr. Tracy* had not collected on the claim, as I was informed, any thing worth about $17.[5] The matter passed out of my mind, and I have not thought of it since, until my letter to *Gov. Wright* was brought to me, a few days ago. I have now no recollection of the matter, further than I have stated. My impression is, indeed I am very certain of this, that *Gov. Wright* had no personal interest in the matter, but simply enclosed to me the receipt for some friend who held the interest in it,[6] with a request that I would enquire into it. I have an indistinct recollection too, that *Dr. Tracy* held certain promissory notes for which he had given the receipt. I think it possible that I may have handed the receipt on *Dr. Tracy* either to you or *Jonas E. Thomas*,[7] as your friends resided in the neighbourhood of Bigbyville, but of this I have no recollection. Now what I wish you to do, is to inform me, whether *Dr. Tracy* still resides in the neighbourhood of Bigbyville, and if not where he does reside. Did you know him. I feel awkwardly situated about it. I am now written to, concerning the claim, and can give no information about it, further than I have stated which must be unsatisfactory to the claimant. When you have made inquiry, and answered me, I will write to *Gov. Wright* concerning the matter. Was *Dr. Tracy* a man in solvent circumstances? In a word write to me all you know about him.

You see the daily proceedings of Congress, which contain all the political news of interest which I have to communicate.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Polk mistakenly wrote 1845.

2. See Thomas to Polk, December 13, 1845. ALS. DLC–JKP.

3. Houston rented Polk's property in Columbia.

4. Silas Wright, Jr., and Albert G. Tracy. U.S. senator from new York since 1833, Wright backed Martin Van Buren for the 1844 presidential nomination; declined second place on Polk's ticket; won election to the governorship of New York in 1844; and served in that post until 1846. Tracy, a Bigbyville physician, died in 1840. Wright's letter to Polk of March 31, 1839, has not been found.

5. See Polk to Wright, August 28, 1839. L, copy. DLC–JKP.

6. Joseph Ames of Canton, N.Y., is not identified further. See Ames to Preston King, November 13, 1845, and King to Polk, December 13, 1845. ALS. DLC–JKP.

7. A successful lawyer and farmer, Thomas first represented Maury County in the Tennessee House, 1835–41, and then sat for Maury and Giles counties in the Tennessee Senate, 1845–47.

## TO WELCOME FARNUM[1]

Sir: Washington City Jany. 7th 1846

A few days since *Mr Bancroft*[2] presented to me the piece of fine black cloth, which you designed for me. It is of beautiful texture and would do credit to the manufacturing skill of any country. I was gratified as an American to wear on New Year's Day, the suit of clothes made from the product of your looms. I thank you for this mark of your regard, and tender you my cordial good wishes for your prosperity.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Waterford, R.I.

1. A native of Uxbridge, Mass., Farnum established his well-known fine woolen cloth mills at Waterford, R.I., on the Blackstone River with his brother under the name W. and D. D. Farnum. Farnum was married to Lucretia, the sister of George Bancroft.

2. Historian and diplomat, George Bancroft attended universities in Germany from 1818 to 1822. An ardent Jacksonian, he took an energetic part in securing Northern delegate support for Polk's presidential nomination at the 1844 Baltimore convention. Polk appointed him secretary of the navy in 1845 and eighteen months later named him minister to Great Britain. Acquainted with many English and French scholars, Bancroft pursued additional research on his ten-volume *History of the United States,* published between 1834 and 1874, before returning in 1849 to the United States.

## TO WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City Jany. 12th 1846

I wrote to you about the first of November,[2] but have received no answer. In that letter I refered to a conversation which I had held with Genl. Bradley[3] when he was here, in reference to your desire to have one of your sons appointed a Cadet at West Point. I stated to you the embarrassments, under which I was surrounded in reference to this and other appointments, but said to you that it would give me great pleasure to appoint either of your sons a *midshipman in the Navy*, if it was desired. I said to you also, that I would prefer a *midshipman's* warrant, to a Cadet's warrant. I would do so, because in the present state of the country and of the public service I would consider the position of an officer in the Navy more eligible, than that of an officer in the army. The moment a *midshipman* is appointed he commences receiving his pay. He is for the first months of his service placed at the Naval School recently established at Annapolis, where he is instructed by his

senior officers, in all the branches of martial service. Under the belief, that my former letter may have failed to reach you, I now report that vacancies in the Navy are of frequent occurence, and that I can, if it is desired appoint either of your sons a *midshipman* at any time within a few weeks after his wishes shall be made known to me. I believe I mentioned in my letter, that he must not exceed the age of eighteen years. On further inquiry I now say, that he would not be deemed ineligible now though he might exceed that age by a few months. My impression is that neither *James* or *Thomas* can be over eighteen years old.[4] In reference to *West Point* the embarrassments are very great. There are now twenty eight states, and of the *ten* at large to be selected by the Secretary of War or the President, no two could be taken from the same state, without producing extensive dissatisfaction, and even violent assaults on the administration. There are numerous applications on file from almost every state in the Union. Add to this that many members of Congress are pressing the claims of their constituents, their friends or the[ir] sons and relatives. I most heartily wish, that I had no patronage to dispense. It gives me the chief trouble which I have.

In regard to yourself I expressed myself fully in my former letter. It cannot require any assurances from me to satisfy you of my friendship and regard, and I am sure it will give me sincere pleasure to give you substantial evidence of it, whenever it shall be possibly in my power to do so with propriety. You are the only man living to whom I have expressed myself thus unreservedly. I doubt not something may occur, and I hope before long, which may enable me, to do as I desire. The army will probably be increased, to protect our emigrants to *Oregon*, but in that remote service and at your time of life, it is not such a situation, requiring you as it would to be separated from your family as would suit you. All I can now say is, that I have every disposition to serve you, and will take the first opportunity to do so, when it can be done with propriety.

Congress has been in session six weeks, but as is usual at the commencement of a long session but little business of importance has been transacted. Except the admission of *Texas* as one of the states of our Union, no measure of importance has been consummated. The *Oregon* question you see is under full debate in the House, and is not likely to be brought to a close for some weeks to come. In the Senate the question will not probably be brought up, until after the next arrival from England, which may be expected about the 20th Instant. The probability now is, that the *notice* to abrogate the Treaty of 1827,[5] will pass the House by a large majority. It will probably pass the Senate also, but by a close vote. Thus far in the session there has been less

acrimony, or bitterness of party feeling, than has been known to exist, for many years past. It is not to be expected that this state of things will continue throughout the session.

I find the Presidential office no sinecure. I have not been absent from the City, a single day since the 4th of March last. My labours & responsibilities are very great, but I am in the enjoyment of good health & bear them well.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Williamson County and marked "*Private*."

1. A resident of Williamson County and a cousin to Sarah Childress Polk, Childress served one term as a Democratic member of the Tennessee House, 1835–37, and ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. House in 1839.

2. See Polk to Childress, November 1, 1845.

3. A Williamson County Democrat, Thomas H. Bradley held the rank of major general in the Tennessee militia.

4. Polk refers to William James and Thomas B. Childress, twin sons of William G. and Mary Berkley Childress.

5. By the Convention of 1818 the United States and Great Britain agreed to the joint occupation of the Oregon country west of the Rocky Mountains; in 1827 the two governments agreed to continue that arrangement until such time as either party might terminate the joint occupancy upon giving one year's advance notice.

## TO EZEKIEL P. McNEAL[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City Jany. 12th 1846

Since I left Tennessee a Decree has been rendered in the Chancery Court at Columbia, against the Heirs of my brother *Marshall T. Polk, deceased*,[2] of whom I am guardian, for between three & four hundred Dollars, which must be paid before the next term of the Court, which will sit on the first Monday in March. If you have collected or may collect any portion of the rents due for last year to the Heirs of *M. T. Polk, decd.*, I desire that you will remit the amount in a draft on one of the Tennessee Banks to *James H. Thomas Esqr.* of Columbia Tennessee & inform him, that it is done at my request, & that it is to be applied towards the payment of the Decree in favour of *Gregory's Heirs*,[3] against *M. T. Polk's Heirs*. I will thank you to inform me of the amount which you may be enabled to remit to *Mr Thomas*, that I may know the balance which I must send to him.

Congress has been in session six weeks, but as is usual at the commencement of a long session, but little business of importance has been

done. Except the admission of *Texas* as one of the states of the Union, no measure of importance has been consummated.

Thus far in the session there has been less acrimony and bitterness of party spirit, than has been known in Congress, for many years past. It is scarcely reasonable to expect, that this state of things will continue throughout the session.

Will you make the kind regards of *Mrs. Polk* and myself to *Mrs. McNeal* and your mother.[4]

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I find the Presidential office no sinecure. I have not been absent from the City a single day since the 4th of March last. My labours as well as responsibilities are very great, but I am in the enjoyment of good health & bear them well. J. K. P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Bolivar, Tenn.

1. A first cousin to Polk and a Bolivar merchant and land agent, McNeal handled Polk's business affairs in Hardeman County.

2. Polk was the executor of the estate of his brother, Marshall T. Polk, who died in 1831 and was survived by his wife Laura Wilson and two children, Roxanna Eunice Ophelia and Marshall Tate, Jr.

3. Thomas Gregory's estate contained land purchased from Marshall T. Polk, which later proved smaller than originally contracted. See James H. Thomas to Polk, October 1, 1845. ALS. DLC–JKP.

4. Anne Williams McNeal and Clarissa Polk McNeal.

## TO JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Jany. 12th 1846

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st Instant, enclosing a Receipt from my mother for $70.98, as part of her legacy under the *will* of Samuel W. Polk, deceased.[1] I thank you for your attention to the old lady. Should she at any [time] want small sums of money as she may, I desire that you will furnish it to her, and I will arrange it with you on our settlement. Her wants are not great but whatever they are I desire that they shall be supplied. I am entirely satisfied that *Matilda* & *Elias* remain where they were last year,[2] and hope you may be able to rent out my store-house. I had paid *David Campbell*[3] before I left home to put a new roof on it. He was to furnish shingles and also materials, and I suppose he recovered it, according to his contract.

Majr. *Ezekiel P. McNeal* of Bolivar has the management of the lands of the Heirs of my brother Marshall T. Polk, deceased, rents them out and collects the rents annually. If he has made collections for last year

he has now in his hands between $250 & $350. I have written to him to day, to remit the amount whatever it may be, to you, to be applied to the payment of the Decree in the Chancery Court go in favour of Gregory's Estate against the Heirs of M. T. Polk, deceased. Whatever the balance may be I will remit to you before the term of the Court in March. When you pay off the Decree, take a receipt in such form that it will be a voucher to me, on settlement as guardian of M. T. Polk's Heirs. As soon as I can learn from *Majr. McNeal*, the amount which he has collected and will remit to you, I will send you the balance.

Congress has been in session six weeks, but as is usual at the commencement of a long session, have done but little business of importance. Except the admission of *Texas* as one of the states of the Union, no important measure, has as yet been consummated. The *Oregon* debate as you will see from the newspapers is progressing in the House, and will probably not be brought to a close for some weeks to come. It is the exciting topic of the session, and every speaking member will desire to be heard on the subject. In the Senate the debate will probably be postponed for some days to come, probably until after the next arrival from England, that it may be known how the message has been received on the other side of the Atlantic. The Steamer which would sail from Liverpool on the 4th Instant will be due about the 20th Instant.

Thus far, in the session, there has been less acrimony or bitterness of party spirit, than has been known in Congress, for many years past. How long this state of things may continue it is impossible to tell.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Polk became the executor of his youngest brother's estate upon the latter's death in 1839 at age twenty-one.
2. Polk rented his slaves to local employers.
3. Not identified further.

## TO SAM HOUSTON[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City Jany. 13th 1846

I have this day transmitted to *President Jones*,[2] an authenticated copy of An Act of Congress, entitled "An Act to establish a collection District in the State of Texas, and for other purposes." By this act Galveston is made a Port of Entry, for which a collector is directed to be appointed, and to which is annexed *Sabine*, *Velasco*, *Matagorda*, *Cavallo*, *La Vaca*, & *Corpus Christi* as Ports of delivery, and for each of which a surveyor of the customs is directed to be appointed.

Immediately after the passage of the Act I nominated *James H. Cocke* as collector at Galveston, and for surveyors *Robert S. Herndon* at Velasco; *Alexander Somerville* at Cavallo; *Galen Hodges* at Matagorda, *W. C. V. Dashiel* at Sabine; *George M. Collinsworth* at Corpus Christi, and *A. G. W. Davis* at La Vaca.[3] All as I understand except *Mr Davis* were the present custom House officers, under the Government of Texas. The name of the custom House officer at La Vaca, could not be ascertained, and therefore I recommended *Mr Davis*. I avowed to several persons at the time of making these nominations, that I had very limited information upon which to make them, but that if I discovered that I had committed any mistake, or appointed an improper person, that I would correct it, but appointing some other, as soon as I could hear from Texas, and ascertain the fact, or the wishes of your citizens. I avowed to them that all the appointments might be regarded as temporary, to be continued or not, as the information which I might subsequently receive might make proper. To my surprise, certain persons from Texas now in this City, immediately on learning the nominations I had made, preferred charges & objections against *Mr Cocke*, to the committee of the Senate, to whom the nominations were refered. The chairman of the committee[4] called on me, and informed me that unless these charges and objections were refuted, *Mr Cocke* would probably be rejected. This I had no means of doing. Under the circumstances I thought it proper to withdraw *Mr Cocke's* nomination, which I did, and nominated in his place *Hiram G. Runnels*,[5] who has been confirmed and is now the collector at Galveston. I thought it proper to inform you, of these facts. The other nominations have not yet been acted on by the Senate. If I have committed any error, I shall have it in my power to correct it, as soon as Texas is represented in Congress, or I can obtain satisfactory information from other sources.

An Act has also passed extending our judicial system over Texas, but as the Judge to be appointed will hold his office for life, I am unwilling to make the nomination with my limited information. I hope soon to hear from yourself & others in Texas on the subject. I desire to appoint some able lawyer, who is sound upon all the constitutional questions, according to the Jeffersonian faith. I will not, if I know it, appoint any latitudinarian Federalist to the Federal Judiciary.

It is My Dear Sir, very important that your State Government, should organize and elect Senators to Congress at the earliest practicable period. Until the new State is represented here, we must be, to a great extent ignorant of your men, of your local interests, and the wishes of your people. I hope therefore that your Senators will be chosen as soon as your Legislature convenes, and that they should come

on without delay. It is very important that they should do so. It will give me sincere pleasure I assure you to greet you as one of them. Your Senators can come on immediately without waiting for the election of your Representatives, which will require more time. I write you this letter in haste, mainly to say to you, and to explain, the reasons, for the appointments which I have made.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Marked "*Private*."

1. Houston, a former governor of Tennessee, won election to two terms as president of the Republic of Texas, 1836–38 and 1841–44. After Texas' annexation to the United States, he served as U.S. Senator from Texas, 1846–59, and as governor, 1859–61.

2. Anson Jones, a physician, served Texas as a member of Congress; as secretary of state, 1841–44; and as its last president, 1844–45.

3. A Maryland native, Alexander Somervell removed to Texas in 1833; served as an officer in the Texas army; and attained the rank of brigadier general in 1839. President Sam Houston ordered Somervell to lead a retaliatory expedition against Mexican forces in 1842. A Mississippi native, Collinsworth participated in the Goliad Campaign of 1835 and served as a customs officer for various districts of the Texas Republic. A Rhode Island native, Hodges held many civil positions in Matagorda County. Cocke, Herndon, Dashiel, and Davis are not identified further.

4. William H. Haywood, Jr., served several terms in the North Carolina House prior to his election as a Democrat to the U.S. Senate in 1843; he resigned from his seat in 1846 rather than obey unacceptable instructions from the state legislature. Haywood chaired the Senate Commerce Committee.

5. A Georgia native, Runnels served as state auditor, state representative from Hinds County, and governor of Mississippi before removing to Texas in 1842. He represented Brazoria County in the Texas Convention of 1845.

## FROM JOSEPH W. CHALMERS AND JESSE SPEIGHT[1]

Sir Washington 14th Jny 1846

The nomination of James H. Tait[2] one of our constituents for consol at Buenos Ayres, was made by you upon the very strongest recommendations, which we esteem were well deserved.

We regret to inform you that the confirmation of his appointment has been opposed upon grounds which can only be explained by Dr. Tait himself, and under such circumstances we would most respectfully advise you to withdraw his nomination for the present.

JOS. W. CHALMERS
J. SPEIGHT

LS. DLC–JKP. Letter in Chalmers' hand. Delivered by Robert J. Walker on January 15, 1846.

1. A former resident of Jackson, Tenn., Chalmers moved in 1838 to Holly Springs, Miss., where he practiced law and served as vice-chancellor for the northern part of the state. A Democrat, he represented Mississippi in the U.S. Senate from 1845 to 1847. A native of North Carolina, Speight served in the North Carolina legislature during the 1820's and in the U.S. House from 1829 until 1837; he moved to Lowndes County, Miss., and in 1840 won a seat in the state legislature; he served twice as president of the Mississippi Senate, 1842 and 1844; and in 1844 he won election to the U.S. Senate, where he served until his death in 1847.

2. Polk nominated James H. Tate, a physician from Lowndes County, Miss., to be U.S. consul to Buenos Ayres in December 1845. Tate gained Senate confirmation in April of 1846 and resigned the post later in the year.

## FROM ALFRED BALCH[1]

Dear Sir, Nashville 15th January 1846

The Legislature will adjourn in about two weeks from this time. On the second day after it first met I perceived that the Whigs would have *in effect* a majority throughout the session. The proprietor of the Union formed a partnership with the Banner and Whig to divide the job printing![2] Divers selfish aspirants to office in our ranks set upon Graham[3] (as our strongest candidate for the Comptrollership and who would have been elected) to drive him out of the canvass. I advised him to retire and he did so in utter disgust. This gave Gordon the power to re-elect Zollicoffer which he did do notwithstanding his holy horror at Turneys treason![4] Yesterday Allen Hall & Barrow[5] were elected public printers. The Union got its reward for its treachery and Crozier Gaskill &c were put to the route![6] Four of Turneys followers secured the victory to the Whigs.[7] Reynolds was defeated by the villainy of Tom Black and one or two others and drunken Bob Anderson was re-elected Judge.[8] Were it not for the dispute about Oregon our party would fall into a state of dissolution. This contest holds us together with fair prospects of an accession to our numbers should serious fears be entertained of an open rupture.

I wish that Ritchie[9] could lay his hands upon a young man of pure morals good education sound judgt and political principles and engage him to edit the Union of this place. This man ought to be made to swear that he will not be a candidate for *any* office; for, an *aspiring* Editor is not fit to edit a paper printed in [....][10] Mr Nicholson intends to retire and I rejoice at this determination which he has reached at last. In the Union of Tuesday he comes out against the course which

Calhoun has taken on the Oregon controversy of consequence in favor of Hannegans ill-advised resolutions.[11] All this is owing to Mr Ns predilections for Cass[12] which were obscurely developed here on a certain occasion before the nomination of the Baltimore Convention, and which *you* may remember.

During the present session of Congress there will be a schism in our party, but your course in my humble opinion is as plain as the path of the sun through the Heavens!

Our Govr[13] takes matters with great equanimity. He comes in almost every day from his country place accompanied sometimes by his "cara sposa"[14] who bows to Whigs and Democrats to her right and left most condescendingly as she is borne along our streets in her carriage of state, drawn by her Bob-tail bays of purest Andalusian blood!

I could write you somethings that might amuse you but I know that you have not time to read them and I am sorry for it for they are spicy.

With respects to Madame ....[15]

ALFRED BALCH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on January 22, 1846.

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

2. Balch mistakenly refers to the *Nashville Union* twice in this paragraph. J. C. Brassfield, publisher of the Democratic Shelbyville *Free Press*, joined with four Whig newspapers, the *Nashville Whig*, Nashville *Republican Banner*, *Columbia Observer* and *Knoxville Register*, to win the public printing contract.

3. A resident of Murfreesboro, Daniel Graham became Tennessee's secretary of state in 1818 and served until 1830; in 1836 he moved to the post of state comptroller and served seven years.

4. Powhatan Gordon, Felix K. Zollicoffer, and Hopkins L. Turney. Gordon represented Maury County as a Democrat in the Tennessee House for two terms, 1843–47, and ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. House on the American party ticket in 1855. A prominent Nashville Whig and husband to Louisa Pocahontas Gordon, Zollicoffer served as adjutant general of Tennessee, 1841–43; comptroller of Tennessee, 1843–49; Tennessee senator, 1849–51; and U.S. congressman, 1853–59. Commissioned a brigadier general for the Confederacy, he was killed in battle early in the Civil War. Balch's "treason" reference is to Turney's election to the U.S. Senate with Whig votes.

5. Allen A. Hall and Washington Barrow. A native of North Carolina and resident of Nashville, Hall served as chargé d'affaires to Venezuela, 1841–45; as assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury, 1849–50; and as U.S. minister to Bolivia, 1863–67. In addition to his diplomatic duties, Hall edited and published several Nashville newspapers including the *Republican Banner*, the

*Nashville Whig*, and the *Nashville News*. A lawyer from Tennessee and briefly a resident of Mississippi, Barrow served as U.S. chargé d'affaires to Portugal, 1841–44; edited the Nashville *Republican Banner*, 1845–47; and won election to one term in the U.S. House as a Whig, 1847–49.

6. Arthur R. Crozier and D. C. Gaskill. Crozier served as editor of the *Knoxville Standard* in 1845; as marshal for the eastern district of Tennessee, 1845–49; and as comptroller of Tennessee from 1851 to 1855. Gaskill published and edited the Gallatin *Union* in 1845. Their newspapers, along with with the *Nashville Union* and Trenton *True American*, represented the losing Democratic bid for the public printing contract.

7. Samuel Turney, Henry Turney, John D. Fletcher, and Thomas H. Garner. A White County lawyer, Samuel Turney served as a Democrat in the Tennessee House, 1839–35; in the Tennessee Senate as a Democrat, 1839–47, and as a Native American, 1855–57; and in the Tennessee Confederate Senate, 1861–63. A Lincoln County Democrat, Henry Turney served two terms in the Tennessee House, 1843–47. A farmer and Democrat, Fletcher sat for Rutherford County in the Tennessee House, 1839–43, and for Franklin and Lincoln counties in the Senate, 1845–47. A farmer and Democrat, Garner represented Franklin County in the Tennessee House, 1843–47.

8. Robert B. Reynolds, Thomas Black, and Robert M. Anderson. A lawyer and key member of the Knoxville Democratic Central Committee, Reynolds served as attorney general for Tennessee's Second Judicial District from 1839 until 1845. A Bedford County farmer and Democrat, Black served four terms in the Tennessee House, 1839–47. Anderson, a native of Virginia, represented Knox and Anderson counties in the Tennessee Senate, 1831–33. An unsuccessful candidate for Congress in 1837, he was appointed in that year judge of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit and served in that post from 1837 until 1854.

9. Editor of the *Richmond Enquirer* from 1804 until 1845, Thomas Ritchie served unofficially as political manager of the Virginia Democracy. He formed a partnership with John P. Heiss of Nashville and purchased the Washington *Globe* from Francis P. Blair and John C. Rives on April 12, 1845. Ritchie changed the newspaper's name to that of the Washington *Union* and issued his first number on April 14th.

10. Two words illegible.

11. An Indiana lawyer, Edward A. Hannegan served in the state legislature; in the U.S. House, 1833–37; and in the U.S. Senate, 1843–49. From March 1849 until January 1850, he was U.S. minister to Prussia. Hannegan and Calhoun clashed over a Senate Resolution giving notice to Great Britain of the United States' decision to terminate the joint occupation of Oregon. Hannegan proposed an amendment defending the U.S. claim to the entire Territory; Calhoun countered with a substitute amendment urging a renewed negotiation based on the 49th parallel.

12. Lewis Cass, presidential nominee of the Democracy in 1848, served as governor of the Michigan Territory, 1813–31; U.S. secretary of war, 1831–36; U.S. minister to France, 1836–42; U.S. senator from Michigan, 1845–48 and 1851–57; and U.S. secretary of state, 1857–60.

13. Polk's former law partner and close friend from Pulaski, Aaron V. Brown served in the Tennessee Senate and House, 1821–33, in the U.S. House, 1839–45, and in the Tennessee governorship, 1845–47. From 1857 until his death in 1859, Brown held the post of postmaster general in the administration of James Buchanan.

14. Balch's reference is to Cynthia Pillow Saunders Brown, the governor's "dear wife."

15. Sarah C. Polk.

## FROM ADAM HUNTSMAN[1]

Dear Sir Jackson Ten Jany 15th 1846

In fomer times we had occassionally a confidential correspondance, knowing the ardent duties now devolved upon, you, I have ceased writing, not that I have less regard, but more mercy for you than formerly for I expect you are weighted down with correspondance without any addition from me. But there is one subject my Dear Sir that you must lend all the energies and influence you have to get out of your way. I mean the *Tariff*. It is true that the argument in your Message is a better one than I ever heard you make on the Stump in its favour and it is equally true that even the whigs here have been constrained to acknowledge that you have come up to all your promises and they further admit that the other positions taken in the Message are right in the main, Yet I discover they are bottling up all their wrath against a reduction of the Tariff. It is their dernier resort, their forlorn hope. Texas is in, Oregon & California follows as natural as the apple falls from the tree at its maturity. The Bank is obsolete, distributions beyond the day of resurrection, and it requires but little political sagacity to see that the whole whig artillery will be concentrated to this one point. It is to be a waterloo, defeat to one side or the other. If the democrats fail to carry this measure it will be extremely disastrous to them at the next election. If the whigs loose it the last remaining piller that supports their tottering edifice is overthrown, they will be anihilated & will rub out the name of whig and begin a new under some other. Therefore I suggest with due respect and great deference to your better opinion, that not only the Justice of the measure but the policy if the democratic cause requires this to be made a party measure if there be no other one at this session of Congress. It is the greatest difficulty I see in your path. Extricate yourself from it as quick as possible. As you have been, or will be, successful in most, if not all the measures of moment of your Administration let not this one swamp you which is the greatest of all.

I have said enough upon this subject. We do not believe in the oregon war here, nor do we care one copper if it comes, I discover there is no whiggery or democracy about that, they are all Americans & ready for a frolic, and talk of it in that way rather than as a fight.

But I must conclude by wishing you success in your administration as well as health to You & Mrs Polk.

A. HUNTSMAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover reads, "The importance of settling the tariff."

1. Born in Virginia, Huntsman had moved by 1809 to Overton County, where he practiced law and engaged in extensive land speculations until 1821. He sat three terms for Overton County in the Tennessee Senate, 1815–21, and later represented Madison County in the Senate for two terms, 1827–31. A loyal Jacksonian Democrat, he defeated David Crockett for a seat in Congress and served one term in the U.S. House, 1835–37.

## FROM WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, JR.

Dear Sir [Washington City, January 16, 1846][1]

Annexed are 4 forms. I like the 2nd best. That is shortest. It supercedes the necessity of conferring with Miss' Senators[2] at all. The only object should be to place upon record such an *averment* as will exclude the inference from the Journal as it now stands that you had a sinister design.[3] It should be done shortly, without argument & without proof & without reasons. The *single word* of the Prest should be assumed by him as it will be admitted by others to be a sufficient verification of a fact. His *ipse dixit*[4] on such a point sufficeth. I strongly incline to think that a reference to the letter as in No 3, & it is certain the letter itself as in No 4 would be a *tender* of *evidence* that what your communication *affirms*, is true. To be sure it is very conclusive proof. But is it consistent with the dignity of a *President* to prove his explanation? It is no *contest* of yours but a bare explanation, nothing more. Should you concur in this either No 1, or No 2 will be taken as a form of the letter of nomination.

In such a case you might if you choose deposit the *letter* of C & S[5] with me to be used in my descretion in the Senate or out of it to stop the mouth of any gainsayer. Should you do that it would be imprudint to let any one know I had it in my possession for any purpose.

Depend upon it I will be true & faithful to your reputation & feelings. But if you mean to consult with *any one* who has had or may have an interest in this tangled little thing do not do it until you are upon the eve of starting off your Secy[6] with the new nomination. If it gets out

that you are conselling & deliberating upon such a subject too much consequence will be attached to it & no good will come of it. "Thine as ever."

W. H. H. JR.

[Addendum] I nominate A.B. of _____ to be Consul at _____ in place of J. H. T. who was appointed in the recess in place of C.D., recalled and whose nomination to the Senate was withdrawn on Jan 1846.

1st James H Tates nomination was withdrawn before I had any knowledge or information directly or indirectly of the resolution that was pending before the Senate in relation to it. This fact I feel it to be my duty to state in connexion with this nomination.

or this:

2nd I think it is my duty to state the fact that James H. Tate's nomination was withdrawn before I had any knowledge or information, directly or indirectly, of the Resolution that was pending before the Senate in relation to it.

or this:

3rd James H T's nomination was withdrawn in consequence of an application by the Senators from Missie. made to me by a written communication which was rec'd on 15 Jan 1846 but I had no knowledge at the time of my withdrawal of that nomination that any Resolution had been moved or was pending before the Senate in relation to it.

or this:

4th James H Tates nomination was withdrawn solely in consequence of a written request by the Senators from Misse. which accompanies this communication. But I had no knowledge that any resolution had been moved or was pending before the Senate in relation to that nomination when it was withdrawn by me.

ALI. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover reads as follows: "Hon. Wm. H. Haywood Senator from N.C. Relates to the manner of re-nomination of James H. Tate, who had been withdrawn on the joint written request of two Senators from Mississippi. Recd. January 1846."

1. Place and date of letter determined by content analysis.

2. Joseph W. Chalmers and Jesse Speight.

3. On January 15, 1846, Polk withdrew the nomination of James H. Tate as consul to Buenos Ayres. At that time Polk was unaware that a resolution introduced on January 13 was pending before the Senate. That resolution requested that Robert J. Walker reply to a letter from Jacob Thompson opposing Tate's confirmation.

4. Latin for "he himself said it."

5. Chalmers and Speight to Polk, January 14, 1846.

6. Joseph Knox Walker, a Yale College graduate, served as private secretary to Polk during his presidency. Walker subsequently practiced law in Memphis and represented Shelby and Fayette counties as a Democrat in the Tennessee Senate from 1857 until 1859.

## FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Columbia, Tenn. January 17, 1846

Campbell provides a statement of receipts and expenditures from Polk's Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation for 1845. He explains that he did not completely settle the accounts due to his wife's[1] sudden serious illness: "I have lost all hopes of her recovery altho she may linger for years. Oh! Coz James I never knew what trouble was before." Campbell believes that John A. Mairs is "one of the best Overseers I ever saw." Campbell offers to buy Polk's plantation, "Lock stock & Barrel as the saying is." He will pay $10,000 on March 1, 1847, and the balance in three annual installments thereafter. He mentions that one of the slave cabins has burned, destroying the slaves' clothing and bedding, and that he has instructed Mairs to buy replacements as soon as possible. Campbell also notes that he has failed to find a buyer for Polk's property in Maury County, and that Polk's farm renters have failed to pay. In his postscript, Campbell promises to keep Polk fully apprised of his plantation interests.

ROBT. CAMPBELL JNR.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on January 25, 1846, and answered it on January 31, 1846.

1. Campbell married his second cousin, Elizabeth Polk, with whom he had eight children. Campbell and Polk were first cousins.

## FROM JOSEPH W. CHALMERS AND JESSE SPEIGHT

Sir Washington 17th Jany 1846

At the time we advised you to withdraw the nomination of Dr. Jas. H. Tate[1] it had not occured to us that there was a resolution pending to call upon the Honl R. J. Walker[2] for further testimony in this matter, nor had we stated this fact to any one out of the Senate.

The charge upon which it was expected to defeat the nomination was conversations alledged to have taken place between Mr. Thompson[3] & Dr. Tate when no one was present but these two gentlemen, and as

such a charge could only be answered or explained by Dr. Tait himself we thought it proper to advise the withdrawal of his nomination.

JOS. W. CALMERS
J. SPEIGHT

LS. DLC–JKP. Letter in Chalmers' hand. Delivered by Robert J. Walker on January 18, 1846.

1. See Chalmers and Speight to Polk, January 14, 1846.

2. A Pennsylvania native, Robert J. Walker moved to Natchez, Miss., in 1826 and practiced law. He served in the U.S. Senate from 1835 until 1845, when he became Polk's secretary of the Treasury. Subsequently, he served as governor of the Kansas Territory and as U.S. financial agent in Europe during the Civil War.

3. A Mississippi lawyer, Jacob Thompson served six terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1839–51. He subsequently served as secretary of the interior during the administration of James Buchanan, 1857–61.

## FROM LOUIS MCLANE[1]

Dear Sir, London Jan. 17. 1846

The Massachusetts, rather a fast sailer, will leave tomorrow, and although it is quite possible she may not arrive until after the next steamer, I think it best, nevertheless, to take the risk of better speed, and, by her, to acknowledge the receipt of your private letter of the 29th,[2] and to add one or two newspapers and a few observations of my own which may not be altogether uninteresting.

I return you my sincere thanks for your letter; and am exceedingly gratified at the treatment given my nomination by the Senate; and as to the period of my return, I am quite content to leave it upon the observations in your letter. I must at the same time, frankly add that, at present, I do not very clearly see how my presence here is to be of much importance in the settlement of the oregon question. Up to this time, in moderating the views of this government, and in predisposing it to a settlement upon a reasonable basis my exertions have not been without effect; but it will be obvious to you that the inequality between my position and the official responsibility of the Minister here[3] is too great to allow me to do much in the present posture of the affair. *He* of course would be too much constrained for that.

In the opinion that, by the adoption of judicious management, this government might be brought to adopt the 49th parallel as the basis of negotiation, and be content with such modifications as would concede the advantages, of which we spoke, in the Straits of Fuca; especially with some extension of the period within which the Hudson's Bay

Company might enjoy their present advantages of trapping and navigation I am not in the least shaken. And I believe, moreover, unless the proceedings in Congress should be such as to rouse a high temper here, that I could, by official or unofficial interference in this quarter, lead to the offer of a proposition which, certainly with the advice of the Senate, you might assent to. But it is quite clear that I have no right to attempt this or at present advised.

I feel a proud consciousness that no one can ever doubt my patriotism, or suspect me in the remotest degree, of favoring the pretensions of a Foreign government in its relations with my own country; and without such consciousness no man would be a very fit agent in the crisis in which our relations with this country are at present placed. I am quite convinced too that our *title* to the whole of oregon is "clear and unquestionable," and that, by the recent discussions with Mr. Packenham,[4] it is more clear to the comprehension of all; and yet I am equally satisfied in my own mind, that the question is not one of *title*, but of *compromise*, and that for the sake of preserving the peace of the world, both nations should be prepared to make reasonable concessions.

I think it ought, indeed that it must, have been in the contemplation of those who made the Treaties of joint occupation in 1818 and 1828, that interests on both sides would grow up during the joint occupancy, and that in the event of a partition would require to be taken care of in some way or other, and that after a lapse of twenty years neither nation could boldly expel the other without some protection of their interests, without a fight. Therefore, I have always supposed that when the time for partition arrived the great question would be as to the equivalent in *land* or *time*, or in some other way that could be honorably given to the interests to be expelled or destroyed by the partition. I do not mean to say that this is legally so; but that it is an equitable consideration, and in a case to be adjusted by compromise to avoid war, that it may be fairly allowed its due might without impeachment of the national honor of the government yielding to it. In this case I am inclined to believe that Great Britain would consider the free navigation of the Columbia for a certain number of years a sufficient equivalent for the 49th parallel; *or* free ports on the Straits of Fuca, and with the whole of Vancouver's Island I suppose it could hardly be doubted, that she would adopt the naked 49th without equivalent; or without any other escape from what she deems a commitment of her honor I have not the least reason to believe.

There is among the commercial and manufacturing classes here a strong disinclination to war, and they would I have no doubt discourage

it for any thing beyond the 49th. I have heard too, and not from a bad source, though it is to be taken only at the value of rumour in a respectable circle, that during his attempt to form a ministry Lord John Russel stated to Sir Robert Peel that *he*, when in the Government, would settle oregon upon the basis of the 49th and that he considered peace with the U.S. indispensable.[5] Indeed, I have no doubt that at present this is the general feeling & opinion here; though it is quite possible that both may be changed and led in to a different direction. The sentiments of Genl. *Cass* in the Senate, if adopted generally by the Public, and the principles of Mr. Douglas's Bill if likely to be carried out by Congress would effect such change.[6]

I have not been able to see Lord Aberdeen since the intelligence by the Acadia, and, therefore, cannot say what effect the accounts forwarded by Mr Packenham have produced, so far as it regards the rejection of the offer of arbitration. However, the effects of that will, I am quite sure, depend upon the grounds & manner of rejection as stated in my former letters; and as I do not know all the grounds upon which it has been rejected, I cannot, of course, speak of the effect here until I see Lord Aberdeen. Believing the difficulty capable of adjustment upon the basis of the 49th with modifications not more objectionable than I have indicated; and being quite willing myself to see an adjustment of that kind, and to assume the utmost responsibility in bringing it about, I only hope that the offer of arbitration may not have been rejected in such terms as to interpose new obstacles in the way of resuming the negotiation, on the part of this government.

I take the liberty of sending by this opportunity several newspapers, containing articles on the subject of our relations with this Government which deserve your particular attention and that of the Secretary of State.[7] The article in the Standard of last night, and in the *Times* of this morning will give you the impressions made upon the business class by the news brought by the Acadia. The Times is more Judicious, and would have from it the positive annunciation of the offer of arbitration which you will see in the close of the article, to have proceeded from *authority*. In this view, and from the fact of its being a deliberate repetition of the notion of adopting Mr. Galatin's proposition,[8] it may be regarded as significant. It is however, a palpable misquotation of Mr. Galatin's proposition; but does not on that account afford a less indication of the elements which this government desire to bring into the negotiation. I repeat that these elements would be greatly modified, if so managed as to allow G.B. a decent escape on the ground of honor.

I ought, perhaps, not to omit on this occasion to state that the part of the Message which has produced the greatest sensation abroad, not excepting perhaps the strictures upon oregon, is that repeating the declaration of Mr Monroe respecting European colonization upon the American continent. It need not surprise you to discover, at no distant day, that a favorite scheme with the leading Powers of Europe is to *compose* the *Mexican* troubles by giving her a settled monarchical form of government, and supplying the monarch from one of their own families. So far as the hope of consummating this scheme may be entertained by anyone it will be used to inspire opposition to the Message, and to bring other governments upon the continent, to sympathize with G.B. in her dispute with us in regard to oregon. The extent of this feeling in France, Col King[9] has no doubt acquainted you with. I confess I found it to exist in a greater degree than I could possibly have supposed; and I think you may fairly expect that in case of war with England, we shall have to encounter any opposition from the *government* of *France* that the popular will may allow; and upon the strength of that popular will, in opposition to the *present* government, I have no great reliance.

I am afraid, Sir, that you will not excuse me for so long a letter, especially without greater pains to make it more readable. It nevertheless seemed to be my duty to acquaint you with the facts & sentiments it contains, and very readable writing is not one of my accomplishments. However I hope it will pass under your own eye only, or at most that of Mr. Buchanan. I trust I may not be afraid of the criticism it will undergo.

Mrs. McL.[10] unites with me in respectful regards to Mrs Polk ....

LOUIS MCLANE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Private & Unofficial*." Polk's AE on the cover reads in part as follows: "Recd. March 7th 1846. Contains important and interesting views in regards to the relations of the U.S. with Great Britain, and particularly on the Oregon question."

1. A lawyer and Democrat, McLane served five terms in the U.S. House, 1817–27, before winning election to the U.S. Senate in 1827. He served twice as minister to Great Britain, 1829–31 and 1845–46; as secretary of the Treasury, 1831–33; and as secretary of state, 1833–34. After his resignation from the Cabinet, McLane became president of the Morris Canal and Banking Company in New York; in 1837 he moved to Baltimore to become president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company.

2. See Polk to McLane, December 29, 1845. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

3. A native of Scotland, George Hamilton-Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen, was raised to the peerage of the United Kingdom in 1814; served as chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, twice as foreign secretary, and as secretary for war

and colonies in the government of Sir Robert Peel; after 1846, he became the Peelite leader of the opposition in the House of Lords and subsequently formed a coalition government of Whigs and Peelites that lasted from 1852 until 1855.

4. McLane's reference is to the published correspondence between James Buchanan and Sir Richard Pakenham regarding settlement of the Oregon question. A career diplomat, Pakenham served as British minister to Mexico, 1835–43; to the United States, 1843–47; and to Portugal, 1851–55.

5. Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel. A member of the British House of Commons from 1813–55 and 1859–68, Russell served as prime minister from 1846 until 1851 and from 1865 to 1866. Prior to taking the reins of government Russell had proven himself an outspoken proponent for the repeal of the Test and Corporation acts and played a key role in the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832. He was raised to the peerage in 1861 as the 1st Earl Russell. Son of an industrialist, Peel began his service in Parliament in 1809; received his first ministerial appointment in 1828; and served as home secretary and chancellor of the Exchequer before becoming prime minister in 1841. His ministry lasted five years.

6. Lewis Cass made a speech in the Senate on December 15, 1845, urging stronger military preparedness in case of war with Great Britain. Stephen A. Douglas introduced House Resolution No. 7 on December 19, 1845, which provided for creating two regiments of mounted troops to protect Americans in Oregon, extending American government over Americans in the Territory, and advising the president to give notice to terminate joint occupation. An Illinois teacher and lawyer, Douglas served as a member of the Illinois House, 1836–37; as Illinois secretary of state, 1840–41; and as a judge on the state's highest appellate court. He went to the U.S. House as a Democrat for two terms, 1843–47, before winning election in 1847 to the first of three terms in the U.S. Senate. Northern Democrats nominated him for the presidency in 1860.

7. Enclosures for Polk and James Buchanan not found. McLane's references are to the London *Standard* and London *Times*. In a January 17, 1846, editorial, the *Times* claimed that Albert Gallatin had offered the 49th parallel as the boundary, reserving Vancouver's Island and the harbor of St. Juan de Fuca entirely to the British as well as free navigation of the Columbia River.

8. Albert Gallatin, a major figure in the early Jeffersonian party, served as a member of the U.S. House, 1795–1801; as secretary of the Treasury, 1802–14; and as minister first to France, 1816–23, and then to Great Britain, 1826–27. While minister to Britain, Gallatin negotiated an extension of the joint occupation agreement and the provision for one-year's advance notice for unilateral termination.

9. William Rufus King served as U.S. senator from Alabama, 1819–44 and 1848–53, and as U.S. minister to France, 1844–46. Elected vice-president of the United States in 1852, he took the oath of office in Cuba and died shortly after returning to Alabama in early 1853.

10. Catherine Mary Milligan McLane.

## FROM JOHN SLIDELL[1]

My dear Sir. Puebla. 18 January 1846

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 17 inst.[2] & should I have an opportunity of negotiating, will duly note its contents. The despatches which accompany this will fully explain the position of affairs & I know nothing that I can add to what I have therein stated. Paredes[3] does not yet feel himself perfectly established. Should his doubts on that point be removed & the intelligence from Washington & London be such as to render a war with Great Britain improbable, I may yet retrace my steps to Mexico. I consider the probabilities on this score about equally balanced. I shall await with great anxiety your definitive instructions. I doubt not that they will be such as the conduct of these people imperatively demands & in accordance with the tone of your[4] which although it has excited many murmurs commands the unqualified admiration of all. It is a document of which every American may be proud but it must be peculiarly gratifying to all who are among strangers & mark the effect which it produces. I leave tomorrow for Jalapa. I have the honor to be ....

JOHN SLIDELL

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

1. A native of New York, Slidell moved to New Orleans, La., in 1819 to practice law. He served as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana, 1829–33, and won election to one term in the U.S. House, 1843–45. In 1845 Polk appointed Slidell minister to Mexico, but that government refused to receive him; he later served in the U.S. Senate from 1853 to 1861.

2. See Polk to John Slidell, December 17, 1845.

3. Mariano Paredes y Arillaga, a Santa-Annista general, led the coup that ousted Santa Anna in 1844. Paredes' announcement of rebellion on October 31, 1844, together with congressional refusal to supply new troops and money, drove Santa Anna from the capital; rebel forces captured him near Jalapa on January 15, 1845. Santa Anna volunteered to go into exile and left Mexico on June 3, 1845. Leading a second coup in the last week of December 1845, Paredes served as president from January to July 1846.

4. Slidell probably meant to write the phrase, "your Message."

## FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

Columbia, Tenn. January 18, 1846

After acknowledging receipt of Polk's letter of January 6, Thomas details his investigation of the finances of Dr. Albert Tracy of Bigbyville. Thomas notes that Tracy died of consumption in Cuba during the winter of 1839–40,

and that the administration of the estate had long been settled. Regarding news in Columbia, Thomas writes that they "have 'a storm in a tea kettle.'"[1] He relates that "Old Billings the Book seller"[2] was indicted "as an abolitionist, endeavoring to excite rebelion &c among the slaves" for selling "a picture representing the 'branding of slaves on the coast of Africa previous to embarkation.'" Thomas believes that the Billings "arrest is a desgrace to our town" and that the charge is politically motivated. Thomas concludes by noting that all their friends are well except Mrs. Campbell.[3]

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on January 29, 1846.

1. Variation of a proverb from Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Legibus*, III, p. 16.
2. Alanson Billings operated a Nashville book and stationary business.
3. See Robert Campbell, Jr., to Polk, January 17, 1846.

## FROM ARUNAH S. ABELL[1]

"Per Telegraph Sun Office"
Jany 19th 1 o'clock P.M. 1846

Important Intelligence 4 day's later from London: We have just received the Exclusive Express containing the most important intelligence received by the ship "Liberty" from London, being 4 days later news. The British Ministry have resigned on the Corn Law question. A new Ministry is forming under Lord John Russell. Parliment prorogued 30th day of December. An advance in price of American Cotton. We shall start an Express for Washington if possible.

A. S. ABELL

L. DLC–JKP. Telegraph transcription by Louis F. Zantzinger. Polk's AE reads in part, "Telegraphic despatch from Baltimore; Important news from England: Dissolution of the *Peel Ministry*."

1. A pioneer in developing innovative means of transmitting news sources, Abell contributed to the founding of two popular newspapers, the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* (1836) and the *Baltimore Sun* (1837); he served as sole publisher of the *Baltimore Sun* from 1868 until 1887. During Polk's presidency Abell operated a relay pony express between New Orleans and Washington City and assisted Samuel Morse in establishing a telegraph service between the capital and Baltimore and later in extending the line to Philadelphia.

## FROM HENRY W. CONNOR[1]

My dear Sir. Green Wood 19th Jany 1846

I have promised myself, to trouble you, with a letter from and after your election. I can scarcely say why, I have not, unless it be, that

I was and have been myself closely engaged on my farms, and write seldom to any one, and knowing the fact that you were only engaged yourself in the ardous duties that devolved on you as Chief Magistrate, but overwhelmed with letters, from office seekers & others. And the August before your election, I had written you, congratulating you in advance on the result.[2] Thus playing the Yankee, in guessing.

I recd from you, your message to Congress, and beg your acceptance of my Thanks, for your attention, & honor done me. Your message is a bold & manly document, such an one as I looked for & expected from you—and so far as I know meets with a cordial & hearty response from every democrat. The federalist are silent—they growl tho not very audibly, and say it breaths war from beginning to end. I have no fear of war with Great Brittain, about Oregon or any thing else. Such is her totering condition at home, that in my opinion the U. States could not kick her into a war. She may threaten & bluster, but that will be all. The adjustment of the Oregon & Tariff questions, and our Country will be again quiet contented & happy and add much to the popular and high character, you have attaind & enjoy in the estimation of your countrymen—and long may you enjoy it.

I regreted to see that you had so much difficulty in getting a minister to England. I do not understand So Carolina. The result of our congressional elections, shows some improvement, in good old N.C. I would that it were better—and hope it may be. We are unfortunate in our leaders, very few of them free from taint—governd, as the people think more from selfish considerations—than principles. Macons[3] are scarce and I attribute, the total neglect and disregard of the our state by the genl gov't. to that cause. We have been treated as a Blank.

You will have seen, that a convention was held 8th Inst to nominate a candidate for Govr. Mr Fisher seemd to be the Choice of the people, but I understood, he declined, and G. M. Caldwell, is nominated.[4] I hope that we shall be able to succeed, tho *(between us)* I fear a failure: the signs are favourable rather than otherwise, at home & abroad. I see that Mangum,[5] more than approves of the soundness & correctness of your course & policy indeed our Senators seem to vie with each other, in expressions of kindness to & for you. Rumour says Caldwell will accept the nomination; if so, he will resign the office of Superintendant of the mint, and you will be greatly annoyd. It is the only office of consequence belonging to our state, and it is vastly important, in every aspect, that it should be filled, with one not only qualified to discharge the duties faithfully to the Govt. but by one acceptable to this region of country. How acceptably to the community it has been filled, I need not say to you, or *how we have sufferd*. In the event of Mr. C. resigning,

I beg to bring to your notice Col William J Alexander.[6] I might give to *you* many, good reasons in my opinion why his appointment would be proper but to you, to whom he is personally known, it may be necessary only to say that he is qualified, and his appointment would I believe give more general satisfaction to this region of country than, that of any other.

With sentiments of high regard & Esteem ....

HENRY W. CONNOR

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

1. Connor, a North Carolina planter, served ten terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1821–41.

2. Letter not found.

3. Radical in his anti-Federalist views and free of personal self-interest in his political life, Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina fought in the Revolutionary War, served in Congress continuously from 1791 until 1828, and presided as Speaker over the U.S. House for three terms, 1801–07.

4. Charles Fisher and Greene W. Caldwell. Fisher served one term in the North Carolina Senate, 1818; won election to two terms in the U.S. House, 1819–21 and 1839–41; and served as a Democrat in the North Carolina House, 1821–36. Caldwell, a North Carolina physician, won election as a Democrat to the Twenty-seventh Congress and served from 1841 until 1843; he served as superintendent of the U.S. mint at Charlotte, 1844–47, and as a captain of the Third Dragoons, 1847–48.

5. A North Carolina lawyer, Willie P. Mangum served in the U.S. House, 1823–26, and in the U.S. Senate, 1831–36 and 1840–53; he held the post of president pro tempore of the Senate from 1842 until 1845.

6. William J. Alexander, a Charlotte lawyer, served seven terms in the North Carolina House, 1826–34; he presided as Speaker during the 1829, 1833, and 1834 sessions; and in 1844 he ran as the Democratic candidate for presidential elector for the Ninth Congressinal District of North Carolina. Polk nominated Alexander for superintendent of the U.S. mint at Charlotte in December 1847 and the U.S. Senate confirmed his appointment in January 1848. Alexander and Polk were related through the line of William Polk, father of Ezekiel Polk and of Susan Polk, who married Benjamin Alexander.

## FROM WILLIAM H. STILES[1]

Legation of the United States
Dear Sir Vienna, January 20, 1846

On parting with me at Washington, you had the kindness to intimate, that you would be pleased to hear from me, after reaching my point of destination in Europe, and I take the liberty of availing myself of the present, being the earliest after the reception of your message

to Congress, as the first occasion upon which I could afford you any intelligence of a nature calculated to interest you, or even worthy of disturbing for a few moments only, the incessant and arduous official duties in which you are ever involved. To express to you my own opinion of the merits of the Message, would savour too much of vanity in myself, be altogether unimportant; and besides a useless consumption of your time, since it would be but a repetition of those just and exalted Eulogiums which I rejoice to see issuing from the press in every section of the Union, and in many instances even from the pens of political adversaries. But I may be permitted to allude to, and it will not I presume be uninteresting to you to learn the opinions expressed of it abroad and the effect upon the welfare of our own country, which that document has not failed to produce upon European minds. From all that I can derive from the English, French, and German prints, and I have avidiously grasped every thing upon that subject, from all that I can gather from the distinguished individuals from all parts of Europe, that are assembled at this court, I have come unhesitatingly to the conclusion, (a conclusion coincided in by every American in Vienna altho' they are without exception political opponents), that no similar document of late years, surely none since Genl. Jackson's celebrated French-Indemnity Message,[2] has accomplished so much towards elevating our country in the eyes of European powers, as the bold, energetic and independent stand therein taken by you upon the subject of our foreign relations.

Never before has a haughty English press condescinded to style us a "great" nation, never before has such a compliment been extended from Guizot,[3] that we were destined to become the first power on the Globe, and never before the appearance of this document, have the European Governments, so sensibly felt, both, that the motto of our guidance was indeed, "to do nothing but what is right, and to submit to nothing that is wrong"[4] *and still more* that we were *in reality,* at all times, *prepared in ability* to sustain it. When the original thirteen States with a population only of three milllions, first declared their independence, the act created in the minds of European powers but a feeling of contempt and was looked upon with indifference, destined as they supposed the experiment to certain & speedy destruction, but now when experience has proved, that, that experiment must succeed, when the light of their principles is disturbing the rotten foundations of Monarchy, when the people hitherto benighted are now everywhere demanding a constitution, when in short the monarchs themselves, (as it is said & certainly with truth as regards Prussia) *have such instruments prepared,* and ready to present in the hour of danger, as a better Safeguard than the

combined arms of a large and well drilled army, that posing of indifference towards the United States has been exchanged into one of intense interest, and that feeling of contempt, been supplanted by one of deep and bitter jealousy at every stride which she is now so rapidly making towards the pinnacle of national power & glory. The late message of the President to Congress was looked for with the utmost anxiety thro' out Europe. The critical situation of affairs between the United States & Great Brittain as regards the Oregon question, the effect of the message upon that question in producing or preventing war and the prevailing opinion that a war between those countries, must lead to a general war in Europe rendered that document a matter of absorbing attention throughout the whole Continent.

The event of a war between the United States & Great Brittain would it is supposed be attended with the following results. France deeply imbued with hatred to England; from continued rivalry in peace and struggles in war but more especially from the fatal blow at Waterloo, an event creating in the eyes of Frenchmen a stain which can be effaced only by the flow of British blood, could not be restrained even by Louis Phillippe himself,[5] whose predilections from interested motives are all on the side of Great Brittain, from seizing the first moment of England's entanglement, for the gratification of her revenge. Russia so long hemmed in and deprived of an outlet for her navy either by the Baltic or the Black Sea her present ambitious Emperor[6] would never let slip so favorable an opportunity as the engagement of these two great powers would present for securing at least free passage by the capture of the Sublime Porte, whilst Austria resisting as she assuredly would, so dangerous an encroachment on the part of the Czar, the whole continent would thus become involved in war.

But this whole disaster will I trust be avoided. From the tone of the English press in general, in which they affect to consider the Message as quite pacific & not in their opinion sufficiently warlike to suit the American taste, as well as that of the "Examiner" (Sir Robert Peel's organ) in particular, which declares it to be absurd and preposterous to suppose that we can quarrel. I cannot but come to the conclusion, that England is but preparing the public mind for a surrender of the question or what is equivalent thereto, the acceptance of one of the propositions hitherto tendered her by the United States.

The paragraph alluded to from the "Examiner" is so significant that for fear that it may not reach you, I have thought proper to send you the following copy, extracted from Galignanis Messenger[7] of the 31st of December: "When two great nations have come so very near to an agreement & left such very little space between their proposals, it

would be quite absurd and preposterous, to suppose that they could quarrel. Whatever may be thought of our own claims, and we have not been disposed to hold them beyond *all* doubt, yet considering the point to which negociations have proceeded, the future object is to conclude them with honor, and after the full disclosure by President Polk of the offers made by the British Government in 1826 & 1844,[8] the point of honor ought to be no more difficult to adjust than the line of frontier."

I avail myself of the occasion to say a word of my situation. The Germans among whom I am located I like very much, and think them the most kind-hearted & immensely polite people I have ever met. The city of Vienna is both beautiful & splendid, and nothing is wanting but the possession of wealth & rank to make it one of the most delightful residences in Europe. The Emperor[9] is so affected by disease viz water in the brain & epileptic fits as to be rendered almost unfit for business, whilst the whole affairs of the Empire are most admirably conducted by a kind of Imperial cabinet, composed of Prince Metternich, Count Kollowrat, the Arch-Duke Lewis, uncle of the Emperor, and the Arch Duke Francis Charles, the Emperors brother and heir apparent of the throne.[10] The Prince de Metternich, now beyond doubt the most distinguished diplomatist of Europe and who *is* in Austria in fact, *The State,* is about seventy five years of age, of a robust constitution, and in full possession of his mental faculties. He has a most intelligent & classic countenance, is noted for his grace and elegance of manner & in all his utterances whether social or official, true to the character of his profession, is fully persuaded of the force, & weight of every expression before he suffers it to escape his lips. From him as well as from the other members of the court I have invariably experienced the utmost kindness.

In the early part of the present month we had a visit in Vienna from the Emperor of Russia on his return from Rome to St. Petersburg. He is a man of immense size, being upwards of six feet in height & proportionably stout, of lofty bearing, with a countenance intelligent but stern, in short in appearance fulfilling completely all ones ideas of an Emperor in general, as well as of Nicholas the tyrant in particular. The Government of Austria had [at] an expense of about $100,000 prepared 150 appartements in the palace for himself & Suite but the Czar in the indulgence of the eccentricities by which he is distinguished, made his abode at the Russian Ambassadors & located his Suite at Hotels. I attended a few evenings since the first Court ball of the season & witnessed for the first time, the fulll splendour of the Austrian Court. The display of jewels was really startling to the gaze of a Republican eye. Notwithstanding I had seen the highest society of most of our Atlantic

cities, I think I can say without exageration that if all the diamonds which I had ever before seen in the whole course of my life, had been collected upon one *individual,* it would even *then* have fallen short of the splendour, with which the most inferior ladies of the court were adorned. The Jewels worn by the Empress[11] on that occasion were computed, as I was informed, at the value of between 2 & 3 millions of Dollars. A single ruby which she wore had cost $250,000 upwards of a century since. The ornaments of the Arch Duchess[12] seemed to me, to fall not very far short in magnificence of those of the Empress. The diplomatic corps in uniform, were arranged in a circle according to rank and age at the Court, and the Emperor, Empress and Arch Duchess passed around holding separately & in order a conversation with each.

I fear much Sir that my narative is uninteresting, & prudence warns me to draw my hasty epistle to a close, but before concluding, I must make you some report of my movements at home as well as abroad. When I started my mission, as I knew not how I should be pleased with my change of residence & profession, and what was still more important as I was totally ignorant of the expense of living as well as of the light in which a chargés lady would be received here, I adopted what I conceived the more prudent course & left my family at home. To this step on my part almost insupportable, I have had but a single circumstance to reconcile me, & it is the discovery of the existence here as I had apprehended, of that most unnatural supposition, that Chargés are never presumed to be married, & that my wife if she had accompanied me would not have been admitted into that society in which alone I was expected to move. This circumstance, added to my conviction of the propriety if not necessity of the measure has induced me to appeal to my friends in the present Congress to urge the restoration of the Mission to this Court cut down during the last days of the last session, when there was allowed neither time for reflection, or opportunity for debate on the subject. I have prepared a letter upon this subject which I have directed my friends to have published for the perusal of the Members who are to act upon this matter and have taken the liberty to direct them to see that you are also furnished with a copy of the same. The letter shows the only ground taken for cutting down the Mission by Congress to be untenable & endeavours to show the propriety of restoration from the magnitude & importance of the Austrian Empire, its increasing commerce with the United States, and concludes with some valuable statistics of the Agricultural Manufacturing & Mining industry of Austria, which I venture to suppose will far exceed the idea generally entertained upon the subject in the United States. This mea-

sure I hope will be accomplished during the present session, and as its probability if you recollect was one of the strong inducements for my taking the station, I trust I am not venturing too far in presuming that in that event I shall become the recipient of Executive favor. For this reason, I have alluded to this subject, with the view, that should the mission be restored & should my suppositions on the subject be well founded, to beg the further favor, that, you will (as is I believe usual,) do me the favor, to give consideration to my wishes in the appointment of an officer who will be so closely connected with me, as that of the Secretary of legation. Your brother Col Wm Polk[13] I have just learnt is at present at Paris & in good health.

Trusting Sir that you succeed in decyphering & that you will excuse the evident haste in which I have been compelled to pen these lines, I remain ....

WILLIAM H. STILES

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 23, 1846.

1. A lawyer from Savannah, Ga., Stiles served as solicitor general for the Eastern District of Georgia, 1833–36; as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–45; and as chargé d'affaires to Austria, 1845–49.

2. Discussion of French spoliations commanded a substantial portion of Andrew Jackson's Sixth Annual Message to Congress (December 1, 1834); in his message Jackson condemned France's refusal to pay American claims for shipping losses during the Napoleonic wars.

3. A strong supporter of King Louis-Philippe, Francois Guizot served as prime minister of France from 1841 until 1848.

4. Quotation is a paraphrase of language contained in Jackson's Fifth Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1833.

5. Hailed as the "citizen king" after the Revolution of 1830, Louis Philippe reigned as monarch of France from 1830 until 1848, when angry Parisian crowds forced him to abdicate the throne.

6. Known as the "Iron Tsar," Nicholas I of the Romanov dynasty ruled Russia from 1825 until 1855.

7. Jean Antoine and Guillaume Galignani published the Paris *Messenger,* an English-language daily first issued in 1814 by their father, Giovanni Antonio Galignani.

8. References are to prior Anglo-American negotiations over rights to the Oregon Territory.

9. A virtual invalid, Ferdinand I of the Hapsburg dynasty ruled the Austrian Empire from 1835 until 1848.

10. Klemens von Metternich, Franz Anton Graf von Kolowrat, Louis Joseph, and Francis Charles. Architect of the post-Napoleonic Concert of Europe and symbol of European conservatism, Metternich began his service to the Austrian emperor as foreign minister in 1809. Kollowrat served as chancellor of

the Austrian court.

11. Maria Anna of Sardinia.

12. Sophie of Bavaria.

13. Polk's only surviving brother, William H. Polk practiced law in Columbia and served three terms in the Tennessee House, 1841–45 and 1857–59, and one term in the U.S. House, 1851–53. In December 1844 he traveled to Washington to secure a diplomatic post. Tyler offered him the position of chargé d'affaires to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, but the Senate failed to act on the nomination. Renominated by the new president, William won confirmation on March 13, 1845, and served as U.S. minister to Naples until 1847.

## TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Washington January 20, 1846

On the 15th of January 1846, I withdrew the nomination of James H. Tate of Mississippi as Consul at Buenos Ayres. The withdrawal was made, upon the receipt that day, of a letter addressed to me by the Senators from the State of Mississippi, advising it.[1] I transmit the letter herewith to the Senate. At that time I had not been furnished with a copy of the Executive Journal of the Senate, and had no knowledge of the pendency of the Resolution before that body in Executive Session, in relation to this nomination.[2] Having since been furnished by the Secretary of the Senate[3] with a copy of the Executive Journal containing the Resolution referred to, I deem it proper and due to the Senate, to re-instate the nomination, in the condition in which it was, before it was withdrawn, and with that view I nominate James H. Tate of Missippi, to be consul at Buenos Ayres.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, draft. DLC–JKP. Marked "*Copy*."

1. See Joseph W. Chalmers and Jesse Speight to Polk, January 14, 1846.

2. See William H. Haywood, Jr., to Polk, January 16, 1846.

3. Asbury Dickins served as chief clerk first of the Treasury department and then of State before beginning his lengthy tenure as secretary of the Senate, 1836–61.

## FROM ISAAC T. AVERY[1]

Swan Ponds

Dear Sir, Burke Co. No. Caro. 21 January 1846

Among some old Revolutionary papers of my Father, Colo. Waightstill Avery[2] deceased, I found, not long since, a copy of "Extracts from the Journals of the Provincial Congress, begun, and holden, at Charles-

Town, in South Carolina, on Thursday, the first of June, 1775, &c." which I have taken the liberty to envelope, and transmit to you by this mail.[3] Believing that you might not have met with it; and might feel some interest, to possess it, for the reason, that during the late exciting canvass, for the Presidency, the character of Colo. Ezekiel Polk,[4] your ancestor, was assailed, for the purpose of influencing the contest, not only in No. Caro., but throughout the Union. And although, I had received from my Father, who was an acquaintance, and Company, living in M'lenburg, traditionary evidence; was not aware, that I had in my possession, documentary evidence, to refute the Callumny. You will find from this Journal, that Colo. Ezekiel Polk was a Member of this first Congress, that gave an importer to revolutionary feeling; and was by that Congress, appointed a Captain, in the first Regiment of Rangers, raised for defence, in the third Province of So. Caro.

All this may be familiar to you, or it may not. It is done, with the kindest feelings towards you; Personal, and Political & I hope will be excused, if supererogatory. Accept my sincere wishes, for the continued success of your administration, and believe me to be with great respect ....

ISAAC T. AVERY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 2, 1846, and answered it on March 10, 1846.

1. A wealthy Burke County planter, Avery was also the cashier at the Morganton, N.C., bank.

2. A Connecticut native and Princeton graduate, Avery removed to Mecklenburg County, N.C., in 1770, where he was admitted to the bar. Avery was a member of the Mecklenburg Convention in 1775; served in the revolutionary state legislature; was appointed attorney general of the state in 1777; and commanded a regiment of state troops during the Revolutionary War.

3. Enclosure not found.

4. Polk's grandfather.

## FROM THOMAS H. BENTON[1]

Sir, Senate Chamber, Jany. 22, 1846

I know the trouble which yourself and your predecessor[2] have had in relation to an associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the U.S. for the Pennsylvania circuit, and expect a renewal of it on the rejection, this day made, of the last nominee.[3] I also know that Mr. Buchanan, for a great number of years past, would have preferred a place on the bench of the Supreme Court to any other in the government; and believing

that the place would *suit* him, as also that he would *suit* the place, and that his nomination would receive the immediate sanction of the Senate, and put an end to all trouble on the question, I have the honor to propose him to you accordingly.

THOMAS H. BENTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on January 23, 1846.

1. A strong supporter of Andrew Jackson and hard money, Benton represented Missouri in the U.S. Senate for thirty years.

2. John Tyler.

3. Benton and five other Democratic Senators voted against George W. Woodward's confirmation.

## FROM GEORGE W. WOODWARD

Dear Sir, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Jany. [22] 1846[1]

Until final action should be had by the Senate on the nomination you did me the great honor of making for the vacancy on the Sup. Bench occasioned by the death of Justice Baldwin,[2] I had thought I would withhold my very grateful acknowledgements, which I was ready and desirous to present.

An opposition however of unprecedented character having been raised against the confirmation of your nominee, I have deemed it my duty to say, that if the withdrawal of my name will relieve you from embarassment, or in any manner promote the prosperity of your administration, you will add another great favour to that already so generously bestowed, by withdrawing my name from the Senate.

You will please to be assured that, though deeming most humbly of my qualifications for the post you sought to assign me, I shall never cease to be grateful for this distinguished mark of your confidence.

May I be excused for adding my earnest hope, in which I am sure the democracy of Pennsylvania would join me, that in all your future selections from amongst us for office, you will afford no encouragement to those men who have proved themselves as willing to thwart your preference, as they are ever ready to distract and defeat your political friends.

I have the honor of subscribing myself....

GEO. W. WOODWARD

ALS. DLC–JKP. Polk's AE on the cover states in part: "Handed to me by the Hon *Mr Wilmot* of the *Ho. Repts.*, on the morning of the day on which he was rejected by the Senate."

1. For confirmation of the supplied date, see above, Thomas H. Benton to Polk, January 22, 1846.

2. Henry Baldwin, a Pennsylvania lawyer and congressman, accepted appointment as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1830; he served on the Court until April 21, 1844, when he died in Philadelphia of a stroke.

## FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT[1]

Jackson Ten. Jany. 23rd 1846

Talbot expresses his approval of Polk's first Annual Message but cautions the president to be wary of those Whigs "who are *loudest* in proclaiming for all *Origon* and no *compromise*." He believes that if the nation goes to war over Oregon, then the Whigs will turn against the administration in the same way the Federalists turned against the Republicans during the War of 1812. To forestall such opposition, Talbot urges Polk to unite the Democrats by asking Congress to pass a firm resolution authorizing the executive "to terminate the joint occupancy, whenever in his Judgement, the safety and interest of the country may require it." He adds that Congress should further empower the president to raise a volunteer army of 50,000 men and borrow $50 million to cover military expenses. According to Talbot, such a course of action would both intimidate the British into acquiescing to U.S. terms and compel the "Benton & Calhoun cliques" to rally behind the administration. Talbot admits that his suggestion is provocative, but claims that "the great body of the nation think as I do."

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 7, 1846.

1. A Madison County lawyer, Talbot succeeded his brother Eli as clerk of the Chancery Court of Williamson County in 1832, served several years as clerk of the Tennessee Supreme Court, and in 1838 became the first U.S. district attorney for the newly formed West Tennessee court.

## FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER[1]

Dear Sir, Memphis Ten. Jany 23d 184[6][2]

I returned from New Orleans a few days since & found your letter of 13th Dec. here.[3] When Mr. Howard received your note from Wm Polk,[4] with instructions to receive nothing but the specie, he handed me the letter & remarked that he would not receive it; that he could not under his agreement with me, demand the *Specie*, & if he received Ten. Bank notes, he would have to pay the difference himself. He said at the same time that he had lost more in transactions of that kind with the Old Gentleman, than he had ever given him. He had a distinct recollection of our agreement and seemed to regret the position in which

he was placed. When I saw the letter in which he said "nothing but the specie" would do, I thought it best, under the circumstances, to waive the agreement & so told Mr. Howard. If I had not done so, he would have returned the note to Wm Polk. The first good opportunity I have I will learn from Howard whether the Old man was *fully* informed as to the agreement between him & myself, & will write you.

SAML. P. WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter in February 1846.

1. A Memphis lawyer and businessman and Polk's nephew, Walker operated a cotton brokerage firm in New Orleans and Memphis with William S. Pickett.
2. Walker mistakenly wrote "1845."
3. See Polk to Samuel P. Walker, December 13, 1845.
4. Wardlow Howard and William Wilson Polk. Howard married Mary Wilson Polk, the daughter of William Wilson and Elizabeth Dodd Polk, in Hardeman County, on December 27, 1834. Known in family lore as "Stingy Bill," William Wilson received a captain's commission in the Maury County militia in 1808; he subsequently moved to Middleburg in Hardeman County. By 1840 he had removed to Phillips County, Ark., where he owned one of the South's largest and most profitable plantations.

## FROM ALANSON BILLINGS

Honored Sir, Pulaski Jan 25 /46

I Believe that Mr Thomas wrote you respecting the Difficulty that Happened me in your old town of Columbia.[1] I Did not know that I had an Enemy therein but it appears that I have some perhaps 3 or 4 and greater Portion of them are Political Enemies Except G. Pillow[2] who took a very active part in the Prosecution. This happened on Saturday and on Monday morning he came to Mr Thomas my Lawyer, and said that his feelings would not permit him to go on any further with it. It appears that he has held a grudge against me since 1840, when I was a collecting agent for the Union. The Amt was only $3 or 4. I called at his House in his absence and Desired his Lady[3] would pay it. He took amiss at it, and took this oppertunity to get Revenge. Smiser[4] was the first man that started it agoing as he was first to say any thing to me about it. Now it was for selling a Common Coloured Picture Representing the mode of Branding slaves on the Coast of Affrica Before they Embark. Nothing to Do with this Country at all. Further more I had But the one any how at home or abroad, and Did not Hawk it about. A Young Colledge Boy By the Name of Bowers[5] come in and Purchased it with

another kind and in Less than one hour after that the Sheriff[6] took me with a States warrant. I went to Jail that night and on Tuesday James Walker Esq[7] cald to see me twice and Bailed me out of that. Your sister, Mrs Hays[8] and all the Ladies were very kind to me indeed, and finally the whole town was in my favor. No Doubt Sir but that G Pillow & some others got that Boy to Buy the article to get me in an Hobble. I Sent Mr Humphreys[9] to Nashville after some friends with my son[10] & They were in town on Monday morning in Due time, and the Case is Laid Over untill May term. It is the most Dirty & trifling act that I Ever heard tell of in any Court and I am apt to think that they will get very Sick of their undertaking Before they get through with it. The whigs are a Cursed set of fooles the best way that they Can fix it. I wonder if they dont know By this time who J. K. Polk is. They say but Little only very very well Pleased with your Message. Is your Health good and Family. As for mine it is Rather Better than usual but at the time Genl Jackson Died I was at the Point of Death tho I did go to the Funeral and took the Last Look of my good old friend. God Bless him is my Sincere wish. And may God Guide & Protect you is the Sincere wish of your friend ....

ALANSON BILLINGS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter in February 1846.

1. See James H. Thomas to Polk, January 18, 1846.

2. A Columbia attorney and general in the Tennessee militia, Gideon J. Pillow played a key role at the 1844 Democratic National Convention. He later served as a general officer in the Mexican War and commanded a Confederate brigade during the Civil War.

3. Mary Martin Pillow.

4. Probably James Smiser, a Columbia attorney.

5. Not identified further.

6. Mumford Smith served as Maury County sheriff from 1846 until 1850, and again from 1854 until 1856.

7. A prosperous Columbia businessman, Walker married Polk's sister Jane Maria in 1813.

8. Jane Maria Polk Walker and Ophelia Clarissa Polk Hays.

9. A lawyer from Somerville, West H. Humphreys won election to one term in the Tennessee House, 1835–37, and served as state attorney general and reporter, 1839–51. He presided over the U.S. District Court for West Tennessee from 1853 until 1861.

10. Alanson's son and business partner in Nashville is not identified further.

## FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

Dear Sir, [State Department, January 26, 1846][1]

I take pleasure in sending you your brother's Treaty.[2] I deem it highly creditable to him & am sincerely glad of it. It is based upon the British Treaty with Naples[3] of which I send you a copy: & therefore differs in form from our other Treaties but it contains the whole substance so far as I have observed.

It is truly unfortunate that the negotiations wh. preceded it have not reached the Department.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia. Addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter and enclosures on January 26, 1846.

1. Place and date of letter determined by content analysis.

2. William H. Polk signed the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation on behalf of the United States with the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies at Naples on December 1, 1845. The treaty specified that trade between the two nations be conducted upon the "most favored nation" principle.

3. Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and Sicilies, signed at Naples on April 29, 1845.

## FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Bolivar, Tenn. January 26, 1846

Acknowledging the receipt of Polk's letter of January 12, McNeal informs Polk of the status of the heirs of Marshall T. Polk accounts for 1845. He pledges to send James H. Thomas two hundred dollars as Polk had requested. McNeal relates that farm rents will be lower than expected: "The plantations are becoming much worn .... Portions of the lands have to be rested." He promises to send a full accounting as soon as possible. McNeal notes that there is popular approval of Polk's Annual Message and in particular that the "people of Tennessee are prepared to sustain the administration fully, on the Oregon question." He and his wife anticipate a tour of New England in the summer and hope to visit Washington City at that time.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 7, 1846.

FROM WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

At Home
Dear Sir in Williamson County Ten. Jany 27th 1846

I received your favour of the 12th inst on the 25th & hasten to reply. But before doing so I will give you an apology for (seemingly) not answering yours of the 1st Novr,[1] which I recd on the 20th. A long passage an answer to the last was written forthwith & placed in my secretary together with two others until I went to Nashville & there they remained until last week when found, to my surprise they had not been mailed. One of which was on business of importance & required immediate attention. I must acknowledge it a verry careless act.

I learn that Gen Bradley when in your city informed you that I desired to have one of my sons appointed a Cadet at West Point. It was a voluntary act on the part of the Gen & without my knowledge not having ever mentioned it to him. Yet it was true that I was anxious to have them *both* provided for, had it been practicable at the same time.[2] I knew you could not consistently appoint them both. My expectation was to have one appointed through the Executive & the other through the representative in Congress from this district. Hence it was I mentioned the subject to you, or in your presence at my home some short time after the election say December & failing to get a definite reply, I resolved to abandon all further expectations. The reason of my great anxiety or desire to have them similiarly provided for, was that they were twins and the only sons. However as there is no probability of having my wishes fully satisfied I gladly accept of your kind proposition to give one of them the appointment of midshipman in the Navy, not withstanding the difficulty of saying which it shall be. This has been settled between them by drawing straws & resulted in favour of Thomas B Childress. He was eighteen years old in December past which is not any impediment as I learn from your last letter.

In relation to the election of H. L. Turney & the rumor of your preferences it was Hops man of straw to enable him to carry on his war more successfully. It does not deserve the notice of any one although he succeeded by it. I was induced by Nicholson to talk to him & remove some of the difficulties that he professed to be labouring under. I will not say whether Nicholson was sincere in what he said to me or whether his object was to crepple me with Hop as I was a candidate for Comptroller. It was the cause of my getting Turneys displeasure. I am told he would curse me in the most bitter terms, charge that I was

for Union & harmony &c. I was induced by a portion of the members of the present Legislature to bring my name before them for the office of Comptroller versus D Graham. After competing with him about ten days he retires & Powel[3] of E.T. administers he all the time saying he would not oppose Graham. Believing that Graham would back out, as he could not be elected, by which means he secured Grahams strength & yet that could not elect him. He knew & the fact was well known that Powel could not get the democratic vote & still he would run. It was a fact equally notorious that I was the only one that could unite the vote of the party (S Turney doubtful) against a whig. I tell you sir I am daily loosing confidence in men, & more especially such as compose this Legislature. This was the first time that I ever failed to get the entire vote of the party. I live in one of the dark spots in Tennessee & am only known in the time of a hard struggle. Such has been my misfortune until it is too late to reflect upon the consequences. In the event you confer the appointment on my son Thomas I would be glad to hear from you at as early a day as will be convenient as it will be necessary for me to make some arrangements in the way of money. Which by the by is not as easy raised by me now as in days gone by my interest acct being rather more than the means will justify.

W. G. CHILDRESS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 5, 1846, and answered it on February 9, 1846.

1. Polk to Childress, November 1, 1845. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.
2. Thomas B. and William James Childress.
3. A native of Maryland, Robert W. Powell practiced law in Elizabethton and for two terms, 1841–45, represented the counties of Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, and Washington in the Tennessee Senate.

## FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

My Dr Sir Nashville Jany. 27, 1846

I received in due time your confidential letter enclosing Mr Ingersolls on the subject of the appointment of a secy to the mission to Berlin.[1] Supposing that this appointment of the present incumbent were disturbed, would depend almost entirely upon your own judgement, I had not thought much on the subject, although several applicants have presented themselves since the intimation in some of the newspapers that a mission might be offered to me.

If the selection be referred to my *wishes alone*, there are several of my personal friends and acquaintances in this country that I would feel

bound to prefer to any Stranger. Among these is one, the son of our old friend the former Post Master at this place, Dr Curry,[2] whom you may have seen at my house or Gen Jackson's. He is poor, but eminently worthy, and if furnished with a little assistance may become a highly useful, if not a distinguished citizen.

Should it be an objection to him that he is a citizen of this State, I could wish no higher guarantee than that which is afforded, of Mr Ingersol's competency and just claims: and I shall state to Mr Ingersoll in the letter which will be enclosed to you,[3] that if the selection is to be made out of this state, that your nomination of him will be entirely satisfactory to me.

Could an individual be presented familiar with the Dutch language there would be an advantage in having such a one in the office; but in the absence of such a qualification it is indispensible that he should be master of the French language. Although able to read and write the French I find it difficult to speak it.

I am here but for the night, intending to go to my farm in the morning, and shall probably descend the Tombigby with my cotton. If so I will write you from Mobile.

The war fever is at a high pitch. But all discreet men see that you are doing what is right. No body wants war, but none are willing to abandon a national right from the dread of British power.

It seems to me that notice to terminate the convention should be passed immediately, and that then we shall be in a situation to arrange what is necessary to maintain peace.

No Treaty that you could now make would be satisfactory to both wings of our party. The notice can be given by a vote of a majority, and if it approximates the elements of war, it at the same time will disclose the most direct mode of averting this collision.

Our legislature is near its close. It has done nothing to harmonize, or to advance the interests of our party. But for the strength of your measures, there would be nothing to encourage us.

With my kind regards to Mrs. Polk & to Mrs. & Mr Walker ....[4]

A. J. DONELSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 6, 1846, and answered it on February 7, 1846.

1. See Polk to Donelson, January 5, 1846.

2. An early settler of Nashville, Robert B. Currey served as postmaster of the city, 1811–26, and as its mayor, 1822–23. A Nashville physician, Richard O. Currey received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania. From 1846 until 1850 he taught chemistry at East Tennessee University at

Knoxville; he later taught the same subject at Shelby Medical College, which was started in 1857 by the Methodist Episcopal Church South as a unit of what would become Vanderbilt University.

3. Donelson to Ralph I. Ingersoll, January 27, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP.
4. Sarah C. Polk, Augusta Tabb Walker, and Joseph Knox Walker.

## TO LOUIS McLANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City Jany. 28th 1846

You will receive by the steamer which will leave Boston on the 1st proximo, a despatch from the Department of State, acknowledging the receipt of yours of the 3rd Instant. The second proposition made by *Mr Pakenham* to refer the Oregon question to arbitration will be rejected. The information which you convey in your despatch, as also the general tone of the Brittish press, is quite as pacific as was anticipated. The extraordinary military and naval preparations making in England, if not commenced with a view to the Oregon controversy, will doubtless be used, in that controversy, should it result in hostilities between the two countries, an event which I am slow to believe. Still seeing those preparations in progress, it is but a wise forecast on our part, to increase our defenses also.

Measures with that object in view, have been introduced into both Houses of Congress, and though they meet with opposition from quarters not anticipated they will I have no doubt pass, in some form, not materially varying from that in which they have been brought forward. The question of giving the *notice* to abrogate the Convention of 1827, as you will see from the newspapers is still under discussion in the House of Representatives. The majority in favour of giving the *notice*, will probably be large in the House. In the Senate, it will probably pass, but perhaps in some modified form. I have seen no indications yet, to lead me to doubt, but that the recommendations of the message, will be substantially carried out by the action of Congress.

When the second proposition of arbitration shall have been rejected, I think it probable that the *Peel Ministry*, now that they are again firmly seated in power, will make another offer to compromise, by dividing the *Oregon* territory. Judging from the tenor of the Brittish press, and especially from that of an article in the London Times, that proposition may be substantially the same that was made by *Mr Gallatin* in the negotiation of 1826.[1] By this proposition the free navigation of the Columbia, was conceded to Brittish subjects, in common with citizens of the U. States. This I have said in my message I could never concede: and if I were disposed to do so, which I am not, nei-

ther the Congress, or the people of the U. States, in the present state of public opinion would sustain me.

Indeed as the debate progresses in Congress, the public opinion is becoming more and more averse to a division of the country. Should such a proposition as I mentioned in my *private & unofficial* letter to you, of the 29th ultimo,[2] be made, I should probably feel it to be my duty, for the reasons then assigned, to ask the previous advice of the Senate.

The Oregon question is manifestly approaching a crisis, and should the *notice* be authorized by Congress, as I do not doubt it will be in some form, it must be adjusted within the year, or war may follow.

I have bestowed much reflection on the subject, with a view to see, whether any new basis of adjustment could be devised. Two facts I think may be assumed as true: First that a large majority of the people of the U. States, would if at all, most reluctantly acquiesce to a surrender of any portion of the territory South of 54º 40": and Second that but for the point of honour, Great Brittain would attach no great value to it. These considerations have led me to the suggestions which I will make to you, but without having much confidence in them, myself. A powerful party in both countries, is now advocating either a total repeal, or material modification of their respective restrictive policy. It is by no means certain that Congress, will agree to reduce or modify our tariff as recommended in the message, without an assurance of the repeal of the corn laws, and corresponding reductions and modification of the Brittish tariff. The advocates for reduction in both countries, would be greatly strengthened, by a stipulation for a like reduction in the other. The commercial advantages to the people of England, under such mutual reductions, would be of more value in a single year, than all she claims in the Oregon Territory. Should such a stipulation for reciprocal reduction of duties, be placed in the form of a convention, such convention would be subject of course to the approval of both Governments, according to their organic law. In the U.S. it must first receive the ratification of the Senate, and secondly, the approval of Congress, by the passage a law conformably to its stipulations, as was done in reference to the stipulation concerning the duty on French wines, in *Mr Rives*'s Treaty of 1831, and as was attempted in the Treaty with the Zol Verein, which was not ratified by our Senate.[3] You may be ready to ask, what possible connection this could have, with the Oregon question. Of itself it has none; but as the point of honour, and not the value of the country, is the chief difficulty with Great Brittain, in settling the Oregon question, by clustering them, in the same convention, she might possibly escape that

difficulty. We might agree to indemnify the *Hudson's Bay Company* in Oregon for their valuable improvements and establishments, either by the payment of a gross-sum [ ...][4] to the amount [ ...] permit them to remain in [ ...] possession, of their settlements, for a term of years, on receiving from Great Brittain a relinquishment of her claim South of 54º 40". By combining the settlement of the Oregon question, with a reciprocal modification of the restrictive systems of the two countries, Great Brittain, may feel that she is relieved from the embarrassment which the point of honour interposes. I confess I have myself no confidence in the practicability, of affecting such an adjustment, and have not advanced the suggestions which I write, worthy of a place in a public despatch. They are merely stated to you in this unofficial form, that you may or not, as in your discretion, you may think proper, in informal conversations with *Lord Aberdeen*, sound him, as to the practicability of such an adjustment. Were such a convention made, the great probability is, it would be ratified by two thirds of the Senate, and there can be no doubt, it would command a majority in both Houses, of Congress, in the enactment of the laws necessary to carry it into effect. In the Senate it would command in its support all those who are in favour of "all of Oregon," all those who are in favour of a reduction of the tariff, and all those who fear war, and are in favour of peace. I know *Great Brittain* never cedes away territory, but in this case to avoid the alternative of war, by which her North American colonies, would probably be lost to her, and by which she would otherwise be so greatly injured, she might possibly yield to such a settlement. I have mentioned these views in the Cabinet. They may be Quixottic & wild, but if they are so, the mention of them to you can do no harm. Still I think that the interests and the desire of Great Brittain, are so great to preserve peace with the U. States, that she would submit to almost any honourable terms to avoid war. Upon the old basis of compromise, I see at present no prospect of a settlement, unless, a compromise can be placed on this, or some other new basis, war may follow. I repeat that the growing public sentiment of the people of the U.S. is against a settlement by a division of the Oregon territory.

If you think there is any thing in the suggestions I have made, select your own time and manner of sounding *Lord Aberdeen* in reference to them, without saying of course that you are instructed by your Government to do so. If by possibility a settlement on the basis I have suggested can be affected, I think it will meet the hearty approbation of a large majority of our people. Unless upon this, or some other new basis, an adjustment of the existing difficulties can be accomplished, we

must leave it to time, and events to determine what the consequences may be. Our people prefer peace, but are ready to maintain all their just rights at every hazard.

Affairs in Mexico, up to the 30th ultio, were in a most unsettled state. *Mr Slidell* our minister had not been accredited. *Genl. Paredes* at the head of the army, had overthrown President Herrera's Government.[5] He was within three leagues of the City of Mexico, and would take possession of it, without the firing of a gun. In view of this state of things our army in Texas, have been ordered to take a position on the Eastern Bank of the Del Norte and our squadron, to assemble before Vera Cruz. I do not anticipate any hostile movement on the part of the new Government, though the revolution proceeded on the avowed ground, that President Herrera's Government were about to dismember the Republic by ceding to the U. States, what *Genl. Paredes* was pleased to call their Department of Texas.

I have written a long letter, though in haste, and without time to revise it. The present is a most interesting moment in our relations both with Great Brittain and Mexico, and it is possible that the latter Power may be stimulated to hostile movements by the former. Whatever may occur, I am prepared to do my duty, and leave the rest to God and the country.

With the kind regards of Mrs. Polk and myself to Mrs. McLane ....

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to London and marked "*Private and unofficial*."

1. See McLane to Polk, January 17, 1846.

2. Polk to McLane, December 29, 1845.

3. Polk's references are to the Convention Regarding Claims and Regarding Duties on Wines and Cottons of 1831, negotiated by William C. Rives on the part of the United States; and the Commercial Convention between the United States and Prussia and other States of the Germanic Association of Customs and Commerce of 1844. The German Customs Union was also known as the Zollverein.

4. Blurred ink transfers render word or words illegible here and below.

5. A veteran of Mexico's struggle for independence, José Joaquín Herrera served a partial term as president of Mexico, 1844–45; in the fall of 1845 he proposed that the United States pay indemnification for the annexation of Texas but was deposed by Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga before diplomatic relations could be reestablished. Although opposed to war with the United States, Herrera acted as second in command to Santa Anna, 1846–47, and subsequently headed the government from 1848 until 1851.

TO WILLIAM H. POLK

My Dear Sir: Washington City Jany 29th 1846

The Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the U States and the King of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies which you concluded and signed at Naples, on the 1st of December last has been received, and on yesterday was submitted to the Senate for [their] consideration.[1] [...] note [...] with the Treaty, full copy the [...] to be [...] with [....] This always accompanies a Treaty as explanatory of it, and usually submitted to the Senate with it[...] of the [correspondence] was the [...] to [...] that, [...] but one despatch to the Department of State (your despatch No. 1) has ever been [...] your note accompanying the Treaty [...] that have come to hand [...] letters to [...] your despatch No. 2 [...] come to hand [...][2] desired by the Department of State, that you will at your earliest convenience, cause to be prepared and forwarded, complete copies of all your correspondence with the Government at Naples and of all your communications to the Department of State, that they may be placed among the public archives here. They should be *full copies* and not a condensed statement of the substance of what they contain. I think the Treaty you have made is a good one, and have but little doubt it will be ratified by the Senate.

The Oregon question is under full debate in the House of Representatives, and will be taken up in the Senate on the 10th of February next, that day having been assigned for its consideration. There is every probability that the *notice* will be given and that all the other measures recommended in the message will be substantially carried out by Congress.

Our Mexican relations are still in an unsettled state. Another Revolution in that unfortunate country has taken place. *Genl. Paredes* at the Head of the army, was on the 30th of December last, within three leagues of the Mexican capital, and on the next day doubtless took possession of the Government, probably without firing a gun, all the troops in the City on [whom] *President Herrera*, depended, to protect him & keep him in power, having on the night before pronounced against him and in favour of *Paredes*. Our Minister *Mr Slidell* had not been received or accredited. The reason, of the refusal of *Herrera* to receive him, doubtless grew out of the weakness of his position, and the excitement of the people against the U. States, which he apprehended would be increased by it. The Revolution conducted by *Paredes*, was based in part on the charge against *Herrera*, that he was about to receive an American Minister, and by Treaty with him to dismember

the Department of *Texas*, and perhaps *New Mexico* and *California* by ceding them to the U. States. The tone of *Genl. Paredes's* proclamation, breathes war against the U. States, though that was probably to enable himself to obtain power, and not with the intention, to carry out his declarations. *Mr Slidell* remained for further instructions from his Government, which have been given. In the mean time as a precautionary measure, I have ordered the army in Texas, to take a position on the East Bank of the *Del Norte*, and the Squadron in the Gulf, to concentrate, before *Vera Cruz*, and await events. If our minister shall be ordered home, or be compelled to demand his passports, we will take the redress of our grievances into our own hands. You will see from my annual message what those grievances are.

Thus far in the Session of Congress, there has been no great bitterness on the part of the opposition, towards my administration. My chief embarrassment has proceeded from a few members of my own party, who seem to be governed in their course, more in reference to the successsion in 1848, than the consideration of the great questions now before Congress. I am however in a most fortunate position. Having resolved upon a "single term," there is no future in politics for me. I might well exclaim "save me from my friends and I will take care of my enemies."[3] But notwithstanding, the unwise course of a few members of my party, I entertain the confident belief, that the measures of the message will be sustained by a majority in both Houses of Congress.

I think you have made character by your Treaty, and I am heartily rejoiced at it. There is one caution which however I must take the liberty to give you. You should be most careful by a scrupulous attention to regular habits and propriety of conduct, to maintain the dignity of your position. I am led to make this remark from the fact, that a Senator in Congress who visited New York a few days ago, communicated to a friend on his return, that he had seen a gentleman in New York, who said he had dined at the same table with you, since you have been in Europe, and that you were upon that occasion indulging too much, and had become excited with wine. I could not learn when or where it was he had met you. As such stories however will return to this country, if there be the slightest foundation for them, you cannot be too circumspect in your conduct. You will I trust thank me for the information, and profit by it.

I had a letter from *James H. Thomas* Esqr of Columbia.[4] There was no local news of interest. Our relations were in usual health.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Blurred ink transfers render transcription of the remaining fourteen lines on page one of the document all but illegible.

2. End of page one.

3. Paraphrase of a quotation attributed to Claude Louis Hector, Duc de Villars, on taking leave from Louis XIV: "Defend me from my friends; I can defend myself from my enemies."

4. See James H. Thomas to Polk, January 18, 1846.

## FROM JOHN H. WHEELER[1]

My Esteemed Sir Beattysford, N.C. January 30, 1846

In a conversation with you last fall as regards the *Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence,*[2] I stated that the only copy extant was in Mecklenburg County, in the hand writing of John McKnitt Alexander,[3] who was the Secretary of the meeting in Charlotte on the 20th May 1775; and that this paper was still in the possession of Dr. M. Winslow Alexander, son I believe of John McKnitt Alexander.[4]

I went to the sale of Dr. M. W. Alexander (who is recently decd.) and was informed that Govr. Graham,[5] whose sister Dr. M. W. Alexander had married, had taken charge of this important paper, and carried it to Raleigh.

When in Raleigh on the 8th of Jan (inst.) I called on the Governor to allow me to examine this venerable document; which he did. This paper was the basis of the document published by the Legislature of No. Carolina in 1830, through a committee the Chairman of which was Thos. G. Polk Esq.[6]

The paper has all the genuine marks of authenticity about it; but the copy submitted by the Committee and by them published has a *list of names* prefixed which the original paper *does not* present, the first name of which is Col Thomas Polk,[7] the ancestor of the then Chairman. It is to be presumed that this list of names was obtained from the statements of Revd Humphrey Hunter[8] and others, and if so, the Committee or its Chairman can say themselves why the name of your ancestor was omitted who as Capt Jack says "was among those who took the lead" in that crisis.[9]

I write this to say that I had understood that among the names your ancestor Ezekiel Polk was recorded, and therefore carefully examined this ancient record.

But while this is not the case; there is no reason either in truth or justice why the names of *those* who *are* mentioned in the certificates of those who were not actors in these scenes (but mere lookers on and boys) should be recorded in our account as stated in 1830

and the *names as recorded* by Capt James Jack who resided at this time in Charlotte, who was privy to the designs and meetings of the leading characters of the day, who *all acknowlege* was the bearer of these proceedings to the Continental Congress at Phila. should be omitted entirely.

I have seen an old copy printed of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence and on which among the signers is the name of Ezekiel Polk. But the original paper which I have carefully examined has no names whatever, and therefore all the names either prefixed or affixed are but based upon the statement of contemporaries.

The Governor will (as he informed me) submit all the ancient papers to the next Legislature, and then these points will be made more public and manifest.

I have thus performed what I had intended or promised you to do, in relation to the Meckg Declaration of Independence.

We have nothing political in the old state worth communicating. We find hard work to get out a candidate for the Governor's chair. Our nominee G W Caldwell declines. I think your old college friend Walter F. Leake[10] would make a good man.

All eyes are turned in Congress on the Oregon question. Our plain people all understood your excellent message; and both parties Democrat and Whig was for the notice. But they are a little bothered when they see J Quincy Adams and others advocating the notice and some of our southern friends not anxious for it. The idea of "a masterly inactivity" is ridiculous to us all.[11]

Excuse this letter & believe me ....

JNO H. WHEELER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "Private." Polk's AE indicates that he received this letter on Feburary 14, 1846.

1. A lawyer, diplomat, and historian, Wheeler sat five terms in the North Carolina House, 1821–30 and 1852. He also served as superintendent of the Charlotte branch of the U.S. Mint, 1837–41; North Carolina state treasurer, 1842–44; and U.S. minister to Nicaragua, 1854–56.

2. On may 19–20, 1775, delegates from Mecklenburg County militia companies gathered at Charlotte, N.C., and declared their constituents' independence from Great Britain by adopting a set of five resolves that came to be known as the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.

3. Reference is to William R. Davie's "copy" of John McKnitt Alexander's journal containing the text of the five resolves and his narrative account of the Mecklenburg militia meeting, which was called by Col. Thomas Polk in response to news of the military engagement at Lexington and Concord one month earlier. The Davie "copy," written in Alexander's hand and dated September 3, 1800, bore two source annotations: one attributing the text of

the May 20th resolves to the original journal of the meeting and the second notation stating that the narrative account of the meeting was written from memory following the loss of the journal in the the Alexander house fire in April of 1800. Many historians have discounted the reliability of the Davie document on the assumption that the text of the resolves as well as the narrative account were the product of Alexander's recollections. Numerous witnesses, however, give credence to the notion that Alexander made copies of the five resolves for other participants in the meeting as well, although no other manuscript copy has been found. The two annotations on the surviving document make more sense if one assumes that following the loss of his journal Alexander took the text of the five resolves from an earlier copy prepared for Davie and then added from memory his recollection of the narrative account of the proceedings. To discard the testimonies of numerous contemporary witnesses and to assume that Alexander needed to rely on memory for recovering the text of the five resolves seems problematical. For additional evidences of Polk's interest in the Mecklenburg Declaration and for subsequent historiographical controversies arising as to the authenticity of the Davie "copy," see William H. Haywood, Jr. to Polk, September 11, 1844, note 5.

4. Moses Winslow Alexander, grandson of John McKnitt Alexander and son of Joseph McKnitt and Dovey Winslow Alexander, married Violet Graham, sister of William Alexander Graham. Both M. Winslow and his father, J. McKnitt Alexander, practiced medicine in Charlotte.

5. A native of North Carolina and 1824 graduate of the University of North Carolina, William Alexander Graham served in the state legislature, 1833–40; sat in the U.S. Senate, 1840–43; won election twice as a Whig to the governorship, 1845–49; headed the Naval department under Millard Fillmore, 1850–52; and ran unsuccessfully for vice-president on Winfield Scott's ticket in 1852. Initially opposed to secession, Graham subsequently served as a senator in the Confederate Congress.

6. Thomas G. Polk, grandson of Thomas Polk and son of William Polk, organized the 1825 semicentennial celebration of the Mecklenburg Declaration and headed a committee created by the North Carolina legislature in 1831 to publish the Declaration and accompanying documents testifying to the events of May 20, 1775.

7. Thomas Polk, older brother of James K. Polk's grandfather, Ezekiel Polk, headed the Mecklenburg County militia; in 1781 Thomas Polk attained the rank of brigadier general in the North Carolina line in place of William Davidson, killed at the Battle of Cowan's Ford.

8. Humphrey Hunter is not further identified.

9. James Jack, a militia captain and by marriage to Mary Barnett a member of one of Western Carolina's earliest pioneer families, delivered a copy of the Mecklenburg Resolves to the North Carolina delegation attending the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia; he returned to Charlotte with the unofficial approval of the delegation, whose members urged patience and order on the frontier pending more concerted action likely to be taken by the Congress.

10. Greene W. Caldwell and Walter F. Leake. A physician trained at the University of Pennsylvania, Caldwell served briefly as a surgeon in the army before switching his vocation to law; he won election to several terms in the North Carolina legislature, 1836–41, and to one term in the U.S. House, 1841–43; practiced law in Charlotte; and served as a captain in the Mexican War, 1847–48. Leake represented Richmond county in the North Carolina legislature, 1831–33, and later served in the state secession and constitutional conventions of 1861–62; he attended the University of North Carolina in 1815.

11. Wheeler's reference is to John C. Calhoun's advice for "a wise and masterly inactivity" on the Oregon question, which he considered in a Senate speech on January 24, 1843. The original quotation is from James Mackintosh, *Vindiciae Gallicae,* [1791].

## TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City Jany. 31st 1846

I received your letter enclosing to me a statement of my business at my plantation some days ago,[1] but have been so much engaged that I have been unable to answer it until today. I regret to learn that your wife[2] is in such an afflicted situation, and though you seem to despair of her recovery, I still hope she may do so.

The statement of my plantation accounts which you enclosed to me is satisfactory. By it, it appears that there is due to me and uncollected $200, for the balance of *Harry's* hire,[3] for last year, and $80.40 due to me from others, and that I owe to you a balance of $149.63, and to *Mr John A. Mairs* the overseer $350, for balance of his wages for last year. You are authorized to draw on *W. S. Pickett & Co.* of New Orleans, for these balances, or for so much thereof as may be necessary. If the balance due me for *Harry's* hire, and the other accounts due to me are paid, as I suppose they will be soon, the sums collected may be applied to the payment of *Mairs*, and the sum drawn for on *Pickett & Co.* may be that much less. I have written to *Pickett & Co.* to honour your Bill, if you should draw one.[4]

It is right and proper to pay the negroes for their cotton, and I desire that it shall be done. You mention that you wish to buy out my whole establishment, and desire that I will inform you early, whether I will sell. I do not at present desire to sell my plantation. I think it better for me, situated as I am, to retain my plantation, as it will be my only source of income at the close of my term, when I shall retire to private life. If it is possible for me to do so, I desire to meet my very heavy expenses here by my pay. If I can do this, as I hope with proper attention to my expenditures I may, I desire to apply the proceeds of my present year's crop, and also of th next two years, to the increase of my force. If

I can do this, I will have a respectable force by the end of my term. This is my present intention and therefore I decline to sell. In view of the probability of some increase of force next year, it has struck me, that it would be well to plant some 20 or 30 acres more in corn this year, than he already has planted. When the crop is made and laid bye, I wish some more land cleared. I mention this to you, that you may if you go to the plantation again this spring, give the necessary directions to the overseer. I am well satisfied that you have hired *Harry* for this year, especially as he desired it. It is better than to have brought him home. I have not heard from *Mr Thomas*, whether he has rented out my store-house for this year or not.

I am glad that *Mr Mairs* turns out to be so good a manager, and that my people are so well satisfied with him. If he continues to do as well as he has done thus far, I shall desire to retain him in my service, until my return. I am glad that he feeds well, clothes well, and is humane and attentive to the comfort of the hands. I would have no one, who would not do so. I hope he will continue to pay particular attention to my stock, for they must be so taken care of, as to make them support the place. I must make my own pork and other supplies. I thank you for your attention to my business, and repeat that I am well satisfied with its management, so far as I have learned it.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I left with you a Deed from *Wm. H. Polk* to me for the interest which he held in my plantation in Yalobusha. I gave it to you, for the purpose of having it recorded in the County where the land lies. You have never written to me, whether it had been recorded or not, and I now mention it, merely to call it to your recollection. J.K.P.

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

1. Robert Campbell, Jr., to Polk, January 17, 1846.
2. Elizabeth Polk Campbell.
3. One of Polk's duties as executor of Samuel W. Polk's estate was the oversight of the slave, Harry, who hired out as a blacksmith in Carrollton, Miss.
4. Polk to William S. Pickett and Co., January 27, 1846. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

# FEBRUARY

## FROM WILLIAM W. POLK

Sir, [Near Helena, Ark.][1] Feby. 1, 1846

I have delayed answering your last[2] with an expectation of Seeing Mr. Howard before writing but have not yet seen him. Therefore will now proceed to Relate to you in Substance a former conversation I had with him on the Subject of Yours, which was Very lengthy & principally in the Language of complaint or Censure on Howard or me. But professional men might Say (I think that with all your Superior rational talents & great acquirements) You have failed to make out Your *Case*. It is now Irksome to me to write & I did think I would write no more. Neither would I now write But to Justify Howard or perhaps myself as you possibly candidly believe you have been wronged by *Howard* or me. I never was guilty of a Swindling act & would disapprove it In my agent & the charge you have made tho not called by that name would If true be in my View a Sharping or Swindling act. Now to the point. Viz, Your agent Walker was informed by me that my deposit in the Memphis Bank was made in American Eagles which at all times is worth a premium over Specie Silver I mean I think at that time

2 pr Ct. Your note came on executed payable in *Specie* which of course could command only *Silver*. Now had your agent obtained the Gold who then would have been wronged. The imputed charge could with propriety have been Reversed. But I do think that Mr Walker failed to notify you that my deposit was Eagles or you would have Executed & Sent on a Note for the Same kind of funds. The above statement being a true State of the case. Mr Howard Saw proper to change the Gold for Specie Silver or its equivalent. The Memphis Bank was then as now paying Silver freely for their Notes. The Nashville Banks were doing So likewise. I understood Howard to Say he paid over the amt in Silver or Its equivalent Nashville notes which was Satisfactory to your agent. I suppose there is Room for a little Brokerage between those two points. Nashville Bills are passing at a Small discount in Memphis & Memphis the Same in Nashville (Only with Brokers). If Required Howard Should either have paid *Silver* or Sent on Nashville Notes to Nashville & drew Silver & paid it over there which was the place where wanted. Be it as it may I only Received a Small *premium* between Gold & Silver. And had your Note been executed for American Eagles they would have been paid to your agent. I will now make a Slight allusion to a former Subject. I once asked of you a Small favor for Thos. M. Polk.[3] You did not grant it. I still think it unkind notwithstanding any professions to the contrary. It has shown me that all applications to the present *Executive* must be made through our Congressional Deligates. They alone (for certain Reasons) have Influence at the City of Washington.

WILL. POLK

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover reads: "*Wm. Polk Esqr.* of Arkansas. Recd. March 4th 1846. Is a foolish letter exhibiting more passion than good judgment. My letter to him was conciliatory containing no such imputation as he opines. I refer to my letters to him, to his to me, and *S. P. Walker's* to me on the Subject. It is certain that the loan of $9000. was made in paper 2. pr. Ct. below specie & was paid in specie, in violation of the contract whereby I lost $180. but I care nothing about it. The real cause of the old gentleman's dissatisfaction, is that I did not appoint his son to an office, in Missouri, which I could not do with any sort of propriety. I will not answer this letter. The debt is paid and if in the transaction I have lost $180. I am willing to let it rest so, sooner than have any further correspondence with him. March 4th 1846."

1. Place of composition determined by content analysis.
2. Polk to William W. Polk, December 13, 1845. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.
3. Thomas M. Polk, son of William W. Polk, is not identified further.

FROM WILLIAM D. MOSELEY[1]

My old friend, Tallahassee, February 3, 1846

The mails of late have been so exceedingly irregular that I confess I have a very imperfect knowledge of what is passing in the political world. I had the pleasure of seeing your message under your frank; and about once in two weeks I receive the weekly union.[2] Apart from these sources of information, I am literally in the dark as to most of the political events that have transpired for the two last months. It is rumoured here that Sir Robert[3] has resigned, with him, the whole of the tory ministry. As to the results of this movemnt there are various conjectures particularly among the "knowing ones."[4] Tis said also that the King of the French[5] is dead. This is also a rich theme for street-wise politicians. Much too is said, about war between Great Britain and the U. States, growing out of the Oregon question. How all these matters will eventually terminate gives me but little uneasiness. As to the British ministry, whether Whig or tory they are both averse to Republican Governments and I presume equally hostile to the success of our experiment, as a federal Union. As to Louis Philip, his death may produce for a while a theme for speculation, and then all will move on quietly; as much so in all probality,[6] as if had never lived.

As to war about the conflicting claims to Oregon believe me if you please, when I predict, that it will not happen, during your administration; even should notice be given, of a dissolution of the joint occupancy. Now, without knowing what are your views upon this branch, of that subject, further than they are set forth in your annual message, I will hazzard the *opinion*, that such notice ought to be given. The truth is (in my judgment) it would have been infinitely better if such occupancy had never existed. All copartnerships, which extend beyond that, which exists between man and wife are, generally, productive (in the winding up) of the most bitter feelings, between the copartners. If this be true as to indivuals,[7] there are much stronger reasons, for bring[8] about such a result; when such a connection exists, between different, independent governments. I have always found, that the sooner the dissolution, the more happy the consequence. Let then, this be done, without blustering; but with firmness of purpose; and if war be the result, why then, let it come, & war between those powers upon this issue will be speedily terminated; or it will prove to be to the existence of the *present British dynasty*, a death blow; and may eventuate, in the overthrow of that Colossal Empire. But her statesmen are too sagacious, to permit themselves to be engaged in a

war with this country, upon such a flimsy pretext. You can't "kick them into a war"[9] with the U. States and nothing but a direct blow, at the *very existence of that* govrmt, by the U. States; will ever urge them into a war *with us*. The cotton fields of the south; with a tariff reduced to the merits of the govmts; will be found to be more effectual security against war with that power than an entire surrender on our part of the *whole of Oregon*. War with Great Britain? No such thing. Give the notice, reduce your tariff, and they will find in the latter, a sufficient excuse for not waxing *too warm* on account of your action on the former. Remember if you please, that I have heretore[10] proved myself fully correct in my predictions. You may remember also that I have no aspirations for the Presidency, or any other political preferments.

Notwithstanding my firm belief is, that neither of us, will ever witness another war between Great Britain & America. Yet prudence it would seem to me would dictate a better and more efficient defence, on our part. The truth is in florida, we have not the means to suppress the most feeble outbreak, against our own lands; nor do I believe that we could, at this time; suppress an insurrection, on the most limited scale; without aid from the federal govermt. Florida can muster as brave spirits as ever pulled trigger; but what can they do without any of the implements of defence? With a sea coast of a thousand miles, *or more*; and not a fort or gun, with some twelve thousand militia; and not a musket, an ounce of powder or pound of shot; public property, through the length and breadth of the state.

If the govrmt shall wisely resolve to place the country in a state of proper defence, I do earnestly hope; that we may not be entirely overlooked; by the wire workers for the next Presidency.

But enough of this. I feel safe, so long as you shall steer the ship. It is only "when the wicked govern, that the country mourns."[11] And although, it may be (for ought I know) that there is enough wickedness in Congress to bring a curse upon the nation, even the curse of war; yet thank God I honestly and sincerely believe, there is purity enough in the Executive to atone for the misdeeds of the former. If you choose, you may call this flattery; but I *know it is not*. I solemnly believe, that the Almighty intended to bless this country, when he placed you at the helm; instead of your irreligious unprincipled competitor[12]; and so long as you consult that infinitely wise and good being, as your counsellor in the discharge of your duty to your country; *this country will prosper*. That you will do so, I have no doubt; that the consequences that I predict, will as certainly follow, I have as little doubt. During your administration therefore I have the utmost confidence that we shall neither be visited by "war pestilence or famine"[13]; but that the

blessings of *Heaven* will rest upon *you*, and *your country*. Yes my old and true friend; such are the convictions of my heart. Do what you believe to right (which I know you will) and trust the consequences to your God; and *all will be right*. "I have been young and I am now old,"[14] yet have I never witnessed *ultimately* a different result.

W. D. MOSELEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*private*."

1. Polk's classmate at the University of North Carolina, Moseley served in the North Carolina Senate, 1829–36, but lost his gubernatorial race in 1834. 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. Washington *Union*.

3. Sir Robert Peel.

4. Used in the political discourse of the day to connote those party leaders privy to the truths behind appearances, the phrase "knowing ones" has antecedents to the ancient Gnostics and their claims to access secret knowledge essential to salvation.

5. Louis Philippe, King of France, 1830–48.

6. Misspelling of "probability."

7. Misspelling of "individuals."

8. Misspelling of "bringing."

9. Origin of this phrase is not identified. Josiah Quincy, leader of the Massachusetts Federalists, used similar language when he denounced Thomas Jefferson's embargo policies of 1808 and concluded that "the administration could not be kicked into war."

10. Misspelling of "heretofore."

11. Paraphrase of Proverbs 29:2, "But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."

12. Henry Clay.

13. Paraphrase from Jeremiah 21:9, "He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence."

14. Quotation not identified.

## TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir: Washington City Feby 4th 1846

I received two or three days ago your letter of the 22nd ultimo,[1] and seize a moment from my constant engagements and [daily?] labours to say or issue a reply on that position. With any new Judicial Circuit, it will be voted by Congress. A law has already passed establishing a District Court in Texas, and conferring upon the Judge Circuit Court levies and magistrates. That is all. [...][2] the present [...] the Judges of the Supreme Court [...] attempted [...] no such [...] that is can

be offered as [ . . . ] the present [ . . . ] The greater probability is that a law may be passed before many years shall [ . . . ] confining the Judges of the Supreme Court to their [old?] state jurisdiction, and relieving them from their Circuit duties. In that event the number of the Judges may be increased as [ . . . ] At present the court sits from the [ . . . ] until the middle of March [ . . . ] and are not able to dispose of more than two thirds of the business on the docket. If contrary to ectation and belief a new Circuit should be created it has become almost the common law of the land, and is generally expected, that the judge selected should be a resident citizen of the Circuit for which he is appointed. No departure from this rule has ever occurred, except in one or two instances, and in them has given great dissatisfaction. You ask me to speak frankly and in the spirit of sincere friendship, which I am sure I feel, and I do so, when I say that it would be attended with serious embarrassment, and meet with violent opposition, were I to attempt to appoint a judge who was not an acual citizen of the Circuit for which he was appointed. This I know would be the case, and with the greatest desire to gratify any wishes you may have, you will not fail to perceive the difficulties—which would surround me were I to attempt it. Even when I confine myself to the Circuit, you see I have already had difficulties to overcome. I nominated to the Senate one of the ablest and best a,[3] a fine lawyer and a Republican from his youth, and by the union of half a dozen Democrats, who preferred someone else, with the undivided Whig party in the Senate, he was rejected. In the present temper of the Senate, such would undoubtedly be the fate of any non-resident of the Circuit for which he might be nominated. I appreciate My Dear Sir: your friendship personal and political, and there is nothing which I could do with propriety, which I would not do, to gratify your wishes. You will I am sure, see and properly appreciate the embarrassments which surround me.

You ask if we will have war with England. I see nothing at present to make such an event probable. We must however maintain all our just rights, do our duty, and leave the rest to God and the Country. The Oregon question is still under debate in the House. I hope the vote on the question of *notice* will be taken soon. It will probably be a fair test of the strength of the other measures recommended in the message. The probability at present is, that these measures, including the *notice* will pass both Houses in some form. I hope they may, for rely upon it, the only way to treat *John Bull*, is to look him straight in the eye, and let him see, that we are resolved firmly to maintain all our just rights. If we do this, and let him see that we are in earnest, I do not think there is danger of war. On the other hand, if we faulter or hesitate in

our course, he will become arrogant, and war may follow. My opinion therefore is, that a firm and decided course is the pacific one. But these are mere speculations.

I have written in great haste, and much more at length, than I thought my time would permit when I commenced, and close by requesting (in which Mrs. Polk joins me) to be kindly presented to your good lady.[4] Will you present my salutations also to my good old friend *Mr Willis*?[5]

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. See Gideon J. Pillow to Polk, January 22, 1846.
2. Word or words here and below illegible.
3. George W. Woodward.
4. Mary Martin Pillow.
5. Probably Nathaniel Willis of Maury County, who served in the Tennessee House from 1815 to 1819.

## FROM JOHN H. PAYNE[1]

Sir, Palermo Sicily Feb: 5 1846

It has no doubt occurred to your Excellency, how peculiarly important at the present juncture the state of the Oregon and Texas question renders our relations with the Indians west of Arkansas. You may also perhaps have been informed that I have myself had opportunities of becoming well acquainted with the feelings of some of the most influential among their tribes, and that I visited the Cherokees, upon their special invitation, after their removal, when I was enabled to observe the manner in which they are divided against one another, though united in a common sentiment of chagrin against us.

What I noticed and know, induces me to apprehend great difficulties upon the Indian frontier, in the event of a rupture with England or Mexico, both or either, unless our relations in that quarter are managed with special address. England has usually been more on the alert in these matters than the United States. She has been conscious that by a course of conciliation and confidence she could win the red men to her interest and has accordingly provided them with opportunities of earning recompense and distinction. She has felt that kindness, attended even by a degree of deference, will render them effective friends. I do not believe, in the event of a war, that she will be unmindful of the use which may be made of their enmity, if it can be provided in rendering their border a scene of awful havoc.

The Cherokees, your Excellency is aware, are active, some of them very intriguing, and all of them possessing a paramount sway over their neighbors. Their inclinings—(notwithstanding a vivid recollection of many wrongs)—are towards the United States; and I am persuaded, with good management, they might be brought to form themselves into regiments for our service, which would be among the best that could be raised. If, on the other hand, they are not lured into our support, they may prove most embarrassing foes. The first step towards uniting them in our favour, ought to be an attempt, as far as possible, to unite them among themselves. Their party divisions were a few years ago established, one around the abode of a person I think they called Captain Rodgers, an early settler; one around the residence of Mr John Ross, one at Beattie's Prairie, where some of the most wealthy, most substantial and most moderate were to be found, one about the home of the Watie (or Boudinot) family, and one about the that of the Ridges.[2] It would be extremely difficult, I know, to reconcile these contenders, but I do not believe it to be impossible for zealous and sagacious agents to work important changes, especially if our general Government can provide the various party leaders alike with some common object of legitimate and inspiriting ambition, at once equally serviceable to them and to us. Perhaps none more appropriate could be offered than the chance of military, and even political elevation, by forming them into a frontier guard and supplying them with openings for receiving office under the United States. Testimonials of good conduct, even though nothing more than medals, publickly bestowed, and under circumstances of éclat, would have great effect among all the Indians.

I am impelled to the mention of these points by a conviction that if we do not secure the good will of the masses concentrated in the Indian Territory, even though with great sacrifices, we shall deplore the omission, and, upon the first disturbance which may arise with other countries, find our frontier involved in flame and massacre, and the half civilized portion of the red race in desolating alliance with their wilder brethren both on the Texas border and in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains. The Seminole, already well known to our country, were in the immediate vicinity of the Cherokees during my visit to them, and seemed greatly under their influence. It struck me that the Seminole whom I saw, could be won by kindness with infinitely more ease and less cost, than they were subdued by force.

Even should the calamity of a war be avoided, there is nevertheless, no time more favorable than the present for drawing these unfortunate fellow creatures towards us and civilization by a course of justice and

gentleness, and such a study and cultivation of their better qualities as may yet invest them with value to the world. In reference to either possibility, war or no war, still might it not be advisable to send confidential and able messengers upon excursions among the divers tribes, without giving any clue whatever to the real object of the visit, or to its being in any degree official, in order to gather their sentiments, to ascertain the most influential of their members, and to recommend to government the courses, founded upon careful and conscientious scrutiny, most likely to benefit their own population and to render it a benefit to ours. I think it will be found that the counsel created by such investigations will be in favour of a system of encouragement, and of reliance upon this peculiar people, though accompanied with very careful watchfulness over their difficult characteristic temper, without permitting them to see the eye that is open upon them, nor to feel the rein by which they are guided.

If my hints are not sufficiently important to do service, I trust they will, at any rate, show that earnest interest in the welfare of our common country, which no one will appreciate more thoroughly than your Excellency.

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Letter is entitled, "*Our Relations with the Indians*," and marked "Private."

1. A New Yorker who served as consul to Tunis from 1842 to 1845, Payne wrote several articles in the 1830's criticizing U.S. treatment of the Cherokees.

2. John Rogers, Chief John Ross, Stand Watie, Elias Boudinot, and John and Major Ridge. One of the principal chiefs of the Western Cherokees or Old Settlers faction, Rogers opposed the Cherokee Act of Union of 1839 and urged relocation of the Western Cherokees to Texas in 1845. A Tennessean of Scots-Irish ancestry and an eighth-blood Cherokee, Ross headed the Cherokee National Council from 1819 until its dissolution in 1826; assisted in writing the constitutions of 1827 and 1839; led the eastern branch of the nation from 1829 until 1839; and following the removal westward served as chief of the united Cherokee nation until his death in 1866. Leaders of the Treaty party, Boudinot and both Ridges signed the Treaty of New Echota (1835), an act for which the Ross party allegedly assassinated them in 1839. Kin to Boudinot and the Ridges, Watie resisted the influence of the Ross party, often with violence; he later commanded a brigade of Confederate Cherokees during the Civil War.

## FROM JOHN POLLOCK[1]

Honoured Sir Templemoyle 6th February 1846

As a letter wrote by Mr William Ross of Philadelphia[2] to his friends in this Country fell into my hands a few weeks ago wherein was stated

that he had an interview with you sometime shortly previous to his writing[3] and that you seemed somewhat desirous to know something of your genealogy from Ireland this sir I think can be easily obtained. I as a near relative of yours can give you a little inteligence on the subject. As I understand that your grandfather was Ezekiel Polk. He and my grandfather were brothers children. They were both born in Templemoyle where I now reside. I frequently heard my father speak of him as being a stout active man. He had a sister called Nancy was married to a man by the name of Maxwell. They had a son named Ezekiel for his uncle whom I was perfectly aquaint with from my infancy. He is dead some twelve years ago. My father is dead upwards of this thirty years. My uncle Samuel and uncle Robert are still alive but neither of them recolect seeing your grandfather. There is just the three families of us now liveing on the inheritance of our forefather. And when I give you a short sketch of our present standing in life you will no doubt be ready to say with an old aunt at the birth of my uncle Roberts youngest daughter it would seem that the good old name was about to die away. As uncle Samuel has only one son alive and he and his wife have no children. And I have neither brothers nor sisters and am just in the same standing as Robert so far as family is concerned. Uncle Robert has three fine daughters and as the most of our relatives have all emigrated to America and are now become a numerous families there. Uncle Samuel had four sons went to America three of whom were married each of whom left four children. They are all dead so that out of five sons he has only one alive. They all died under fifty. So I think when you are become as I may say a multitude you must send some of your sons over to ireland that they may get married to uncle Roberts daughters and revive the name once more. You will no doubt be surprised sir when I tell you that I can have our genealogy back upwards of two hundred and forty years. I can assure you sir that you and I are sprung from a good staunch branch of Presbiterians. Our ancestors came from Scotland about the year 1609 (and were in high estimation in their native land) and settled in and about where we now reside. And as nothing in life could give me so much pleasure as to have a personal interview with so near a relation more especily when raised to high an eminence in life. Only the distance is too great and my circumstances rather limmited being an industrious farmer and subject to a pretty high rent. So that the undertaking would be rather ardious for me to undergo. But should you and I never have the pleasure of meeting in this world of bustle and trials I hope we will meet at the right hand of our God there to unite in the happy anthem of Moses and the Lamb throughout the endless ages of eternity. As both high

and low must bear in mind that we are only poor perishing mortals it is our incumbent duty to have our lamp trimmed and our lights burning so that when the voice of the bridegroom cometh we may be ready to appear with him in glory.[3] And as it has been the good pleasure of your God to place you in the chair of state for a time over so large a community I hope you will be enabled to rule to the glory of God and the good of your brethren of mankind. And may you be enabled to set such an example as did David and Sollomon so that your name may be imortalized to sons yet unborn. But me thinks I hear you say who is sufficient for these things. Listen to the words of our saviour Jesus Christ to all his humble followers: my grace is sufficient for you and my strength shall be made perfect in your weakness.[4] And in these days of light and renewals we are taught to look forward to that ancient prophecy where it is predicted that rulers become nursing fathers and their queens nursing mothers to the true church of the liveing God.[5] And may you be enabled to rule with a single eye to the happy amen of malineal glory where one will not have to say to another know ye the Lord, for all know him from the least to the greatest.[6] And with such feelings and humble prayer I subscribe myself....

JOHN POLLOCK

P.S. Sir when this comes to hand if you think me worthy of your notice or my letter worthy of your reply I certainly would find a secret pleasure in looking over and reading a letter from your hand. As god in his providence has been pleased to place us in distant lands yet we ought to rejoice that we have the privilege of communicating our ideas to each other by letter. If so direct to John Pollock of Templemoyle near Newtown Limavady County Londonderry to the care of John Hunter a merchant.[7] You see sir there is a little difference in spelling the name but the substance is the same. JP

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. The cover bears a postmark of New York, March 31, and an AE: "Sir as I do not properly know your address if I am in error you will please forgive me & request you send it on."

1. The Pollock family connection is not identified further.

2. A Philadelphia grocer, Ross sought an interview with Polk following his inauguration, on a presumption that they might be related. See Henry Simpson to Polk, March 31, 1845. ALS. DLC–JKP.

3. Paraphrase from the parable of the ten virgins, Matthew 25:1-13.

4. Paraphrase from 2 Corinthians 12:9, "And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

5. Paraphrase from Isaiah 49:23, "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers."

6. Paraphrase from Hebrews 8:11, "And they shall not teach every man his

neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

7. Hunter is not identified further.

## TO DAVID CONNER[1]

Dr. Sir: Washington City Feby. 7th 1846

This letter will be handed to you, by my young friend *Thomas B. Childress*, who has this day, been appointed, an acting midshipman in the Navy of the United States, and been ordered to Report himself to you for service. I know this young gentleman personally. He is of a highly respectable family, and is himself in all respects worthy. He is however wholly inexperienced in the duties of the new profession on which he is about to enter & may need advice and well as instruction. As he will be under your command I commend him to your attention and care.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Pensacola, Fla.

1. A veteran of the War of 1812, Conner served as chief of the Bureau of Construction, Equipment, and Repair, 1842–43, and commanded U.S. naval forces in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, 1843–47. During the Mexican War Conner blockaded Mexico's gulf ports and supported the amphibious landing of Winfield Scott's forces in the assault against Veracruz.

## TO ALBERT G. BROWN[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City Feby. 9th 1846

I received the letter which you did me the honour to address, to me, enclosing one from *Mrs. Rainey* the widow of my old friend *James Rainey deceased*.[2] It gives me pleasure to have it in my power to gratify the wishes of *Mrs. Rainey* and yourself, by appointing her son[3] an acting midshipman in the Navy. I have to request that you will convey to *Mrs. Rainey* the enclosed letter from the Secretary of the Navy.[4] As soon as the name of her son is ascertained, a letter of appointment as acting midshipman will be forwarded to him, provided he comes within the enclosed regulations of the Department.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Jackson, Miss.

1. Albert Gallatin Brown. A practicing attorney, Brown served as a member of the Mississippi House, 1835–1839; as a Democratic congressman, 1839–41 and 1847–53; as a circuit court judge, 1842–43; as governor, 1844–48; as U.S. senator, 1854–61; and as CSA senator, 1861.

2. Eliza W. and James Rainey, Sr. James Rainey attended the University of North Carolina in 1816. See Albert G. Brown to Polk, November 17, 1845, and Eliza W. Rainey to Polk, November 1, 1845.

3. Youngest son of Eliza W. and James Rainey, Sr., John D. Rainey entered service as a midshipman in March 1846; he received a promotion to lieutenant in 1855 and resigned from the navy in 1857.

4. Letter not found.

## TO WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Feby. 9th 1846

I have received your letter of the 27th ultimo, and by the mail which will convey to you this letter, I enclose under cover to your address, a letter of appointment from the Secretary of the Navy, for your son *Thomas B. Childress* as an acting midshipman in the Navy of the United States. You will perceive from the instructions which accompany the letter of appointment,[1] that he is ordered to proceed to Pensacola & report himself to *Commodore Conner,* for service in the Gulf Squadron. When I wrote to you[2] I had not made particular inquiry in relation to the Naval School, at Annapolis & supposed as a matter of course that all midshipmen on their appointment, would be ordered there for a few months. I now learn from the Secretary that in this I was mistaken; that the number allotted to the school at any one time is now full, and that no more will be sent there until next fall, when those now there will be ordered to sea. As *Thomas* is now at the extreme age at which he could be appointed, it is upon the whole probably best that he should at once enter upon active service. *Commodore Conner* under whose command he will be, is a gentleman and a fine officer. When he proceeds to Pensacola he must of course take with him his letter of appointment, and the order to Report himself to *Commodore Conner,* and that on being presented to the Commodore, will authorize him to receive him into the service.

His letter of acceptance and the oath of office should be immediately attended to, in Tennessee, and returned to the Secretary of the Navy. I hope and believe that he will acquit himself well & that at the end of six months, his commanding officer will make a favourable report of his conduct. You will see from the regulations, that his continuance in the service will depend on this. As you have been a military man you will see the necessity of impressing on his mind the great importance of strict obedience to the orders of his superiors, and of punctual and prompt attention to every duty. He should be particularly guarded against forming associations, with idle or dissipated young

officers. He should devote the first six months to acquire a knowledge of the new profession upon which he is about to enter. I think he had better postpone procuring his uniform until he reaches Pensacola, where he can have it made in the proper style & cheaper than he could do in Tennessee. I shall feel a lively interest in his success. I wish it was possible not to seperate the twin-brothers, but this cannot be avoided. Tell *James* however not to despair, and that in proper time, it may be in my power to do as much for him; in some other branch of the public service (the army or some other position) as has been done for *Thomas*.

You had better prepare for *Thomas* and let him take it with him, the letter which he is directed to write from Pensacola to the Secretary of the Navy; that he has reported himself to *Commodore Conner*.'

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I conclude it may not be improper to enclose herewith an introductory letter for *Thomas* to *Commodore Conner*,[3] which he can deliver on his arrival in Pensacola. Should it happen that *Commodore Conner* is absent when he reaches Pensacola, he should Report himself and deliver his papers, to the officer next in command and obey his orders. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Williamson Co., Tenn.

1. Letters not found.
2. See Polk to William G. Childress, January 12, 1846.
3. See Polk to David Conner, February 7, 1846.

## TO ANDREW J. DONELSON

My Dear Sir: Washington City Feby. 9th 1846

I have received your two letters written at Nashville and Florence on your way to your plantation.[1] The letter enclosed in the former for *Mr Ingersoll* of Connecticut I have not forwarded.[2] In reply to your suggestion I have to remark that it would be embarrassing both to the administration and to yourself to take a secretary of legation from Tennessee. It would be so to the administration, because other sections of the Union (as I think without cause) have already been disposed to complain, that too many appointments have been made in my own State. To take both the Minister and Secretary from Tennessee, would certainly revive these complaints. It would be embarrassing to you, because the Secretary, could not speak either the French or German language, and would be wholly unacquainted, with the public view, and

manners and customs of the country. Indeed this I fear would be an objection to the selection of *Mr Ingersoll*,[3] who has never been abroad, and in the habit of speaking the language of the country to which he would go. I was desirous to gratify *Mr Ingersoll*[4] (the father) because he was an old friend, and a very worthy man, but since I wrote to you at his request,[5] I have doubted whether I should have done so, and with my present views I will not forward your letter to him. My present impression is, that the present Secretary,[6] can render more service, at least at the commencement of the Mission than any new man. If after you reach the Court you should think it proper or necessary, to make a change it can be done. The present Secretary I understand is a literary gentleman of character and standing. He has been several years at the Court, and if disposed, as I have no doubt he would be, could render you essential service on your arrival. I believe *Mr Wheaton* has quarrelled with him, but who is in the wrong I have no means of determining. I will at all events act on your suggestion & make no nomination for Secretary until you reach Washington on your way. Your own nomination I will make at any time you may desire. I suppose however you cannot be prepared to leave before April, and if the nomination is made in the early part of next month, it will be in full time. There will be no necessity for your personal presence here, as I do not anticipate opposition to your nomination.

I will endeavour to provide for *Mr Coffee*.[7] If the new Regiments are raised, there may be an opportunity to do so, by giving him the situation which you indicate as acceptable to him.

Will you write to me, on receipt of this letter.[8]

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–AJD. Addressed to Mobile, Ala., in "care of James E. Saunders"; marked "*Private*" and "*Confidential*." Donelson's AE on the cover states that he answered this letter on February 20, 1846, and requested that his nomination "be made at once."

1. See Andrew J. Donelson to Polk, January 27 and 31, 1846.

2. See Andrew J. Donelson to Ralph I. Ingersoll, January 27, 1846. ALS. DLC–P.

3. Colin M. Ingersoll.

4. Ralph I. Ingersoll.

5. See Polk to Andrew J. Donelson, [January 5, 1846], and its enclosure of Ralph I. Ingersoll to Andrew J. Donelson, January 1, 1846. ALS. DLC–D.

6. Theodore S. Fay.

7. Andrew J. Coffee of Alabama received an appointment as paymaster in the U.S. army in 1847.

8. See Andrew J. Donelson to Polk, February 20, 1846.

FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

My dear Sir, Columbia, Tenn. Feby. 11th 1846

Our *Loco-Whig* legislature has adjourned. I have seen Jonas E. Thomas & enquired of him in relation to the claim upon Dr. Tracy. He says you spoke to him upon the subject sometime ago, & that he enquired of the administrator of Tracy, but that he could get no information whatever of such a claim, & further he says Tracy had left the country, before you the time at which you should have *put out* the claim & never returned,[1] & that the claim is & *was* worthless.

I have rented your store house to Capt. Helm for this year at $83, & taken his note for that sum due 1 Jany. next. I further bound him to put glass in the windows, which were much broken. Taking into view the situation of the house I think this enough. I examined it before I rented it. Our county elections are close at hand. I think Mumford Smith will be Sheriff easily. W. B. Pillow and J. B. Alderson are his opponents.[2] Cahal has appointed Jack White Clerk & Master of the Chancery Court at Nashville.[3] The Chancellor is somewhat alarmed from the indications in the late legislature for the longer existence of the Chancery court & he is endeavoring to make it popular by appointing *great* men to the clerkships.

Tho long delayed I hope the time is coming when we will get clear of Whiggery & all its attendant evils in Tennessee.

There is some complaint among the people of this county about the removal of our Branch of the State Bank. Our members I fear will have much trouble upon the subject hereafter.

Mr. Voorhees[4] the Senator from Dixon county is here on a visit & to look out a situation to settle as a merchant. I hope he will locate here. Our neighbor Mr. Kelly will be in Washington in a short time on his way east. He is one of our best men, & is perfectly reliable, & has my unquallified esteem. Your relatives here are all well. I have not yet heard from McNeal, but suppose I will in due time. If I should not I will comply with your promise & advise you.

JAMES H. THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 18, 1846.

1. Syntax garbled.

2. William B. Pillow and John B. Alderson are not identified further.

3. Terry H. Cahal and Jackson B. White. Cahal, a prominent Columbia Whig and lawyer, served in the Tennessee Senate, 1835–36 and 1837–39; as mayor of Columbia in 1840; and as chancellor of the Middle Tennessee Division

of the Chancery Court, 1843–50. White, a Columbia lawyer, married Cahal's sister Ellen in 1836; moved to Edgefield, Davidson County, in 1846; served as clerk and master of the Chancery Court of Davidson County, 1846–62; and represented Davidson County in the Tennessee House from 1859 until 1861.

4. A Dickson County merchant and farmer, Jacob Voorhies represented Dickson, Benton, Humphreys, and Stewart counties as a Democrat in the Tennessee Senate from 1843 until 1847.

## FROM ALFRED BALCH

Dear Sir, Nashville 16th Febry. 1846

The people throughout the whole of this country have felt the deepest interest in the controversy now depending between our Govt and that of Great Britain. It has become intense since the publication of the Late correspondence between the Secretary of State and Mr Pakenham.[1] It is impossible for you to mistake the course which your *true* friends every where expect you to pursue. So long as you stand out for our undoubted legal and equitable rights and set the bullying of the British ministry at defiance they will sustain your nobly. If the house of Representatives shall falter, if the Senate shall dishonor itself by refusing to do its duty to the country, still the Executive can move forward without spot or stain upon *his* Escutcheon. Every wise statesman will do all he fairly can to avert from his country the calamities of war. But, no *wise* statesman will ever sacrifice the honor of his country by a recreant surrender of its undoubted and righteous claims.

If we shall have war (of which I entertain no serious fears by the way) that same party which opposed itself to the war of 1812, will be found again engaged in its old vocation. This you will see as surely as you live. But, the farmers at the plough, the great middle class who do not borrow from Banks and subsist by speculation, who will have to do the fighting, will be found by your side and devoted to the good cause.

It has been every where reported that there would be changes in your Cabinet. The success of your administration depends *materially* upon the retention in the public service of those now at the heads of the various departments; and *eminently* upon their hearty co-operation in all the measures which may be adopted for the promotion of the public good. Changes in a cabinet always have a bad effect. New men who have to learn their duties, who wish (as they often do from the impulses of their ambition and vanity) to introduce novelties are often inefficient. Changes too, encourage the hopes of the opposition and often beget sour feelings in those who have retired. If possible a President should *end* his term of service with those by his side,

with whom he *commenced* it, when he is satisfied that they are honest and capable.

With respects to Mrs P. I remain ....

ALFRED BALCH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 25, 1846.

1. Balch refers to a widely circulated official correspondence of 1844–45 between John C. Calhoun and James Buchanan on the part of the United States and Sir Richard Pakenham on the part of Great Britain, concerning settlement of the Oregon boundary.

## FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

Dear Sir, Feb. 17th 1846

As your delay for a day to act on the subject discussed before the Cabinet implies some doubt on your mind, permit me to suggest to you some points for reflection.

1. After a settled course of policy has been adopted it ought not to be changed without good reasons.

2. In case Mr. Slidell returns to his home at New Orleans, then all difficulties are at once removed & you can immediately appeal to Congress.

3. If it be necessary, as it certainly will be, to make a demand on Mexico for payment of our claims, this can be better & more efficiently done through the agency of one of our officers of the Squadron, *than through that of a rejected minister*. This is not a diplomatic duty; but one which under our Treaty, [is] to precede actual hostilities; & can be better performed by another agent.[1]

4. Congress will not be so likely to respond favorably to your recommendation; whilst Mr. Slidell is lingering on Board a vessel of war, for the purpose of negotiating, as if he had returned home. They will in the former case await the result.

5. If the demand by an officer of the squadron should result in a renewal of the negotiation, Mr. Slidell can return to his post in a few days.

6. Slidell once on board of a vessel of war, how is he to be got off with honor? Is he to remain there until Congress shall act? Suppose there is great delay in their action? And many other probable suppositions might be made exceedingly embarassing, which reflection might supply.

7. Please to examine the 3d Section of the 34th Article of our Treaty with Mexico (Laws of U.S. Vol 8 page 976).[2] Would it not have a

happier effect on Mexico to make this demand through the agency of a naval officer of our fleet, than through the agency of a rejected minister? In the natural order of things this ought to be done after diplomacy has failed; & doing it in this manner will have a better effect on the fears of Mexico & be better calculated to produce negotiation.

When I differ from you it is always with reluctance & regret. I do not like to urge arguments in opposition before the whole cabinet. I appear then to be occupying a position which is always painful to me. A little previous consultation with me on important questions of public policy relative to foreign affairs would always obviate this difficulty; because if I failed to convince you, there would then be no appearance of dissent.

Did I not believe that the retirement of Mr. Slidell on board a vessel of war might involve you in difficulties & embarassments without accomplishing any good wh might not be better accomplished by the agency of some other person in making the demand, I should not have written these hasty notes for your consideration.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on the same date "in about an hour after the messenger, who brought me, the draft of a despatch, sent by *Mr. B. to Mr Slidell*."

1. Reference is to the "Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation" ratified and exchanged by the United States and Mexico in 1832. Terms of this initial convention provided for the payment of claims of United States merchants against Mexico arising during its war for independence from Spain; provisions for payment of the claims were revised subsequently by the "Convention Further to Provide for the Payment of Awards in Favor of Claimants under the Convention between the United States and the Mexican Republic of April 11, 1839" ratified and exchanged by the United States and Mexico in 1843.

2. The third provision of the 34th Article stipulated "that neither of the contracting parties will order or authorise any acts of reprisal nor declare War against the other on complaints of injuries or damages, untill the said party considering itself offended, shall first have presented to the other a statement of such injuries or damages verified by competent proofs, and demanded justice and satisfaction and the same shall have been either refused or unreasonably delayed."

## FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

[Dear Sir] [February 17, 1846][1]

If Mr. Slidell should not be received & return home, then in your appeal to Congress, which may be made immediately, you can inform them that you have directed an officer of the American Navy, to make

the demand required by the Treaty, preliminary to hostile measures. This will save time & distribute the duties to each agent in his appropriate sphere "reddendo singula singulis."[2] If deemed advisable, the necessary instructions might be forwarded so as to have this demand made without delay. The return of Mr. Slidell to Pensacola or New Orleans, would, it strikes me, give great additional force to the demand. It would then be a clear indication to the Mexican Government, of your fixed purpose.

J. B.

ALI. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 17, 1846, "within an hour after the delivery of his note No. 1 of this date."

1. Date identified through content analysis.
2. Latin phrase meaning "by referring each to each."

## FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Sir, Naples Feb 18th 1846

I returned from Paris a few weeks since! My Dispatch which accompanied the Treaty will have informed you why I considered it necessary to go to Paris.[1] I hope the Treaty will meet with approbation, and I am encouraged to believe it will from the contents of the last Dispatch from the Department of State, and if so, I will claim a feather to adorn my "fools-cap." It was no easy task to make it and cost me an amount of toil and labor to which I was before wholly unused.

I arrived at Paris one day before the reception of your Message. There was much excitement and speculation as to its contents, and the arrival of the *document*, seemed to add intensity to the excitement. The rebuke to France was well planted, and the tone of the language employed to England in regard to the Oregon question, wrung admiration and applause from the bitterest Whigs in Paris, and there was a large number in the City at the time. They gave their President praise for his liberal exertion to settle the question by negotiation, and awarded him admiration for his bold tone of manliness when negotiation had failed. Your Message has had more effect, to give our Government and Country standing abroad than any other previous paper of the same kind. It has awakened a spirit of enquiry in the European World as to our true power and greatness. The Itallians who are proverbially ignorant of every Country distant from the Continent seemed awed and astonished, that any Country or any man at the head of any Government, should have the boldness to brave the wrath of England. Your Message was published in the Itallian language, and by that means

has been generally read in this Kingdom. The English Minister at this Court, whom I have frequently met since the reception of your Message, has not alluded in the most distant manner to the subject, though not the French Minister who has sought two or three occasions to converse with me on the subject. I of course know nothing of the policy or intentions of our Government, further than developed by the Message. You may consider me impertinent to dare suggest a thought on the subject; but I cannot refrain from begging, not that I doubt your firmness, that you will not *recede an inch* form the proposition you have already made. I want to see that haughty-pride of England humbled. Make her repudiate the act of her Minister in rejecting the offer, *and ask you to renew it*. She is in no condition *for War*, her Statesmen know it, and they know the first six months of a war with us, will create starvation throughout their little "water-girt" Island. I don't understand the course of Mr Calhoun—does he intend to go into opposition? And if so, will he be able to control a sufficient fraction to kill our majority in the Senate. If you have not time to write, ask Knox to write me a full letter. Tell him I wrote to him by the *same mail* which carried my ill-fated Dispatch, but still hope both have been received. I will send by the next Steamer a copy of the Dispatch. Excuse this letter, as I have written in great haste.

Let mother know I am well.

WILLIAM H. POLK

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on March 21, 1846, and answered it on March 29, 1846.

1. Concerned over the security of the mail from Naples, Polk sent the Treaty and accompanying dispatch from Paris.

## FROM JAMES MCKISICK[1]

Dear Sir Cherokee Agency 24th February 1846

I hope that it would not be improper to make a communication to your Excellency of a private and confidential nature in regard to matters & things in general appertaining to the policy views & habits of the Cherokee people.

I am aware however, that in regard to the great and controling causes out of which their deep seated hatred, & political animosities have grown, that you are in possession of all the information connected with the history of these people, derived from accurate & reliable data, much beyond any information I profess to have on the subject. It is therefore only in reference to recent occurences, & things present that

I intend to advert.

In my official communications to the Comr. of Indian Affairs,[2] I considered it proper to confine myself to facts as they occured, without speculating on the motives which might have produced those occurences. It is well known that many of the Cherokee people have the benefit of respectable educations; and altho they enjoy the benefits of the lights of Revelation & the precepts of the Gospel, it seems to me, that they have no compunction of conscience, on account of deliberately slaying each other. To me this in a moral view, does not seem to argue verry favorable to their advancement in civilization.

These people are extreamly tenacious of their rights, and to a proper extent, this principal is commendable, but they seem to distrust every act of the government or government officers, which has any connection with the affairs of the Nation. The dominant or Ross party, are verry Jealous & suspicious, that the United States government entertains an undue bias in favor of the Treaty party and old settlers,[3] and with a view to counteract such lies, they have drawn up a verry strong remonstrance (which I presume will be presented to the Executive) against the recognition of the weaker party by the government. This document was presented to me by the principal acting chief Major Lowry[4] with a view as I understood, of obtaing an expression of my opinion in favor of it. I however declined giving any views on the subject, remarking that paper seemed to be intended for the action & consideration of the Executive & Congress, & that I considered it would be improper in me to make any suggestions, particularly as I had understood the representations of the Treaty party & old settlers would be heard & considered of.

The late Murders & depredations commited in the Nation,[5] have been marked by much violence, & in some of the cases, seem to be wholly unprovoked except from party feeling and political prejudice. The dominant party however, when speaking of those occurances, seemed to take great pains to negative the idea, that these acts had any connection with the politics of the Nation, but alledged that they were induced from a state of affairs, which made the acts, however rash & lawless in appearance, at least excusable.

The Treaty party on the other hand, charged, & asserted, that altho these acts were not done by authority of a written act of the council, yet the members of the council & committee, or a portion of them, in secret conclave concocted the plan and advised the proceedings. And indeed some of the Testimony which I have lately taken under an order from the department, goes verry far towards establishing that fact, taking into view as we must, the conduct & expressions of some of the

prominent men connected with the government, at and about the time these outrages were going on.

Genl. Arbuckle[6] has remonstrated in verry strong terms to the acting principal chief against those outrages, and pretty preemptorily demanded and required that the authorities of the Nation, should arrest and punish the Murderers. But they have refused to correspond with the Genl. alledging, that he had no right to address them (the Cherokee authorities) in an official capacity impugning the acts of the Nation. This position tho assumed, & rather sustained, in a newspaper attack on the Genl. upon the authority of an official document or communication they had got from Genl. Taylor while commanding at Fort Gibson. I understand the purport of this opinion of Genl. Taylor was that the commanding officer could not act *at all* without a formal requisition from the Indian Agent. Well the rupture broke out so suddenly, & so violently, that the fleeing party applyed to Genl. Arbuckle for protection, which I thought the circumstances of the case Justifyed. But the dominant or Ross party, took a tecnical exception to the measure, & seemed to think, I ought to countermand Genl Arbuckles orders in sending troops out to stop those outrages & Murders. This I refused to do, believing there was an absolute necessity for the measure. The truth is, they, the dominant party, have a great repugnance to seeing any Military men, or military movements in or on the borders of the Nation. And altho a civil officer, Agent for instance, is not so obnoctious to them, unless he concurs with them in all their views & acts, they would much rather dispense with his services. I have reference now to the dominant party: they having the controling power in the Nation, are opposed to any other authority coming in collision with the authory they claim & wish to exercise. Thus far however, I have no right to complain of a want of ordinary courtesy & respect to me as the representative of the government, in my official intercourse with the authorities of the Nation.

Since those Murders & outrages have ceased, at least temporarily so, I addressed a communication to the acting principal chief Major Lowry, in pretty strong, tho verry respectful language, in which among other things, I said, that as the Cherokee people had of their own free will & accord, enacted a code of written laws for their own government, in which the lives liberty & property of their citizens were protected from lawless outrages, it seemed to me most clear, that the honor of the nation, & the dignity of their laws, would dictate that the Murderers should be arrested & brought to trial. To this the chief replyed, that it was the *cincere* desire of the authorities of the Nation to have those charged with these aggressions arrested & tried in solemn &

legal form, or words to that effect. Well, in the absence of Mr. Ross,[7] the acting chief dont dictate his official despatches, some of the smart fellows do it for him, and it seems to me that according to Cherokee ethicks, *cincerity* & *veracity* (I mean those words) have a verry loose & unlimited signification. Let me give one example, I could give more.

As the Cherokee law stood previous to, & at the time that most of these Murders were being commited (the Council was then in Session) there was a Solicitor, or Attorney for the Government appointed to each District, whose express duty it was made by law, to ferret out prosecute and punnish, all who are guilty of penal offenses. Well, this law had been in operation for some considerable time, & was found to be beneficial & salutory in its effects. But this Council at this verry important crisis, repealed the law creating those Solicitors, & their powers & duties ceased, so that now there is no Officer known to the government, whose special duty it is, to institute an enquiry into any Offense however aggravated. This appears to me to have an awful squinting at design.

I have taken pains to ascertain the number of Officers & other political characters connected with the administration of the government, and find the number is about Seventy including Executive, Judicial, & Legislative authorities. That is, since the abrogation of the Solicitorial appointments just refered to. Of this number it appears, that three or four are not decidedly Ross men; but are rather negative in their political sentiments. The Treaty party & old Settlers complain, that they have no practical share in the administration of the government.

The personal dislikes and political animosities of these people appear to be so deep rooted toward each other that there seems to be little or no prospect of their living peaceably & friendly under the same government, and I take this to be the prevailing opinion of disinterested observers who have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the feelings and prejudices of the parties.

On the reception of instructions from the Comr. of Indian Affairs, directing me to proceed to take all the Testimony I could obtain in relation to the late Murders & depredations in the Nation, also, as to the causes which led to these, I addressed a note to Major Lowry the acting principal Chief informing him of the nature of my instructions, and observed in the conclusion, that any suggestions he might think proper to make in regard to the matter I would hear & respectfully consider. When I set out on this business a Committee of two came to me (Judge Foreman one of the delegates & Mr Ross, editor of the Cherokee Advocate the government Organ)[8] and enquired what object the government had in view in adopting that mode of proceeding, to

wit, in ordering those depositions to be taken. I replyed that I had no information as to the particular object, all the information I had was contained in the letter of instructions, which letter I shewed to Mr Ross, the Editor & committee man. They then went on to say, that they viewed the order as a usurption of the rights of the Cherokee authorities, and they in behalf of the Nation protested against my proceeding to take those depositions, alledging that no practical benefit could result to the government but that serious injury & injustice might result to their people if the course was persisted in, and seemed to apprehend, there was some secret diplomatic instructions, behind the letter intended to infringe on their rights, or affect their interest or privelages. I told them I had been candid in my representations and that one principal object I had in view in writing to the Chief on the subject was that if he thought proper, he might have an opportunity to appoint some credible person to accompany me in taking those Depositions, and if it was considered to partake in any degree of a party matter, it seemed to me, that course would be advisable. They however persisted in their objections, and I informed them that I intended to conform to the tenor of my instructions as far as might be in my power.

I owe an apology for this lengthy epistle. I do assure you, it is not expected or intended, to have any, the least, influence on the Executive in regard to his action on Cherokee affairs. I thought it might contain some Scraps of information which he would not otherwise receive.

JAS. MCKISICK

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

1. A political ally of both Archibald Yell and Polk, McKisick served as court clerk of Bedford County, Tenn., before moving to Arkansas about 1836. Polk appointed him Indian agent to the Cherokees in 1845.

2. An Ohio lawyer, William Medill served as a member and Speaker of the Ohio House, 1835–38, before winning election in 1839 as a Democrat to the first of two terms in the U.S. House. Medill served as commissioner of Indian affairs from 1845 until 1850. Polk submitted McKisick's report and collected testimony to the Senate with his message on the state of Cherokee affairs on April 13, 1846. U.S. Senate, *Documents*, No. 298, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

3. Factional splits among the Cherokees included the Old Settlers, who removed west of the Mississippi River prior to 1835; the Treaty party, who relocated following the signing of the Treaty of New Echota in 1835; the John Ross party, who resisted until their forced removal in 1838–39; and the North Carolina Cherokees, who remained in the Appalachian mountains.

4. President of the constitutional convention of 1839, George Lowry served frequently as assistant principal chief under John Ross. Polk submitted the Ross party remonstrance to the Senate with his message on the Cherokees.

5. On November 9, 1845, an unknown group killed James Starr and Sewel

Rider, members of the Treaty party, and wounded others at the Starr home. Many of the Treaty party members fled the nation and sought the aid of U.S. authorities.

6. A Virginia native, brevet Brigadier General Matthew Arbuckle commanded the Seventh Infantry Regiment stationed at Fort Smith, Ark.

7. A Tennessean of Scot ancestry and an eighth-blood Cherokee, John Ross headed the Cherokee National Council from 1819 until its dissolution in 1826; assisted in writing the constitutions of 1827 and 1839; led the eastern branch of the nation from 1829 until 1839; and following the removal westward served as chief of the united Cherokee nation until his death in 1866.

8. Stephen Foreman and William P. Ross. Foreman served many years as a delegate to the National Council. A Princeton graduate and nephew of John Ross, Ross edited the *Cherokee Advocate* for many years, and served as chief of the nation, 1866–67 and 1872–75.

## TO ROMULUS M. SAUNDERS[1]

My Dear Sir, Washington City Feby. 24th 1846

I have this day nominated you [to][2] the Senate, as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain. I presume there will be no objection to your confirmation. Mr Irving the present Minister to that Court, has recently addressed a letter to the Secretary of State, expressing his desire to return to the United States, and asking [to] be recalled, so that in appointing you to fill the office, it has not been necessary to remove *Mr Irving*.[3] I have made no nomination for Secretary of Legation, and will not do so, until I can obtain further information, and consult you on the subject. I regret to learn that serious objections would be made, to the confirmation of the gentleman, whose name I mentioned to you, in my letter last summer.[4] Of these objections I was when I wrote to you, and until very recently wholly uninformed. I will not at present state them. It is enough that I learn, that they are of such a character, that unless satisfactorily explained, his confirmation would be instantly opposed, and his rejection would be probable. In this state of the case, I will postpone making any nomination. If it shall be deemed expedient not to nominate the gentleman alluded to, I will consult you before my appointment is made. I think it proper however to suggest, that if the present Secretary were retained,[5] he might during the first months of your mission, render you more aid, than any one not familiar with the measures, habits and language of the country, and not acquainted with the public men, with whom you would have intercourse could render you. After you have been abroad for a few months, if you desire it a change it can be made. These suggestions are made for your consideration. When I see you I can explain to you

the nature of the objections which I understand will be made to the gentleman named last summer. They may and I hope are susceptible of a satisfactory explanation.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Raleigh, N.C.

1. A lawyer active in North Carolina politics since 1815, Saunders lost his bid for the governorship in 1840; having previously served three terms in the U.S. House, 1821–27, he returned to that body and served two more terms, 1841–45. The Senate confirmed Saunders' appointment as minister to Spain the following day, and he served in that post through the remainder of Polk's term.

2. Manuscript faded here and below.

3. Washington Irving spent much of his adulthood living and writing in Europe. In 1842 he became U.S. minister to Spain and served in that post until 1846. For Irving's letter of resignation, see Washington Irving to James Buchanan, December 12, 1845. ALS. DNA–RG59.

4. Polk's reference is to Washington Greenhow, whom he mentioned in his letter to Saunders, July 17, 1845. L. DLC–JKP. Appointed by Polk to the consulship at Buenos Aires in March 1847, Greenhow declined the office.

5. Jasper Hall Livingston. John Tyler appointed Livingston as secretary of the legation to Spain in April 1844, when Alexander Hamilton, Jr., resigned from that post. Livingston of New York served until recalled and replaced by Thomas Caute Reynolds of South Carolina in May 1846.

## FROM GEORGE McDUFFIE[1]

My dear Sir, 25th Feb 1846

I regret extremely that the weather forbids me to call on you this morning as I intended. I desire to converse with [you] very much on our relations with Great Britain. I have learned from private Sources that the news of your rejection of the first propal[2] to arbitrate was received by the ministry two or three days after the speeches of Sir R Peele & Ld. J. Russell,[3] but had not been made public. That it was badly received & that Lord Aberdeen swore the British ministry would not "eat dirt." The inference is obvious. This decision here & the violent debates in Congress have led them to conclude that the Western members who declare for the whole of Oregon or war, speak your sentiments. Untrue as this is, the course of the negociation & debates here, & the declaration in your message that there is no hope of a proposition from G.B. that you could accept renders it a very natural conclusion to them. Now my desire is that something should go out by the Steamer to contradict this impression. After the declaration of Sir R Peele & Ld. J. Russell that Mr Pakenham ought to have submitted your proposition

to his government, I [think] that you are almost invited to renew it & I think there never was a time when it could be done with more dignity & effect. My confident belief is that it would lead to an adjustment promptly. Without it I fear the British Government would never make another offer. It is proper you should know the opinion of the Senate & of your friends there in particular. Those who have counted noses say there are but 9 members who would not vote to sustain you in a treaty on the basis of 49 degrees & if your friends could ascertain that it would be agreeable to you a vote to that effect could be passed in the Senate, in executive Session which would assure you of the fact I state & relieve you from a part of the responsibility & give you assurance of support. For heaven's sake let us not risk the countless calamities of a war upon any point of diplomatic etiquette, when the *speedy* adjustment of this question would open to us a prospect of peace & prosperity, never before enjoyed by this country. I hope the weather will enable me to see you tomorrow.

GEO. MCDUFFIE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally; marked "Private." Polk's AE reads in part: "Handed to me by *Mr Calhoun*, in presence of *Mr Senator Colquitt* of Georgia: Feby. 25th 1846."

1. McDuffie, a lawyer, won election to seven terms in the U.S. House, 1821–34; served as governor of South Carolina, 1834–36; and went to the U.S. Senate for parts of two terms, 1842–46.

2. McDuffie probably meant to write "proposal." On December 27, 1845, Pakenham submitted to Buchanan a proposition for arbitration between Great Britain and the United States on the Oregon question. Following Polk's instructions, Buchanan wrote Pakenham on January 3, 1846, with a rejection of the proposition. On January 16, 1846, Pakenham submitted a second proposition for arbitration which was rejected on February 4, 1846.

3. Reference is to Sir Robert Peel's and Lord John Russell's speeches before the House of Commons on January 22, 1846.

## FROM CAVE JOHNSON[1]

My Dear Sir, [February 28, 1846][2]

I intended to have expressed more fully my opinions to you about the Buffalo case. We have several cases of a similar character now pending in N.Y. between the different fractions of our friends.[3] The Old Hunkers are strugling to put D. out at Albany. The Barnburners &c large majority are strugling to turn out Wasson an old Hunker. At Westfield the same game is playing. At Lockport a similar game tho the p.m. is I believe a Barnburner & so at Albion & several other places of less

note.[4] *I have refused to interfere*, whereever the P.M. was a *democrat & performed his duty* & hence charges were made against Dorshimer, impeaching his *official integrity* as well as *his moral character*. The first was made *in writing*. He has *most satisfactorily* refuted *every charge* agt. *his official* conduct. The charges agt. his moral character (the Bankruptcy case) was not made in writing & hence he has not answered that. His friend Mainard[5] here says something like this—that a receipt was given him for the claim before Bankruptcy upon a *promise to pay* after—that he still acknowledges the force of that promise but that Smith the applicant,[6] is a lawyer commenced suit agt. Dorshimer since his appointment & dismissed it under the pretence that he would place the Bankruptcy, so as to make a *case against him here*. In this state of the case, the refusal to nominate D. could not be attributed to any *official misconduct*, & his *private integrity* could be & will be probably well sustained. The fact of his rejection with such charges hanging over him, proven by him hereafter to be false, would produce no doubt much feeling & probably entered much farther than the neighborhood of Buffalo, & would very probably produce loud calls for the sacrifice of others belonging to *the old hunkers*. If it was an original selection between the two, it would be a different thing. I think the rule we have acted on is the only safe one never to interfere with a democrat who does his duty to whatever fraction he may belong. I said this much to Gov. M.[7] & I thought I should say this much to you & I write because I may not be able to see you before you act.

C. JOHNSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Polk's AE reads in part: "Since this was written, many letters have been received from Buffalo, charging incompetency, want of integrity and honesty in Mr. Dorsheimer, Feby. 28th 1846."

1. One of Polk's closest friends and political allies, Johnson practiced law in Clarksville and served seven terms in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1829–37 and 1839–45. Polk appointed him postmaster general in 1845.

2. Date determined through content analysis.

3. Johnson's refers to the growing division within the New York Democracy between the Hunker and Barnburner factions. The Barnburners, identified with Silas Wright, Jr., Martin Van Buren, Azariah C. Flagg, and John A. Dix, supported the "stop and tax" policy for funding state internal improvements. The Hunkers, commonly associated with William Bouck and Daniel Dickinson, favored "soft money" banking policies and a resumption of deficit spending to support New York's internal improvement projects.

4. Philip Dorsheimer, James D. Wasson, Hezekiah W. Scovell, Henry J. Sickles, and Orvis Nichols. Dorsheimer served as postmaster at Buffalo, N.Y., 1838–42 and received a recess appointment to that post, 1845–1846. Wasson served as postmaster at Albany, N.Y., 1843–45; Scovell, at Lockport, N.Y.,

1837–45; and Sickles, at Albion, N.Y., 1843–45. Nichols received two appointments as postmaster at Westfield, N.Y., 1835–41 and 1843–45.

5. Reference probably is to Elisa A. Maynard, a Buffalo democrat and law enforcement officer.

6. In August following, Polk nominated William L. G. Smith to replace Dorsheimer as postmaster at Buffalo; the Senate rejected Smith's nomination.

7. A lawyer and New York politician, William L. Marcy served as state comptroller, 1823–29; associate justice of the New York Supreme Court, 1829–31; U.S. senator, 1831–32; Democratic governor of New York for three terms, 1833–39; secretary of war in the Polk administration, 1845–49; and secretary of state, 1853–57.

# MARCH

FROM JAMES HAMILTON, JR.[1]

My Dear Sir, Houston Texas March 2d 1846

I am just on my way to Austin, to meet the Legislature of Texas, to have the claims, which I hold and represent against the late Republic, recognized & placed in a train of adjustment.

I have reason to believe that the Legislature of Texas, will in all this month, pass a declaratory act, which on the assent of the Congress of the U.S. will effect an entire cession of the public Domain, on terms satisfactory to the public creditors, beneficial to Texas, & preeminently so to the Govt. of the U.S.

On my arrival at Austin after I have confered with the Govr.,[2] and leading Members of the Legislature, I will write you. In the mean time I would most earnestly & respectfully suggest to you that you submit no *projet* on this subject to Congress until you hear from me, and see what the Legislature will do.

Be so kind as not to communicate the purport & object of this Letter to either of the Senators of Texas,[3] or indeed to any person, at Washington. Such is Houstons jealousy of me, in reference to every

thing connected with this Country, that to do anything effectual for it, I have to do it by *stealth*.

I need not tell you My Dear Sir, how honorably, nobly, & courageously you redeemed all the public faith, your friends pledged for you, and you pledged for yourself, on the Tariff. Your definition of a Revenue Duty or rather a tariff for Revenue, is the only just & philosophical analysis, and illustration, of the subject, I have ever seen, and as much as the subject has been discussed, as novel as it is just.

I most ardently pray for your safe deliverance from the Oregon difficulty, and its collateral contingency of a Mexican war which inevitably accompanies hostilities with G.B.

As your sincere friend and warm supporter, let me beg of you, to be on your guard against the insane violence of a block of our party and the insidious wiles of the Whigs, who under the hope, that your administration would break down, under the overwhelming calamities of the two first years of the war, would not object to seeing, this portentous evil brought upon the Country.

A great change has taken place in Europe within the last two years, & all the Continen[t]al powers are now more jealous of us than they are of England. In a contest we should be without their sympathy or support.

It would take us 25 years of steady preparation for a war with G.B. by a gradual increase of our army & navy. When we next fight her we must transfer her power to desolate our coast to the defense of her own.

Cuba will inevitably be the cause of a great & momentous war between G.B. & the U.S. & for this, if we are a wise people (which we are not) we must prepare. As to Oregon, it is not worth the Red flannel which would be required to envelope our cartridges.

J. HAMILTON

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

1. A lawyer and planter, Hamilton served as a member of the U.S. House, 1822–29, and as governor of South Carolina, 1830–32. Initially a strong supporter of Andrew Jackson, he became an outspoken advocate of free trade and a leader of the states' rights party in South Carolina. Following the nullification crisis of 1833, Hamilton moved to Russell County, Ala. Enthusiastic in his support for Texas, he served as one of its European commercial agents and advocated its annexation to the United States.

2. A brigadier general in the Texas army and an experienced lawyer, James Pinckney Henderson served as attorney general, secretary of state, and agent to England and France for the Republic of Texas prior to his appointment in 1844 as special minister to negotiate a treaty of annexation with the United States. Elected governor of Texas in 1846, he fought in the Mexican War with

the rank of major general; later he served part of one term in the U.S. Senate, 1857–58.

3. Sam Houston and Thomas J. Rusk. A successful Georgia lawyer, Rusk moved to Texas in 1835; organized a company of volunteers for the Texas revolution; and served as inspector general of the Texas army from 1835 to 1836. A signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence, he served briefly as the Republic's first secretary of war in 1836; sat for one term in the Texas Congress, 1837–38; and served as chief justice of the Texas Supreme Court, 1838–42. He served in the U.S. Senate from 1846 until his death in 1857.

## TO ANDREW J. DONELSON

My Dear Sir: Washington City March 4th 1846

I have this day nominated you, to the Senate as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Prussia. I presume there will be no objection to your confirmation. *Mr Wheaton* our minister at that Court, understanding that it would be agreeable has asked to be recalled, so that in making your nomination, it has not been necessary to remove him. He will leave the Court about the first of May, and it is desireable that you should be there, about that time. In regard to your Secretary of legation, my opinions expressed in my letter addressed to you at Mobile are unchanged.[1] I am fully satisfied that the present Secretary[2] will be more useful to you, at least for some months after the commencement of your mission than any new one could be. Under this impression and after the receipt of your letter from Mobile,[3] my Private Secretary at my request addressed a letter to Mr R. I. Ingersoll of Connecticut, informing him that you would probably desire to retain the present incumbent for the present.[4] Your letter to *Mr Ingersoll* enclosed to me, has therefore not been forwarded to him.[5] If after a few months residence at the Court, you should desire a change of your Secretary, there would be no difficulty in effecting it. I am sure it is wise to retain the present Secretary at least for the present.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–AJD. Addressed to Nashville and marked "*Private*."

1. See Polk to Andrew J. Donelson, February 9, 1846.

2. Reference is to Theodore S. Fay.

3. See Andrew J. Donelson to Polk, February 20, 1846.

4. On the cover of Ralph I. Ingersoll to Polk, February 7, 1846, Polk's AE states that J. Knox Walker wrote Ingersoll on February 28, 1846. Walker's letter not found.

5. In his letter to Ingersoll of January 27, 1846, Donelson expressed his wish to have a fellow Tennessean appointed legation secretary.

TO JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir: Washington March 4th 1846

I have received your letter of the 23rd ultimo,[1] acknowledging the receipt on my account, of $200 from *E. P. McNeal* of Bolivar, to be applied towards the payment of the decree in favour of Gregory's estate against *Marshall T. Polk's* Heirs and also from Jonas E. Thomas a cash note of $80 the price of my horse sold by him.

In regard to my taxes, as also those of my mother[2] for last year (1845) it is proper to pay them. As to the charge against mother for arrears of taxes prior to 1845, my strong impression is, that it is erroneous. I think I paid all demands against her on that score up to the time I left. I would not say absolutely and positively, that I did, and yet my strong belief is, that I did so. If I did so I have receipts, but they are packed away among the papers which I left, so that it would be next to impossible for you to find them, without my presence. *Cook*[3] you know is a tax collector and rather a loose man in his manner of doing business. I know I paid him corporation taxes for mother—repeatedly, within the last few years, and I had no idea that any arrears were due. I do not desire however that the old lady shall be in any way troubled or disturbed about it, and if it is necessary to pay what is now demanded, you can do so, expressing in the receipt—that if it shall hereafter appear that they had been paid, the error is to be corrected.

I authorized you in a former letter[4] to draw on me, for the balance which may be necessary to pay off the decree against M.T. Polk's Heirs.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. See Thomas to Polk, February 23, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP.
2. Jane Knox Polk.
3. John M. Cooke.
4. See Polk to Thomas, February 17, 1846. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

FROM DAVID LEVY YULEE[1]

My Dear Sir Washn. March 4, '46

I send this to apprize you in advance of the purpose of our visit this evening. I have been desirous that the notice should take a shape best calculated to strengthen you some in the negociation. The great difficulty has arisen from an apprehension that the extreme section of the Oregon advocates, represented your opinions & feelings,

and an impression that your message was capable of being construed into an abandonment of compromise, which rendered it necessary for those who favored compromise to put themselves right upon the record. Being satisfied that your views were pacific, I was desirous that Mr Lewis[2] should be impressed with the same conviction, and with that view induced him to seek conversation with you.

The speech of Mr Haywood today[3] has done much to correct misapprehension.

D. L. YULEE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally and marked "Private." Polk's AE on the cover reads in part, "*Mr Yulee* & *Mr Senator Lewis* called on the evening of the day on which this letter bears date."

1. A St. Augustine lawyer, Yulee served as Florida's territorial delegate, 1841–45; as a member of the state constitutional convention in 1845; and as U.S. senator for two terms, 1845–51 and 1855–61.

2. A Montgomery lawyer and member of the Alabama House, 1825–27, Dixon H. Lewis sat in the U.S. House from 1829 until 1844, when he resigned to fill the U.S. Senate seat vacated by William R. King. Lewis was reelected and served until his death in 1848.

3. William H. Haywood, Jr., began his Senate speech on the Oregon question on March 4 and concluded it the following day. *Congressional Globe*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, *Appendix*, pp. 369–78.

## TO ISAAC T. AVERY

My Dear Sir: Washington City March 10th 1846

I was much gratified to receive your letter of the 21st of January, and should have acknowledged its receipt earlier, but for my constant and pressing official duties, which make it impossible for me to give proper attention to the letters of my numerous correspondents. The printed copy of the, "Journals of the Provincial Congress begun and holden at Charles-town, on thursday the first of June 1775," which you transmitted to me with your letter is a most interesting document.[1] The proceedings of that Congress exhibit in bold relief, the patriotic tone and noble bearing of its members. I was not before aware that my ancestor Col. Ezekiel Polk was a member of that Congress. I was fully sensible that the unwarrantable assaults made upon his character and memory, during the last existing canvass for the Presidency were false and calumnious. Of this I had ample testimony, and have now in my possession his original commission of *Captain* which he held under the authorities of South Carolina, and under which he served in the Revolutionary struggle. The Journal which you have forwarded to

me contains the official evidence of his election as a *Captain* by the Provincial Congress, of which he was a member. The name of your father is familiar to me, as one of the patriots of the Revolution.[2] If I am not mistaken he was one of those who participated actively in the celebrated meeting in Mecklenburg, who absolved themselves from all allegiance to the Brittish crown, and declared Independence on the 20th of May 1775.[3] The traditionary account which you state in your letter, he gave you of my Grand-father, with whom he was acquainted, and with who he acted in the Revolutionary struggle, but confirms the mass of testimony which my friends collected in 1844, establishing the same facts.

I thank you My Dear Sir: for your letter, and the copy of the Journal which you have been so kind as to send to me, and will carefully preserve them.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Seven Ponds, Burke Co., N.C.

1. Enclosure not found.
2. Waightstill Avery.
3. On May 19–20, 1775, Mecklenburg County militia delegates gathered at Charlotte, N.C., and declared their constituents' independence in a set of resolves that came to be known as the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. See also John H. Wheeler to Polk, January 30, 1846.

## TO JAMES PINCKNEY HENDERSON

Dear Sir: Washington City March 10th 1846

I have appointed *Malcomb G. Anderson*[1] of Texas, a Cadet at the Military Academy at West Point. He is the son of the *Hon. Kenneth L. Anderson*,[2] late Vice President of your Republic. As I am not informed of the precise place of residence of young *Anderson* or of his Post Office I take the liberty to transmit the appointment herewith to you, and request that you will cause it to be conveyed to him. I am not certain that his christian name is correctly given in the warrant. The person intended to be appointed, is the son of my old friend, your late lamented Vice-President, and should there be a mistake in the christian name, it can be corrected before he enters the Academy.

As soon as your Representatives are chosen, and shall have taken their seats in Congress, the State of Texas will be entitled to two additional Cadets, who will be appointed upon their nomination.

With my ardent good wishes for the prosperity of your young State, and for the success of your administration ....

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Austin, Tex.

1. Malcolm G. Anderson later served as a judge in San Antonio, Tex.

2. A native of North Carolina, Anderson resided in Bedford County, Tenn., before moving to San Augustine, Tex., in 1837; he served as a member of the Texas House, 1840–42, and as vice-president of the Republic of Texas, 1844–45.

## FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Dear Sir Bolivar T March 14 1846

I have just returned from Dr Caldwells. I stayed with him last night. Mrs. Caldwell[1] has received your letter of the 20th Ult.[2] She requested me to write you relative to the Drs Situation. Her distress is so great that she says she can not write.

When Saml P Caldwell[3] left home appearences were favorable, but of short duration. He has been gradually sinking & now much emaciated & very helpless without any change for the better; his Physians say his disease is Typhoid Neumonia. Dr Neely who went down with me as a friend & relative, thinks there is still some chance for a recovery; Dr Haywood of Brownsville has been with Dr Caldwell all the time for the last 10 days.[4]

If his Son Saml should be in Washington on the receipt of this letter, urge him to come home. If his Father dies he should be with his Mother. If he becomes Convalescent he should be at home, as it will be a long time before he can possibly be up, & able to go out of the house, and his mind is so engrossed with the welfare & prosperity of his farming opperations, he wold soon fret himself into a relapse. Although he has not been out of his bed or able to sit up for near ten weeks he never gave up looking after his Family enquiry until the last four or five days—his neighbors are very kind and attentive in their attentions.

E. P. McNeal

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on March 28, 1846; and his AE reads in part: "*Saml. P. Caldwell* had left for home March 22nd, 1846."

1. Lydia Eliza Polk, Polk's sister, married Silas M. Caldwell, a physician and planter in Haywood County.

2. Letter not found.

3. Samuel Polk Caldwell was the eldest son of Silas and Lydia Caldwell.

4. James Jackson Neely and Egbert Haywood. A first cousin to both Polk and McNeal, Neely practiced medicine in Hardeman County, Tenn.

## TO THOMAS H. BENTON

Dear Sir: Washington March 16th 1846

I return to you herewith, the volume of laws and the other documents which you submitted to me, on the subject of Brevet and Staff Rank. Concurring with yourself and the Committee on Military affairs of the Senate as to the course proper to be taken, a general order was issued on the 12th Instant, of which I enclose you a copy.[1]

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Enclosures not found. Polk's general order restored Andrew Jackson's general order of August 13, 1829, which granted regular army rank superiority over brevet rank. Benton and Polk acted in response to a memorial from 158 army officers in Texas dated December 12, 1845, and addressed to the President of the U.S. Senate. The memorial criticized the actions of Winfield Scott, who had issued orders recognizing the superiority of brevet rank.

## TO PRESTON KING[1]

Dear Sir: Washington March 16th 1846

I enclose to you herewith an extract from a letter received from James H. Thomas Esqr. to whom I had written for information concerning the claim of your constituent upon Dr. Tracy.[2] I return to you my letter of August 1839 to *Gov. Wright*.[3] Shortly after that letter was written I changed my residence to the Seat of the State Government, where I remained for two years. My attention was not afterwards called to the subject. Indeed it had wholly passed out of my mind until I received your note enclosing the letter of your constituent to yourself and my letter to Gov. Wright.[4] Mr Thomas's letter to me, a copy of which I enclose, conveys all the information which I possess on the subject. You will learn from it, that Dr. Tracy died in the winter of 1839–40, in insolvent circumstances.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. A lawyer in Ogdensburg, N.Y., King sat two terms in the New York Assembly, 1835–38; won four terms in the U.S. House, 1843–47 and 1849–53; and served one term as a Republican in the U.S. Senate, 1857–63.

2. See Thomas to Polk, January 18, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP.

3. Polk to Silas Wright, Jr., August 28, 1839.

4. King to Polk, December 13, 1845, and Joseph Ames to King, November 13, 1845. ALsS. DLC–JKP.

## FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD[1]

Buenos Ayres, March 18, 1846

Announcing his arrival at the blockaded port city, Bradford attributes the war-torn status of the region as having been "originated by French policy and prolonged by English cupidity and meddling." Speculates that the British, frustrated by the dominance of American cotton agriculture, "have turned their hopes upon the shores of the La Plata ....The virtual possession of this country is the ultimate object of England." Observes that if "the designs of England and France are penetrated, and a permanent peace is established a wide door will be opened for the enterprize of our people." Thinks that the United States "have a strong hold in the confidence and affection of the people who speak of the U.S. as the great Republic." Argues that the U.S. is poorly represented in the region, and that Juan Manuel de Rosas "has completely hoodwinked our venerable charge de affaires."[2] Expressing dismay over the dominance of Whigs in foreign postings, Bradford urges a policy that "when appointments are to be confered they should be confered upon the democracy." Also complains that the army and navy are "almost monopolized by Whigs especially the Navy with most of its younger officers."

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

1. Bradford served briefly in 1837 as editor of the *Nashville Union*; the following year he went to Puerto Rico as U.S. consul at St. Johns. In March 1845, Polk appointed him to the post of purser in the navy.

2. Governor of Buenos Ayres and dictator of Argentina, Rosas supported Manuel Oribe, former president of Uruguay and leader of the conservative *blancos*, in an eleven-year civil war against José Fructuoso Rivera, leader of the liberal *colorados*. A Virginia native, William Brent, Jr., served as a member of the state House of Delegates, 1810–11, and as chargé d'affaires to Buenos Ayres, 1844–46.

## FROM LEVIN H. COE[1]

Dr Sir, Memphis 20 March 1846

I know your time is much occupied & dislike to trouble you & would not in any ordinary case.

It is in regard to Com. Lavallette & A. B. Worford Civil Engineer.[2] Their whole correspondence has passed under my perusal. Worford if wrong that he did committed it unintentionally. He made all the concessions an honorable man could ask or give. But, Sir, these Gentlemen both are but in dust compared to other matters. The fact is Mjr Wofford is to be removed because he is in good faith for pushing on the yard. Allow me briefly to allude to some facts

1. Worford made out a plan which was approved.

2. This spectacled man O'Sullivan[3] was sent on here (by supplanting D. Morrison)[4] as 2nd Assistant who forthwith sent *his protest direct* to the Department & produced delay.

3. The contracts are let out at Washington last summer & not yet closed & many never will be at the prices.

4. Mr. Bancroft in his report speaks in terms that could have proceeded only from enmity to the yard.

5. I have reason to believe Com. Lavallette & Purser Harris[5] neither approve the Location for the yard.

6. O'Sullivan who commenced by throwing difficulties in the way, who *approved* & *aided* in framing Worfords letter to Comodore Lavallette which caused his dismissal from the yard is appointed by that same Lavallette to his vacancy.

The people here without distinction of party, seeing all this, seeing the jealousy of other sections north & south, feel that Commander Lavallette is giving them the death blow.

I say to you in all candor & sincerity that if Worford is removed, if Lavallette is permitted to remain it produces the worst state of things imaginable. No human means can breast the torrent. Take Lavallette away. Send us some man of common sense. Send us a friend of the work & make that work progress or every political friend you ever had will curse the day that the Depot was established.

I cannot close without noticing the latter part of Lavallettes letter to the Secretary of the Navy, of this date. He charges in substance that Worford has exerted the influence he has acquired here &c. to place him Lavallette in a wrong position.

This is a cruel injustice. I have never seen Mr Worford. I learn from all who do know him that he is a modest, unassuming man, retiring in his manners. I formed my opinion of this matter cautiously from the best sources of information. I have not heard nor do I believe Mr Worford has made the slightest effort to injure him.

I got sight of the letters by especial request & charged not to show them to others. I made this application after I had sought & had interview with Mr J Geo Harris for the purpose of trying to get the difficulty settled.

L. H. Coe

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on April 1, 1846, and replied to it on April 2, 1846.

1. A popular lawyer and Democrat from Somerville, Coe sat two terms in the Tennessee Senate, 1837–41, and presided over that body as Speaker during the

latter part of his second term.

2. Elie A. F. Lavallette and A. B. Warford. Joining the navy in 1812, Lavallette achieved the rank of captain in 1840. Brother-in-law of James and Simon Cameron, Warford served as chief engineer of the Memphis navy yard.

3. O'Sullivan is not identified further.

4. David Morison served as assistant engineer of the Memphis navy yard from 1846 until 1849.

5. A staunch New England Democrat, J. George Harris had been associated with the New London *Political Observer* (Conn.), the *New Bedford Gazette*, the Boston *Bay State Democrat*, and the Boston *Morning Post* before assuming the editorship of the *Nashville Union* on February 1, 1839. In March 1843 Harris received a commission from Secretary of State Daniel Webster to serve as special commercial agent of the United States for American tobacco sales in Europe. Polk appointed him to a pursership in the navy in late 1845.

## FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

My Dear Sir, Naples March 20th 1846

I this day received your letter of the 29th Jan'y, and am at a loss to account for its long delay. It should have reached me by the 1st of this month. I am truly gratified that the Treaty has been received, and am rejoiced to receive the information that it meets your approval and will probably meet the approbation of the Senate. The information has removed from my mind many anxious thoughts, and dispelled various conjectures which the immagination had conjured up, forming fanciful grounds of objection to the Treaty. I am astonished to learn that my Dispatch No 2 had not been received, and have prepared a duplicate to forward by the mail which will convey this letter, but will retain it until I prepare a copy of the correspondence which took place preceeding and during the negotiation. All of which will be sent by the Steamer from Liverpool the 4th of May, there not being time to prepare them in season for the Steamer of the 4th of April, since the reception of your letter. This letter will necessarily be a short and hasty one, this being the last day to be in time for the regular mail for Liverpool. There is one little thing which I desire to call your attention to, and ask your advice concerning. When the Treaty was concluded and signed, I was beset by various underlings belonging to the several Departments for presents in the shape of money, they stating that it was the custom on the conclusion of a Treaty with any Foreign power, for the Minister or Chargé d'Affares to make such donations, which I done, though before doing so I requested the Consul,[1] in a private way, to ascertain whether or not such was the custom, and found it was so. Now, I have heard so much in former times, for instance in the case of Maj Eaton[2] and

others, of complaints having been made and Government refusing to pay contingent expences of some kind, of what discription I know not, that I feel a hesitancy in presenting such items of account, although my position forced me to make the expenditure. True the amount is very trifling, not in all amounting to more than one hundred dollars and probably, not that much. Still I prefer consulting you before making the charge in the bill of my contingent expences. There is another thing. I felt it my duty, and if necessary the Consul will state his conviction of the necessity, of my conveying the Treaty from this to Paris, in view of the uncertainty of the mail conveyance through this Country, and particularly for so large a package as the Treaty formed. Then will the Government allow me my necessary expences? Understand me, I do not intend to make any demand for these expenditures, but merely ask your advice, and will act accordingly.

I was deeply mortified and astounded, to learn that some evil disposed person or rather *villian*, had propogated the charge against me, which you kindly mention in the closing paragraph of your letter. You mention it as having come from New York. Now will you permit me to make a sugestion, in way of question. Don't you know that the people of N. York, from the most worthy, intelligent and dignified gentleman of which the City can boast, down to the most obscure vagabond, consider it fair and legitimate, to give birth to every species of detraction of any one in office if they can by that means obtain his removal from office or bring him into disrepute. Now it may be that this charge bears the marks of such an origin, for *surely* it can claim no kindred with truth. I do not pretend that I have been able to transform my whole nature since my residence abroad, or put on the cowl of a monk. But I do say, and in making the assertaion I defy the world, that I have not in any case compromised the dignity of my position, or indulged in any species of disipation to that extent which would mark me as an object of observation, and more particularly in the way which you mention. I say this much to you in my defence, because I know you mentioned the matter in the warmest spirit of kindness, to any other one I would have treated it with the contempt which it deserved. I did sincerely hope and trust, that I would be able to gather some rest from the pursuit of slander, when I had in some measure silenced the complaints of my creditors, but it seems I have an enemy in every bush. I thank you again for having made mention of the matter, as it will teach me the necessity of surrounding myself with double guards, and look with an eye of suspicion, caution and distrust upon every American whom it may be my *luck* to meet.

I dislike to trouble you, but it is very strange, that I cannot re-

ceive the "Union."[3] I have not received a number of it since the 25th of November, whereas the New York Herald comes regularly by the Havre Packets twice a month. My impression is, that the papers are thrown into the State Department and there neglected. Will you ask Knox to see Heiss[4] and request him to send my paper to the Dispatch Agent in New York, marked to go by the Havre Packet. The want of the Union is a source of great annoyance to me. I get no information from Washington, except through the letter writers to the Herald, and their statements are so contradictory, that it pains the mind to read them, instead of giving satisfaction.

If we have war with England, you must grant me the privilege to return home and mingle in the strife, for it may probably be the only opportunity I will ever have of receiving a little honor or some distinction. Let Mother know you have heard from me.

WILLIAM H. POLK

[P.S.] Excuse this letter. I have not time to copy and correct.[5]

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he replied to this letter on April 29, 1846.

1. A Maryland native, Alexander Hammett held the post of U.S. consul at Naples from 1809 until 1860.

2. A strong supporter of Andrew Jackson, John H. Eaton of Tennessee resigned his Senate seat in 1829 to become secretary of war in Jackson's cabinet. Washington society's refusal to accept Eaton's second wife, Peggy O'Neale, led to his resignation two years later. Eaton received appointment as governor of Florida Territory, 1834–35, and then as minister to Spain, 1836–40.

3. Washington *Union*.

4. A native of Bucks County, Penn., John P. Heiss formed a partnership with Thomas W. Hogan in 1842 to publish the *Nashville Union*; he became the business manager of the Washington *Union* in May 1845.

5. Polk wrote his postscript at the top of the first manuscript page.

## FROM THOMAS SLIDELL[1]

My Dear Sir, Waxhaws, March 20, 1846

Advices were recd here of *28th* ulto. by a merchant house of prominent standing & who are supposed to be on an intimate footing with those in power in Mexico, to the effect that it was considered certain that my brother[2] would very soon be officially recd. at the metropolis.

I thought it proper to communicate this to you, & you will best know what reliance should be placed upon it. My information as to these advices comes to me in a very direct manner & from a responsible source.

THOMAS SLIDELL

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

1. A New York native and graduate of Yale College, Slidell established a successful law practice in New Orleans in the 1820's. He served as an associate justice of Louisiana's supreme court, 1845–52, and as chief justice, 1852–55.

2. John Slidell.

## FROM CAMPBELL P. WHITE[1]

My Dear Sir New York 21 March 1846

I regret exceedingly the course pursued by some of our political friends in the Senate on the questio vexata,[2] which now agitates the public councils, and indeed the whole country. Because I am very apprehensive it will weaken, if not entirely destroy, the impression that has been produced in England by the firm dignified and yet conciliatory tone of the Executive government from which we were just beginning as I conceive to reap the fruits. I am decidedly the advocate of Peace with England but all my experience leads to the conviction, that Peace can alone be preserved, by maintaining a high and lofty tone with that arrogant people. If the Senate pass Resolutions in favor of giving notice that the joint occupation will cease in twelve months and at the same time recommending an adjustment by compromise I much fear all hope of accommodation is at an end. War will take place if at all by our chivalric orators magnifying the power & resources of England and deprecating the capacity of our own country for offensive & defensive warfare.

This course of proceeding is to be more lamented because I presume few of our Statesmen of any party would venture to assert that we can accept consistently with the national honor less favorable terms than those magnanimously proposed by you to the British Minister[3] & which were so promptly rejected without the sanction and as it now appears the approbation of his Government. By the last advices the language of the British Press seems to have changed and evidently a more hostile spirit prevails than before. I submit with great deference to your better judgment whether as a measure of *precaution* and of *policy:* the Executive should not immediately recommend to Congress, the defence of the seaboard & great Lakes at the most vulnerable points, the calling into the public service 100,000 Militia; and the placing of all the Naval force of the Country forthwith in Commission. This will be more effectual in securing Peace than all the arguments which genius can devise or Patriotism dictate.

CAMPBELL P. WHITE

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

1. A New York merchant, White emigrated from Ireland to the United States in 1816 and won election as a Democrat to the U.S. House, where he served from 1829 until his resignation and subsequent retirement in 1835.

2. A variation of the Latin phrase *vexata quaestio*, meaning a question discussed but unresolved.

3. Sir Richard Pakenham.

## FROM JOHN LAW[1]

My Dear Sir Vincennes March 22d 1846

I need not say that I have read with regret the remarks of my friend Hannegan in the Senate of the U States in his late controversy with Senator Haywood,[2] and I but speak the voice of all his friends in this quarter, when I express my own feelings. I am, and for years have been, very devotedly and sincerely attached to him, and the sentiment has been reciprocal on his part. Hence I have felt a deep solicitude in his fame character and usefulness at Washington. He has a good heart if left to the generous impulses of his own nature, but he is rash and choleric, the child of impulse, and as likely to go off wrong as right when aroused. Yet twenty four hours reflection, his own sole reflection, will always cause him to make an amend when injustice has been done and I have no doubt now he already regrets the language used, language the full force and effect of which he did not perceive or appreciate in the ardor of debate.

I have but one wish my Dear Sir to gratify, and that is to see you and your administration sustained by the Country. Thus far I find no fault with it. None can be found. I should perhaps have hesitated a little in proposing the 49th paralell for the *third time* to Great Britain, but it has turned out well for our interests that it was done. Her minister[3] has rejected the proposition, and we are left as we were. Arbitration I consider out of the question. Our title to 54'40 I consider "clear and indisputable."[4] We have placed ourselves "rectus in curia"[5] before the world, and have nothing else to do but give the notice.

But suppose Great Britain now, disdaining the authority of Mr Packenham to reject the offer of our Government, and Sir Robert Peel more than intimates he erred, renew the proposition herself, offer the 49th paralell as the boundary precisely as offered by us. Ought the proposition coming from her to be contemptuously rejected. I think not. I do not believe we could place ourselves honorably before the world in doing so. And our position before all Europe, should be one we

can maintain, proudly honorably maintain. The Executive on such a question must not be driven to the wall as my friend Hannegan would drive him were his counsels to be followed. Something must be left to the discretion, something to his judgment. The proposition coming from Great Britain cannot be treated with contempt and contumely, especially when they but renew our own terms of settlement, three times offered. It must be considered, it must be received. What action should be had on it is not for me to say. I am for the whole of oregon, every inch of it, but yet as a government we must preserve our consistency. We must act like a great nation, on a great question, and so act as to justify ourselves to all Christendom. I again repeat it is not for me to say what is to be done in such a case. Whether the President and his Cabinet would act on the proposition themselves taking the responsibility, or leave it to be considered by the Constitutional advisors of the President, the Senate, and to act on their determination in the premises. All I mean to say is, that whatever may be the action of our Government ultimately, the proposition of the 49th paralell as a boundary coming *from* Great Britain herself must be seriously and solemly considered, not rejected, and so thinks every reflecting and intelligent man in the west, where the war fever is probably as rife as any where in the U States. The door to negotiation must not be slammed in John Bulls face. If he now we have done talking, wishes to say any thing he should be heard.

I have written you this and marked it *private* because I believe the true state of feeling in the west is not known, or rather is perhaps unintentionally misrepresented. We have Hotspurs here, who would fight any body, most of all John Bull, but the reflecting intelligent portion of our people look on war as an evil to be avoided ever, except at the sacrafice of national honor. They are noble and generous as well as brave, and willing to make some sacrifice in a spirit of peace, when that sacrifice carries with it no disgrace. Excuse this long letter and believe me truly ....

JOHN LAW

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

1. An Indiana lawyer and legislator, Law served as a delegate to the 1844 Democratic National Convention, as a judge for the Seventh Circuit Court of Indiana, and as a two-term member of the U.S. House, 1861–65.

2. On March 5, 1846, Edward A. Hannegan responded to William H. Haywood's speech on the Oregon question by denouncing any proposed compromise over the territory.

3. Sir Richard Pakenham.

4. Paraphrase from the resolutions of the 1844 Democratic National Con-

vention: "That our title to the whole of the territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable."

5. Latin phrase meaning "right in court."

## FROM BURRELL B. TAYLOR[1]

Sir: Newark, Ohio, March 23d 1846

When I said to you at parting, some days since, that I would write you, on my return home, I supposed you would be glad to hear an impartial account of the state of public opinion and feeling on certain subjects connected with your administration; and it is with a view to communicate these that I now write. On the cars and in the Stages, "Oregon" was the constant theme of remark and debate. It was easy to perceive that opinion and feeling sat strongly in favor of the entire Territory. But I had no opportunity to judge of the feeling of the masses, until I had got some distance this side of Wheeling. Meeting with an old acquaintance in Guernsey county,[2] in whom I had great confidence, he told me that the feeling of indignation was strong against the Senate, for the course it was taking, and that those Senators who, in popular language, argued the British side of the question, were condemned in no measured terms. As I passed along, and had opportunities for inquiry and observation, I found the accounts he gave me fully confirmed. At Zanesville I got upon the outside of the coach with the driver, who, I soon learned, recognized me; and as a specimen of popular feeling, allow me to tell you what he said. "What," said he, "will that *infernal* Senate do about the Oregon question?" I replied that it was impossible precisely to say, but hoped it would do its duty to the country and sustain the recommendations of the President. "Well then," said he, "why don't they do it at once?" "But, he continued, I believe one half of them would give away half the state of Ohio, if Queen Victoria would get some of her whelps to cry out war! war! Aint we going to claim our own because somebody talks about war! Let her go to war if she dares, and we'rl pretty soon snap up Canada for her" &c.

I assure you, Sir, that is but a specimin of the general feeling of the masses, and I may add, that the people generally have confidence in your firmness and integrity of purpose, and believe that you will, at all events, stand by your message as it is popularly understood, that is, that the proposition of 49º is withdrawn *finally*, and that our title to the whole is sustained by "irrefragible facts and arguments."[3] In this position, rest assured, the people will sustain you with enthusiasm.

You will allow me, Sir, I trust, to say one or two other things, without taking offence, where none is intended. I thought I observed, in

certain quarters, at Washington a lurking wish that the Democracy of Ohio might *not* be successful in the conflict upon which we are just about entering.[4] They seemed fearful that success might give us a more commanding position, and accordingly I saw a number of efforts, in quarters where better things might be expected, to stifle the voice of our true Democrats, disregard their reasonable requests, and discourage all their efforts to promote our great cause. The retaining a whig in office at Cleveland is *one* instance.[5] It also seemed to me, but I may be mistaken, that there were influences at work to prevent any Ohio democrat from getting any valuable favor at the hands of this administration. I am very confident that we are neither properly understood, nor rightly appreciated at Washington. I am also confident, that the part taken by the Ohio Delegation, at the Baltimore Convention has been carefully concealed from you, or totally misrepresented. Did you *know* what was there done by Col. Medary,[6] I am satisfied that some things would have been different from what we now find them. But he is too proud and sensitive a man, ever to say one word on the subject. Allow me to say Sir, in all frankness, that *it was the Ohio delegation, and nobody else, that nominated the President at the late Baltimore convention*, and at the head of that delegation was *Samuel Medary* the chief advisor and actor. It is time *some truths* should be known. Yet if Col. Medary knew that I have written this, I know that it might wound him, but I have said it here, even at the risk of his displeasure, because injustice is *too hard to be borne*. "Fiat justicia, ruat caelum."[7] It is not for myself I say this, but in behalf of as a noble and true hearted a democracy, as lives upon the globe. The private history of the Baltimore convention, has not yet been written.

B. B. Taylor

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

1. A prominent Democrat from Newark, Ohio, Taylor served as consul to Buenos Ayres from 1846 to 1847.

2. Not identified further.

3. Quotation from Polk's First Annual Message.

4. Reference to the statewide elections of 1846.

5. Taylor probably refers to patronage in the customs house at Cleveland.

6. A native of Pennsylvania and printer by trade, Samuel Medary edited the Columbus *Ohio Statesman* and in that position exercised great influence among the Ohio Democracy; he subsequently served first as governor of Minnesota Territory, 1857–58, and then of Kansas, 1859–60.

7. Quotation from William Murray, First Earl of Mansfield, translated as: "Let justice be done, though the sky falls."

## FROM FREDERICK P. STANTON[1]

Dear Sir Washington 26 March 1846

My intercourse with Mr Bancroft leads me to believe that he is unwilling to do any thing at Memphis except to build the Rope-walk.[2] I understand him as designing to postpone indefinitely all other buildings and preparations, at least such is the inference to be drawn from his hesitation and indecision on the subject. You will do me a favor to inform me of the determination of the Department, whether the law of Congress will be executed, or whether the influence of the Executive will be used to thwart the execution of the law and finally to repeal it.

I have not at any time doubted your views on the subject; but how far the manifestly unfavorable disposition of the Secretary may operate upon your views and action is what I desire to know. Col Morison will present this and inform you of the position of things at the Department.

FRED. P. STANTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Polk's AEI on the cover reads, in part: "I saw the Secretary of the Navy, immediately after Receiving the within letter, and in presence of *Mr Morrison*, gave orders that the work at Memphis should proceed at once, & that contracts for that purpose should be closed at the lowest rate, the bids made authorized."

1. A Memphis lawyer, Stanton served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1845–55, and as governor of the Kansas Territory, 1858–61.

2. Reference is to the Memphis Navy Yard.

## TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir: Washington City March 28th 1846

I learn by a letter received from *W. S. Pickett & Co.* of New Orleans,[1] that they paid a draft of $149.64 drawn by you, being the balance due to you by me, on your account forwarded to me some time ago. I have written to *Pickett & Co.*[2] to remit to me the balance of amount of sales of my cotton, after retaining the price of bagging, rope and other articles for my plantation ordered by you. When you visit my plantation and settle with the overseer,[3] I wish you to draw a bill at sight on me instead of drawing on *Pickett & Co.* for any balance you may have. If you can collect *Harry's* hire reduce the amt. paid to the plantation, the balance will be small. Whatever may be received, draw on me and your draft will be paid at sight.

I have heard nothing lately of the health of *Mrs. Campbell*. I hope it may be the case that she may yet recover. Will you write to me

when you expect to visit your plantation again, and when you will be at mine?

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.
1. William S. Pickett to Polk, March 20, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP.
2. Polk to William S. Pickett, March 28, 1846. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.
3. John A. Mairs.

## TO WILLIAM C. TATE[1]

Dear Sir: Washington March 28th 1846

I send you the enclosed Report of *Marshall's*[2] proficiency and standing in college[3] assuming it would be agreeable to his mother and yourself to receive it. The Report was made at a late examination of the students of the college.

*Marshall* is a boy of much sprightliness and fair talents, and if he could be induced to apply himself to his studies, would make a distinguished man. He is however so full of life and spirit and delights so much in his amusements, that it is very difficult to confine him to his studies, or induce him to apply himself to them. I have in the kindest manner repeatedly lectured him on the subject, and think my advice has had some effect upon him. Still as you will perceive from the Report, there is much room for improvement. He is much more steady now than he was six months ago, and I hope as he grows older he will see the necessity, and properly appreciate the importance of further improvement in his habits of application. I am pleased with the discipline and course of instruction of the college and do not think that he could be placed a better institution.

I suggest to you that it might have much influence with him if you were to write a kind letter to him urging him to apply himself to his studies. You might inform him that I had forwarded to you the Report of his examination and standing in college. If he knows that the semi-annual Reports of his standing in college, are transmitted to his mother and yourself, it will I think stimulate him to increased exertion to stand well in his class. He is a fine boy, and I take very great interest in his welfare. He is now at that period of life, when the habits which he may contract will have a decided influence on his future character and usefulness. I see him often and I think it fortunate that he is so near me as to be under my immediate control. He is well disposed and willingly obeys any thing I tell him to do, except to give more attention to his studies. He could if he would be the first scholar in his class.

If his mother and yourself will write him on the subject, I have great confidence that he will very soon do so.

Say to his mother that he will certainly visit her next summer.

With the kind respects of Mrs. Polk and myself to *Mrs Tate* . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Morganton, N.C.

1. A Morganton physician, Tate married his first cousin Laura Wilson Polk, the widow of Marshall Tate Polk. Polk served as the executor of his brother Marshall's estate and as the guardian of his nephew, Marshall T. Polk, Jr.

2. Enclosure not found. Marshall T. Polk, Jr., was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1848 and was graduated in 1852 with the rank of second lieutenant.

3. Georgetown College.

## TO WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Sir: Washington City March 29th 1846

Your letter of the 18th ultimo, was received on the 21st Instant. You say that you will forward a duplicate of your lost or missing despatch by the next steamer. I regret that you did not send it by the last steamer. *Mr Buchanan* expresses much surprise that neither the original nor a duplicate of it has been received. Your Treaty has not yet been taken up for ratification by the Senate, but I am assured by the Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations[1] that it will be in the course of the next week. He anticipates that it will be ratified. The ratification will be forwarded to you by the first steamer after it occurs.

The Oregon question is still under debate in the Senate, on the question of giving the *notice* to terminate the Convention of the 6th of August 1827. The House passed the *notice* by a vote of more than three to one. In the Senate, though a decided majority are known to be in favour of the *notice*, the question has been much embarrassed, and great delay produced by the course taken by *Mr Calhoun*. A better feeling is however now prevailing and it may be regarded as certain that it will pass, in the course of a very few days in some form, and the probability is that the House Resolution will be concurred in, without change. The delay has been unfortunate because it is calculated to produce an erroneous impression in England & throughout Europe, that serious divisions exist on the question in this country.

Calculating on our division Great Brittain will probably become more arrogant in her pretentions & less disposed to do us justice. That Power for the last two centuries never was known to do justice to any country with which she had a controversy when that country assumed

a supplicating attitude or was on her knees before her. The only way to treat *John Bull* is to treat him firmly and look him straight in the eye, to demand nothing that is not right and submit to nothing that is wrong.[2] I regret to say that the course of the Senate has not been as bold and firm as I could have desired. In the end however I have reason to believe that they will do what is proper. You will see from our newspapers that on the 24th Instant I communicated to the Senate a special message, recommending that suitable provision be made, to place the country in a state of defense.[3] This I did as you will see as a precautionary measure & not that I apprehend an immediate rupture if at all. Our relations with Mexico are unchanged since I last wrote you, as you will see by reference to my special message. My administration, I am flattered with the belief, has thus far, commanded a reasonable share of the confidence of the country, and I hope so to conduct it for the future as to deserve that confidence. The opposition in and out of Congress have been less violent in their assaults, than they were upon *Genl. Jackson's* or Mr *Van Buren's* administrations. How long this may continue to be the case, no one, of course can tell.

Our brother-in-law *Dr. Caldwell* has been extremely ill for more than two months. About the middle of January he was supposed to be recovering, and his son *Saml. P. Caldwell* came to Washington to spend a few weeks. A week ago he received intelligence that his father's situation was very critical and left immediately for home. My information since he left, renders it highly probably that his father would be dead before he reached home. Sister *Eliza* writes that the physicians thought his case almost hopeless. She is of course in great distress. Mother and all the rest of our relations as far as I know are in good health.

*Edwin Polk*[4] has been here about a month, and speaks of leaving on tomorrow. He tells me he will write to you to day. *Majr. Bills* and his daughter[5] are here on their return from the North. They will spend only two or three days with us. *Marshall* is at the Georgetown College, and is growing rapidly and doing well. He is not as studious as I could desire him to be. He will I hope improve in this respect as he grows older. If he could be induced to apply himself to his studies he would make a distinguished man. I hope to hear from you by every steamer.

I think you may calculate to receive the ratification of your Treaty, by the steamer which will go out on the 1st of May.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Naples and marked "*Private*."

1. A lawyer, farmer, and stockman from Chillicothe, Ohio, William Allen won election as a Democrat to one term in the U.S. House in 1833 and sat in the U.S. Senate from 1837 until 1849.

2. Paraphrase from Andrew Jackson's Fifth Annual Message, December 3, 1833: "Seeking nothing that is not right and determined to submit to nothing that is wrong . . . ."

3. See James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1902*(10 vols.; Washington, D.C.: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1903), IV, pp. 426–28.

4. A Hardeman County lawyer and farmer, Edwin F. Polk was the youngest child of Ezekiel Polk and was twenty-two years younger than his nephew, James K. Polk.

5. John H. Bills and daughter, Mary Caroline. A merchant and postmaster at Bolivar, Tenn., Bills married Ezekiel P. McNeal's sister, Prudence Tate McNeal on September 9, 1823. Bills and McNeal formed a business partnership in Bolivar in the late 1820's. Bills' daughter is not identified further.

## TO JAMES McDOWELL[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington March 31st 1846

My indispensible engagements have prevented an earlier answer to your note of the 21st Instant.[2] The late *Felix Grundy* left at his death but one son who has since died.[3] He has several grand sons two of whom bear his name.[4] If your friend *Doct. J. Warren Brown* of this city,[5] shall as you state he desires to do, present a Hickory cane to either, and shall think proper to entrust it to my care, I will cause it to be conveyed to him. The Hickory cane which he proposes to present to me, it will give me great pleasure to accept, as a mark of the respect of the donor. Will you be pleased to convey to Dr. Brown my thanks, for the evidence thus tendered of his regard.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. McDowell served as governor of Virginia, 1842–46, and won election to three terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1846–51.

2. ALS. DLC–JKP.

3. Mentor for Polk's legal training and early political career, Felix Grundy served as chief justice of Kentucky's supreme court prior to moving to Nashville in 1807. He won election as a War Democrat to two terms in the U.S. House, 1811–14; sat in the Tennessee House for two terms, 1815–19; and served in the U.S. Senate from 1829 until 1838, when he resigned to become U.S. attorney general. In 1839 Grundy returned to the U.S. Senate and served until his death in December 1840. James P. Grundy, a prominent Nashville lawyer, died on May 6, 1844.

4. Felix Grundy, Jr., and Felix Grundy Mayson. Mayson received commission as a second lieutenant in the marine corps in November 1845.

5. Not identified further.

# APRIL

TO WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 2nd 1846

I have not heard from you since I transmitted to you a midshipman's warrant for your son *Thomas*.[1] I hope to be able to make equal provision for *James* in some other way, before the close of my term. I sieze a moment from my constant engagements to say, that it is probable that an Indian commission will be instituted in the course of a few weeks, to investigate claims under the Treaty of 1835, with the cherokees. It may if instituted continue for a year, or for a shorter or longer time. The commissioners would be required to visit the nation in the West, and would have to spend a part of their time at Washington. There have been two or three commissions heretofore, of one of which *Majr. Eaton* was a member, but they have left the business unfinished. In the event such a commission should be instituted, and that fact will be determined in a short time, I thought it probable that you might be willing to be one of the commissioners. If you would, I desire that you will write to me to that effect immediately. My brother-in-law *John W. Childress*[2] will inform you of the embarrassments which surround me,

and of my sincere desire to gratify any wishes you may have, as far as I can do so with propriety.

It is possible that the Indian commission of which I speak may not be instituted, but the probabilities are that it will be.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Williamson County, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. Polk to Childress, February 9, 1846.

2. A younger brother of Sarah Polk, Childress lived in Murfreesboro where he practiced law.

## TO LEVIN H. COE

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 2nd 1846

If I have not written to you heretofore, it has not been because of any abating of our long continued friendship on my part, but because of my constant and increasing official labours from which I have not a single hour's respite. In truth I am compelled almost entirely to give up the attempt to write to my friends, as I would desire to do. I have not written a dozen letters in that number of weeks. I seize a moment to write to you now, in answer [to] your letter of the 20th ultimo, in relation to the Memphis Navy Yard, and the difficulty which has taken place between *Com. Lavallette* and the *Civil Engineer*.[1] You [...][2] in your opinion that *Mr Bancroft* has some feelings of hostility to that yard. On the contrary he has ever manifested a deep interest in it. Difficulties have arisen, which could not have been foreseen, which have produced delay. It was the duty of the Government to make contracts for the work at the lowest rates. Proposals were accordingly invited by a public advertisement in the usual mode. The lowest bids which were of course accepted, have in several instances not been executed by the bidders. Finding this to be the case, and that the completion of the work was to be postponed for an indefinite period, the Secretary of the Navy has adopted measures to have the work progress, at the lowest practicable rates. Assistant *Engineer Morrison*[3] who left here a few days ago, will inform you of the steps which have been taken, and which I hope may be satisfactory. My intention is to have the works at Memphis constructed at the earliest possible period, and at the same time with the least cost to the Government. In regard to the misunderstanding between the commandant of the yard & the engineer, that has probably arisen from a want of proper knowledge of their respective rights and duties, and steps have been taken to correct the error into which either may have fallen in this respect. I hope no further

difficulty of the kind will arise for the future.

I would be glad My Dear Sir, if my time permitted to write you much of public affairs as they are transpiring here. The question of the *Notice* on the Oregon question you will see is still under debate in the Senate. I regret the delay, but feel conscious that I have discharged my duty to the country & must leave it to Congress to discharge theirs. I will add however that the great delay which has occurred has in my judgement increased the embarrassment by which the subject is surrounded. I would write you about other matters, but am called to other duties. I shall be pleased to hear from you, whenever your leizure may permit.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Memphis, Tenn., and marked "*Private.*"

1. A. B. Warford.
2. Word or words illegible.
3. David Morison. See Frederick P. Stanton to Polk, March 26, 1846.

## TO A. O. P. NICHOLSON

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 2nd 1846

If I have failed to answer several letters which I have received from you, it is because of my constant and unceasing official duties from which I have not an hour's respite. I receive numerous letters from my friends daily but have not written a dozen in that many weeks. In truth I am compelled to give up all idea, of answering letters addressed to me. I seize a moment now to say that I have the same high opinion of our friend *Blackwell*,[1] that you express in your letter of the 27th of February,[2] and sincerely sympathizing with him in his condition, would be glad to serve him, if I could do so, with propriety. You can scarcely have a conception however, of the pressure for office, and the embarrassments which surround me in dispensing the public patronage. We have twenty eight States in the Union, and there are usually half a dozen, and often twenty applicants, to fill any vacancy which is worth having. All cannot be served, and I most sincerely wish that I had no office to bestow. The locality of the applicants and geographical considerations are constantly urged. One section of the Union insist they have never had any of the Federal offices, and all other considerations being equal that they should be gratified. The fact that Tennessee has furnished two Presidents, and that some subordinate appointments have been taken from that State, are constantly urged as reasons, why the patronage should be bestowed on other States. In the midst of these difficulties (though knowing as I do, that Tennessee

is yet short of her proportion of Federal offices) it is yet not in my power without giving great dissatisfaction to other States, to prefer her citizen over others.

In regard to Mr Turny's[3] speech in the Senate, to which you allude, I knew nothing of his intention to make it, or of its contents until I saw it published in the papers.

The *Oregon* debate still continues as you see in the Senate. I regret the delay to decide the question of *Notice*, and have a strong conviction that the hesitation of Congress, and the course which the debate has taken, will involve the subject of the Oregon controversy in additional embarrassment. Had Congress acted promptly upon the recommendations of my anual message, it would in my opinion have been far better. I have however discharged my duty & must leave Congress to discharge theirs, according to their sense of propriety. One thing, however is certain & that is, that Great Brittain was never known to do justice to any country, with which she had a controversy, when that country was in an attitude of supplication or on her knees before her. But I find myself running into the Oregon question, which I cannot attempt in the limits of a letter, hastily written as this is. The probability is that the *Notice* will be *at last* passed in some form by the Senate, but how soon, it is impossible to tell. This letter is written very hastily and is of course intended for yourself alone.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. NHi. Addressed to Nashville and marked "*Private*."

1. A Democrat from Athens, Tenn., Julius W. Blackwell won election to the U.S. House from the Fourth District in 1839 and from the Third District in 1843.

2. See Nicholson to Polk, February 27, 1846. ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia.

3. Hopkins L. Turney.

## FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir, Columbia Tenn Apl. 4th 1846

I went & measured your mothers pavement myself & found an error of 34 1/2 feet against her, which I had corrected, & thereby reduced her old tax from $50 to $37.72. I paid this sum $37.72 old tax; $34 tax for 1845 & I gave her $50 in all $121.72 & for which sum I inclose her receipt.[1] She expresses some fear that you will think her extravagant. I endeavored to remove her apprehensions, to do which I had to promise to give you the items of expenditure that you might see what they were for. She is in good health except a cold, which does not make her sick

but a little uncomfortable. Your other friends are all well. I also paid your corporation Tax of 1845 of $12.50.

I certainly have but an imperfect knowledge of things at Washington. Yet as advised I deeply regret the manner in which our Congress is proceeding. The great questions for their consideration were fully discussed in 1844 and decided & they have but to do what their masters, the people, *have ordered*. This is a time for action, not for speaking.

We small men feel like we would do great things if we were in power. I feel now that I should like to have the floor of Congress for a little while, just to read a homily to some of those patriotic democrats with their "masterly inactivity."[2]

It is truly astonishing that to this late hour so little is done, when so much is to be done & when it is so plain what should be done. The views of the President have been made known to the people & approved—Congress should promptly carry them out.

But you have no leisure for my sage lucidations.

I forwarded you a receipt in full for the Gregory decree[3] & drew for balance of which I advised you at the time. McNeil's Executor[4] recovered a decree against Dr. Hays at our Chancery Court.

Of the effects of Cooper Caruthers & Co.[5] (to which Dr. H. is entitled to one third) there is a judgt. in Miss. (of which I have a certified record) for about $9000 against Berry Gillespie & Co. now of Texas.[6] Berry Gillispie is now at Washington or is going there soon, whether for office or not I do not know. I have suggested to Dr. H. to write to Knox.[7] I do not know whether he has or not. I feel so much for the Dr. that I would do anything that I could justly do to serve him, and hope you will therefore excuse me for asking you to bear the fact in mind, & to make any suggestion that may be profitable, of which you will be the best judge.

Mrs. Thomas[8] has been quite ill for some weeks but is now recovering. Remember me kindly to Mrs. P.

JAMES H. THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter and enclosure on April 12, 1846.

1. Jane Knox Polk's receipt dated March 31, 1846. DS. DLC–JKP.

2. Thomas refers to the actions of the U.S. Senate on the Oregon question. The quotation is from a January 24, 1843, speech on Oregon by John C. Calhoun.

3. Thomas Gregory's unsigned receipt dated March 11, 1846. D. DLC–JKP.

4. Not identified further.

5. Not identified further.

6. A lawyer from Carroll County, Barry Gillespie sat two terms in the

Tennessee House, 1827–31, representing Carroll, Dyer, Gibson, and Obion counties. He later removed to Texas, and in 1842 Sam Houston appointed him a general agent of the Texas government at New Orleans.

7. Joseph Knox Walker.
8. Margaret Stephens Thomas.

## TO LYDIA ELIZA POLK CALDWELL

Dear Sister: Washington City [April 6, 1846][1]

Your letter of the 23rd ultimo,[2] written at *Bolivar* was received two or three days ago. I deeply lament the death of your husband and sincerely sympathise with you in your afflictions. *Dr. Caldwell* and myself were always friends, there was no one of my relations to whom I was more attached. *Samuel* left here in two hours after he received intelligence of the critical condition of his father, and I had hoped might be able to reach home in time to see him alive, but it was ordered otherwise. His lamented death will fall more heavily on you than on others; still it is the fate which awaits us all, and must be borne with Christian fortitude.

In your letter you ask for my advice. I do not know that I can give any, that will not readily suggest itself to *Samuel* and yourself. I learn that no *will* was made, and this I think is as it should be. In the situation of his family, the law makes a just and equitable distribution of his estate between yourself and your two sons.[3] No *will* could have been made that would have been more so. The law directs the manner in which the estate, shall be managed and disposed of. Still you may need legal counsel, and I suggest that you send for *Mr Coe,* and follow his directions and advice. The only safe course is to pursue the directions of the law strictly. There should be a guardian appointed for *James,* and I think his brother *Samuel* should be appointed. I think *James* should by all means return to his school, and I hope he will be impressed with the importance of acquiring a good education, as his father desired he should do. When the estate is divided I advise you to keep your portion of it under your own exclusive control. If you should be blessed with long life, you will need it. Your sons will both have a handsome competency of their own, and if after many years, you shall think it proper to aid either of them you can do so. I mention this because I have seen it often happen, that mothers dispose of their property among their children, and afterwards become dependent on them. This very often produces an unpleasant state of things. I know both your sons will desire that you shall retain & keep control of your portion of the property, and it will certainly be wise for you to do so.

*Mr Coe* is my friend and yours and you may safely rely on his advice.

I do not know what your wishes may be, but think it probable, that you will be more happy to live with mother; if not altogether, at least a part of every year. You would be alone at the plantation. I advise that you spend this summer at all events with mother, and by the end of the year you can better determined what you ought to do. *Samuel* I take it for granted, will see that the plantation is properly managed this year.

*Sarah* wrote to you a few days ago. Her health is very good. She desires to be kindly remembered to you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Haywood County, Tenn.

1. Erroneously dated "March 6th 1846."
2. Letter not found.
3. Reference is to Samuel Polk Caldwell and James Montgomery Caldwell, sons of Silas M. Caldwell and Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell.

## TO JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 6th 1846

My constant official engagements have prevented me from acknowledging sooner, the receipt of your letter of the 12th ultimo, enclosing to me the receipt of the Clerk and Master of the Chancery Court at Columbia for $322.91, being the amount of the Decree & costs incurred by *Gregory's* estate against *Marshall T. Polk's* Heirs. Your draft on me for $121.69, being for the balance due by me on the Decree as Guardian of *M. T. Polk's Heirs*, has been presented to me and paid. I thank you for your attention to this, as well as to other small matters of business in which I am interested.

You wrote to me some time ago that you had rented my store House to *Capt. Helm*. Perhaps he may be willing to purchase it. If so he can have it, at what it may be estimated to be worth, and upon such time as he may desire. I wrote to *Col. Campbell* last year authorizing him to sell my House and lot, and the small piece of land West of town. When you see him, tell him that I still desire to sell, and will do so, if I can get a fair price for the property. If he has a fair offer, I am willing to sell on long time. What I would desire would be to realize the proceeds at the end of my term. Request him to if he should have any offer to write me what it is. If you can sell your property, you would find mine I think a more desireable residence.

JAMES K. POLK

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

## FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Columbia, Tenn. April 8, 1846

After acknowledging receipt of Polk's letter of March 28, Campbell details recent financial transactions regarding Polk's plantation. He notes that he received a letter from John A. Mairs on March 10, and explains that plantation affairs appear to be in good order. Campbell states that he will not go to visit the plantation until his wife[1] recovers from her illness. He requests that Polk will appoint his son, Robert B. Campbell,[2] to the Military Academy at West Point in 1847. In a postscript, Campbell advises Polk to increase the number of slaves working his plantation.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he answered this letter on April 20, 1846.

1. Elizabeth Polk Campbell.
2. Not identified further.

## FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

Dear Sir, [Washington City] April 11, 1846[1]

The Senate have just *unanimously* confirmed the nomination of Dr. Tate.

Thus has the result vindicated the soundness of your judgment in the prompt renomination of the Dr.

Since sending in my defence[2] I have received the official list of the ayes & nos in the Mississippi Legislature. It is stronger than I had given it. The vote for me was 72. Against me 12. *All whigs*. The democratic vote in my favor was unanimous & a majority of the whigs.

R. J. Walker

ALS. DLC–JKP.

1. Place determined through content analysis.
2. Reference unclear.

## TO ISRAEL K. TEFFT[1]

Dear Sir: Washington City April 13th 1846

I have had the honour to receive by the hands of Lieutenant Van Vliet your letter of the 2nd Instant informing me that I had been "elected an honorary member of the Georgia Historical Society."[2] The letter which you state was addressed to me in January 1845 was never received.[3] It is possible, if it came to hand that it may have been overlooked among the numerous letters, received at the moment I was preparing to leave my residence in Tennessee for Washington, in the

latter part of January 1845. It gives me pleasure now to acknowledge the honour done me by your society, and to accept the membership to which I have been elected. I thank you for my Diploma and the two Volumes of Historical Collections which Lieut. Van Vliet delivered to me.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Savannah, Georgia.

1. Cashier of the Bank of the State of Georgia in Savannah and prominent autograph collector, Tefft helped found the Georgia Historical Society and served as its corresponding secretary.

2. Letter not found. A native of New York and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy in 1836, Stewart Van Vliet served in the artillery and quartermasters department. He later served as a general officer of the volunteers during the Civil War.

3. Tefft to Polk, January 14, 1845. ALS. DLC–JKP.

## TO JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 13th 1846

I have only time to acknowledge the receipt of your letter[1] enclosing to me a Receipt from my mother for one hundred and twenty one dollars and 72 cents ($121.72) which you have paid to her for me, in part of her legacy under the *Will* of *Samuel W. Polk*, deceased. You say the old lady fears I may consider her extravagant. Say to her she need have no uneasiness on that score, and that whenever she needs money, to call on you. I know she will call for no more than is proper. I answered your former letter to which you allude a few days ago.[2] In haste ....

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Thomas to Polk, April 4, 1846.

2. See Thomas to Polk, March 12, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP. For Polk's reply to this letter, see Polk to Thomas, April 6, 1846.

## FROM WILLIAM McLAIN[1]

Colonization Rooms

Sir Washington City 14 April 1846

At your suggestion, I called upon Mr. Buchanan, in reference to the Africans liberated from the *Pons* & landed at Monrovia, Liberia.[2] He said the subject had not been brought under his consideration, but

he considered it very important that there should be an appropriation made for their support.

I desire therefore in the name of the Executive Committee of the Am. Col. Soc. & in behalf of Liberia to ask of you the favor that you will call the attention of Congress to the fact that the U.S. ship Yorktown has captured a slaver with 913 children & youth under twenty years of age on board, & has landed 756 of them, in a sick & totally destitute condition at Monrovia, & that there is no provision made by the law for the suppression of the slave trade for providing them with clothing or any necessary, or giving them any support until they are in circumstances to take care of themselves, and that in view of this fact you will recommend to Congress to pass an appropriation for the purpose.

It is as much a dictate of *justice* as of humanity that something of this kind should be done. It would not be right to let the poor victims starve, nor is there any reason why the Colonization Society, or Liberia should be called upon to support these people.

During Mr. Tyler's administration & at his request, Congress appropriated $5,000 for the purpose. This amt. being placed at the disposal of the President, he directed two thousand dollars of it sent out in the Renown & be used in building a house or houses for the use of recaptives until they could be located on their own lands. The Renown was wrecked while landing Government stores at Port Praza, & these $2,000 were lost in her. The President then directed the remainder to be sent out in the Virginia for the same purpose. The buildings are in process of erection, & will consume when completed the whole amount.

It costs $30 a year to keep a native child in one of the families of the colonists & send him to school. When we send out a company of Emigrants, we support them *six months*, during which time they become acclimated, raise a crop, build a house & are prepared to take care of themselves. It costs $30 for adults and & half price for children, to do this; including provisions, a house to live in, medicine & medical attendance & nursing when they are sick, & a piece of land, say five acres given to them.

From this statement you will perceive that the expense of keeping these 756 people must be very great. And as we know not what day others may be landed there in like condition, I trust that you will feel authorised in calling the attention of Congress to the matter *immediately*.

We contemplate shortly sending out a vessel with supplies, & could take any aid which our Government might be disposed to give.

W. McLain

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover reads, "I have

declined to make a communication to Congress. Apl. 23d, 1846."

1. McLain served as agent for the American Colonization Society before becoming treasurer in 1843 and corresponding secretary in February, 1844.

2. The U.S.S. *Yorktown* captured the *Pons* on November 30, 1845.

## TO WILLIAM H. POLK

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 14th 1846

*Mr Greenhow* of Richmond Virginia will leave here today as the bearer of despatches to Europe. He will deliver to you the official evidence of the ratification by the Senate of the Treaty between the United States and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, concluded and signed at Naples on the 1st of December last. As the period limited for the exchange of the Ratifications will expire on the 1st of June next, it was deemed safest, to send a bearer of despatches with the ratification on our part, instead of entrusting it to the European mail. You will of course not fail to have the ratifications exchanged in proper time, and forward the evidence of the fact to the Department of State, that the Treaty may be proclaimed.

I think you have done yourself great credit, in the negotiation of the Treaty. There were I learn but two dissenting votes in the Senate to its ratification. *Mr Buchanan* expressed to me again today, his great surprise, that but one despatch except that accompanying the Treaty had been received from you since you left the country. I have written to you several times to send a duplicate of the one, which you informed me you had forwarded, but which up to this date has not been received. I hope you will not neglect to do so, any longer. All our ministers abroad are expected to communicate frequently with the Department of State, so that our Government may be regularly advised of the state of our Foreign Relations, as well as the internal condition of all the countries with which we have diplomatic intercourse. By turning to the archives of your legation during the time of your predecessors you will see the character of their communications. Though *Mr Buchanan* does not complain it is evident that he thinks your omission to keep the Department advised, of all that transpires at Naples, of a public character, very strange. All our other ministers do so. It often happens that they have nothing of much importance to communicate, but if that be so, it is still satisfactory to the Department to know the fact.

*Mr Greenhow* is an intelligent gentleman and can give you the political views here, more fully than I have time to write it. The delay of the Senate in taking the vote on the question of *notice* on the Oregon question has been very great. Thursday the 16th instant, has at length

been agreed upon, as the day on which the vote will be taken. The *notice* will pass the Senate in some form. Our Mexican affairs are still unsettled and in a state of great uncertainty. *Mr Slidell* up to the 18th of March had not been accredited as Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary, and unless he shall be received very soon will demand his passports and return to the United States.

In my letter to you of the 29th ultimo I informed you, that our brother-in-law *Dr Caldwell* was very ill. I am now sorry to inform you, that he died on the 20th of March. Sister Eliza has written since his death, and is of course greatly distressed.[1]

I had a letter from Columbia two days ago.[2] Mother and all of our relations were in usual health.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Naples and marked "*Private*."

1. See Polk to Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell, April 6, 1846.
2. See James H. Thomas to Polk, April 4, 1846.

## TO JAMES CONNER ET AL.[1]

Gentlemen, Washington City April 15th 1846

My public engagements have been such as to prevent an earlier answer to your letter of the 10th ultimo,[2] presenting to me, on behalf of my Republican friends of the City of New York, several copies of my late annual message to Congress, printed on satin, and one of the them "framed by a Democratic mechanic" of your City, "the design and workmanship," being "entirely original." I am highly honored by your present, and in accepting it, as a "token" of the "regard" of my Republican Fellow Citizens of New York, I have to express to them my grateful acknowledgements.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New York; enclosed in Polk to Elijah F. Purdy, April 15, 1846.

1. Addressed to Conner, James C. Stoneall and Elijah F. Purdy. Conner, grand sachem of the Tammany Society, served as New York County clerk.
2. LS. DLC–JKP.

## TO ELIJAH F. PURDY[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 15th 1846

I have seized a moment to write a very hasty answer to the letter of yourself and others, presenting to me copies of my message printed

on satin.[2] Had my public engagements, which occupy every moment of my time, permitted, I would have given a more full answer. As your letter relates, chiefly to myself personally, I do not desire to make myself conspicious[3] by the publication, of the hurried answer which [is] herewith enclosed.[4]

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New York and marked "*Private*."

1. A wealthy New York banker and powerful figure in Tammany Hall, Purdy served as acting mayor of New York in 1841 and later sat for three terms as president of the Board of Supervisors; Polk appointed him surveyor of revenue for the port of New York in 1845.
2. James Conner et al. to Polk, March 10, 1846. LS. DLC–JKP.
3. Polk probably meant to write "conspicuous."
4. See Polk to James Conner et al., April 15, 1846.

## TO JOHN SLIDELL

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 17th 1846

You letter of the 9th Instant,[1] was received last evening. You state that if it is desired you will immediately visit Washington. I write simply to say that your presence here is desirable at your earliest convenience. I have no doubt you can impart useful information, in reference, to our relations with Mexico. We must act with promptness and energy. I will however delay action until you can reach Washington, and hope it may suit your convenience to come on immediately.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New Orleans; marked "*Private*."

1. Writing to James Buchanan from New Orleans, Slidell bemoaned the failure of his mission to Mexico. ALS. PHi.

## FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir, [Washington City] Sunday [April 19, 1846][1]

I send you Mr. McLane's private letter.[2] A subject has been introduced into it which I regret, as I had never intended & never do intend, whilst I have the honor of remaining in your cabinet, to allude to it in the most remote manner. If I could have detached that portion of the letter from the remainder, I should certainly have done so. I have to request it as a favor that you will not shew this letter to any other person.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. Place and date of letter determined by content analysis.

2. Louis McLane to James Buchanan, March 17, 1846. ALS. PHi. In the course of this twenty-two page letter, McLane discussed Buchanan's desire to be appointed to the current vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court. Buchanan and Polk routinely shared their private correspondence from McLane, who often wrote of matters not included in his official dispatches.

## TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City [April] 20th 1846[1]

I have received your letter of the 8th Instant. I regret that the health of *Mrs. Campbell* continues so bad. I cannot of course expect you to leave home whilst she continues in her present situation. I will endeavor to gratify your wishes in regard to your son, and I can do so, but would suggest to you, that as he will not attain his sixteenth year until July he will be almost too young to enter the Academy at that period. Many young men who enter the Academy at so early an age, are unable to pass the examination at the end of the first six months, and are compelled to leave. I would advise you therefore to [...][2] him at school at home a year longer, and [...] that time I hope to be able to gratify his and your wishes.

I have not heard from my plantation, for several months, but from what you say, and what I heard last fall from my neighbour *Mr Leigh*,[3] I have no doubt *Mr Mairs* is an excellent overseer. When you shall next visit my plantation I wish you to make a contract with him to continue on the plantation during the whole time I am absent, say for the next three years, after the expiration of the present year. I am sure it would be better to do so, than to risk any new man. He is acquainted with my business and my people, and I had better pay him better wages than I could get others for, than to change him. I have received from *W. S. Pickett & Co* the amount of the sales of my cotton, after deducting the amount for which you drew on him, and the amount of their bill for bagging rope &c. For whatever the amount of *Mairs* wages as overseer, which there may not be the means of paying when you next visit the plantation, you will draw on me at sight, and your draft will be honoured.

You say that I have too much lands for my force. This I know and I intend to increase the force as soon as I am able to do so. I can only authorize you at present to make one purchase. Some years ago I reluctantly sold to *Genl. Gideon J. Pillow* a man named *Harbert*[4], because he became unruly and unmanageable whilst I lived in Nashville.

He belonged to a family that I received by my wife and now own his mother. *Genl. Pillow* agreed at the time of sale to let me have him back at any time I might desire it. Before I left Tennessee we talked the matter over and he agreed to let me have him back, when it might suit my convenience to take him. As he is a family servant *Mrs P.* had some feeling about it & *Genl. Pillow* told her I should have him when I wished him. *Harbert* is now at *Genl. Pillow's* plantation in Mississippi, about forty miles from my place. I wish you to see *Genl. Pillow* and purchase him for me. I think he is about 30 years of age, perhaps over that age. He was a boy of some size when I was married between twenty two and twenty three years ago. He is a lively man, and though perhaps not so good a field hand as some, is worth as much as most men of that age. I am willing to pay a fair price for him, and even something more because of his being a family servant, say $25 or $50 more. I think I have heard that *Harbert* has a wife. If so I wish you to buy her also, and if they have any children of course they would be included. You can rely on *Genl. Pillow's* description of the woman, if there be one, and can buy her without seeing her. If it be inconvenient to *Genl. Pillow* to spare them from his crop at this season, perhaps you could procure other hands for him in their place and make an exchange. It is only because *Harbert* is a family servant that Mrs. P. and myself desire to get him back. I never would have parted with him if he had not behaved badly at Nashville. You can draw on me at sight for whatever amount you pay *Genl. Pillow* [ . . . ] *Harbert* and his wife (if he has one) and children, and your draft will be honoured on presentation. If you make the arrangement you can write to *Mairs*, (enclose to him *Genl. Pillow's* order) to send for *Harbert* (and his wife and children if he has such) and bring them to my plantation.

I wrote to you some time ago about the sale of my House and lot and other property at Columbia. I wish to sell if I can do so without a sacrafice. If you find any one wishing to purchase write me the best price you can get. I will give long time. It will serve my purposes if I can be paid at the end of my term. If I can sell I intend to redeem the Half of the House lot now occupied by mother, which the house [ . . . . ] You know I own the other half, and I will make myself owner of the whole, if I can sell my other property at Columbia.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I have written to *Genl. Pillow* today, informing him that I have authorized you to purchase *Harbert* and his wife, if he has one. You can show him this letter if you choose. J. K. P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia and marked "*Private*."

1. Polk mistakenly dated this letter "May 20th 1846."
2. Words here and below illegible.
3. John T. Leigh owned a cotton plantation adjacent to Polk's in Yalobusha County, Miss.
4. Harbert and his mother are not identified further.

TO WILLIAM S. PICKETT & CO.

Gentlemen: Washington City April 20th 1846

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th Instant, transmitting to me a Draft at sight on Nevins Townsend & Co of New York for $543 83/00, the balance due me on the settlement of my account with your House, up to the date of your letter. Your sale of my cotton and the purchases of bagging, rope &c, which you have made for me are entirely satisfactory. I shall continue to transact the business of my plantation with your House.

JAMES K. POLK

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

TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 20th 1846

You will remember that when my man *Harbert* became unruly and acted badly at Nashville, and I sold him to you, I requested that you would let me have him again if you ever sold him. As he belongs to a family which I received by Mrs. Polk she has always had some feelings on the subject, though she gave her consent my parting with him under the circumstances as they existed at the time. Before I left home I had some conversation with you on the subject, and you said you would let me have him back, at that time or at some future period, as I might prefer. As it was not then entirely convenient to me, it was concluded to postpone the arrangement to some future period. As we own his mother *Mrs. Polk* has still a desire that I should get him back, and remembers to have had a conversation with you once in which you agreed at her request to do so. Supposing that it may be agreeable to you to let me have him, I have today written to my relation *Col. Robert Campbell, Jr.* and authorized him to purchase him and pay you for him. If *Harbert* has a wife or a wife and children I have authorized him to purchase them also, as I would be unwilling to separate them. He is authorized to pay you a full and fair price for them. If it shall be inconvenient to you to spare them from your plantation at this season

of the year, *Col. Campbell* is authorized to make an exchange with you, so as to avoid that inconvenience.

I can add nothing to the political news which you see in the daily papers. I think it most unfortunate that the question of the *notice* to abrogate the Treaty of 1827, has been so long delayed in Congress. It has increased the embarrassments of the subject. It is even yet uncertain whether the Senate and the House will be able to agree on the form of the *notice*, though I hope and believe they will: but a day or two will determine. Our Mexican relations continue in an unsettled state. They cannot long remain so. Before the present Congress rises they must be brought to an issue. I write in great haste having scarcely a moment to spare from my public duties. I beg of you to present my kind regards to *Mrs. Pillow* and my old friend *Mr. Willis*. *Mrs. Polk* desires to be remembered to Mrs. Pillow.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia and marked "*Private*."

## FROM J. G. M. RAMSEY[1]

My Dear Sir Mecklenburg T. Apl. 20. 1846

This is forwarded by my son J. Crozier Ramsey,[2] who visits Washington rather unexpectedly on business of some importance to myself. Attempts are being made by some bidder so to modify the Proposals as published by the P.O. Department as to transfer the stage from the route by this place & put them upon a new road recently established above it. This office in the mean time to be supplied by a horse lateral mail weekly. This is the bid as I am informed that thus modified is intended to deprive the office of its tri-weekly mail & Stage facilities. I have written to the P.M.G.,[3] protesting against the modification & requesting his personal attention to the private injury it is intended to inflict, without one public consideration in its favor. I am unknown personally to that officer, but I have no doubt that if the subject can receive his attention he will see that private injury shall not be inflicted where the public service & the general accomodation are not advanced by it.

I have frequently intended for the moment to write you on some public topics, but I have still supposed that your whole time was so absorbed with the momentous subjects of national importance as to allow you no leisure to read a letter from a private citizen. If I could disregard that consideration so far as to offer one suggestion this evening it

would be to say that I hope the Internal Improvement or Harbor Bill of the H. of R. if it passes the Senate must be met by the veto of the Executive. They are mistaken who suppose that these appropriations are popular or demanded by public sentiment even in the Districts whose Representatives have voted for them. *Every* place cannot be provided for. *Every* appropriation therefore seems to be *partial*. Hence their general unpopularity with the masses. I touch not the Constitutional objection to the measure. On that I may be almost ultra. But such appropriations are popular only in the *localities* where the disbursement of the money is made. General sentiment is against & does not demand them.

Without equivalents I would not compromise if I belonged to the Treaty making power upon the 49 Degree. With sufficient equivalents I would.

But the subject is too long & important to say more, without exhausting your patience & trespassing upon your time, & I feel that it is in hands that have the Nations confidence.

The occasion allows me time only to assure you ....

J. G. M. RAMSEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and hand delivered by J. Crozier Ramsey. Polk's AE states that he received the letter on May 6, 1846.

1. A Knoxville physician, railroad promoter, and banker, Ramsey played a key role in the 1844 campaign by refuting charges that Ezekiel Polk, James K. Polk's grandfather, had been a Tory during the Revolutionary War. Ramsey also wrote one of the early landmarks in Tennessee historiography, *The Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (1853). During the Civil War, Union troops burned Ramsey's residence and thus destroyed materials for a sequal to his history of Tennessee.

2. John Crozier Ramsey was the eldest son of J. G. M. and Peggy Barton Crozier Ramsey.

3. Cave Johnson.

## FROM THOMAS RITCHIE

My Dear Sir, [Washington City] Friday Eve'g [April 24, 1846][1]

I have just returned Home, and, find your Messenger has been to seek me. But as it is now 2 o'Clock, & your dinner Hour, I do not wish to interrupt you. Could you communicate with me, by a line, or, if you prefer to see me, please name the Hour at which I may see you this Evening.

May I venture to *guess* the object, however and to enclose to you

a brief article for your consideration?[2] I take for granted, that you wish to see me again about the article in the Union.[3] My friend Mr. Buchanan had been talking to me about it, and making it rather worse that it really is, for, I have just read it over, and though there are a few expressions I would like to alter, and some few ideas I would wish to have put in, yet I consider the general staple of the article to be good. We have not got the best thing we desired, nor, was it done in the best manner, yet as it was the best we could get, we were to make the best we could of it, in so important a negotiation we might have to make with a foreign power. This was the great object of the article. And another, though of smaller account, was to defend the course of our Western friends who had voted against it, and to appeal to our Southern friends in behalf of the Union of our party. I have made this experiment. Heaven knows whether it will answer. You know if nobody else does, that I am not committed to Mr. Calhoun or his friends. I scorn to look to the question of the succession, for Mr. Calhoun or any other man. I see, however, we have great difficulties to encounter to keep our party united. I think we should try conciliation first, for, I cannot believe that they mean to desert or oppose the administration. We shall find great difficulty in pleasing all the divisions of our party, and an honest man has but one course to pursue, and *that* is what you said the other day, viz. follow principle and do your duty.

This article in last night's "Union" was written under peculiar circumstances. They annoyed me excessively, and I lament very much that I could not show it to you. But I am now making arrangements, I hope, for giving equal force with more circumspection to its articles.

T. RITCHIE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Place and date of letter determined by content analysis.

2. Enclosure not found.

3. Ritchie refers to the editorial entitled "The Deed of the Day," which appeared in the Washington *Union* of Thursday, April 23, 1846. Ritchie's article analyzed Congressional passage of the "Joint Resolution Concerning the Oregon Territory" earlier that day.

## FROM ADAM HUNTSMAN

Dear Sir Jackson 27th of Apl 1846

If I had been a member of the Legislature at the last Session I should have voted for Mr Nicholson not because I had more confidence in his

Democracy than I had in Turneys either *then or yet* but *because* the great majority of the democratic Party had selected him for that office. I did not blame Mr Nicholson for making an exposition immediately after he was defeated. Every thing Ultimo to that time ought to have been left to the people. But his continual action in his paper[1] upon the subject has been in bad taste and selfish, and it seems to me more intended to benefit himself by keeping prominent before the people than either to harmonize or strengthen the party. I may as well say at once that he has weakened himself by this course in the District & that considerably. I do not, cannot, & ought not to blame Turney for defending himself. He has accordingly got a Statement from Mr Coe & probably from others to prove that Nicholson was trying to get into the senate himself by Uniting some six or seven Democrats with the whigs as Turney states in his Speech in times past and gone and I think it very probable some of the Gentlemen who has made or given Mr Turney Statements may have conversed with you or you with them at the time.

My object is to keep your name out of it. Our party has troubles enough with the enemy without creating difficulties amongst ourselves of which there appears some symptoms. If your name was to get into it of course it will spread to the extent of the Union. I have written to Turney particularly to avoid this result. I have no doubt he will as far as practicable. But at the supreme and Federal Court here I have collected the opinions of our leaders which authorises me to say that if a scuffle ensues between N and Coe in regard to the Statement the latter has given Turney, there can be no doubt that the District folk will support Coe as a man in whom they have confidence. *I may say in* [...][2] while they are not *overloaded* with confidence in the other and Coe would dislike of all things to call upon you for any information about it, I am led to believe that Turney will get the Statement of some of those democrats that was willing to go in for N at the time. If so it will not depend upon rumours, and I suggest to you the policy of letting N & T scuffle this matter out amongst ourselves. Such are the symptoms of divisions in our party about various little local matters which are calculated to weaken us that if another is added to them which I begin to suspect (to wit the factions of the Tariff) I think there is great danger of loosing the State at the next election.

ADAM HUNTSMAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "confidential."

1. Nicholson served as editor of the *Nashville Union* from 1844 to 1846.
2. Word illegible.

FROM GEORGE C. WHEELER[1]

Most Respected Sir Pikeville Tennessee April 28, 1846.

I propose to Organize a Colony of Hardy Yeomen of Tennessee, to locate Somewhere on the Oregon Route, at present I think in the Gap of the South Pass. In doing which, I ask the following Protective Grant,

1st 5000$ for Outfits Nessary

2nd

100 Stand of United States No 1 Yeargers[2]
4 Rifles Carrying 1 lb Balls to mount in movable Pivots with Spy Glasses attached
4 6 Pound Guns on Carriages
Powder, Ball, for 6 Pounders & Lead
1 Stand Colors Drum Fife etc.

and In return will Build Efficient Fortification.[3] In the Best Protective manner against Indian Warfare as well as British to be subject to Review & Inspection, of any Officers appointed by Government.

But would wish a Commission for myself, and the right of appointing the Lower Grades of office, Untill such time as by a Settlement of difficulties and the repulsion of Indian Neighbors, we will be secure, then to surrender the Garrison up to the United States.

By this method a Colony will be planted and Secured by themselves– and a post always Maintained, at a small Cost to Government and if such a Colony is protected I believe the whole line can be forted & Colonized, in like manner.

Enterprize is my Fort, and in Struggling to obtain a Grant of Territory at Mouth of Colombia. Before Congress at the last Term of Mr Monroes Service as President I represented an association which I had raized in Baltimore to Colonize of some 1500 Souls—which cost me considerable & failed as is well known to your Excellency.

I will say no more as the whole is easily understood.

I am ready to Act and can soon Choose out Sufficient Efficient Men & their Families.

GEORGE C. WHEELER M.D.

[P.S.] If the Protection can be had as asked the Arms & Munitions to be drawn when we are organized to Start, and, the money, at such time after, Partial Organization, as, may be Nessary, and Bonds with Efficient Securety will be given for the performance of the Specified Work or a Return of the Fund to Government, But Issue of Commission of such Grade as is Deem'd Nessary By your Excellency with Special, Bear-

ings would be Nessary as early as Intimation is recd of the accepted propositions. George C Wheeler MD

ALS. DNA–RG 92. Addressed to Washington City. E in an unknown hand states that Polk received this letter on May 19, 1846, and referred it to the Quartermaster General's Office on May 21, 1846.

1. A physician from Overton County, Tenn.

2. Jager rifled muskets, firearms made in Austria, Germany, and Norway.

3. Along the margin Wheeler wrote, "Founded on the Probable Passage of the Act to Extend the Laws of the U.S. over Oregon, & Erect Protective Forts, etc." On April 23, 1846, Congress had authorized the president to give notice terminating the convention with Great Britain providing for the joint occupation of the Oregon country.

## TO LOUIS McLANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City April 29th 1846

Your private and unofficial letter of the 10th Instant,[1] addressed to *Mr. Buchanan* was received this morning. Your despatch and private letter of the 3rd Inst.[2] came to hand some days ago. Your private letters,[3] all of which as you requested have been shewn to me, have imparted much useful information. In several of them you have expressed apprehensions, that your official communications with the Department of State, detailing conversations which you have held with the Earl of Aberdeen, and giving your own speculations and views, might be communicated to Congress and then be made public. I agree with you that it would be highly detrimental to the public interest, in the present position of the Oregon question to make them public, and you may dismiss all apprehensions on that point. None of them will be communicated to Congress, even if the correspondence should be called for by that body. I have sincere doubts whether it was proper to communicate the short extract from one of them which accompanied the correspondence relating to arbitration. As that extract however related to an official conversation which you had been desirous to hold with *Lord Aberdeen*, and as it was deemed necessary in order to impress on Congress, the importance of making suitable preparations for the public defense, it was understood on full consultation, that it was proper to lay it before Congress. Care was taken however to confine the part communicated to the official conversation. I shall regret its publication, if the effect shall be to restrain the freedom of the interviews which it is desireable you should have with Lord Aberdeen. For the future you may be perfectly assured that nothing you write will be published until after the Oregon question shall either be settled or

have reached its crisis, and not then unless imperiously demanded by the public interest.

The formal notice in pursuance of the Resolution of Congress to Abrogate the Convention of 1827[4] was forwarded to you with instructions by *Mr. Buchanan* on yesterday. I scarcely expect any action on the part of the *Brittish Government*, until it shall have been delivered. Whatever action may be intended by that Government, it is desireable should be had at the earliest practicable period, so that it may be considered here before the adjournment of Congress. I deeply regret the protracted debates, which have taken place in Congress on the question of *notice*, and still more the character of some of the speeches, as being well calculated to weaken our position. In the House of Representatives there is a sound & practical Democratic majority, but in the Senate I fear the same thing cannot be said. With a nominal majority of eight (including the Texas Senators) in the Senate, I cannot with any certainty calculate on carrying any measure in that body. The remaining measures concerning Oregon, recommended in the Message, I hope may be speedily acted on by the Senate, but I cannot say that I have any assurance that they will be. They have as you know passed the House and the Bills are now before the Senate.

I have delayed writing until I am scarcely in time for the mail, which will reach Boston in season for the steamer of the 1st proximo.

With my respectful regards to Mrs. McLane ....

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to London and marked "*Private & Confidential*."

1. ALS. PHi.
2. ALS. PHi.
3. Louis McLane to James Buchanan, April 18, 1846. ALS. PHi.
4. "Joint Resolution Concerning the Oregon Territory," House Resolution No. 5, 29th Congress, 1st Session. Approved by the House and Senate on April 23, and signed by Polk on April 27, 1846.

## TO WILLIAM H. POLK

My Dear Sir, Washington City April 29th 1846

I wrote to you on the 14th Instant, that *Mr Greenhow* would leave New York, in a packet of the 16th as a bearer of despatches to convey to you the ratification of your Treaty by the Senate. I hope he will arrive within the period limited for the exchange of the ratifications. Since that time I have received your letter of the 20th of March. I have

consulted *Mr Buchanan* in regard to the usage of the Department, in relation to the contingent expenses, to which you have been subjected, and which you mention in your letter. He says the items for presents made on the occasion of signing the Treaty, have never been allowed or paid at the Department. In regard to the item for conveying the Treaty from Naples to Paris, *Mr Buchanan* says he thinks that a reasonable charge and one which ought to be paid. You would have been authorized to employ a messenger to convey it to Paris, and in that event he would have been paid. As you desired it yourself, your actual expenses in going and returning will be allowed upon your forwarding your account for the same properly made out. Any expenses during your stay in Paris beyond the time required to make a proper disposition of the Treaty will not be allowed. I think it will be well as you suggest to accompany your account with a statement of the U.S. consul[1] that in his opinion, it was a necessary & proper precaution for you to take the Treaty to Paris instead of entrusting to the hazards of the mail.

After long and uncertain delay the *Notice Resolution* to abrogate the Convention with Great Brittain of August 1827, on the Oregon question have passed the Senate, and have been approved and signed by me. By the steamer of the 1st proximo, a formal notice, will be forwarded to Mr McLane to be delivered to the Brittish Government. This fact has not been made public here and you will regard this announcement of the fact as *confidential*, until it shall become known through some other channel. The form of the *Notice Resolutions* as passed by Congress is not that which I preferred, but still the just end of abrogating the Convention will be accomplished by it. I regret the protracted debate which has occurred in Congress, and still more the character and tone of some of the speakers, as well calculated to weaken our position. In the House of Representatives there is a sound & reliable Democratic majority, but in the Senate I fear the same thing cannot be said. The Senate gave the Resolutions their present form and the House was compelled to yield or loose the notice altogether. If any further proposition for an adjustment of the Oregon question be made it must proceed from the Brittish Government. I think it probable that such a proposition will be made, and in that event, I will judge of its character & may deem it my duty to submit it to the Senate for their previous advice before I act upon it. I have no time to write more. It seems always to be my misfortune when I write to you, to postpone it until the last hour to be in time for the steamer which is next to sail.

Mr *James Walker* & *Sister Maria* have been here a week & will remain some days longer. Their son *Marshall*[2] is also here on his way

to West Point, having been appointed a cadet. Mother was very well when I last heard from her.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Naples and marked "*Private & Confidential*."

1. Alexander Hammett.

2. The fourth son of James and Jane Maria Polk Walker, Lucius Marshall Walker was graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1850 and served in the army until 1852. He later served in the Confederate army.

## FROM DAVID LEVY YULEE

Dear Sir Senate Chamber April 29, 1846

I have communicated to my colleagues Messrs. Westcott & Brockenbrough[1] your purpose of making nominations for the judicial offices in Florida under the act of last session,[2] and have asked them to express their views as to the proper selection of officers, at the same time informing them that it was your opinion that the public interests required you to delay no longer in the organization of courts in Florida.

I am not authorized by Mr. W. to make any communication in his behalf, and I have not received any definite suggestion from Mr. B. who preferred to consider further.

I suggest that in making this temporary provision for the public interests connected with the judicial establishment of Florida, as the Judge is taken from East Florida it will be advisable to appoint the *Marshal* from So. Florida (Joseph B. Browne) and the District Attorney from Middle Florida (Charles S. Sibley).[3] This wd. make a distribution of the offices to the different parts of the state, and I have named the oldest officer in commission of each description.

D. L. YULEE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. James D. Westcott, Jr., and William H. Brockenbrough. Westcott served as U.S. attorney for the middle district of the Territory of Florida, 1834–36; won election to one term in the territorial legislature, 1832; and served in the U.S. Senate, 1845–49. He removed to New York City in 1850 and practiced law. Brockenbrough served in the Florida territorial legislature; he later served as U.S. district attorney, 1841–43, and sat one term in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1846–1847.

2. Reference is to House Resolution No. 497, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, which provided for the entry of Florida and Iowa into the Union and received Tyler's approval on March 3, 1845. At the time Yulee wrote this letter, Senate Bill No. 3, 29th Congress, 1st Session, was under consideration. Passed

on May 14, 1846, the bill established two U.S. district courts in Florida and provided for the execution of federal laws in the new state.

3. A native of Virginia, Browne served throughout the 1840's as U.S. marshal for the southern district of Florida. A native of New Jersey, Sibley served as U.S. district attorney in Tallahassee from 1841 through 1846 but was not renominated.

## FROM LOUIS McLANE

My dear Sir, London 30 April 1846

There are many reasons why I prefer making *you* this informal communication, rather than to embody its contents in the form of a public despatch.

Upon invitation I had an interview with Lord Aberdeen the day before yesterday, and which was repeated yesterday at my instance. The chief object was to reiterate his objections to any attempt to reopen the negotiation at Washington, by a new proposition until the final vote of the Senate upon the resolutions of notice is known. Before this interview was ended he was equally explicit in stating that as soon as he was informed of the final vote in the Senate he would by the first subsequent opportunity instruct *Mr. Pakenham* to submit a further and new proposition. Though it may not be so denominated, it will most probably be in the nature of an *ultimatum*; but of this I hope to be able to speak more explicitly by the opportunity by which the instructions to Mr. Pakenham will be transmitted to Washington. I am sorry that it has been out of my power to obviate or prevent this delay; if mischief arise, however, the responsibility will be upon those who have so inexcuseably protracted the final vote upon a measure which, *will be seen*, in the sequal as I have always predicted, not only not to be injurious, but, since the rejection of the last proposal to arbitrate, in fact indispensible to a resumption of the negotiation.

I urged, or rather suggested, as one means of obviating delay, that the proposition should now be settled, and that *contingent instructions* should be forwarded to Mr. Pakenham by the Steamer of the 4th May, to be presented as soon as the vote in the Senate had been taken; but I saw there were objections to this course that I could not remove; and indeed that some longer delay was not regarded as so objectionable. In declining to adopt the suggestion however, I understood Lord Aberdeen to state distinctly that after being informed of the Senate's vote he would not wait for the further action by the House if that should be made necessary by the proceedings in the Senate; and indeed, an intimation of this kind previously given (when I adverted to

the probable time of the adjournment of Congress) formed the basis of my suggestion, which otherwise might have been out of place. It is a great point to have made more of the reopening of the negotiations by a proposition from this government as soon as the Senate have finally acted, and without waiting for any possible disagreement between the two Houses of Congress; an event I had been led to apprehend as not altogether improbable.

It is, indeed, quite probable that by taking the responsibility in an official note for that purpose, according to the suggestion of Lord Aberdeen at a former conference, which I mentioned in my last letter to Mr. Buchanan,[1] of stating the injurious consequences of greater delay, and expressly inviting an immediate proposition, I might have led to the transmission of an offer by the Steamer of the *4th* May. But, I thought, upon reflection that there was a risk attendant upon that course, greater than the advantage which might be saved in point of time. That saving at most would not probably exceed half a month probably not more than the interval which will elapse between the arrival at Boston of the Steamer which leaves Liverpool on the 4th May, and that of the *Great Britain* at New York which will leave Liverpool on the 11th May, since I hope before the 11th we will receive the intelligence by some vessel from New York of the Senate's vote. But under the apparent change in the attitude presumed by the President since the withdrawal of his proposition which this course might have involved, it was not clear that it was fully contemplated by any instructions yet received by me; and I felt that after such an invitation it might be difficult to resist an imputation that I, at least, if not the President, was responsible for the proposition itself, as well as for the mode of renewing the negotiation! Now, even if the proposition had been actually decided and, to my knowledge, met as in all respects I could adopt & recommend, I would have been unwilling to incur such a responsibility unless absolutely necessary to reopen the negotiation. I saw, too, that Lord Aberdeen was, at least, not anxious to pursue that course, and that it might have been very difficult for me to have ventured upon such grounds in my official letter as he would have deemed necessary. I thought it on the whole better, considering the little time to be saved after all to leave you a clean field, and an unshakled discretion; and beyond and above the reach of unjust imputation of any kind. The trifling delay which must follow, in addition to that which would otherwise necessarily and unavoidably have arisen, cannot do any great harm, and I hope,therefore, the course I have taken will merit and receive your approbation.

I felt the greater confidence in my decision, from the nature of the

conferences with Lord Aberdeen; for in the course of them, and especially in that of yesterday, although the particular terms of the contemplated proposition in all points were not presented (and, indeed, I am quite sure are not *now* determined upon) the demand in relation to the navigation of the Columbia river, was brought up, and pretty fully discussed. I did not fail to present more fully the views I had prepared upon this point, and with the heads of which I will put you in possession in due time; and, refering to your notice of this point in your Message, and to my knowledge of the views of the Senate, I exposed the folly of defeating an amiable adjustment of the question which upon other grounds might be practicable, by persisting in claiming an advantage which after the lapse of a very few years would be entirely nominal, and in the interval not at all likely to be interfered with by our Government. Lord Aberdeen in the end stated that he would consult Sir R. Peel, and, in due time, let me know their views. I am not without a strong hope, *and belief*, that an obstinate adherence to the permanent right of navigation of the Columbia will not be insisted upon, at the hazard of war; and yet, I should deal uncandidly with you not to confess that I have very serious fears upon this point.

You must be entirely forewarned, to do justice to the subject, Sir, that Lord Aberdeen continues to receive advices from the U.S. on which it is natural he should place greater reliance l than he would be waranted perhaps in reposing upon the views, presented, in arguendo,[2] by the Minister of the U.S. however great his respect for him might be. It is quite certain also that he is encouraged to expect and believe that the *Senate* will not be so much opposed to the free navigation of the Columbia as I have represented. He is evidently as I think persuaded that two thirds of the Senate will yield this point, and that the President, in the face of their advice will not take the responsibility of making war; and that the Senate if the worst came to the worst will not permit him to do so. He reiterated the argument that he had a right to treat upon the basis of former offers, especially those of 1826–27; to keep all Mr. Gallatin then offered and to yield more on both sides or a salvo to the honor of all; and he refered to the speeches of Senators (meaning obviously that of Mr. Webster particularly, for, he it was who presented and argued the same view) as taking the same ground, and as authorizing him to infer that they at least would be willing to treat upon that basis. I pointed out to him, however, the small influence which the only Senators whom I had observed to favor such a view could be expected ultimately to exert upon the final vote, and in opposition to the public sentiment, in the Country; and I did not fail to remind him that unless the proposition was made as the President would be

willing to accept if a mind to do so, he could scarcely be expected to submit it to the Senate. In their opinion that, in fact, in rejecting it without recourse to the Senate, he would assume no greater responsibility than in rejecting any other objectionable proposition which might be offered in the progress of a negotiation, or in withdrawing that he had submitted, and in which act it was now apparent he was supported by the almost unanimous voice of the Country. However Sir, it is not my purpose, nor would I be justified at present, to trouble you with all the observations I made. I wish rather to state, for your satisfaction, that advices from Washington—I suppose from the British Minister—and the course of the debate in the Senate have obviously inspired fresh hopes that the permanent right of the free navigation of the Columbia river may be insisted upon without serious hazard. I think I cannot be mistaken in this; and therefore, unless this impression can be removed, it is hardly to be expected that the demand will be abandoned at least without a struggle. I will omit no opportunity to endeavour to remove it, as well as to shew that a persistence in the demand is not necessary on the ground of honor, and that the right in itself is not worth the risk. More than this I need not say until I know what the nature of the new proposition to be submitted will in all respects be. On that occasion I will take the liberty of presenting one or two views upon this and another part of the subject which have occured to me as of some weight, and which may perhaps be used with some effect. But if Mr. Pakenham send one set of assurances, back by *the authority of those from whom he receives them*, how can anyone in London representing the Executive alone, refute them? This is one of the evils which have sprung from exposing the subject, pending the negotiation, to the interference of Congress, and to the *open* public discussion it has undergone in both houses, but particularly in the Senate. I sincerely hope it may be your good fortune ultimately to overcome it; although I still believe the Whig Party in the Senate will not, if they can help it, allow you to settle the question upon better terms than your Predecessors (Mr. Clay especially) were willing to take, and that of the merit of any settlement which may be ultimately made, they will give you as little as possible.

In my interview with Lord Aberdeen, I discovered that *Mr. Niles*,[3] at present in Washington, had ventured upon a correspondence in Paris, to be used with Lord A. & this government, urging a prompt renewal of the negotiation; and, by way of inducement to *this* government to move immediately, *pointing out the serious evils and bad consequences of longer delay*: of evils and bad consequences to this side of course! The communication was made to me connected with an inquiry who

Mr. Niles is, and what are his connections? Knowing Mr. Niles recently only as the particularly active agent of our friend Governor Cass, the new character in which this recent interposition places him, somewhat surprises me! Of course, I could not say exactly this here, and was properly cautious in my answers; but I confess I could not well understand, if Mr. Niles, like Gov. Cass, is bent upon demanding all & accepting nothing less than 54. 40, why he should be so particularly anxious to lead to the reopening of a negotiation which could only end, if their exactions could expect it, in signal failure! *Robert Owen*,[4] too, is *here*, on a mission of peace! Certain it is that, the old saying ascribing so much mischief to a multiplicity of cooks, must have lost all its truth, or all its pertinence to matters of graver import, if this *oregon* negotiation end in anything vary palatable to anybody!

It is now, I think, quite certain that by the Steamer of the 11th or 19th May the proposition of this government for the partition of oregon will be forwarded to Washington, and that early in June, at the latest, it will be received, and, in some form or other be finally disposed of by the end of that month. That result may I suppose be anticipated, even though you, conforming to several precedents by General Washington throughout his administration (to which I will take the liberty of calling your particular attention at the time the proposition may be transmitted, and I know more certainly whether it is in fact intended as an ultimatum) should ask the advice of the Senate not only upon the offer in the form in which it is made, but upon the offer with other modifications if assented to by this Government. Upon these suppositions it is not at all probable that after the first of July the services of an American Minister at this court in regard to this great and critical question would be at all needed. In that case I should be very glad of the opportunity of embarking hence for the U.S. about the middle of July or in the course of the month of August, but, by remaining later I might have the opportunity of employment at home, and I take the occasion therefore, of bringing the subject to your attention in this quiet way, in order that you may act with a knowledge of my motives, and with the least inconvenience & responsibility to yourself.

In connection with it, a sense of duty by no means agreeable, compels me to once more advert to a topic to which heretofore I adverted (and I grieve to say, with less success than I had expected) more on personal grounds. Of recurring to it again on personal grounds I should be quite incapable, even if it were not already passed remedy in that sense. But I only discharge a public duty when I express the opinion that the advantage of the Public Service, and the deputy of the Government

and administration make it very desireable that before I should take any official leave my successor should arrive in London; or a suitable Chargé d'Affaires be provided.

Besides this, I venture to assure you Sir, that various causes within the last ten years have combined to place the general reputation and moral weight of our Government and Country abroad in a more critical, nay in a more equivocal position than you might be aware of: and I am sorry to say that individual efforts have not been wanting very extensively to diffuse the word that the Party at present in power, least of all, is entitled to the respect of Foreign Nations. Perhaps some few individuals have derived some temporary, personal advantage from thus befowling their own nest, but the Country and its Institutions, and especially the great and powerful Party by which it is now, and most probably will continued to be governed, have suffered even more in consequence of this very treachery. These views are at the bottom of the hostility currently existing against us in the mind of the French *Government* and have taken deeper root I can assure you with other governments upon the continent. The *British Press*, in its most comprehensive term, in fact in every hand and department of it in which types are employed, has been diligently laboring to bring our institutions into disrepute and if possible to degrade our people in every part of Europe. Wholly destitute as we are of any countervailing Press we are almost defenseless against the assaults which are thus made upon us; so far as the influence of Printing might save us we stand absolutely naked and unprotected. Nor should I look to the *Press* under any circumstances as the best shield or correction. I am, on the contrary, entirely satisfied that next to a wise, dignified, prosperous administration of our Government at home, which, undoubtedly in any event must be our great stay & support, the character of our national representatives abroad must more than anything else & than all other things contribute to the elevation or degradation of our country & government in Europe. This court, & one or two other of the principal governments, but this above all others requires that we should be represented by a gentleman, and one of education, knowledge and experience, and who to a thorough knowledge of his own country, and a manly patriotic spirit of devotion to its interests, should add a knowledge of the character and temper of the English people. If the oregon question be settled as I hope it will amicably, the next four years in England may be regarded as even a greater & more important crisis than that which succeeded our revolution. If during that period we should be represented here by a gentleman of education, proper spirit, conciliatory deportment of truthfulness & dignified conduct, and of real

knowledge & accomplishments we will attain an elevation and influence equal to that of any other Foreign Government, and might not unreasonably hope to become in fact the Model Republic. I will not attempt to refer to what might follow if we should fall into different hands, for I could not exaggerate the evil if I should try. I hope you will not deem me presumptuous in what I have here said, especially as it is composed, if you please, to your own heart, is not intended to have & cannot have any effect in my favor personally, and is really designed, as far as it may have that tendency to enable you in your foreign appointments to make them such as will redound to your own honor and to the advantage of the Country. At all events, I pray you, Sir, to send my successor here before I go.

I hope you will not find my long letters disagreeable to you. I write them, I assure you, because I suppose I may say much rather important to you that I could not well embrace in a despatch; and as it may be hoped there will be no great time for their repetition, you will the more readily excuse me for the past.

Praying you to make the kindest regards of Mrs. McL and myself to Mrs. P., I add the assurance of the sincere esteem & regard ....

LOUIS MCLANE

P.S. I omitted in the body of my letter, and therefore add a postscript, to express the gratification at the course recently taken in the Senate by Colonel Benton in opposition to Governor Cass. I have felt mortified at the conduct of the latter seeing that under the circumstances he might have been looked to as one of the pillars of the administration. For I cannot persuade myself that the Governor entertains the least idea that a majority of either party in the country can be brought to plunge us into a war for 54. 40 if honorable terms short of that can be obtained. Being tolerably one of peace he may have the merit of insisting upon 54. 40 without the hazard of war; but there will be great danger by such a course of producing confusion when there ought to have been order, and of tendering discord when all would have been harmonious. I yet hope, however, that the example and influence of Col. Benton will yet prevail, and that the great body of the Party will be well satisfied with a course of policy by which peace may be maintained without any sacrifice of our national honor. I am afraid however, that Col. B. has given Governor Cass an advantage, in placing too much confidence in the adoption of the 49th parallel as that fixed by commissioners under the Treaty of Utrecht. I made a very close and thorough investigation of this subject some time ago. I made inquiry into it in Paris, and finally had an able research prosecuted in

Paris by Mr. Boyd,[5] of the Legation, and the result of the above was to convince me that no satisfactory proof could be had that the commissioners appointed under the Treaty ever did more than establish the northern line between Great Britain & France as far west as the Stoney Mountains and, therefore, I contented myself with adverting to it very generally in my conversation with Lord Aberdeen without pressing it. I have always reposed great confidence in Mr. Benton's researches, in which I have rarely if ever known him to commit an error; and it is possible he may have had access to proofs which have escaped me. If so they can be used at Washington. Meantime I send with this letter a "Times" newspaper of today,[6] as containing what I shrewdly suspect to be, the views of the Foreign Office upon this topic. If I could have found the proof, as I hoped, to make out the case as stated by Mr. Monroe, & Col. Benton I would have disposed of oregon for you before last New Year's day.

Having the pen once more in hand, I may use it to say further that I think the prospect of success of Sir Robert Peels Great Measures are even better than when I wrote concerning them before; and so I think his own position is strengthening. I am quite sure he will have all the Measures of free trade; and that there will be no change in the Ministry before the die in our affairs is cast. L. McL.

I send you the "Times" containing the notice of Mr. Benton's speech.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed on the cover to James Buchanan, Washington City; addressed internally "To the President, Washington" and marked "Personal & Private." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on May 23, 1846, and notes the contents of the letter as "containing an interesting account of the causes which have embarrassed the Oregon question the chief of which are the delay to give the *Notice* & of the course in the Senate of the U. States. Contains also some private matters. *Confidential.*"

1. McLane to James Buchanan, April 18, 1846. ALS. PHi.

2. Latin legal phrase meaning "by way of argument."

3. Prior to his lengthy political career, John M. Niles established and edited the *Hartford Times*. A Democrat, he twice represented Connecticut in the U.S. Senate, 1835–39 and 1843–49; he also served as postmaster general in Martin Van Buren's cabinet from 1840 until 1841.

4. Son of Robert Owen the British industrialist and social reformer, Robert Dale Owen assisted in the founding of the New Harmony community in Indiana in 1826; he served three terms as a Democrat in the state legislature, 1836–38, and two terms in the U.S. House, 1843–47.

5. A Baltimore native, James McHenry Boyd went to London as an attaché and served briefly as secretary of the legation following Gansevoort Melville's death in 1846.

6. Enclosure not found.

# MAY

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir, Columbia May 1st 1846

Yours of the 20th ultimo is received. I have no wish to part with the boy Harbert. He is as valuable a boy as I can get and being now acclamated to the valley, he is more valuable to me than any ordinary hand not *acclamated*. He has taken a very likely & valuable woman of mine for a wife & he has a very likely & smart & stout boy about 7 years old.[1] The woman is about 27 years old & is cook at my plantation.

You will readily perceive that I could not expect to better my condition by a *sale* and *repurchase*, or by an *exchange* for negroes *whose qualities* I do not know, and who are not *accustomed* to the particular atmosphere of the Yazzoo valley. Such being my conviction as to the value of this *family of negroes*, it is not without some degree of reluctance that I consent to part with them at all. I certainly would not do so to anyone else. I remember my promise to Mrs Polk, and also to yourself & am ready to comply with it either by a *sale* or *exchange* for other property.

In a sale I could not sell the family for less than $1500. Harbert I

price at $650, his wife Mary at $500, & her son at $300. I am now paying here $625 & $650 for likely young fellows of good character & find it exceedingly difficult to get them at that price, and $550 for young women. The son of Mary is large of his age, and was one of the drivers for my gin the past season, though he was small for that business. You may buy fellows now & then who are sold because of their *bad* qualities for less than $650, but I prefer to buy boys of *good qualities* at $650 to boys of bad character at $550.

I do not want to part with this family at the above price, and only consent to do so to accommodate you & I know I cannot replace them on my place for less money. Col Campbell thinks my price high, & prefers to give me another man & woman for them, but says *his* are younger than mine & he wants me to pay a difference. I think my negroes are worth as much, indeed more, than any ordinary negros though they may be a few years younger. I know the qualities of mine & know that they are acclamated & I cannot think of paying a difference between them and any ordinary pair of negroes. If purchasing I would give the preference to Negroes from 20 to 25 but I do not regard the difference in age as equivalent to a knowledge of their qualities & acclamation.

If you prefer to purchase the family, I would take Col Campbells draft upon you payable 1st Octr, & deliver the Family 1st Octr as I could not now spare them from my plantation. If you think proper to exchange, I would deliver them at any time when my place was supplied with a likely young fellow, healthy & stout and of good character & a woman of like description. You could pay me the money for the boy. I would be unwilling to part the boy from his mother, or to be the means of seperating any other boy from his mother. I would prefer you to pay me for him.

I hope you will be satisfied with the *fairness* of these propositions & will appreciate the motives which induce me to consent to part with them. Col C.'s negroes might be preferred by a *trader*, whose object was to sell them immediately, but as my negroes are in the *prime of life*, and suit me in all things, I regard them as equal in value to any pair. I have not seen Col. C.'s negroes—they are at his plantation in Mississippi. My proposition, if an exchange is made, is for C. to send me a pair of negroes to my plantation, who shall be young & likely, stout & healthy & of good character, of which my overseer is to be the judge and to pay me $300 for the boy. If either of these propositions suit you, I am ready at any time to carry out *the sale* & convey the negroes. If you can make any other suggestion which would be more satisfactory to yourself, in regard to the Trade it will afford me pleasure to accommodate my views to yours & let you have the negroes.

Knowing Col. Campbells views about negroes, that he purchases negroes more with reference to *price*, than to their *qualities*, & not being willing to exchange for negroes I have never seen, and don't know, *merely* upon *his judgment*, I can suggest no other plan for an exchange for the negroes *he offers* me than the above by reference to my overseer. There is a fellow & woman for sale belonging to Col Will Pillow here now offered for sale—the fellow at $625 & the woman at $550. I am willing if he buy these, or pay for them, & send them to my plantation, & pay me for my boy to let you have mine. I do not think it probable with Campbells view, I & he can trade, & I address you this communication to place you fully in possession of my willingness to let you have the family & of my views in regard thereto. Remember me affectionately to Mrs Polk & receive renewed assurances of my kind regard & friendship. Mrs Pillow desires to be kindly remembered to Mrs Polk.

GID. J. PILLOW

[P.S.] If you think my proposition is not fair & just say what would be satisfactory. It is possible I may be in Washington City about 25th of this Int. G.J.P.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on May 12, 1846, and that he replied on May 16, 1846.

1. Harbert and Mary's son, Lewis, is not identified further.

## TO HENRY HORN[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City May 5th 1846

I take sincere pleasure in introducing to you my friend, the *Revd. Samuel Doak*[2] of Tennessee who visits Philadelphia to attend the Session of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. *Mr Doak* is the President of Greeneville College Tennessee,[3] and what is rare among clergymen of his denomination, is a Democrat on principle. He was the friend of *Genl. Jackson* in all his severe political trials, and has sustained me in all my arduous contests. He is a pious, good man, and I commend him to your kind attention.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. A Jackson Democrat and Van Buren loyalist, Horn sat one term in the U.S. House, 1831–33; in 1845 and again in 1846 Polk nominated Horn to be collector of customs at Philadelphia but failed to secure his confirmation.

2. A Presbyterian minister, Samuel Witherspoon Doak served as vice president of Washington College (Tennessee) in the 1810s during the tenure of its

founding president and his father, Samuel Doak, also a Presbyterian minister. He later served as president of that institution, 1838–1840. In 1835, he revived Tusculum Academy of Greeneville, Tenn., another educational institution founded by his father; and during the 1830s and early 1840s, excluding his tenure at Washington College, he conducted the academy. In 1844, he secured the incorporation of the academy as Tusculum College and served as a founding trustee and president of the Presbyterian affiliated school until his death in 1864.

3. Polk mistakenly refers to "Greeneville College" instead of "Tusculum College." In 1868, Greeneville College, another local Presbyterian affiliated institution, merged with Tusculum College.

## FROM JAMES E. SAUNDERS

Mobile, Ala. May 5, 1846

Following notice of the reported beginning of hostilities on the Texas border, Saunders notes that "600 of the volunteers raised, started under the command of Genl Desha in the New Orleans Boat."[2] He reports that Major William H. Chase[3] has arrived in Mobile with orders from General Edmund P. Gaines to muster volunteer units and that "several fine volunteer corps" await a federal requisition.[4] Saunders notes that "Since hostilities have commenced freights at New Orleans and at this city have advanced 1/4 under the apprehension that privateers under the Mexican flag may capture outward bound vessels." He suggests that assigning "two or three 10 gun sloops" as escorts would help allay fears. Saunders promises to keep a revenue cutter in Mobile for despatch duties.

JAMES E. SAUNDERS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Unofficial."

1. An educator and Democratic politician, Saunders represented Lawrence County in the Alabama legislature in 1840. He moved to Mobile in 1842 to engage in commercial operations and received the appointment as collector of customs for that port in 1845.

2. A native of Sumner County, Tenn., Robert Desha served as a brevet major in the army during the War of 1812; sat two terms in the U.S. House, 1827–31; and removed thereafter to Mobile to engage in mercantile pursuits.

3. A Massachutsetts native, Chase was graduated from West Point in 1814; served his entire army career in the engineers, reaching the rank of major in 1838; resigned his commission in 1856; and served as major general of Florida state troops during the Civil War.

4. A Virginia native, Gaines entered the army in 1797; achieved the rank of brigadier general, brevet major general, during the War of 1812; and commanded the western department at the outbreak of the Mexican War. Gaines was not authorized to call for volunteers, although a court martial later exonerated him. This incident represents his extensive conflict with the War Department and his superior general, Winfield Scott.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Sir: Washington May 6th 1846

Abel Shunk and others[1] who have applied for leases on certain tracts of the prairie lands, on Isle Royal in Lake Superior, containing *copper ore*, having appealed to me from your decision declining to grant the leases claimed, I have given to the subject a careful examination.

My opinion is clear that there is no authority of law to grant leases on any of the public lands except those containing *lead mines* or *salt springs*, and that the authority of the Executive to grant such leases, does not embrace *copper* lands. This view of the legal authority of the Executive necessarily excludes the applications made by Shunk and others for leases on Isle Royal, which is a *copper* and not a *lead* region, and renders a detailed examination of the questions raised, in the coterminous arguments and documents, which have been presented by the claimants, unnecessary. Having however, fully examined these cases, I deem it proper to add, that I am not free from doubt on the question, whether Isle Royal, was embraced within the limits of the mineral region, under Mr Cunningham's superintendency[2] at the time, the alledged *permits* were granted by him; nor am I satisfied, if it was, that the applicants in these cases have conformed to the regulations prescribed by the War Department so as to entitle them to the leases they claim, even if the locations made by them, had been in fact on *lead* instead of *copper* lands. By the regulations of the Department, the power is reserved to the Secretary of War to refuse leases, in all cases, where *permits* have been given by subordinate agents of the Government, if he shall become satisfied that they have been illegally or improperly issued.

Having after very full examination arrived at these conclusions, I approve and affirm your decision refusing to grant the leases applied for by Shunk and others, and hereby direct that no further *leases* be granted in the *copper* region or for any other of the public lands except such as contain *salt springs*, or where the predominating mineral is *lead*. The power to grant *permits* or *leases* for any other lands, has not in my opinion been conferred upon the Executive by Congress, and until such authority be given, by further legislation, it cannot be exercised.

My attention was called to this subject for the first time, in the cases now presented to me, and I am well satisfied that the practice of granting *permits* or *leases* for *copper* lands, which has prevailed for several

years is erroneous, and should be corrected.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. Not identified further.

2. A New York native, Walter Cunningham served as special agent for U.S. lead mines and mineral lands in the upper Mississippi and Lake Superior region from 1842 until 1845.

## TO ROBERT C. SCHENCK[1]

Sir: Washington City May 6th 1846

I received this morning your letter of the 5th Instant,[2] addressed to me, by order of a Committee of the House of Representatives of which you are chairman. You request me to "communicate any information that it may be in my power to give as to the means or agency by which any account and vouchers, relating to the expenditure of any part of the secret service money, may have been obtained, or permitted to be made public, by or through Mr Charles J. Ingersoll."[3]

You do me no more than justice when you state in your letter that, "the Committee have no thought that information which was refused in answer to a formal call by the House, has been communicated or permitted to be communicated with my knowledge or assent."[4] My first information on the subject was derived from the proceedings and debates in Congress. If disclosures of the character to which you refer, have been made at any time, to any person, I have no previous knowledge of the fact and I have never given my assent to any such disclosures through any channel whatever.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. A lawyer from Dayton, Schenck served in the Ohio House, 1839–43; as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1843–51; as minister to Brazil, 1851–53; as a general officer of the volunteers during the Civil War, 1861–62; as a Republican in the U.S. House, 1863–71; and as minister to Great Britain, 1870–76.

2. Letter not found. A copy of Schenck's letter and Polk's response were included in the committee report; see House Report No. 686, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

3. A Pennsylvania lawyer and Democrat, Ingersoll served as a member of the U.S. House, 1813–15 and 1841–49; as U.S. district attorney for Pennsylvania, 1815–29; and as state assemblyman in 1830. He went to Prussia in 1837 as secretary of legation and became U.S. district judge for Connecticut in 1853. On April 27, 1846, in a speech on the House floor, Ingersoll charged Daniel Webster with official misconduct during his term as secretary of state.

A House select committee resolved against further action on the charges. See House Document No. 484, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

4. In an April 20, 1846, response to a House resolution, Polk maintained the privacy of past expenditures from the president's contingent funds for foreign intercourse, or secret service funds. For the text of Polk's response, see James D. Richardson (ed.), *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1902* (10 vols.; Washington D.C.: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1903), IV, pp. 431–36.

## FROM JAMES E. SAUNDERS

My Dear Sir Mobile 7th May 1846

This morning Major General Gaines sent an officer to this city to muster volunteers into service for Point Isabel. The term of service (six months) will I fear bar a great many of our volunteers who are well disciplined, from the ranks. Could their services be accepted for the emergency, three or four of our companies would march immediately. I fear they will not do very well in New Orleans in raising men.

This morning Gen Lang,[1] one of my revenue officers, also the Adjutant and Inspector General of the state of Alabama, secured a communication from Major Genl Gaines addressed to the Governor of this state[2] under date of the 4th May, the original having gone by mail in which he says, "I have solicited the President's authority to concentrate upon the Rio Grande, in the present month 50 battalions of 600 men each, to be taken into the service of the United States for six months, unless sooner discharged. To save *time* which is now important to the accomplishment of the proposed measure, I think it my duty to say to you that your excellency would contribute very much to the interest of the service, by giving authority for three battalions, two of infantry and one of riflemen to organize and repair to Point Isabel, or to this city (New Orleans) as soon as practicable from the young men constituting the chivalry of Alabama. Should they find steamboat navigation transportation at Mobile, they can receive their arms and other supplies there, and go from there to Point Isabel. Otherwise they will repair to this city, where they will receive arms and every thing necessary to promote their health, comfort and efficiency. From this city they may proceed in good vessels, steamers if possible, to Point Isabel."

Gen Lang goes directly to Tuscaloosa and I presume the Governor under the circumstances will respond to the call made by Genl Gaines and issue his proclamation accordingly. One of the main reasons why Volunteers are slow in offering their services is a want of confidence

in Major G. Gaines who is thought to have retained the fires of youth, without having acquired the wisdom of age.

In this emergency however it seems that he is pursuing the proper course. I have been particular in setting forth what has been done and hope any movements made by the Governor of Alabama in pursuance of Genl Gaines request may be properly indorsed at Washington. If one more failure to pay Volunteers should occur it would be an extinguisher upon all future expeditions called for by emergencies too great to await the tardy and regular action of a Government covering such an area as ours.

There is nothing today from the theater of war.

May 8th

This mornings mail brings nothing from the Rio Grande. Great anxiety is felt on this subject. I conversed last evening with a Mr Nicholson[3] who has resided in Texas for several years and explored the country between the present camp of Gen. Taylor and Point Isabel. He represents the face of it as being very difficult for the march of reinforcements from the thick "chaparal" which would confine them to a narrow track and leave them exposed to a raking fire of artillery in front, without the power of displaying column.

A gentleman who arrived from New Orleans in the Mail-Boat says that when the Boat left Galveston it was rumoured at that place that Point Isabel had been taken. The rumor however needs confirmation. It may be so.

This Mr. Nicholson also informs me that there is a fine road and an open country running from Matamoros down the right-bank of the Rio Grande to some place near the mouth.

In the hope that fact I may communicate may be useful to you, I will write frequently.

JAMES E. SAUNDERS

P.S. Inform Mrs Polk that Col Childress[4] and family are all well. Mrs C. and the children left the city yesterday to spend the summer in the interior. J.E.S.

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

1. James W. Lang received his appointment as an inspector at the Mobile Customs House in 1845.

2. An Alabama attorney, Joshua Lanier Martin won election to several terms in the state house, 1822–28; served as state solicitor, 1827–31; won election to two terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1835–39; and served as governor from 1845 until 1847.

3. Probably James Nicholson. A native of England, Nicholson immigrated to the United States in 1833; he moved to Bastrop, Texas, in 1839, where he engaged in mercantile pursuits and held the post of town clerk. He served as mayor of Bastrop in 1844.

4. A Marengo County attorney, Thomas B. Childress was probably the brother of William G. Childress and a cousin of Sarah C. Polk.

## FROM LOUIS McLANE

(By the Great Britain)
My dear Sir, London May 8, 1846

I send you two copies of the *Times* Newspaper; that of today will acquaint you of the receipt here, by the way of Havre, of the intelligence of the final vote in the Senate upon the resolution of Notice.[1] This result has produced quite a sensation here; and, it cannot be concealed, will facilitate the reopening of the negotiation, a task, I assure you, of no little difficulty. I spent an hour, this morning, with Lord Aberdeen, at his home and have just left him. He has consented by the next Steamer (that which will leave Liverpool on the 19th instant) to send out detailed instructions to Mr Packenham to submit another proposition as a final effort to settle the question. I am satisfied that in coming to this conclusion he has not had united support of the cabinet here; many of them thinking that their gov. ought to go no farther than to signify its willingness to treat further, if an offer for that purpose should be made. And I believe it has required both courage & firmness to maintain the resolution he has taken.

That which is now to be hoped for is that the proposition should be such as that consistently with your own just responsibility you can submit it to the Senate; either before, or after for the purpose of consulting them. It will not be my fault if it does not corespond with the hopes I have heretofore reported. Lord Aberdeen has promised to give his attention to it in earnest immediately, and I am to call upon him again next week for the purpose of discussing it, informally of course. You may be sure that I am fully sensible of the importance, while obtaining all the advantage possible from my interference and assistance here, most carefully to avoid any such commitment, of you or of your opinions, as to occasion the least possible embarrassment in your treatment of any proposition that may be made. I will be able also by the next steamer to acquaint you pretty certainly whether the proposition really will be an ultimatum or not, so that you may act accordingly. It is possible from an intimation dropt this morning that the Senate's Preamble may be regarded as doing away with the necessity, if not the

propriety of making an immediate ultimatum. Lord Aberdeen seemed desirous of knowing whether under the discretion of the resolution you would proceed immediately to give the notice if the negotiation should be resumed. I said if the house retained the expression, your course would probably depend somewhat upon the nature of the proposition he might submit. I understand him to assent to the idea of sending out his proposition by the 19h, although the house should not concur in the Preamble and resolution of the Senate. And it will be my effort to effect that, even if the house should disagree to the form of the Senate's resolution, and the Senate persist in its own form, a result I have assumed to be possible, if not probable. It is a pity such a negotiation, in such a crisis of it, should have to be conducted so many thousands of miles distant from events and proceedings by which it is to be so materially affected. Nevertheless, I have an abiding confidence that it will appear in the end that the real difference dividing the two Governments is too small to justify extreme measures; and that notwithstanding this are the difficulties you have had to combat, the good fortune will yet be yours to preserve the peace of the Country, without commiting her pride, or surrendering any one of her material rights. I am glad to see the independence with which *Houston* acted,[2] which makes me more than ever gratified to have him back in the Union. I tender my best wishes to Mrs. P. & yourself....

LOUIS MCLANE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "Personal & Unofficial & *Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 3, 1846.

1. Enclosures not found.
2. McLane's reference is to Sam Houston's support in the U.S. Senate.

## FROM J. GEORGE HARRIS

My Dear Friend, Memphis, May 10, 1846

I feel it to be my duty to give you a brief and running account of our Navy Yard affairs at this place. I know they have given you no little trouble. Always having enjoyed and never having abused your confidence, I have reason to believe that, inasmuch as I have nothing to do with the *government* of this yard, what I shall state will not be unacceptable nor obnoxious to suspicion of prejudice or partiality.

The truth is that a few prominent but not very influential citizens about here have from the first supposed that this was to be a *civil* and not a *naval* establishment—that it was to be a sort of *fixture* to the city of Memphis, its advantages and benefits to be used and distributed and

its operations directed by those few who may affect to make and direct public opinion—that the bulk of the appropriations for this point were to be deposited here under their peculiar advice, and that our local public opinion as guided and shaped by the incidental influence hereof would be made to influence the President and Department in all things concerning the work.

Our mode of doing business under the Naval organization, while the mass of the people who begin to understand it admire it, is not very much approved by the very few to whom I have adverted. Everything has to be approved by the Commandant and recorded by his Clerk. My monthly estimates are the basis of the Navy Agent's monthly drafts, and as I make them close, and require them promptly, no surplus of any consequence can remain long in his hands. The Commandant, the Pursur, the Navy Agent, and the Clerk of the Yard are each a check on the other, and the records of the Department are a check on us all. There is no chance for the loss of a dime, or for the misuse of a dollar.

The work is vastly popular here, and the manner in which it is done is also popular and is daily growing more and more so. Nevertheless a very few prominent men seem determined to keep up *some sort* of an excitement against the present mode of doing things, now abusing the Secretary, then the Commandant, all of whose acts they criticise and pass judgment upon from the suspicion of a disobedient officer to the appointment or removal of a day-laborer. It really seems to me that they will never be satisfied until the *Corporation* or the people in town meeting assembled shall be permitted to say whether *Pat* or *Teddy* shall be employed at a dollar a day, and to resolve that none of the public money shall be expended here unless it is expended through and by them. I assure you that the captious course of these few men has already become a reproach and a bye-word through the streets. They want to be considered the *exclusive* friends of the yard. I am satisfied that no arrangement can be made which will redound so much to the progress of the work, now going on finely and producing an excellent effect among the people, as the arrangement which now exists. The rumor which you have no doubt heard that Com. Lavallette is politically opposed to the party in power is in my judgement an idle one. I never asked him the question, but I admired his reply to an incidental remark of mine upon the subject. "I am no politician" said he "My life has been spent in the service. I am a Naval officer. It is my duty to support my country's administration of government with my personal influence and the influence of my office. I ever have done it. I ever shall." This was the substance of the sentiment, and I thought it becoming a Naval veteran, who had been honored by his country with

medals and swords for his gallant conduct on Lake Champlain.

There is not then an officer in the yard who is politically opposed to the party in power, unless we come down to the overseers of laborers. There are four of them, three of whom I understood yesterday had acted with the whigs in elections, but who (as I was told) will probably act with them no more. Indeed, it is a hard matter when the poor fellows come up and cry to be a slave at a dollar a day that their families may not starve, to ask them whether they are whig or democrat. I know you would not approve such an *extreme* course. The few complain of everything—they complain that some of the *contractors* are whigs.

I heard yesterday from no doubtful source that one of your old and rather dangerous—not dangerous but *equivocal*—friends has declared that *he* has taken hold and that the naval officers now here will be called away in less than 30 days. Ready & willing to obey orders even though they carry us to the uttermost ends of the earth, it would be exceedingly mortifying to be pulled and hauled by such influences as those on which this *boast* is predicated.

I am anxious that your own fame, at home especially, should find a prop in this work. No man here *dare* say that it is not your darling object—no one has ever presumed to say it. With this work you are impregnable, and can direct it as you please under full confidence in public approbation without fear or favor.

I have no doubt that Mr O'Sullivan[1] has told you much truth about our local affairs. I think however that his judgment is not altogether sound with reference to the probable durability of the *piling* on Wolf River. He is undoubtedly a scientific Engineer, and knowing his worth in that capacity, we regretted the necessity which required his detachment.

I am satisfied that there are retrospective and prospective influences at work in this matter outside the Yard. The appointee of the late administration, and the expectant under a future administration harmonise to some extent in embarrasing the existing administration. There is something in this.

But let me say in conclusion, that we are moving on here smoother and better than under all the circumstances could have been reasonably expected. Activity, rigid economy, careful records, uniform and temperate government, are commanding the public admiration, while with the mass of the laborers our bluff and my counter have become perfect idols. Give us a little time, and the support and approbation of the government which we cheerfully serve with a desire to be faithful, and we will make this the most popular work in the country.

I *know* this free and unreserved communication will not be unaccept-

able. It is made as a matter of duty, and it has afforded me a pleasant hour of a Sunday evening.

J. GEO HARRIS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*Confidential*."

1. T. L. O'Sullivan, former assistant engineer at the Memphis Navy Yard, is not identified further.

## FROM ROMULUS M. SAUNDERS

My dear Sir, Ellicotts Mills May 10th /46

After my conversation with you, I again saw Mr. Calhoun. He said he was glad to receive the information I gave him as to the *Notice* and professed to be satisfied with what you had done. I then pressed on him the importance of taking up the House bill as to jurisdiction, &c.[1] He said, he was prepared to go as far as the British statute & thought it impolitic to go beyond. I said you would be satisfied with that. He feared the friends of the measure would not be—that the British statute simply provided for arrest & a trial before the judicial authorities in Canada, whereas the House bill, contemplated, both arrest & trial by magistrates within the disputed territory. I asked him if he was willing to hold a few conferences with the Attorney Genl. on the subject.[2] He said, most certainly. I intended to see Mr. Mason, but failed to do so. Would you feel free to make this suggestion to Judge Mason. I am fully sensible of the difficulties that surround you, and I deeply regret to say, I found amongst those who ought to be supporters & friends, a feeling very different from what it ought to be. I think the *cause* is apparent, but that is another matter of conjecture.

Mr. C. again adverted to our affairs with Mexico, and said, there was a gentleman there in the City, who had given him information, which lead him to fear a collision, between the two armies & danger on the part of ours. If the news of this morning be true, those fears have been realized.

I have deemed it proper to give you the above intelligence, thinking it might be of importance for you to know it.

R. M. SAUNDERS

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

1. "A bill to protect the rights of American citizens in the territory of the United States west of the Rocky Mountains, and for other purposes," House Bill No. 7, 29th Congress, 1st Session. The bill passed the House on April 18, 1846, but the Senate failed to take up the bill.

2. John Y. Mason served as a member of the U.S. House, 1831–37; U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, 1837–44; secretary of the navy, 1844–45 and 1846–49; and U.S. attorney general, 1845–46.

## FROM JOHN G. TOD[1]

Sir, Galveston, Texas May 15th 1846

I am just in from the Rio Grande and the historic *Extra* which I have drawn up for our Papers may contain an item of intelligence not found in Genl. Taylors despatches, which is my apology for this liberty.[2]

I was with Genl. Vega[3] & the other Prisoners the night of the 12th inst. I had a long conversation with him thro. an interpreter. He told me that Genl. Perades[4] was at the head of 13000 Troops on his way to Matamoros, and ought to be there in ten or fifteen days at the furthest, though it may be, he said, when the intelligence of the discomfiture of Genl. Arista's Army[5] reaches him, that he may divert his plans and even disband his army.

I enquired about Santa Ana's return.[6] He told me he had received a letter from Genl. Santa Ana dated the 25th of April, and that he had no idea of coming back to Mexico. Genl. Vega however remarked, that there was no telling what would occur?

He was told that 15000 American Troops would be on the Rio Grande in two Weeks; he expressed the hope that they would not cross the River, but trusted all difficulties would be settled amicably.

It was mentioned to him that two or three thousand Texas Troops would be down shortly on the Rio Grande? He shrugged his shoulders, and said that was terrible; that they were pirates robbers and murderers, and did not carry on the science of war like christians!

I suggested a Flotilla of Boats as an auxiliary force to the command of Point Isabel, in my conversation with Maj. Munroe.[7] He was so pleased with my views that he at once requested me to speak to Genl. Taylor upon the subject. I did so, and mentioned what had passed between Major Munroe & myself upon the subject. Genl. Taylor expressed his approbation of it; and said he would write to the War Department and recommend it, as he could do nothing more in its favor. I got already to come up here, and fit out a few Boats belonging to our old Navy. In the meanwhile, the U.S. squadron arrived off the Bar at Brazos san Iago, and will undertake it on a more magnificent scale.

I feel however, that they had better go and try their hand on Vera Cruz, and the Castle of San Juan d'Uloa,[8] and leave the Rio Grande to the Texas Navy that was!

Do not let Genl. Scott[9] come down to the Rio Grande. I have often heard the remark made, that no doubt he would be down there. We do not want your administration cursed with a second Florida affair on the Rio Grande.[10]

JNO. G. TOD

P.S. In examining the knap-sacks of many of the Mexican wounded & the killed, they contained only a little corn & salt! I did not mention this in my *Extra*, for I did not wish to create any more sympathy in behalf of the poor Devils, than the policy of War requires. Tod

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

1. A Kentucky native, Tod joined the U.S. navy in 1830 as a midshipman; he later removed to Texas, where he served with the Texas navy from 1838 until 1842. During the U.S.-Mexican War, he supervised the recommissioning of the Texas navy.

2. Enclosure not found.

3. A longtime Mexican general, Rómulo Diaz de la Vega was captured at the Battle of Resaca de la Palma.

4. Mariano Paredes y Arillaga.

5. A participant in Mexico's struggle for independence and general in the Mexican army, Mariano Arista served as secretary of war under José Herrera in 1848. Elected president of Mexico in 1851, he served until 1853.

6. A general in the Mexican army, Antonio López de Santa Anna often headed the central government during the period from 1833 to 1855; he commanded Mexican armies in the Texas rebellion and in the Mexican War with the United States.

7. A native of Scotland and artillery officer, Brevet Major John Munroe commanded the army supply depot at Point Isabel. He received promotion to lieutenant colonel, and then colonel, for his conduct at the battles of Monterey and Buena Vista.

8. Construction on Castle San Juan de Ulúa, a large protective fortress in Veracruz harbor, was begun in 1564; in the nineteenth century the Castle often served as a prison for dissident politicians.

9. A Virginia native, Winfield Scott practiced law in Petersburg before his commission as a captain in the artillery in 1808. A decorated major general and popular hero at the conclusion of the War of 1812, Scott later supervised the removal of the Cherokees in 1838, encouraged arbitration to settle the Maine boundary dispute of the same year, and commanded operations in the southern theater of the Mexican War, 1847–48. Nominated for president by the Whig party in 1852, he won promotion to lieutenant general in 1855 and retired six years later.

10. Tod's reference is to the conflict between President Andrew Jackson and Scott over the latter's inactivity in the campaign against the Seminoles and Creeks, 1835–36. Jackson removed Scott from command, though a court of inquiry later commended Scott's decisions.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City May 16th 1846

I have received a letter from Genl. Pillow concerning the sale of *Harbert* and his family.[1] He asks $650 for Harbert $300 for the boy & $550 for *Harbert's* wife. I am perfectly willing to pay the price he asks for *Harbert* and the *boy*, but my impression is that the woman is rated $50 or $100 above her value. The likely girl that I got from *Mrs. Childress*,[2] and that you took to my plantation last fall, was valued to me at $450. She is as likely as any girl and is two years younger than Pillow's woman. I have written to Genl. Pillow today that my impression was that the price of the woman was too high, and submitted to him whether he ought not to let me have her for $50 or $100 less. But whether he agrees to make his deduction or not, I have said to him that I would take them at his offer. I buy only because *Harbert* is a family servant, and Pillow sells only to accomodate me. Neither of us wish to make anything by the trade. Pillow is a good judge of property, and if he still thinks they are worth $1500. I have said to him I would take them. You are therefore authorized to draw on me at sight for the amount of their price, upon Pillow's conveying them, and stipulating to deliver them to my overseer in a sound and healthy state. *Genl. Pillow* states in his letter that he cannot spare them from his plantation before the 1st of October. I have written to him that that time will suit me, but that if he should conclude to deliver them sooner, that I will pay him for them *now* or at any time he delivers them. I have written to him further that if either of them die or should be deprived of health before they are delivered to my overseer, it must be his loss. In closing the trade with him, this should be distinctly understood. Will you write to me what you do.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia; marked "*Private*."

1. Gideon J. Pillow to Polk, May 1, 1846.

2. Elizabeth Whitsitt Childress, Sarah C. Polk's mother, sold Caroline to Polk in August 1845.

TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir Washington City May 16th 1846

I received your letter of the 1st Instant, some days ago, but have been so constantly engaged about the Mexican affair and other public

matters as to be unable to give to it an earlier answer. You state the terms on which you are willing to let me have *Harbert* and his family, and in the poscript[1] to your letter say that if I do not agree with you in your proposition to "say what would be satisfactory." I am perfectly satisfied with the price which you place on Harbert, viz $650, and also with the price of the boy, the son of his wife. From your description of him I think him worth $300. Harbert's wife you say is 27 years old and the price you place on her is $550. My impression would be that, that is for a woman of her age, about $100. above her value. You however know her, and are a better judge than I am. I do not wish, and I know you do not, to make a dollar by the trade. I buy [...][2] *Harbert* a family servant, as I have heretofore explained to you, and take his wife and his child with him, because neither you nor myself would be willing to seperate them. I submit to you whether a fair price for the woman would not be $450 or $500. If you think she is worth more I have confidence in your judgement and will take her. You may therefore consider the trade as made however you may decide as to the value of the woman. You say you cannot conveniently spare the negroes from your plantation until the 1st of October. That time will suit me, or if you find that you can part with them sooner I will receive them at any time they are delivered, sound and healthy to my overseer,[3] who will go down to your place for them at any time he is notified. It will of course be distinctly understood between us that you run the risk of their health and lives, during the time you retain them and until they are delivered. If you find that you can deliver them immediately I am ready to pay for them *now*, and will honour *Col. Campbell's* draft on me at sight for the amt. If you retain them until October and either of them should either die or be deprived of health between this and that time, it will be your loss. Perhaps you may conclude to buy for yourself, the two belonging to *Col. Pillow's* estate, and deliver Harbert and his family immediately. Should you do so, you can instruct your overseer to deliver Harbert & his wife and her child to mine, and that will close the transaction. I repeat that the leading motive with both Mrs. P. & myself in making this purchase is to get *Harbert* back, as we own his mother.

The last week has been to me an exceedingly responsible and busy one. You have seen my action and that of Congress on the Mexican affairs. The truth is we had borne and forbourne so long with that distracted power & suffered so many wrongs and insults from her, that no alternative was left, when she shed American blood East of the Del Norte, but to recognize the war which she had made. The war has been declared and I have called for 20,000 Volunteers, intending to make it,

if possible a short war. By the act which was passed the Volunteers are to be officered by the State authorities.[4]

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia; marked "*Private*."

1. Misspelling of the word "postscript."
2. Blurred ink transfers render word or words illegible.
3. John A. Mairs.
4. "An Act providing for the Prosecution of the existing War between the United States and the Republic of Mexico," *Statutes at Large*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 16.

## FROM LOUIS MCLANE

My dear Sir, London May 18, 1846

I had the honor on the 15th instant, to receive your private letter of the 29th April. I am happy to know that you take the same view as to the impropriety of giving publicity to my despatches, and indeed I am unwilling to contemplate any possible crisis in which it would be warranted. The Despatch No 44,[1] by the present opportunity, may perhaps be regarded in a different light; and if you deemed it proper, as I have supposed you might, to consult the Senate in regard to the oregon negotiation, as a branch of the Treaty Making power, I could interpose no objection to the communication in like confidence to that body of such parts of my despatch as you might desire to send; though I by no means desire that it should be done.

I am persuaded that an impression has been made here that you will not reject the offer now to be made without consulting the Senate, and that the Senate will advise its acceptance; at all events with some modifications respecting the navigation of the river. I have as little doubt that in making the precise offer now directed they have been encouraged 1. by reliance upon the pacific & compromising disposition of the Senate, 2. upon our troubles with Mexico, and 3. have an apprehension of the change in the Ministry here; the present ministry, in that event appear to have occupied strong ground; and it would seem to follow that if modifications are to be insisted upon, they should come supported by the concurrence of both branches of the Treaty Making power.

I have taken the liberty to note some cases in which Genl Washington pursued the course of consulting, or advising with, the Senate in advance and in the progress of the negotiation; some of which are quite analogous; or even stronger than the present case. The cases to which

I refer will be found in the volume of the Executive Journal from 1789 to 1805.

Pages 20–21–22 Message of President Washington asking advice respecting a Treaty with Creek Indians.
Page 36 askes advice in advance and during progress of negotiation respecting Treaty of boundary with Great Britain. Answer of Senate to this application will be found on page 41.
Page 55 also presents another precedent.
Pages 60 & 61 & 85 precedents more pertinent and important; and on page 100 115 a message will be found asking advice in regard to negotiation with Spain, and on page 187, an offer of advice from the Senate.

In the present instance the previous public discussions in the Senate, their influence upon the negotiation, the most probable consequences that, under all circumstances, may be expected to result from a failure of the negotiation, and the peculiar influence which after what has already occured in the opinion of the Senate must have upon the future progress of the negotiation would seem to make an application to that body almost unavoidable.

I feel very confident, if the Senate insists upon a limitted right to the Hudson's Bay Company of navigation of the Columbia, so as to confine it to a term of years and that should form the only point of difference that it would be accepted here especially if the present Ministry should [...][2] though, for the reasons already adverted to, they could not be induced to *offer* it in the first instance.

I have greater difficulty in giving an opinion as to the probability of their objections to any qualification in the reservation in favor of the rights of the occupants on lands between the Columbia & 49th parallel. My own opinion is, as I have often before said, that in the protection of the rights of British subjects which have grown up during the joint occupancy this Government considers the real point of honor to be involved, and I do not believe they would consent to the terms offered by Mr. Gallatin, so as to protect them in their occupations for a term of years. In short I have wished that better terms can be had of the present, or a new Ministry than the 49th to the Strait of Fuca as now proposed—the confirmation of the British occupants in their possessions; and the right of the Hudson Bay Company to navigate the Columbia for some ten or fifteen years.

It is my duty on the present occasion to urge upon your attention my own situation. I am sure not only that I have done my best to get a better proposition than will now be made, but that it is not probable

that it will be in my power to render you much further assistance. If the proposition go to the Senate, as I presume it will, it will either be affirmed or rejected, in toto, or renewed with modifications. The two first modes dispose of it finally, and the last being materially an ultimatum would require no time for its final disposition, and in that I would no longer be needed.

I need not say anything to convince you that on the score of my health alone I should be very desirous of returning home; but besides that, I feel bound not to throw myself entirely out of employment, which if I remain abroad until the affairs of my old company could wait no longer for my return I should do. I hope, therefore, you will not expect me to remain here so as to deprive myself of the opportunity of resuming my situation in Baltimore. I should be glad indeed to leave by the 1 or middle of July, unless the oregon question take a course that I do not now expect, requiring some further interference on my part.

LOUIS MCLANE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "private and confidential."

1. McLane summarized the British proposal to settle the Oregon issue and gave his opinions of British reactions to possible modifications that might be proposed by the United States. L. DNA–RG 59.

2. Word or words illegible.

## FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir Nashville May the 19th 1846

We are every day expecting a requisition. We have recd. the Bill as finally passd. and some doubts are entertained how the officers above the grade of Colonel are to be appointed—whether by election of the troops or by yourself. I have examined the Laws & feel satisfied myself on the subject. If the Decision at Washington shall be that the President appoints Then I beg leave to remind you of Genl. G. J. Pillow, whose age, energy & decided military cast of character eminently qualify him for the command of Troops in such an expedition. I do not know a man in the state, so well qualified as I believe him to be & I am happy to know there are many very prudent & sensible persons who concur with me in this opinion. Our Old Warriors are now dead & we have to rely on you[n]g men, to some extent untried & I know of no one to whom the Honor of the Military character of the State could be more safely entrusted than to him. Situated as I now am I feel justly jealous of that honor & would not venture to name to you a man who would

not in my opinion guard it as he would his own life.

AARON V. BROWN

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "private & confidential."

## TO ANDREW J. DONELSON

My Dear Sir: Washington May 20th 1846

The enclosed is from *Mr Senator Haywood* of N. Carolina.[1] It relates to the nomination of *J. Geo. Harris* for Purser in the Navy. Will you write the letter suggested addressed directly to *Mr Haywood*. The nomination will not probably be acted on until your letter can reach him.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–AJD. Addressed to New York and marked "*Private*." Donelson's AE on the cover reads "Ansd. same day of receipt 23rd May 1846."

1. William H. Haywood, Jr., to Polk, May 19, 1846. ALI. DLC–AJD.

## FROM THOMAS FITNAM[1]

Sir, Washington May 21, 1846

Having learned from an authentic source, that your Excellency has given orders for the appointment of Catholic chaplains to the army in Texas, I feel myself forced, in consequence, to believe that you are actuated by a sincere desire to do justice to the catholic portion of the democratic party. This being, therefore, taken for granted, I as one of them have concluded to "bury the hatchet" and cease assailing the administration in the columns of the *New York Herald*, and other papers for which I write. This I consider reciprocal fair play.

While conveying to your Excellency my own determination, I will embrace the opportunity it affords of giving you the views of a very large body of your friends of the democratic family on the same subjects and which first caused me to oppose you. The Catholics of the United States, both native and adopted citizens, are democrats and, as such, voted for your election to the presidency. The exceptions are not worth naming. Since then, numbers of them that were in office prior to your coming into power, have been removed, and none hardly appointed. This apparent hostility to them, has created against you a feeling of deep rooted bitterness, which, if permitted to remain in force until the ensuing presidential campaign, must have the effect of throwing the election into the hands of the Whigs. They believe, and

not without cause, from the large number of *Protestant* Irish that have been appointed to office by you, and who represent not one twentieth part of those born in Ireland, who belong to the democratic party, while the latter are nearly excluded from their just proportion of the patronage of government that you are hostile to them on religious grounds. This, sir, is the feeling that pervades the whole body throughout the entire country, with respect to your administration. If your Excellency have been ignorant of this state of things among those whom you have supposed ought to continue your friends, as they proved themselves to be during the campaign of '44, I shall be glad if I know that I have been instrumental in placing these facts before you for consideration. The appointment of those chaplains will do much to allay this ill feeling, but I fear it wont be sufficient. Restore those to office in Baltimore, Philada., New York, and Boston, who have been removed, and let some few others be appointed in a just proportion to the weight and influence of the body to which they belong, and the thing may be remedied. Or, if the old ones should not get back, put others in their places of equal merit and honesty.

The above views are placed before you with no desire to dictate or control your own sense of duty, but simply to give you an insight into an evil, which, if allowed to strengthen in proportion as we advance towards the period of a new presidential election, must be productive of bad consequences to the democratic party.

From an interview which I had yesterday with the Right Rev John Hughes, Catholic Bishop of New York,[2] I have inferred that you have been "more sinned against than sinning,"[3] and that you are probably disposed to do what is fair where it can be done with propriety.

This communication is intended solely for your own eye.

THOS. FITNAM

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. Below his signature Fitnam added the phrase, "alias 'Ariel' of the *New York Herald";* Fitnam is not identified further.

2. An Irish native, John Joseph Hughes headed the Roman Catholic heirarchy in the United States and vigorously defended Roman Catholic immigrants from nativist attacks.

3. William Shakespeare, *King Lear,* act 3, scene 2.

## FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

My Dr. Sir, May 23d, 1846

Your note of the 20th did not reach me until to day at 4 oclock. I have without losing a moment written to Mr Haywood, and some three

weeks ago wrote also to Mr Calhoun, expressing a hope that Mr Harris would not be rejected. Mr C wished to know that Mr Harris was not an abolitionist.

Mrs D was confined to her bed on my return here, and it is not yet safe to venture to sea with her. So that I may yet have to wait another week.

You have seen the proceedings of the great meeting here.[1] The public feeling is right. All that you have to do is to make the military feeling of the country available in negotiating for a speedy termination of the troubles with Mexico. Get upper California if you can, but sacrifice much for the sake of peace—a permanent and a lasting peace.

Nothing can be gained by a war with Mexico. We are not ready for another Annexation question, and the Mexicans are not fit for incorporation into our Union. If California can be aded to us there will be no danger in that measure because in five years 4/5 of its population will be emigrants from the Union.

You have nothing to fear. All your measures can be triumphantly defended: and they will be sustained by the people.

A. J. DONELSON

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

1. On the evening of May 20 friends of the administration gathered in New York City's Central Park and held a pro-war mass meeting.

## FROM FRANCIS W. PICKENS[1]

My dear Sir Edgewood 23 May 1846

We are on the eve of great events, and I trust you will pardon the freedom with which I shall write. In the first place I sustain you fully in all that you have done either in Texas or in relation to Oregon, and so I think nine tenths of the people do notwithstanding what you see from miserable commercial and Bank papers, or what you hear from politicians. I think (and have so written our members) that if the *Notice* had been passed at the first of the Session and with unanimity there would now be no difficulty either with Mexico or England. I have allways thought if the British govment had sincerely intended to settle the Oregon question upon any principle of justice to us they would have accepted substantially your offer of the 49Ê, and it is a very violent presumption to suppose that Packenham rejected it without authority from his gov., the pretended intimation of the Prime Minister to the contrary notwithstanding.[2] They knew in England the 49Ê was rejected before your Message was published in this country, and I believe

they knew it also in Mexico, and immediately after that the revolution commenced which overthrew the gov. and rejected our Minister[3] even after the former gov. had agreed to receive such a minister.

I therefore have feared all along that the British gov. was not sincere in their pretended professions for peace. I may be wrong, but it looks to me as if this Mexican war was but the commencement of far more serious difficulties. I have therefore felt with you throughout, and I now think the only way to prevent the war from spreading & foreign officers from drilling the Mexicans is a direct march right upon the city of Mexico with a powerful and well provided army, landing at Tampico and pursuing the banks of the River Tula which rises near the city itself. It is about 250 miles from the mouth of this River to Mexico. The city is the heart of the Empire without which there is no vitality in the parts. A blow aimed at it would necessarily paralise the limbs, and all the Northern provinces would fall. But if we invade with Volunteers they must be well and regularly fed. Our people are so well fed at home that meat and bread are as essential to our armies (if they go into the enemy country) as powder & ball, & in fact more so. This is the great point we will have to guard agst.

I have said thus much to let you know that you have my most cordial and sincere sympathy in the emergency in which you are placed, and that I am now prepared to serve you & the country in almost any capacity that you may think proper to indicate. And I take this liberty now because on a former occasion I thought myself bound to refuse a distinguished post you were kind enough to tender me.[4] Since then the position of So. Ca. has altered as well as the country and you have in my opinion honourably fulfilled every pledge you ever gave either in public or in the private conversation I had with you at your own house in Tennessee.

We have heard a rumor here that you intended to offer a high command to a So. Carolinian,[5] formerly distinguished, because you were induced to believe that he had the confidence of the Southern people & especially of this state if we should be called into service. I think this is all nothing but a rumor, but if is so in fact I take the liberty to say to you as a friend that, however much the distinguished gent. alluded to may once have commanded our confidence & admiration, it is now no longer the case, and if our politicians have recommended him for such a command they have totally mistaken the real sentiments of our people in this case, as[6] some of them have in other cases. If we are to have a serious war I think it my duty to give you this warning, but of course it is to rest between us.

I wrote you a letter a few days since in relation to Genl. Bonham[7]

and I now take the occasion to say that he is exceedingly anxious to go with the army, and if you do not call upon So. Ca. for volunteers if you could give him an appointment even of Captain or Maj. in the service he would accept it in the regular service, and I pledge myself that he would serve you with devoted bravery & fidelity. Col. Bonham who fell in defense of the Alamo was his brother and Travis the commander was his neighbor.[8] Both Travis & Bonham were natives of this District, and Genl. Bonham is very anxious to avenge the death of his brother. He is now Maj. Generl of the 1st Division of So. Ca. Malitia and one of the most popular men in the country. His capacity is not of the most enlarged kind and therefore I only solicit the appointment of Lieut. Col. Maj. or even of captain if you could find a place to confer it. You could not confer it on one more worthy or more gallant. If this Division should be called on I have no doubt he could immediately raise a regiment. If you could give him an appointment you would confer a great obligation upon me.

The feeling in this state is that we may be on the eve of a conflict with Great Britain, & if so our extensive coast in So. Ca. will be one point of immediate attack. If there should be any thing of that kind anticipated I should be glad to know it, and if so Fort Sumter ought to be immediately finished—it would be far more efficient than fort Moultrie.

There was a meeting at Edgefield, my nearest village, yesterday and 100 of our first young men immediately volunteered. There is to be a large meeting in a week, and I have no doubt at all that this whole country will volunteer if needed. The feeling is unanimous.

As events of the deepest importance to this country are occurring every day I could not forbear to write you this freely.

F. W. PICKENS

ALS. NHi. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Confidential."

1. A South Carolina lawyer and planter, Pickens won election to Congress as a nullifier and sat from 1834 until 1843; a member of the Nashville Convention of 1850, he served as governor of South Carolina from 1860 until 1863.

2. Pickens refers to claims by Sir Robert Peel's government that Sir Richard Pakenham should have refered the American offer of July 12, 1845, to London for consideration instead of rejecting it at Washington.

3. John Slidell.

4. Polk offered Pickens the mission to Great Britain in April 1845.

5. Reference not identified.

6. Pickens deleted the words "they notoriously" here.

7. Letter not found. A South Carolina lawyer, military leader, and planter, Milledge L. Bonham served in the state house, 1840–44 and 1865–67; frequently won election as major general of the state militia; served as lieutenant

colonel and colonel of the 12th Infantry during the war with Mexico; held the post of solicitor of the southern district of South Carolina, 1848–57; served as a States Rights Democrat in the U.S. House, 1857–60; won election to the governorship of South Carolina in 1862; and served as a general officer in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

8. James B. Bonham and William B. Travis. A lawyer in South Carolina and Alabama, Bonham removed to Texas in 1835, and died in the defense of the Alamo in March 1836. Born in South Carolina, Travis removed during his youth to Alabama, where he became a lawyer. He later removed to Texas in 1831, practiced law, supported Texas independence, and died while commanding Texan forces at the Alamo.

## FROM SASHEL WOODS AND JOHN MARKLE[1]

Dear Sir Carroll Cty Missouri May 24th 1846

I am addressing you these few lines in hopes that you will not attribute to us a wish or will to dictate to you; or from us any disposition of that kind for we have the fullest confidence in you, to discharge all the duties incumbent on you in that high office which we had the pleasure in Securing by your Election.

But we residing on the extreme western border of the State; are placed in a verry different Situation from those citizens of the Interior States. We are here surrounded with the Savage Tribes who are ever ready to rain the Tom hawk against us; and as the Mexicans; have commenced War upon us; So far as they can have any influence with those Indians on our West; they will most certainly use it; to the destruction of Thousands now on the road to Oregon and the *Californias*, and we would Sugest to you the propriety; of Raising Immediately Say at least Four Thousand mounted Riflemen; and if you will permit us here in the West to to do it. It can be done at the Shortest notice; on condition to be commanded by *Western men*; who can lead us on to Santafee; and also to the Californias and Secure them now; When the opportunity offers; and thereby prevent those fine regions from falling into the hands of the Brittish; and save the effusion of the best Blood; which would occur; of those getting possesion of that delight full Clime; and will refer you to, Col. Benton. Genl. D.R. Atchison[2]; of the Senate, also Genl. Sterling Price; of Congress. and to your Cousins of Polk county. the Messrs Campbles[3]; and give us Col R.M. Johnson; of Ky. to take the command; and we will Secure to our Government; those regions which will enlarge the area of Freedom; and Secure to our posterity more fully those liberties which they now enjoy; altho; the heads of Families; and of that age; Which the laws exempt us from all Mil-

itary duty we are ready and willing to march at a moments warning; and hope that our requests may be complied with; and we are with due regard and Esteem your true and Faithfull friends.

SASHEL WOODS & JOHN MARKLE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. A Presbyterian minister from Carroll County, Mo., Sashel Woods participated in the Mormon War of 1838 serving as a major in the state militia; he later moved to northern California, where in 1851 he helped negotiate a treaty between white settlers and local Indian tribes. A pioneer of some renown, John Markle successfully traversed the pass where the Donner Party perished and later helped found Cloverdale, Cal.

2. A lawyer from Clay County, Missouri, David R. Atchison served in the Missouri House (1834–40) before his election as a Whig to the U.S. Senate, where he served from 1843 to 1855.

3. Reference is to Polk's first cousins, John Polk Campbell, Ezekiel Madison Campbell, and William St. Clair Campbell. In 1835 the Campbell brothers moved to southwestern Missouri where they assisted in the formation of Polk County and held a number of public offices.

## TO LOUIS MCLANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City May 25th 1846

Allow me to present to you *Mr Healy*,[1] the distinguished American artist, who was commissioned by Louis Phillippe, the King of the French, during the early part of the last year, to return to the United States and take the portrait of Genl. Jackson. Mr H. reached the Hermitage just in time, to execute his commission before the Genl's death. His portrait of him, which he takes with him to Europe, is I think the best I have ever seen. Mr H. is not only an artist of distinguished merit & in all respects a gentleman of worth. I take pleasure in commending him to your kind attention.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. A Boston native, George P. A. Healy painted portraits of many prominent Americans and Europeans. Jackson's portrait resides in the Musée National de la Coopération Franco-Américaine Château de Blérancourt.

## FROM CHARLES J. INGERSOLL

Dear Sir May 26, 46

When you thought proper soon after your inauguration as president to consult me concerning the Philad. Customs house appointments,

you may remember that I coincided in your favorable impressions of Mr. Horn, and most of his conduct when you appointed him Collector I thought praiseworthy. But in my very first conversation with him at Philad. and several afterward I cautioned him against what has enabled the enemy whose every move was to overthrow him, viz, his restricting his officers too much to Philad. and not to the *Cty*. That combined the whole *State* against him, and I need not tell you how, on such a basis, such a vote as yesterday, which nevertheless surprised me, may be embodied.[1] I thought from all I had heard that he wd. probably be confirmed.

And now my object in troubling you with this note is to mention Mr. Rush[2] to you as an excellent person for your prompt deliberation, before dozens of doubtful applicants tease you with innumerable and influential recommendations.

Mr. Rush stands high with our party, and high with the whole country. He is a man of the purest, loftiest probity—never this life charged or questioned as to that. He is of the *County* of Philad. which is democratic ground, instead of the *City*, in which respects he is better than Mr. Horn.

He is of no clique, doctrine or faction, a man of Jackson firmness and would be influenced by no man or bad motive or faction.

After a month's quiet deliberation as Collector, for he is never hasty but a very cautious man, he would do much to heal all our Philad. divisions. He is thoroughly right on native Americanism, constitutional Treasury, banks, moderate on tariff, was the first American to *argue* Oregon up to *61* as american ground, a son of a signer of the Declaration of Independence—in a word a man whom your prudent selection of will gratify the community and do credit to you. Mr. Dallas[3] is on kind terms with him. Mr. Buchanan not at all, I believe, indisposed to him. And I believe that nearly the whole democratic delegation of Penn. in Congress will be pleased with his selection, if made before they are enlisted by various local aspirants.

C. J. INGERSOLL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. On May 25, 1846, the Senate rejected Henry Horn's nomination as collector of customs at the port of Philadelphia.

2. A lawyer, diplomat, and writer, Richard Rush served as U.S. attorney general, 1814–17; as acting secretary of state, 1817; as minister to Great Britain, 1817–25; as secretary of the Treasury, 1825–29; and as minister to France, 1847–49. An unsuccessful vice-presidential candidate on John Q. Adams' ticket in 1828, Rush moved into the Democratic ranks during the fight over rechartering the Second Bank of the United States. He was the son of

Benjamin Rush, a distinguished Philadelphia physician, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and veteran of the Revolutionary War.

3. A prominent member of the "Family" party in Pennsylvania, George M. Dallas counted himself for many years a staunch Van Burenite; his revival of the "Old Hickory Club" in 1843 helped remove James Buchanan's name from the list of potential presidential nominees. Early in 1844 Dallas followed the lead of Robert J. Walker in advocating the annexation of Texas.

## FROM JOHN FAIRFIELD[1]

Dr Sir, Wednesday Morning, May 27 [1846][2]

The motion to reconsider the nomination of Henry Horn was finally, after discussions, withdrawn on the ground that it violated the Rules of the Senate.

The vote you will recollect was 21–25, Hannegan, Sevier, Atchinson, Colquit, Bright & Yulee being absent.[3] Five of them & possibly 6 would have voted for him if present, so that upon a renomination the probability is strongly that he would be confirmed. Of the expediency however of making it you will determine, seeing that, right or wrong, there is a strong opposition to him in Pennsylvania.

I intended to have seen you this morning, but found the throng so great that I was obliged to give it up.

J. FAIRFIELD

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally and marked "Private."

1. A Maine lawyer, Fairfield sat as a Democrat in the U.S. House and served from 1835 until 1838, when he resigned to become governor of Maine, 1839–43. Fairfield resigned the governorship to fill the seat of Reuel Williams in the U.S. Senate and served from 1843 until his death in 1847.

2. Year of composition determined by content analysis.

3. Edward A. Hannegan, Ambrose H. Sevier, David R. Atchison, Walter T. Colquitt, Jesse D. Bright and David Levy Yulee attended the funeral of Benjamin Speight, son of Jesse Speight. Sevier represented Arkansas Territory from 1828 to 1836 in the U.S. House and won election as a Democrat to two terms in the U.S. Senate, 1836–48. A Georgia lawyer, Colquitt won election as a Whig to the U.S. House in 1839; refusing to support Harrison for president in 1840, he resigned and in 1841 won back his seat as a Van Buren Democrat. He served in the first session of the Twenty-seventh Congress and then went to the U.S. Senate for one term, 1843–48. A lawyer from Madison, Bright served as lieutenant governor of Indiana, 1843–45, before being elected as a Democrat to the U.S. Senate, in which body he served from 1845 to 1862.

FROM WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, JR.

Dear Sir W. City 27 May 1846

Do not permit the importunity of others to prevail upon you to renominate H. Horn until I see you. Grieved as I am that so good a man & so faithful an officer should have been rejected I regard it as my first duty to protect *you* against taking position upon it without knowing the real state of facts. I should have gone to you last night but the crowd at your rooms excluded the idea of a visit on business.

W. H. HAYWOOD JR.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally; marked "Confidential" and "Private."

FROM HENRY HORN

My Dear Sir, Philadelphia 27th May 1846

By the newspapers of the day I have been informed of my rejection by the Senate. It is a triumph though I believe a short lived one for my enemies. They deceive themselves much if they suppose I am to be prostrated by the unworthy and despicable means they have used to effect their object. I shall show them that I can bear the "whips and stings of outrageous fortune"[1] with all the calmness and composure of a christian philosopher, and rise superiour to all their persecution and malice.

Had I acted the part of a courtier and a hypocrite I might perhaps have secured the favour and influence of some who obtained their places and power by the use of such means. But in that case I should have despised myself as I do them, since in my estimation no place however exalted is worth holding at the sacrifice of principle or against the dictates of moral honesty.

To you I owe a debt of gratitude the recollection of which neither time nor circumstance can ever efface, and the only favour I have now to ask is that you will not act hastily in reference to the appointment of my successor, as I am informed nefarious schemes are now in progress to deceive you.

HENRY HORN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on May 28, 1846.

1. Paraphrase from William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 3 scene 1.

FROM LOUIS McLANE

My dear Sir, London May 28, 1846

The opportunity of Genl. Armstrong's visit to the U.S. on some private business, I believe in part, to bring back his daughter, enables me to send this letter for your private eye.[1]

In my last letters, public or private,[2] I did not express all the regret I felt at not being able to have sent to you a better proposition than has actually gone, especially as it relates to the navigation of the Columbia. I assure you, however, that it was a task of greater difficulty than you can well appreciate to induce this government, after the passage of the resolutions of notice, even to reopen the negotiation by making a proposition from here. A majority of the Cabinet remained opposed to it throughout; and I have reason to believe that Sir R. Peel was of the majority. To overcome this, and lead to a proposition on the 49th as the basis, was all that, under the circumstances could possibly be accomplished. If I had possessed less shackled authority, & the influence of the Senate had not been interposed I might possibly have done better; as it was, it was impossible, and I supposed it vitally important, under all circumstances, that you should at least have the triumph of reopening the negotiation from here, without a commitment on yr part.

I thought it best also, being entirely sincere in it, to express my belief in a public despatch which, in case you decided to consult that body, you might send to the Senate, that the indefinite navigation of the river had been insisted upon, mainly in the belief that the Senate would be satisfied with it; and that if a modification of the offer in this respect should be made with the concurrence of the Senate, or in a way to warrant the assertion that the Senate would not otherwise accept it, it would in all probability succeed. This would either authorize you, with less responsibility, to press on modifications without going to the Senate; or make it more difficult, if not impossible for the Senate to advise the acceptance of the present proposition without at least an attempt to modify it. I still entertain a strong conviction that a concession would be made upon this point, if the proposal to qualify the offer could reach this before the present ministry go out of office; and I now begin to hope that this may be possible. The "Factory Bill" having been urged on before the decision upon the measures of free trade, ministers did not select that occasion to go out; and all apprehension of the loss of the corn bill in the Lords, which seemed to be entertained in some quarters, having now vanished, I have little doubt that the opinion I have uniformly held will prove to be correct, and that all those

measures of free trade will ultimately succeed. A good deal of time will necessarily be consumed in the discussion of them in the Lords, and some time must afterwards elapse, perhaps, before a suitable occasion will occur for the final overthrow of the ministers. They may get on until some time in July. They may even hold out the Session, and I hope you will have felt yourself at liberty to take such a course as to enable you even by the earliest day to have acted upon the proposition of this government.

I take the occasion to assure you that I have lost none of my desire to use every exertion in my power to contribute to the success of your administration, the chief, I can honestly affirm, the only inducement I had for embarking upon this mission: and I will be ready, of course, to remain at my post as long as I can do anything to promote your wishes. I will frankly confess to you that I have no great relish for a negotiation with the railroad company[3]; indeed, I rather look upon it with repugnance. I regard it only as an honorable employment in which while it enables me to support my family, affords me an opportunity of rendering useful and important public service. At the same time, the reduced salary of a minister at this court, being now only 8,000 dollars, instead of $9,000, as it formerly was, is quite inadequate for the most necessary expenditures of the humblest mode of living. And you perhaps may not be aware that the 5th auditor,[4] after having succeeded in imposing upon Congress so as to lead to the reduction to which I have averted, is now seeking by every petty annoyance still further to reduce the most necessary contingencies of the Legation. This, however, by the way. Let it suffice for me to assure you, which I can so do in perfect truth, that my salary & outfit, & quarter's salary for returning will do little, if any, more than enable me at the end of the year to get home without absolute loss: and that every day I remain afterward will be at the sacrifice of increasing a debt beyond my allowance from the government. On this account, therefore, necessity would oblige me to ask as I have asked permission to return the moment I can get away and this, & only this, obliges me to turn my attention to a resumption of my position in the railroad. I do not doubt, however, that you will perceive the propriety of considering this confession as intended for your own eye; since to me its greater publicity might prejudice me unnecessarily in a quarter from which I have always experienced a large & flattering share of confidence. Therefore, in urging that the answer to the British proposition may be promptly sent back, I not only take the best means of getting it before the present ministry, but of releasing myself, without inconvenience to you, in due time. I must trust to the Balt. Company to wait somewhat longer without impatience.

I think you may consider it quite certain that the present Ministry when they *do* go out, after the success of their measures of free trade, will be succeeded by the Whigs, and now a new & different Tory or conservative ministry. Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston,[5] therefore, may be looked to as the ministers with whom we will have to treat, if we treat at all, after the overthrow of Sir Robert Peel and the present Cabinet.

I am ashamed, however, to trouble you further with so long a letter; and with my best respects to Mrs Polk, I beg to add the assurances of the very sincere regard and esteem, with which I have the honor ....

LOUIS MCLANE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and delivered by hand; marked "*Private & Confidential*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 16, 1846.

1. Robert and Elizabeth Armstrong. Robert Armstrong served as postmaster of Nashville from 1829 until March 1845, when he was appointed U.S. consul at Liverpool. One of Polk's closest political friends, he managed Polk's three gubernatorial campaigns and his presidential bid in Tennessee.

2. See McLane to Polk, May 18, 1846, and McLane's despatch of same date.

3. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company.

4. A Delaware native, Stephen Pleasonton served as fifth auditor of the Treasury department from 1817 until his death in 1853.

5. Having served as both foreign and as home secretary, Henry John Temple, Lord Palmerston, attained the position of prime minister in 1855; his first ministry lasted three years; and his second extended from 1859 to 1865.

## FROM ARTHUR P. BAGBY[1]

My dear Sir, Senate Chamber May 29th 1846

I am satisfied that in full Senate Mr. Horn will get twenty eight votes, without Mr Johnson of Maryland,[2] who is absent, but who I think will not vote against him. Under my view of the case I feel confident he will, upon a renomination he will be confirmed.

A. P. BAGBY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally; marked "Private." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on May 29, 1846.

1. A Democrat and an ally of Thomas H. Benton, Bagby served as governor of Alabama, 1837–41; U.S. Senator, 1841–48; and minister to Russia, 1848–49.

2. A Maryland attorney and member of the Maryland Senate, 1821–29, Reverdy Johnson won election to the U.S. Senate as a Whig in 1845, and served until 1849, when he accepted appointment as U.S. attorney general in the Taylor administration.

TO WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir: Washington City May 29th 1846

A Bill has passed the Senate and is now before the House of Representatives which among other things, authorizes the appointment by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, of several assistant Paymasters and assistant Quartermasters of the army.[1] These officers will rank, some of them as Colonels & others as Majors, and will receive the pay & emoluments of officers of these grades. There is but little doubt that the Bill will pass the House. It has occurred to me that one of these offices might be acceptable to you, and my purpose in writing to you, is to ascertain that fact. Though I am fully aware, that if the Bill passes, there will be great pressure upon me for the offices which it creates, I will hold one of them of the higher grade open, until I can hear from you. There will probably also be a *commission* of two, to investigate claims under the Cherokee Treaty, created with a compensation to each of $3000 per annum, but this by the Bill now before Congress is limited to one year only.[2] If this would be preferred, I would appoint you one of the commissioners. I think however that you would prefer to be attached to the army, and in that event, you would be ordered to go out with the Tennessee Volunteers. I write in great haste and request that you will give me an immediate answer.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I learn from the Navy Department that your son *Thomas*, has forwarded his acceptance, and joined the Squadron in the Gulf of Mexico, and he will of course have an opportunity to see immediate & active service. Tell *James* not to be discouraged, for I intend to do as well for him before my term expires. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Williamson County, Tenn.

1. "An Act supplemental to an Act entitled 'An Act providing for the prosecution of the existing war between the United States and the republic of Mexico, and for other purposes'." *Statutes at Large*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 29.

2. "An Act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian deparment, and for fulfilling treaty stipulations with the various Indian tribes, for the year ending June 30, 1847." *Statutes at Large*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 34.

FROM LOUIS MCLANE

My dear Sir, London May 29, 1846

I wrote you a private letter yesterday by Genl. Armstrong; and this morning, we have the intelligence by the *Cambria*. If the army under Genl. Taylor escape disaster the crisis with Mexico has not come too soon; and in no event and under no circumstances can it be met and the war prosecuted with too much vigour. How could Genl. T. have waited so long, in the face of a treacherous wiley enemy, without reinforcing himself?

I sincerely congratulate you upon the unanimity with which upon this question you have been sustained by both houses of Congress; and I hope that in the Country at large even greater unanimity and a warmer support will be given to the cause of the Country. There is one vote, or rather several votes, in the Senate which has deeply pained me. What can Mr. C. mean?[1] Does he suppose that our affairs with England are to be improved by divided councils or reluctant measures in regard to Mexico? Such an expectation would be positive insanity; and I had devoutly hoped that in such a crisis *no* man would have been found to falter.

After the receipt of Mr Buchanan's despatch this morning,[2] I called at Lord Aberdeen's house, and acquainted him without delay with its purport; indeed, I partly read to him all that I believed it was good he should learn. He said that although he regreted the crisis, this Country was the last to complain of the most rigorous blockade, though it was always to be apprehended that more or less difficulty must arise from its practical enforcement. He repeated that he had cordially advised the Mexican authorities to settle their difficulties with us amicably, and assured them that in case of war they had nothing to expect from this government: and he said now that he could only interpose his further counsel in behalf of peace. He said he hoped the war would not be one of conquest, which might in that event be looked upon with more or less jealousy. I said the language of Mr Bs despatch afforded the answer upon this point; but that as to the consequences to grow out of a severe & prolonged war it was not for me to speak. One thing I thought very certain that after all the provocation we had received, we would be very sure before ending the war that it would result in an effectual maintainance of our rights and vindication of our honor, and be succeeded by a substantial peace. I will tomorrow acquaint him more formally with the contents of the despatch, and write to the Secretary of State an account of my proceedings: unless indeed I should have

time before closing the mail today to send a despatch.

It may not be amiss for me to add that the Mexicans here engaged in operating a loan have in my opinion been expecting favorable intelligence from the army on the del Norte. This I am sure of, and that they have expected upon the receipt of the news of the destruction of the American army to increase their chances for a loan is equally clear. It is not likely however after the unanimity in Congress, and the spirit getting up in the Country that their prospects will be much improved.

LOUIS MCLANE

P.S. It may well, however to consider whether this news may not indispose this gov. to make any abatement of its offer in regard to Oregon?

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "Private & Confidential."

1. John C. Calhoun.

2. For the text of Buchanan's despatch of May 14, 1846, see John Bassett Moore, ed., *The Works of James Buchanan* (12 vols.; New York: Antiquarian Press Ltd. reprint, 1960), VI, pp. 484–85.

## FROM JONAS E. THOMAS

Dear Sir, Columbia May 29th 1846

I have enrolled myself as a soldier in a cavalry company for the Mexican war. We raised several companies in Maury but in the drawings they all failed, and the good or bad fortune of going fell upon others. I then joined a company, which was raised in Lewis. Being in for the war I feel a deep interest in the organization of the army and on whom the command is to devolve, for much of the success of the army depends on the officer who directs its movements. At first blush we thought here that the move on the part of the Senate had taken the power and responsibility of appointing the officers, but upon investigation it is the fixed opinion now that the President not only has the power but that it is his duty. This follows from the fact that the laws of 1812 expired with the then war and of course they are not in force. The law of 1836 was limited in its operation to two years and therefore it is inoperative. The present law only provides for the organization of Regts. by the Voice of the troops. It there stops, and then goes on to provide for the action of the President by his organizing the troops into Brigades Divisions &c. And how can this be done without the appointment of a Majr. General &c.

What then remains but to throw the President back on the constitutional power of appointing all officers not otherwise directed by law.

It seems to me that the 6th section will be wholly inoperative without the President exercising the appointing power as to a Majr. Genl. & Brigaders. Though I have volunteered as a private and shall have no responsibility on me except as to my own conduct as a soldier, yet I feel a deep and an abiding interist in the proper management and organization of the troops with which the Tennessee cavalry may be united. The opinion prevails here now that that portion of the Tennessee troops to which I am attached may be ordered to join the Ars. & Misse. troops. Suppose we have commanding officers not legally and constitutionally appointed. All would be anarchy and no one bound to obey or legally responsible for disobedience.

I have thought proper to call your attintion to this subject as the troops will shortly be in motion. I should like to have a Tennessee General and if you shall find it to be your duty to appoint I will say to you that I should be glad, and I also believe it would satisfy the solders to be led on by Genl. G. J. Pillow. I write this in hast and hope being an old friend and now a soldier that it will receive your consideration.

J. E. THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 7, 1846.

## TO SAMUEL P. WALKER

My Dear Sir: Washington City May 29th 1846

A few days ago a young man named *N. J. Bledsoe* of De Soto County Mississippi called on me in very feeble health, without money and apparently in great distress.[1] Young *Bledsoe* was for a short time during the year 1844 a law student in the office of *James H. Thomas* of Columbia Tennessee. He boarded at *Col. Campbell's* whilst at Columbia. His story is that being in very bad health he was advised to take a voyage to sea, that he did so, and after having expended all his money he was landed at *Gibralter* placed in a Hospital where he remained three months. In some way he effected his return to the U. States, and came to Washington seeking the means to enable him to reach his father's House, some fifteen or eighteen miles from Memphis in De Soto County Mississippi. He excited my sympathy & I advanced him *fifty Dollars* taking his note on *Benjamin Bledsoe* his father. Young *Whitthorne*[2] who was a law student with him in *Thomas's* office advanced him *twenty Dollars*. I would have advanced him the whole but supposed *fifty Dollars* was enough. I enclose to you the two notes[3] and request that you will see his father and cause them to be collected.

The young man says he saw you often at Columbia in 1844 but does not know that you will remember him. *Whitthorne* told him that the orders on his father would be sent to you, and he said they would certainly be paid.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Memphis, Tenn.

1. Neither Bledsoe nor his father is identified further.

2. Born in Marshall County and a graduate of East Tennessee College, Washington C. Whitthorne served as a clerk in the Office of the Auditor for the Post Office Department during Polk's administration. He returned to Columbia in 1848 to practice law; served as a Democrat in the state legislature, 1855–58; became state adjutant general in 1861; served eight terms in the U.S. House, 1871–83 and 1887–91; and filled a partial term in the U.S. Senate, 1886–87.

3. Enclosures not found.

## TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Sir: May 30th 1846

I send herewith my letter to Genl. Taylor. I concur in your suggestion that he should be assigned the command under his Brevet Rank, at least for the present. I suggest that *Col. Persifor F. Smith* and *Capt. Samuel H. Walker*,[1] both recently appointed in the new Regiment of mounted riflemen, should be notified of the respective appointments. They are both now in Genl. Taylor's army, and they may be informed that their present appointments is not intended[2] with their present service, until they shall voluntarily leave that service and assume their respective commands under their new commissions.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MHi. Addressed "To the Secretary of War."

1. A Philadelphia native and lawyer, Smith removed to New Orleans in 1819; served in many civil, military, and judicial positions, including adjutant general of Louisiana; commanded a brigade in the war with Mexico; breveted to brigadier and then major general for his war-time service; and after the conflict commanded several departments in the West, receiving brigadier-general rank two years before his death in 1858. A Maryland native, Walker served in many campaigns in Texas under the republic; volunteered service as a scout for U.S. forces in Texas; fought at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma; was elected lieutenant colonel of the Texas Mounted Riflemen, with whom he fought at Monterrey; activated his commission as captain of Company C, U.S. Mounted Rifles, on October 2, 1846; and joined U.S. forces in Mexico in 1847, where he died at the battle of Huamantla on October 9, 1847.

2. The bracketed phrase "to interfere" interlined here by an unknown hand.

TO ZACHARY TAYLOR

Sir: Washington City May 30th 1846

I transmit to you herewith a commission as Major General by Brevet in the army of the United States, conferred upon you for "gallant conduct and distinguished services in the successful victories over superior Mexican forces, at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma on the the 8th and 9th days of May 1846."[1]

It gave me sincere pleasure, immediately upon the receipt of official intelligence from the scene of your achievements, to confer upon you, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate this testimonial of the estimate which your Government places upon your skill and gallantry. To yourself and the brave officers and soldiers under your command, the gratitude of the country is justly due. Our army have fully sustained their deservedly high reputation and added another bright page to the history of American valour and patriotism. They have won new laurels for themselves and for their country. My confidence in them never faultered. The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma rank among our most brilliant victories and will long be remembered by the American people. When all the details of these battles, and of the noble defense of the camp opposite to Matamoros shall have been received it will be my pleasure as it will be my grateful duty to render to the officers and men under your command suitable testimonials, for their conduct in the brilliant victories, which a superintending Providence has enabled them to achieve for their country.

In transmitting to you this commission, and in communicating to the officers and soldiers under your command my profound sense of their meritorious services, I but respond to the patriotic enthusiasm, manifested by the people in behalf of their heroic defenders. Whilst my warmest thanks are tendered to the survivors, the nation mourns the loss of the brave officers and soldiers who fell in defense of their country upon the field of victory. Their names also shall be remembered and appropriate honors be paid to their memory by a grateful country.

You will cause this communication to be made known to the army under your command.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Polk to Marcy, May 30, 1846.

1. Enclosure not found. The quotation comes from Polk's nomination of Taylor's brevet rank to the Senate on May 26, 1846.

# JUNE

TO JOHN W. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 2nd 1846

Agreeably to an understanding when you left here in March, I now authorize you to draw on me at sight at this place or at one day after at either of the Northern Cities for a sum not exceeding $1800 or $2000, to be applied to the purchase of the property of which we spoke for me. You can take the title in your own name and make a quit-claim conveyance without warranty to me, and enclose both to me. I think it probable that you can make the purchases cheaper now than next fall. If you purchase you can keep possession of the property until next fall, as it would not be safe on account of sickness to send it to my plantation until about the 1st of October. If I am fortunate in arranging my money-matters at home, I will be able to advance about an equal sum to that now authorized in September. If you make purchases, I will give you specific instructions about sending the property below before October. I need not repeat the reasons which I assigned to you why it should not be made public that you are making purchases for me.

We are in good health, but I am as busy as usual, and even more so, since I have a Mexican War on my hands.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. You will see that I have authorized you to draw on me at one days sight payable at either of the Northern Cities. This I have done because I remember you told me, that checks on these Cities would command a premium at Nashville, when those payable at this City could only be sold at par. I can with a day or two of notice pay as conveniently at one place as the other. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Murfreesborough, Tenn.; marked "*Private*."

## TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear Sir: Washington City June 2nd 1846

I have not heard from my plantation since about the beginning of the present year. I learn from *Col. Campbell* that sickness in his family has prevented him from visiting it, during the spring, as he intended to have done. I request that you will write to me concerning the health of my people, and your prospects for a crop. Write me generally concerning my interests under your charge.

As it is my intention to increase my force before the beginning of the next year, I wish you to employ all the time you may have, after you have finished cultivating the crop, and before it is ready to be gathered, in clearing more land. My impression is, that the clearing should be in the forks of the creek and adjoining the present opening, but this I leave to your judgement.

JAMES K. POLK

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

## TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Dr Sir: [Washington City][1] June 2nd 1846

I hand you the enclosed paragraph[2] to be inserted in your instructions to *Col. Kearney*,[3] which has been prepared at your request. I think it proper that you should insert in your letter also, that the rank of Brigadier by Brevet, will be conferred upon him, as soon as he commences his movement towards California, & that it will be sent round to him by sea, to the care of our squadron. I forget whether you advised him, in your draft, that arms & munitions of War including ordnance

would be sent round by sea. If you have not, it would be well to insert such a paragraph.

JAMES K. POLK

[P.S.] Will you do me the favour to let me see your draft & *private letters* when you have finished them. J.K.P.

ALS. DLC–WLM. Probably delivered by hand; marked "*Private*."

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. Enclosure not found.

3. A New Jersey native, Stephen W. Kearny entered the army as an officer in 1812; spent most of his career on the western frontier; assumed command of the Third Military District in 1845; captured Santa Fe and established a civil government in New Mexico in 1846; led his forces into California, where he and John C. Frémont clashed over claims to superior authority; served briefly as military governor of Vera Cruz and Mexico City; and died in St. Louis in 1848.

## TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 2nd 1846

In the midst of my incessant public engagements I seize a moment to reply to your letter of the 23rd Instant.[1] I am mortified at the information which you give me concerning *Lewis*.[2] I had heard the rumour before, but have no time to read newspapers, and the printed paragraph which you enclosed to me had not met my eye. The letter to which you allude from the *Revd. Mr. Dawson* to his brother[3] authenticates the newspaper statement and I have given orders today for *Lewis*'s recall. I was induced to give him the appointment as much for the sake of his family as himself. I knew he was poor and was competant for such a service. It was not however contemplated that he was to be in the public employ more than a few months, the object being that *Gov. Butler*[4] and himself should pass through the *Comanche tribes*, and after holding friendly talks with them and conciliating them, to return. They have already been absent long than was anticipated and upon this ground alone their recall would be proper. When there was superadded to this, the violation of *public morals* and of *domestic duty*, I did not hesitate upon learning the facts in an authentic form, upon the receipt of your letter, instantly to order *Lewis* home. For the former reason *Gov. Butler* has been recalled with him.

I received a few days ago, your letter and also one from *Gov. Brown*[5] concerning the Mexican War, and the call for volunteers from Tennessee. Since that time you have seen the requisition on the State

from Secretary of War. I am as yet invested with no authority to appoint the General officers. A Bill conferring the power has passed the Senate, but has not yet been acted on in the House.[6] How long it will be delayed in that body I have no means of knowing. The impression is that when taken up, it will pass, but of this there is no certainty.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I wrote to you about two weeks ago,[7] in answer to your proposition about *Harbert & his family*. I shall expect an answer soon. I said to you I would take them, and after making such suggestions for your consideration, as occured to me as proper left the terms to you, knowing that neither of us desired to make anything by the transaction. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. Letter and enclosures not found.

2. Micajah G. Lewis operated a tavern in Columbia; previously he had held a part-interest in the *Columbia Observer*, 1834–35. Polk appointed Lewis as commissioner to the Comanche Indians in 1845.

3. Neither Dawson nor his brother is identified further.

4. Governor of South Carolina, 1836–38, and agent to the Cherokees, Pierce M. Butler served as a commissioner to the Comanche Indians before he formed a South Carolina volunteer regiment to fight in the Mexican-American War; he died in battle in 1847.

5. See Aaron V. Brown to Polk, May 19, 1846.

6. "A bill supplemental to an act entitled 'An act providing for the prosecution of the existing war between the United States and the republic of Mexico, and for other purposes'. " Senate Bill No. 185, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

7. See Polk to Pillow, May 16, 1846.

## TO ARCHIBALD YELL[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 2nd 1846

Having heard that it is your intention to leave Washington on tomorrow with a view to join the Volunteer troops, called out from your State to march against Mexico, I avail myself the occasion of your retirement from Congress, to express the ardent desire which I feel for your future welfare. I hope it may be the pleasure of the Regiment of Mounted Volunteers in Arkansas to select you as its Commander. Your services to the country & to my administration during the present Session of Congress, are highly appreciated, and nothing could induce me to give my assent to your retirement, from the civil service but the fact that you are about to enter upon a more important service. I hope

as soon as the War with Mexico shall be terminated, to see you again representing your patriotic State, in the Councils of the Nation.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. A very close personal and political friend of Polk, Yell practiced law in Fayetteville, Tenn., until his appointment as U.S. judge of the Arkansas Territory in 1832. He won election to several terms in the U.S. House, 1836–39 and 1845–46, and served as governor of Arkansas from 1840 until 1844. In 1845 Polk sent Yell to Texas to assist Andrew J. Donelson in his negotiations with the Texas government. Colonel of a regiment of Arkansas militia during the Mexican-American War, Yell was killed at the Battle of Buena Vista in 1847.

## FROM LOUIS MCLANE

My dear Sir, London [June 3, 1846][1]

My public despatches will sufficiently acquaint you with my proceedings, in regard to the Act of Congress and the Proclamation respecting Mexico.[2]

I hope to be pardoned for saying that, so far as the honor and interests of our Country are concerned, everything present & future, depends upon the vigour with which this crisis will be met and the signal promptitude with which the War will be prosecuted to its end. *Reverses* and *delay* only can prejudice us.

The newspapers, which I send by this opportunity,[3] will convince you, if indeed any intelligent American Statesman at this time of day, needed such proof to convince him of that fact, that in this country all the sympathies, public & private, are, on this occasion, and will be on any other, against the U.S. I need not stop here to inquire into the causes, nor, whether there may not be individual exceptions among the English, or in favor of particular individuals in the U.S.—though I incline very much to think that the latter, if any there may be, are chiefly confined to such as are supposed to prefer the land of their "forefathers," to that of their fathers—such on inquiry I regard as wholely unnecessary. The fact to which I advert is certain. There is a dislike, deep seated, almost universal, amounting almost to hate, of our people, of our Country and of our Institutions; a dislike which must continue to rankle (affecting to prefer any other government and every other People to ours) and what, with all the sincerity with which I have endeavoured to preserve the present amicable relations between the two countries can, as I believe, result in nothing else than in increasing animosity & hostility, and in ultimate deadly strife!

On our side, we ought, as I think, to contemplate this subject as one of time only. For myself, if it could be honorably accomplished, I would prefer the continuance of peace with England for the next twenty years; that we may swell our population to forty millions, and give full scope during that period to our agricultural commercial and manufacturing enterprise; pay off our debts, reinstate our credit at home and abroad, and emply the best means in our power to cultivate harmonious & close relations with France, and the governments of the Continent. To do this however, we ought to have able ministers & real americans at all the principal Courts. Twenty years hence we ought to be, God grant we may be, in defiance of those causes which might augur the contrary, in a condition to command our own position, and assert our public rights.

In my Public despatch I have taken the liberty to suggest the importance of avoiding, by the exercise of the right of blockade or any other belligerant right to give France or G.B. any pretence for interfering with the war with Mexico, and I take it for granted that such a consideration will not be lost sight of. I venture in this private letter to suggest that the negotiation with regard to oregon now be conducted, in some degree, with reference to the same object. If it become desirable to finess on terms with G.B. until we have settled our account with Mexico, and to give the former no pretense to interfere, unless oregon can be adjusted in the mean time, why not allow the negotiation to run through the year?

I am quite persuaded that no one here wished us to be at war at war with Mexico, unless in the event of an unfavorable termination of the oregon negotiations. The surmise, and the aim undoubtedly was to keep our difficulties with Mexico *unsettled*, but without an open rupture, to await the end of oregon; when peace or war would follow as the result might require; and I believe one half the violence & temper now betrayed, may be attributed to disappointment that the crisis has been forced on sooner than they desired or expected. They fear they may never need the auxiliary arms of Mexico, or, that the interval when they need them will be too long. So then, why may we not continue to lengthen it? This is one reason why, in my opinion, if Genl. Taylor's army escape disaster, the crisis has not come one moment too soon. If Taylor is defeated—but the extent and effects of such a humiliation as that are too mortifying and extensive & ruinous to be followed out! If an *American* army *can* be defeated by twice the number of Mexicans, then the present belief—in spite of their ill humour at present entertained here—and apprehension of our superiority, will begin to vanish, and Mexico will not be long without aid. I may add, also, that calcu-

lations begin already to be made that our volunteer force being after all only militia, cannot be fully relied upon. They affect to believe, or to hope, that they will be too suddenly raised, too precipitously hurried into the field without sufficient discipline, or without officers of sufficient skill and experience, and that on these accounts they will be hardly more efficient than the Mexican recruits that will be brought against them. I yet believe that the Mexican agents in charge believed that the *Cambria* would bring intelligence of the destruction of the American army, and they still think it will come by the next steamer. The British papers hope, if they do not expect, the same thing; and they already encourage the Mexican agents in their representation that the U.S. cannot carry on the war efficiently, and that if Mexico be aided with money, she will defend herself successfully. Simultaneously, efforts are renewed to depreciate U.S. credit in London; and to prevail upon those making advances to the American china & east India commerce to withhold them as the most effectual means of embarrassing our operations. You might well be astonished to know the Individuals and the houses who are appealed to, and who, there is some ground to apprehend, may be found yielding to the appeal, to cooperate in this policy. I would rather abstain, for the present, from any more specific allusion; leaving to time to make further develpments, or to furnish facts from which I could speak with greater certainty.

I am quite of the opinion that the collision with Mexico, the sensation produced by it here, and the certainty in the public mind generally that the present Ministry must soon go out will make it very difficult to obtain any modifications of the offer directed to be made by Mr Packenham: and I believe you may count on it certain that the same causes will make it extremely difficult to follow out the suggestion I have made in a previous part of this letter, and obtain time in the oregon negotiations. I believe I have already apprised you that the articles on *foreign affairs* in the Times Newspaper are most generally published under some countenance from the Foreign office; and I believe the articles I send by this opportunity are of that description. It would not surprise me if their proposition should be rejected, to see an effort made to treat it as an ultimatum, and to use the rate of things which would be then produced to precipitate matters during the Mexican war. I am sure that this is a calculation to be fairly taken into the account by those who have to deal with the subject at Washington. I do not know, and cannot with certainty form an opinion whether if better terms could not be had the President & Senate would be willing to accept the offer recently made, and of course I find it difficult to be very explicit about it. But upon that supposition, that is to say if

better could not be had this offer would be taken, then, would it not be advisable, in case modifications are to be proposed, so to propose them, or to *confer respecting them*, as to keep the present offer in our hand and in a situation to be finally accepted if necessary; rather than by an absolute rejection of it, to leave this government free to consider it their ultimatum, and that as such it has been finally refused? I rather think such a course might be pursued, with advantage, with or without the advice of the Senate either here or at Washington. And I will venture to express the opinion that, in the present shape of the negotiation, no possible advantage could result, but much positive mischief be unavoidably produced by a flat or positive rejection of the offer, *unless indeed it be the determination of our Gov. to go to war rather than accept it*. And this alternative I [...][4] present without venturing an opinion upon it. If it be retained as a basis upon which to attempt modifications, time at least will be gained if that be desirable, and possibly some modification may be had, but of that I repeat that I now have very great doubts.

There appears to be a very general alarm among our countrymen here, who desire to get home, on account of Mexican Privateers, 'though I have endeavored to convince them that they run no risk, especially if they go out in the English steamers. I hope, however, if these Privateers whould multiply to any extent, which I do not expect, it would not be found too inconvenient to direct one of our vessels of war that may be put in service for the protection of our commerce to bring out my successor, and take me home. It will not escape you that the performance of that service would be only consistent with & in fact part of the general protection to be afforded to our commerce between England & the U.S.

Finding Mr. Boyd somewhat uneasy in his position, and being entirely willing, so long as I continue here, to keep him as secretary, if *it may be done consistently with your convenience and with the public service*, I have ventured in a public despatch to bring the subject to your notice.[5] In that despatch I have been sufficiently explicit in stating that Mr. B. is in no wise to stand in the way of my successor, be he whom or of what grade he may; but I would rather here state confidentially to you, and the Secretary of State that my suggestions in regard to Mr. Boyd are to be taken *as confined to the office of Secretary of Legation*. I should not ask, nor could I recommend that he should be left in charge of the Mission, and therefore, in acceeding to the suggestions I have made, it would be well to bear this in mind. Will you pardon me for adding that in regard to the Mission here, supposing the oregon question to be amicably settled, unless you can command a Minister

of the very highest grade of character and spirit, and *in all respects american*, that it may be well to consider whether there is an immediate necessity of sending anyone? Why not inform this Gov. that the present mission was intended to be brief, and that the condition for its continuance having passed, I have permission to return home according to previous arrangements; but that the President is not prepared, at the moment, to despatch my successor. If that course could be taken without offense, without in any way compromising our dignity, and in a way to leave the cause to conjecture only, I am not sure that it might not have rather a beneficial effect than otherwise. I am mistaken if a new man, never before in a public station in England coming here in the present state of feeling, will not have reason to wish that the above suggestion had found favor.

I owe you an apology, doubtless Sir, for so long a letter. It appeared to me however that I was bound [by a] sense of duty to say what I have done upon the topics which are in it & which could only be said in a private letter. Presuming that the Secretary of State will see this letter, I deem it unnecessary to write to him; & desiring my respectful regards to Mrs. Polk ....

L. McL.

ALI. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "Personal & Private."

1. Date identified through content analysis.
2. See Despatches No. 50 and 54, May 29 and June 3, 1846. DNA–RG 59.
3. Enclosures not found.
4. Blurred ink transfers render word or words illegible.
5. See Despatch No. 53, June 1, 1846. DNA–RG 59.

## FROM SAMUEL F. B. MORSE

Wednesday June 3d 8 o'clk A.M.

*Per Telegraph*

10 days later from Europe—Arrival of the Steamer Hibernia at Boston on Monday with dates from Liverpool to the 19th ult. She brings 54 passengers among them W. W. Messer,[1] bearer of Despatches from the court of St. James.

The intelligence by her is of considerable importance, there appears to be an evident desire on the part of Great Britain to settle the Oregon question in the most amicable manner. It is supposed, that positive instructions have come out in the Hibernia to Mr Pakenham to settle the

matter, at once, and negotiation will probably be immediately renewed in Washington.

The trade in provisions, was not very brisk. There was very little doing in grain: the arrival of flour from the U.S. continued large. The London money market was in a better condition. The timber trade continues depressed. The Caledonia arrived at Liverpool, May 14th after a passage of 12 1/2 days. The impudent proposition of the Mexican Government created a stormy time among the bond-holders. Paredes agent demanded a new loan of £2,000,000 and proposed to consolidate the old debt at a discount of 60 pr. ct.

Wilmer & Smith's European Times mentions a report, that, the British Govt are are about to dispatch a War Steamer to to Oregon, 200 gunners, 2 sergeants, 2 corporals and 2 Bombadiers, under the command of Capt. Blackwood[2] early in June. 3000 Excavators are soon to follow this force and these men are professedly sent to the Hudson Bay Company's territory, but it would be useless to shut our eyes, to the fact, that the bare announcement of such an expedition, while the Territory in question forms the subject of negotiation between the two Govts is calculated to produce no small excitement in America. The same Journal, also mentions that, reports are in circulation of the intended resignation of Sir Robert Peel. Messers Roebuck & D'Israeli[3] had a very pretty quarrel in the house of Commons on the evening of the 9th May. The latter charged the former with prepared impromptus; the former, retorted, upon the latter, the charge of studied invective.

SAM. F. B. MORSE

L. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this telegram on June 3, 1846. A representative example of his new invention, Morse signed his name with the title, "Superintendent of the U.S. Telegraphs. Washn." See also Samuel Morse to Polk, May 30, 1846.

1. Not identified further.

2. Probably Francis Price Blackwood of the Royal Navy.

3. John Arthur Roebuck and Benjamin Disraeli. A radical M.P., Roebuck earned notoriety for his incessant criticism of British imperial policies. A conservative M.P., Disraeli played a prominent role in British politics from the 1830's until his death in 1881; he headed the government twice as prime minister, first in 1868-69 and again in 1874-80.

## FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT

Memphis, Tenn. June 3, 1846

After announcing his removal to Memphis, Talbot gives his views of the difficulties at the Navy Yard: "the Government officers, in and about the Navy

yard [are] at logger heads." He believes that "a certain *clique* here, headed by Dr. Jeptha Fowlkes[1] … wishes to get control of the public money to be expended here." Talbot reports that Commander Elie A. B. LaVallette "could not be used for such purpose." He has been assailed subsequently, and the subject has been brought before the city council, "where Fowlkes has a controling influence." Talbot encourages Polk to retain LaVallette in his current position: "He is a high toned gentleman, who will countenance no peculation upon the public." Talbot suggests removing instead the chief engineer, A. B. Warford, "who if there is any peculation going on, has a hand in it, as he appears to be a great favourite with Fowlkes." In a postscript commenting on Zachary Taylor's leadership of the U.S. forces Talbot notes that "Public sentiment here, is much averse to placing a superior officer over him. He has done well, therefore he should be continued in command." Talbot describes a division in public opinion concerning prosecution of the war: "The *country* is ripe for the war, and to march to Mexico, but many thinking people believe this unnecessary."

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Confidential." Polk's AE on the cover notes that he received this letter on June 14, 1846.

1. Fowlkes applied for the naval agency at Memphis in 1844, but Polk appointed Joseph S. Watkins to that post.

## FROM HENRY HORN

Dear Sir, Philadelphia 6th June 1846

It appears now that the ground of opposition to my confirmation is narrowed down to the single charge that I asserted in some publication about twelve years ago, that the Senate had been bribed to recharter the Bank of the United States. This charge I feel entirely confident is utterly destitute of foundation. It is true I have always been ardent in my politics, and yet with all my zeal in the cause which I have espoused during the course of my whole life, I believe it cannot be shown that I have ever decended below the grade of a man of honor and a gentleman—maintaining my own opinions with that firmness which springs from a conviction of their truth and justness. I have nevertheless always treated with respect and deference the opinions of others who honestly differed with me, and I feel convinced therefore that I never could have uttered the charge imputed to me.

It is difficult you know for any man to prove a negative, nor ought he in justice to be required to do so, and yet that is the position in which I have been placed in relation to the charge in question. I have caused the files of the Pennsylvanian the Organ of our party here to be diligently searched for the whole year in which the allegation is said

to have been made by me and nothing has been there found, to sustain the charge which my enemies have made against me.

On the first of this month an article appeared in the "North American" a newspaper published in this City and owned and edited by parties violently hostile to you as well as myself in which the charge of my having asserted that "the Senate was bribed to recharter the Bank of the United States" is again made. Upon reading the article I determined to prosecute the editors[1] of the paper for a libel as soon as my case now pending in the Senate should be disposed of. And as a preliminary step, I addressed a note to the editors, declaring the charge to be untrue and demanding the authority upon which it was made. The note was delivered by two respectable merchants of our City on the 6th Inst. to one of the editors of the paper, who upon reading it replied that as soon as his partner, who was out, came in they would send me a written communication. But up to this moment I have received nothing from them, leaving me to the inference that they have no foundation whatever for the charge, not even in information derived from others. That it is the creature of their own malice for which I shall hold them personally responsible according to the laws of my country.

The persecutions and calumnies to which I have been subjected within the last few months are unparalleled within the scope of my memory, but I feel that I shall rise superior to them all.

HENRY HORN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Henry Horn to Polk, June 6, 1846; marked "*Private*."

1. Cephas G. Childs and Joseph R. Fry.

## FROM WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir Franklin June 7th 1846

Your favr. of the 29th ult was duly recd. on yesterday & I hasten to reply as pr request though I have great fear that my strength will not permit. I reached home 12th April from the South sick afflicted with diseased liver & kidny which has well nigh carried me off, though I am gratified to say to you that I am on the mend.

I learn from you that a bill has passed the Senate & is now before the other branch & which you have no doubt will pass into a Law authorising you by & with the advice & consent of the Senate to create some additional Paymasters & quartermasters with the rank Pay & emoluments of Major & Colonel, and that you will reserve one

of the highest grade for me or until you hear from me; for which I tender my best respects, assuring you that it will give me much pleasure to receive from you an appointment confering the rank, Pay, & emoluments of a full Colonel & should any thing occur (not now expected) prevent you from accomplishing your present intention, the other commission to investigate the Cherokee Indian claims at *$3000* pr annum, would be kindly recd. for the time being awaiting better opportunities. I recd. a letter from my son Thomas. He is anxious to be ordered on to Annapolis to school. In your first communication you expected he would be sent there first. He had been sick with cold which fell in his eye & ear.

I had put my son James to reading Medicine but his master has gone to Mexico as Surgeon to the Regiment. Altho' I have rested several times my strength is gone & I must close. There are many things I desire to say to you, but must defer them for a more strengthend time.

W. G. CHILDRESS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 16, 1846, and replied to it on June 24, 1846.

## FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Louisville, Ky. June 8, 1846

Announcing a brief travel stop, Yell updates Polk on his river journey to Arkansas. He reports that the"river banks between here & Cincinati was lined with men women & children [ . . .] I have never witnessed so much enthusiasm in any war." All rejoice in Taylor's appointment to command the regulars; Scott "is not popular here." Yell notes that local Whigs "say you are not disposed to make it a *party* war." Yell mentions that the appointment of William O. Butler[1] as brigadier general "would be hailed here with pleasure by all parties & if he could command *our* troops he would be very acceptable." Volunteers from the states along the Ohio river are impressive; they are "young men of firm futures families and educations are privats in the companys and seem delighted to have an opportunity to serve their country." He will write from Little Rock and "give a speedy account of the organization of the Ark Polk vols."

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

1. Butler fought in the Battle of New Orleans; served as an aide to Andrew Jackson; and sat in the Kentucky House, 1817–18. He won election as a Democrat to two terms in the U.S. House, 1839–43, but lost his gubernatorial bid in 1844 to William Owsley, nominee of the Kentucky Whigs. He ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. vice-presidency on the Democratic ticket of 1848.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir Nashville June 10th 1846

Our regiment of Infantry are now gone in fine style to N. Orleans to report itself to Genl. Gaines. A Battallion has also gone before now from Memphis & another embarking down the Tennessee from Knoxville or thereabouts. The cavalry regiment is also wending its way (by companies) to Memphis there to await further orders. I know the destination of the Infantry & so sent them on. The cavalry I find I retained very properly for further orders.

I musterd. them all into the service of the U. States within their respective geographic divisions of the State for reasons that will be obvious to you. I made also certain advances to them under proper heads that were essential to them in starting out & travelling to the place of the rendezvous. All have gone off in fine content—much dissatisfaction however with some of those who were not fortunate in the lottery, & amongst whom I learn is Genl Johnson of Clarksville,[1] who I know has no just cause for it & I think will become reconciled to the result. An immense effort was made to *dictate* my course about Nashville. 1st to induce me to pick out 2 or 3 companies at Nashville & Memphis & send them off without any lottery to which others would have to be subjected. 2nd to induce me to throw the call on Middle & West Tennessee, leaving out East Tennessee altogether. Among those who insisted on this last course was our quondam friend Claiborne,[2] whose advice on this point not having been followed, went out into the streets & joined with the enemy, may excuse him in attempting to censure my course. I feel released from any obligation to serve him as I have often done against the assaults of his enemies. Whatever of excitement prevailed for a few days has passd. & my proceedings are destined to give more than usual satisfaction.

I congratulate you on the prospect of setling the Oregon question. They will propose 49 & if not encumbered with too many *water privilege* you will have to accept it. If they ask the *joint navigation* give it for the joint navigation of the St Lawrence & if they wont give that (as we know they wont) then let them have the use of the Columbia for the purpose of navigation with all commercial craft, for 20 years or even perpetuity with an express clause that no public armed vessel shall ever be permitted to enter said river, &c &c. Pardon me however for obtruding advice on the subject. My familiarity with the subject would once have justified it, but not now.

Do you ever write any letters of friendship now a days? If you do, I should like to have a small share of them in that line. Mrs. B. desires to be rememberd. by Mrs. President[3] & hopes as she hears she does, that she enjoys fine health amid the splendors but the cares of the white house.

AARON V. BROWN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 18, 1846, and answered it on July 7, 1846.

1. A Clarksville lawyer, Willie B. Johnson sat in the Tennessee Senate for one term, 1835–37, and served twelve years as attorney general for Tennessee's Seventh Judicial District, 1839–51.

2. Probably Thomas Claiborne. A major on Andrew Jackson's staff during the Creek War and a Nashville lawyer, Claiborne served three terms in the Tennessee House, 1811–15 and 1831–33, and one term in the U.S. House, 1817–19.

3. Sarah C. Polk.

## FROM WILLIAM J. LEIPER[1]

My dr Sir, Philada. 10th June 1846

I mentioned in a hasty note which I addressed to you before leaving Washington,[2] that I had seen Mr Buchanan on the subject of the vacant Judgeship, and had received his assurance that although his relations with Mr Kane had become less intimate than they formerly were, he should not allow himself to lay a single objection in the way of Mr K appointment.[3] Since my return to Philadelphia I have also seen General Cameron.[4] He authorizes me to say to you in his name, that there is no man whose nomination he would prefer to Mr. Kane's. In fact although there intercourse has very naturally been less frequent since the Senatorial election, in which Mr Kane supported Judge Woodward, there never has been personal alienation between them and Genl Cameron has always recognized his obligations to Mr Kane for former Kindnesses.

I enclose a letter from the Secty of the Commonwealth Col J Miller.[5] I have no doubt from all that I have seen and heard here and elsewhere that the appointment would be as acceptable to the Bar, to our immediate community and to the People of the State at large, as it would be personally grateful to yourself. The only fear that I hear of is lest the appointment should be delayed as there [is] much bussiness laying over & daily accumulating. I need not speak to you that this will [be]

considered *as a personal* favour not only to myself but to my brothers.

WM. J. LEIPER

P.S. My nephew starts in the morning on his Western tour. I trust his health may be restored & that he many render important services to the Country.[6]

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

1. Leiper of Delaware County, Penn., was the brother of Jane Duval Leiper, wife of John K. Kane, and of George Gray Leiper, a member of the U.S. House, 1829–31.

2. Reference is to William J. Leiper to Polk, June 9, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP.

3. A Philadelphia lawyer and an ardent Jackson Democrat, John K. Kane served from 1832 until 1836 as one of the spoliation claims commissioners under the authority of the 1831 convention with France. He opposed the rechartering of the Bank of the United States, an unpopular position to take in Philadelphia. In 1845 Polk appointed Kane U.S. attorney for Pennsylvania and the following year named him U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, a post that he held for twelve years.

4. A Pennsylvania banker and businessman, Simon Cameron won election as a Democrat to fill the U.S. Senate seat of James Buchanan, who resigned to become Polk's secretary of state. Cameron, who served from 1845 until 1849, subsequently won election as a Republican to the U.S. Senate, 1857–61 and 1867–77.

5. Reference is to Jesse Miller to Polk, June 9, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP. Miller sat in both the Pennsylvania House and Senate prior to his election as a Democrat to the U.S. House, where he served from 1833 until 1836. He held the post of first auditor of the Treasury from 1836 until 1842; subsequently he received appointments as canal commissioner of Pennsylvania in 1844 and then as secretary of the commonwealth in 1845.

6. A Philadelphia attorney, Thomas L. Kane, son of John K. and Jane Duval Leiper Kane, served as a district court clerk during his father's tenure as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. An ardent abolitionist, the younger Kane served as a U.S. agent to the Mormons; having won the confidence of Brigham Young, Kane convinced the Mormon leader to rescind an order calling for resistence to U.S. troop occupation of Utah in 1858.

## TO JOHN K. KANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 11th 1846

I enclose to you herewith a letter to your son,[1] which he requested and which I give to him with great pleasure. He has no doubt informed you of the object of his journey, and that he will be the bearer of dispatches to our squadron in the Pacific.

It gives me pleasure to inform you, that I have this day nomi-

nated you to the Senate as District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania in place of Judge Randall deceased.[2] Your friends informed me that this situation would be acceptable to you, and to avoid any agitation or excitement on the subject I concluded to nominate you without delay.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. PPAmP. Addressed to Philadelphia and marked "*Private*."

1. See Polk to Thomas L. Kane, June 11, 1846.

2. Archibald Randall served as associate justice of the Court of Common Pleas at Philadelphia, 1834–42; in 1842 Tyler appointed him to the bench of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; Randall presided over the U.S. district and circuit courts at Philadelphia from 1844 until his death in 1846.

## TO THOMAS L. KANE

Dr. Sir, Washington City June 11th 1846

Being informed that you have obtained your passport to proceed to the Pacific Coast of this continent, it gives me pleasure to recommend you to the favourable consideration of all officers of the United States whom you may meet or with whom you may have occasion to communicate in the course of your travels. Possessed as you are of my confidence you may have it in your power to impart to those entrusted with the interests of the United States in that distant region, information of importance. I commend you to this favourable consideration, not doubting that they will, in the exercise of whatever directive, the instructions under which they may be acting may authorize them to use, or which emergencies arising out of the existing war with Mexico, may render it proper for them to assume, under you all the aid and facility in accomplishing the objects of your journey, which you may desire. Wishing you a safe and pleasant journey and a speedy return to your house.

JAMES K. POLK

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

## TO JESSE MILLER

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 11th 1846

I have received a letter from *Gov. Shunk*,[1] informing me that my friend *John K. Kane Esqr.* would accept the office of District Judge, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of *Judge Randall*. I have

received also other letters from the friends of *Mr Kane*, and have this day nominated him to the Senate. This I am informed will make a vacancy in the state office which Mr K. now fills. In relation to your state matters, and the divisions into which the Democratic party may be unfortunately divided, I know very little, and would not on any account, be understood to interfere by obtruding my advice. One thing however I feel at liberty to mention to you, as a friend in whom I can confide, and that is that *Mr Kane's* nomination has been rendered satisfactory, to certain prominent Pennsylvanians here, in the expectation that the state office which he now holds may be conferred upon some gentleman, whom they have no doubt indicated to the Governor, whose appointment they think would be calculated again to cement & strengthen the Democratic party. They think also that it would have an important influence in confirming the nomination of *Mr Horn*, and would have the effect of restoring harmony once more to the Democratic party in Pennsylvania. I make these suggestions here because of what I have casually learned. You will give them such weight and no more, [than] your better knowledge of your affairs will entitle them to.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Harrisburg, Penn., and marked "*Private*."

1. Letter not found. A lawyer from Pittsburgh, Francis R. Shunk had served as clerk of the Pennsylvania House and as secretary of the commonwealth, 1839–42. Elected governor in 1844 and reelected in 1847, he served from 1845 until 1848, when ill health forced him to resign.

## FROM ARTHUR P. BAGBY

My dear Sir, Senate Chamber June 12th 1846

The vote on the *projet* has just been taken and the result is 38 for it and 12 against it, without any alteration.[1]

A. P. BAGBY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally and delivered by hand.

1. The Senate resolution states: "That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, advised to accept the proposal of the British Government, accompanying his message to the Senate dated 10th June, 1846, for a convention to settle the boundaries, &c., between the United States and Great Britain west of the Rocky or Stony Mountains."

FROM HENRY HORN

My Dear Sir, Philadelphia 14th June 1846

Yesterday about an hour after I took my leave of you I proceeded to execute the duty which from the result of our conference had devolved upon me. To say that it was not rendered with some unpleasant sensations on my part would be disingenuous. Yet appreciating as I did from my very hearts core the motives which dictated the measure, and recollecting that whatever it might do with others it could never lessen me in your esteem I determined to carry it out in good faith.

I must however remark that what rendered the contemplated interview more repulsive to my feelings was the idea that the Senator[1] having himself appointed the hour when it should take place, would with his usual adroitness have taken care to have had some of his special friends in attendance to witness what they might have construed to be a humiliating step on my part. In this I was however agreeably disappointed. I found him entirely alone. The ordinary salutations passed between us. A general conversation ensued. This was succeeded by one of a more special nature relative to the matter in hand. He said that he regretted that I had not called upon him at the commencement of the session, to which I replied that he had not been an exception to my general rule, that I had called upon but few of the Senators and that as I had conceived myself to be so justly entitled to the votes of the Democratic Senators I had deemed it unnecessary and even indelicate to solicit them. He then remarked that I had appointed an individual from the country who was unfriendly to him. I assured him that the person he named was not appointed by me but by my predecessor,[2] and that I had no knowledge of his being unfriendly to him. With this explanation he appeared to be satisfied.

He next adverted to what he conceived to be the improper influence of Mr. Buchanan in procuring the appointment to office of unworthy persons who were inimical to him (the Senator). I now began to doubt whether this was not a snare laid to draw me into some expression of feeling against Mr B. If it was however it failed of success. He went on to specify and name Genl. Hammond[3] and others whom he said had received their appointments through the influence of Mr B. I told him he certainly could not hold me responsible for that which had been done by others. He said he did not, but that he had been badly treated. I expressed my surprise at this and remarked that I had long considered Mr. B as his warm friend. He replied that he did not regard him,

that he had done a great deal for Mr B and that he had done little or nothing for him in return.

I then rose to take my leave when he remarked to me that he did not know what he could do in my case without degrading himself. I replied that I had nothing further to say upon the point, but that I expected him to do what was right and just in the matter, and we parted upon fair and apparently friendly terms. From the detail I have given, you will be able to judge of his probable future course, if he is as shrewd and cunning as he has been supposed to be. I think he can not fail to see that he has nothing to gain and much to lose by continuing his opposition.

It occurs to me that Genl. Cass who is a strong 54.40 man might and would do much among those who think with him upon that point. I think I will write him upon the subject.

HENRY HORN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private & Confidential*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 15, 1846.

1. Simon Cameron.

2. Calvin Blythe served as customs collector at Philadelphia from 1843 until his removal in 1845.

3. A two-term U.S. congressman from Pennsylvania, 1837–41, Robert H. Hammond served as a lieutenant in the army from 1814 to 1820; he accepted a commission in 1846 as a paymaster with the rank of major. Wounded in the Mexican-American War, Hammond died en route home on sick leave in 1847.

## FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Mouth White River Ark
My Dear Sir 14th June 1846 (Sunday)

I am this four[1] on my way to Little Rock. I find from the News Papers that our Regt will be full by the time I Reach the place of Rendezous (Washington). Five companys have already reported thirselves to the Gov[2] and the balance no doubt are already raised. The five companys I find a majority of the capts are *Whigs* and if there should be a majority of the company officers of the Regt Whigs I do not expect they will select me as their commander. If not I shall go as a *private* and rely upon your good will for some salvation, that I can and ought to accept. I give you this early intimation that you may be apprised in time that

there is a chance at least, that another may be selected to command the Regt. I have herd nothing hower, to induce this belief but judge only from, the persons who are elected to command the companys.

P.S. Since writing the above I learn the Regt is full, still its complection is uncertain? The Regt will be ready to march from our Rendezvous by the 25th Inst.

A. YELL

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

1. Yell probably meant to write "far" instead of "four."

2. A Lawrence County Democrat and farmer, Thomas S. Drew served as governor of Arkansas from 1844 to 1849.

## FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir Murfreesboro, June 15th 1846

Yours, authorising me to draw on you &c. was recieved, a few days since,[1] and Sarahs letter to my wife,[2] written under the supposition, that I had gone upon a campaign to Mexico, reached here yesterday. At the urgent request of a good many friends, who had sons & relations, desirous to go upon a campaign, I very reluctantly consented, to go along and take command of a company, composed entirely of young men. We offered our services to Genl. Bradley for a *six months* tour and were by him accepted, and were immediately afterwards informed by Gov. Brown, that he was not authorised under the act of Congress to recieve troops, for a shorter period than twelve months. The most of the company as well as myself being unwilling to be absent from home for so long a time, without the emergency was greater, declined the service, and another company was taken in our stead. This explains, the appearance of my name in the Nashville papers as engaged in the campaign.

If your letter had reached me a few weeks earlier, I could have made the purchases, readily, and to advantage, there having been a large number offered in this county, by persons from Virginia & N Carolina, during the spring, and the market has been untill recently overstocked. I am however inclined to the belief that the kind of property spoken of, has a downward tendency and may be bought just before the July court, when Executions have to be provided for, at fair prices. I will take my time and buy whenever I see one that suits, and the price favorable. I will draw as the money may be needed (unless you think it best to draw the whole amt. at once) and will always notify you,

immediately that I have done so. If you have any further directions, as to age, quality &c. you can write me upon recpt of this.

I learn that Col. Yoakum[3] has gone upon the Mexican expedition, at the head of a company of Texas Volunteers. From my personal knowledge of his pecuniary affairs, he has done so, at a great sacrifice and must have left his wife & children in a strange land & without friends, in a very destitute condition.

I suppose he would not have gone under the circumstances, but he thinks the Government is entitled to his services, upon every occasion of the kind, in return for the education he recieved at West Point. I know these were his views when volunteers have been called for heretofore and he has never failed to offer his services. I mention these things to you for the purpose of asking your aid for him in some way. If there is any staff appointment, or anything connected with the service, that will afford better pay and give him better position than a capt's commission it would be an act of great kindness to confer it upon him. He is as you know amply qualified for almost any post you might assign him, and I know, that since he went to Texas, he has been unable to buy necessaries for his family. There is great sympathy for him in this community, where he is best known, and anything you might do for him, would gratify many of your friends here.

JOHN W. CHILDRESS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 25, 1846, and answered it on June 27, 1846.

1. Polk to Childress, June 2, 1846.

2. Sarah C. Polk's letter to Sarah Williams Childress has not been found.

3. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, Henderson K. Yoakum served as mayor of Murfreesboro, 1837–43; won election to one term in the Tennessee Senate, 1839–40; received a lieutenant's commission and fought at Monterey under James Gillaspie; moved to Texas in 1845; and authored a two-volume *History of Texas*, which was published in 1855.

## FROM LEVIN H. COE

Dear Sir, Memphis, June 16, 1846

I have felt it my duty heretofore to address you in regard to Commandant Lavallette. It will take one year of good management to repair the damage he has done us. If he remains much longer the damage will be

irreparable. In this I am not mistaken. We have advice that his successor is designated but he is ordered to remain until that successor comes. Let him go at once. Not an hours delay. A commandant at the present time is a sort of 5th wheel to a waggon & can be got along without for a few weeks if occasion require.

This mans feelings are so malignant that he would I believe incur any risque of sacrificing himself to gratify them. Again, I must most earnestly but respectfully urge that without delay he be removed at once. Pay no attention to any representations about influence of cliques &c. I who try to look calmly upon the current of circumstances around me & neither know nor care about cliques feel an abiding conviction that Lavallette has done much to disorganize & destroy us here & will succeed to the full content of your worst enemies unless promptly removed.

The war feeling boils over here. Our people are ready to grapple with Britain if called on. Five companies of the cavalry are encamped here. They are restless at the idea of remaining 3 or 4 weeks.

James C. Jones,[1] expected in two days & Jonas E. Thomas, now here will compete for Col. Comt. of the Regt. We do not know how it will be as much depend on the complexion of the E. Tenn companies. No pains will be spared by yr. friends.

L. H. Coe

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 29, 1846.

1. A Wilson County farmer and one-term member of the Tennessee House, Jones defeated Polk in the Tennessee gubernatorial elections of 1841 and 1843. In 1850, Jones moved to Shelby County and became president of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. He won election to one term in the U.S. Senate, 1851–57; following the collapse of the Whig party in 1854, he joined the Democrats and supported James Buchanan for the presidency in 1856.

## FROM HENRY HORN

My Dear Sir Philadelphia 16 June 1846

Everything appears to be working admirably well here in regard to the Oregon settlement. You will lose but few if any real friends, and gain the confidence and esteem of all who feel a deep and abiding interest on the welfare and prosperity of our country. I have convinced many who did not before correctly understand the subject, that you still maintain the same position in regard to that question which you

assumed at the commencemt of your Administration, and it will require but a short time to make it clearly manifest to all.

In relation to the letter of McCulley[1] of which you spoke when I saw you last. I must beg leave to give you a friendly caution. It was written for your eye and with the view of placing himself in a favourable position before you by assumg to be friendly to me. Beware of him he is hollow hearted and insincere.

HENRY HORN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to "The President"; marked "*Private*."

1. Horn probably refers to Thomas McCully, who served one term in the Pennsylvania legislature, 1841–1843.

## TO JOHN ADDISON THOMAS[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 16th 1846

I learn that you have raised, or are raising, a Regiment of Volunteers, who will be ready to enter the public service, whenever the Government may call for them. I think it probable that an opportunity may soon be afforded me to gratify your wishes, and at the same time enable you to render important services to your country. As you were once a citizen of my congressional District, and were appointed a Cadet upon my nomination, I have always taken great interest in your prosperity and welfare, and was much gratified, after learning that you had resigned your commission in the army, that you had placed yourself at the head of a volunteer corps, and were ready still to serve your country, in the profession of arms, which you had early selected. Without being more specific, I desire to see you at Washington at your earliest convenience. I request that you will come immediately to Washington that I may confer freely with you. You will of course see the propriety of saying nothing to any one, of this unofficial note, until after you shall have seen me. Hoping to see you at Washington in the course of two or three days ....

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New York.

1. Son of Isaac J. Thomas of Columbia, Thomas was graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1833; served at the Academy as a professor of ethics, geography, and history from 1834 until 1841; became commandant of cadets in 1842 and served in that post until his resignation from the army in 1845. Thomas practiced law in New York City until 1855, when he became undersecretary of state in the administration of Franklin Pierce.

FROM HENRY HORN

My Dear Sir, Philadelphia 18th June 1846

The recent advices which I have received from Washington convince me that there is no dependence to be placed upon the word of the Senator[1] I visited with so much reluctance when I was last there. He is alike destitute of honor and principle and the only way to combat and conquer him is by open bold and decisive measures. I rely much upon your characteristic firmness, and upon the good judgement and skill of my friends in the senate to hold the matter under their control until the auspicious moment for action shall arrive. Gen. Cass informs me that there has been and he thinks there will be no adverse action on the part of the 54.40 men.

The merchants here are exceedingly active and are bringing additional forces to bear upon their senators. I have but little doubt of success, if these influences are allowed time to operate.

HENRY HORN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 20, 1846.

1. Simon Cameron.

FROM ALBERT G. BROWN

D Sir Vicksburg Miss 20th June 1846

Col C. W. Clifton[1] a member of my staff is by this letter introduced to your acquaintance & favourable notice. Col C. is charged by me to inform you how greviously the Chivalry of Mississippi has been disappointed in being denied the privilege of sending more than one Regt. against Mexico and to represent how earnestly we desire to send at least one more. We look upon the War with Mexico a[s] peculiarly our own, and regard the introduction of troops from other states as little less than usurpation. If there should be any further call for troops do give Mississippi an open field or you and I are both ruined. As much as one thousand Dollars has been offered by a single company for a place in our Regt. Of course the thousands who are disappointed are not in a pleasant humor either with the State or National government.

A. G. BROWN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Not identified further.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Dear Sir Bolivar Tennessee June 20 1846

Enclosed please find account current for last years transactions, in renting & collecting rents due from the lands of M T Polk in this county & the payment of Taxes in this & other counties; shewing the balance due you at this date to be $12.00. All the dues for last year is collected except five Dollars. You will also find enclosed separate accounts against the Hs. of S W Polk & Hs M T Polk for Taxes paid,[1] both receipted & charged to you in a/c current. I make no return of Taxes paid on M T Polks Land in Gibson Co. The taxes are regularly paid on it out of the proceeds of a small improvement on the land, at some future time a statement of the receipts & payments on that acct will be brought forward. As yet I have not made a sale of your land near this place.

I contemplate leaving for the North on the 1st July via St. Louis & the Lakes. To Buffalo & Niagara, from thence I have not determined precisely what route we may take. Mrs McNeal our daughter & Sister Miss Williams accompany me,[2] for the double purpose of adding to their stock of health (which is not very good) and gratifying their curiosity &c &c. I am inclined to the opinion that we shall pass through Ontario & down the St Lawrence to Quebec and return leisurely through New England & New York so as to reach Philadelphia about the 15th August & make my fall purchases.

As I have no acquaintance East or North of New York City, except a business acquaintance by correspondence with our Commercial house in Boston, I would be pleased and under many obligations to you, to receive at Buffalo New York some letters of introduction. I dislike to trespass on your time which I know must be fully engaged, two or three letters will be entirely sufficent. We desire to make our tour in a quiet unpretending kind of Style, but at some time circumstances might occur in which it might be desirable to have letters that could be delivered or with-held as may seem most expedient.

By the late correspondence between Genl Scott & the Secretary of War, we in this country think the General has done the very thing above all others that he wished to avoid (to wit) lessened his prospects for the Presidency. He has ruined himself in this community. The south west could not have been better pleased than they are at the turn things have taken with regard to the supreme command on the Del Norte. The Administration done (as was expected) right to offer

the command to Scott, but we are all gratified to hear that Taylor has now & will continue to command the Army that march to the interior & perhaps to the City of Mexico. Whig Editors may say much for effect, but rest assured that your Administration has a hearty & zealous support from the people of both parties in the war measures against Mexico. In fact there seems to be but one party now in this section of the country & that is the great *fighting party*.

The Hardeman Co. Boys were sadly disappointed in not being fortunate enough to get with the Army. Our kinsman Dr J J Neely had a Company 84 men reported at an early day.

E. P. McNeal

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Reference is to the heirs of Polk's brothers, Samuel and Marshall, for whose estates he served as executor. Samuel Wilson Polk died in 1839 unmarried and without issue; Marshall Tate Polk died in 1831 leaving two children, Marshall Tate Polk, Jr., and Roxana Polk, who was known in family circles as Eunice Ophelia.

2. McNeal was accompanied on the trip by his wife, Anne Williams McNeal; their only child, Priscilla McNeal; and Anne's sister, "Miss Williams," who is not identified further.

## FROM HENRY HORN

My Dear Sir, Philadelphia 22d June 1846

Our friends Generals Houston & Rusk spent saturday and sunday among us much to the gratification of our democratic fellow Citizens. They have made many friends here and have left behind them a most favourable impression of their character.

From the intercourse they had with my fellow citizens they became strongly embued with a sense of the injustice and persecutions which I have recently suffered and Genl. Houston assured me that as soon as he returned to Washington he would go to work in good earnest to secure my confirmation which he felt sanguine could be effected.

My enemies are cowardly and treacherous and I am sure can be frightened and beaten into submission only by bold and energetic measures.

One of the miscreants here (McCulley)[1] who lately had the meanness to write a letter to Washington in favour of my confirmation which letter was intended only to deceive you was at *that time* and is now secretly doing everthing in his power against me. Beware of him.

Henry Horn

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on June 24, 1846.

1. Reference probably is to Thomas McCully; no "McCully" letter to Polk in support of Horn has been found.

## TO LOUIS McLANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 22nd 1846

I am in receipt of your two letters brought by *Genl. Armstrong* and also of that by the Caledonia,[1] in which you have placed me in possession of valuable information which it would not have been prudent to communicate in a public despatch. *Mr Buchanan's* despatches transmitted to you by the last steamer and those which will go out by the Great Western,[2] will inform you of the action which has been had here on the Brittish proposal for the adjustment of the Oregon question. The acceptance of the proposal was advised by the Senate by a vote of more than three to one, and the Treaty was ratified by a vote of 41 to 14, every Senator voting except *Mr Jarnagen* of Tennessee.[3] It was not until after very full deliberation that I obtained my own consent to lay the proposal before the Senate for their previous consent. For the reasons however stated in my message I came to the conclusion that it was my duty to do so. I need not say to you, who are so well acquainted with my opinions and views, that had it not been for the concessions of my predecessors, and had the subject come under consideration for the first time I should promptly have rejected the offer. The question is however settled, and that upon better terms than Great Brittain has ever before offered, and so far as I have learned public sentiment, the adjustment will be generally approved or acquiesced in by the country. I agree with you, that but for the recent debates and proceedings in Congress, and especially in the Senate, better terms would probably have been obtained. I take it for granted that as the Brittish proposal was accepted without modification that The Treaty will be promptly ratified on the part of Great Brittain, and that the ratifications will be exchanged, and returned to the U. States by the steamer which will leave Liverpool on the 19th July.

We are prosecuting the Mexican war with great energy and vigor, and hope to bring it to a speedy and honorable close. Judging from your letters and the tone of the Brittish press, which is exceedingly violent, I am not without some apprehension that there may be some European interference on behalf of Mexico. I do not doubt the sincerity of the assurances to the contrary, given to you by the Earl of Aberdeen, so far as he is concerned, but if there should be a change of Ministry

soon, as you think probable, I fear we have no guaranty against such interference by Great Brittain herself. Our people would be exceedingly jealous of the object of such attempt, and would I think resist it almost as one man. Should a mediation be tendered, should [it] go no further than to dispose Mexico to [ . . . ][4] or to bring the negotiators together, there would be no objection. Should such tender extend to any thing beyond this, or to any, the slightest agency on the part of the mediator in the adjustment [of] terms, it cannot for a moment be listened [to]. I allude to this because leading members of the Whig party here, as I understand are confidently of [the] opinion that Great Brittain will tender her service. When we shall treat with Mexico, we will deal boldly and justly by her, but we will not permit any other Power to interpose any agency in the making nor will we agree to make a Treaty under the guaranty of any other Power. The doctrine of the annual message against European interference or interposition in the affairs of this continent [will be] fully maintained and strictly carried out. The most prompt and vigorous measures are being [taken] to seize and hold military possession of [ . . . ] and of the Northern Provinces of Mexico. These we will hold until an honourable peace shall be concluded by a Treaty, which shall embrace [ . . . ] and proper adjustment of boundaries. You may rely upon it, that the slightest interference by any foreign Power, with the strict blockade which we have ordered of the coasts of Mexico, will be at once resisted. I hope no such interference may occur, but if it does, collision with the interfering Power will be inevitable.

In regard to the period of your return from your mission I have only to say, that after the satisfactory exchange of ratifications of the Treaty shall have taken place it will be left to yourself to select your own time of departure. *Mr Buchanan* will as you requested, transmit to you, your letter of recall, and it will be left to your discretion to leave immediately or not as you may think proper. I have not yet fully made up my mind in regard [to] your successor, and cannot probably be prepared to name him, until near the close of the present Session of Congress, which will not probably take place before the early part of the month of August. *Mr Boyd*, whom I have appointed Secretary of Legation may understand that if he shall be acceptable to your successor he [may] be retained, but that if any other should be preferred, he will according to the usage in these cases be expected to retire. I shall myself be entirely satisfied to retain him, and will do so, unless the minister to be appointed shall prefer another.

There is another matter of great importance concerning which I desire to confer with you fully but in the *strictest confidence*. You are I

believe apprized that *Mr Buchanan* has for many [years] prefered a seat on the Bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, to any other station under the Government. Such I have repeatedly learned from him is the fact, and it is [ . . .] known among his friends. During the last autumn he repeated his views on the subject in free conversation with me. I at that time advised him in the then state of our foreign negotiations against retiring from the Cabinet, but informed him, if he had fully made up his mind on the subject and insisted upon it, I would gratify his wishes. After some days consideration he concluded to remain in the Cabinet. I nominated *Mr Woodward* as you know to fill the vacancy then existing occasioned by the death of *Judge Baldwin*, and though one of the best men, and an able jurist, sound in all his constitutional opinions and doctrines, he was rejected by the Senate. The place still remains vacant and must be filled before the adjournment of Congress. A few days ago I had another conversation with *Mr Buchanan* on the subject in which having reason to believe that it was still his desire to go on the Bench, I informed him, that if he desired it I would nominate him to the Senate towards the close of the Session of Congress. Though he has not said to me [ . . .], I asked him to say what his decision will be, I have yet no doubt in my mind, that he will desire the appointment. In that event his place as Secretary of State will be vacated and I know of no one in the country with whom any personal as well as political relations would be more agreeable, or who would render more service to my administration and to the country than yourself. I therefore invite you to accept the station, and hope it may be compatable with your views to do so. You are fully acquainted with the policy of my administration and with my opinions and views upon all the leading questions now before the country, and will have been before it, for the last twenty years, and I have no doubt the utmost harmony and accordance of views and opinions would exist between us. Desiring as I do to avail myself of your valuable aid in conducting my adminstration, I hope to receive your early and favourable response. An early answer will be the more important because I must make the nomination before the adjournment of the Senate. Of course you will understand that if contrary to my present expectation and belief *Mr Buchanan* should change his mind and determine to remain in his present position, then I could not carry [out] the wish I have expressed, that you should fill the place. As I have remarked however, I am well satisfied that *Mr Buchanan* will go on the Bench. I will remark further that the public are wholly unapprized of *Mr B's* anticipated change of position, and it will be proper that publicity should not be given to it until it occurs.

With the kind regards of Mrs. Polk and myself to *Mrs. McLane* ....
JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to London and marked "*Private & Confidential*."

1. McLane to Polk, May 28, May 29 and June 3, 1846.

2. See Department of State, Despatches Nos. 34, 36 and 37. DNA–RG 59.

3. Spencer Jarnagin studied law under Hugh L. White and practiced in Knoxville from 1817 to 1837, when he moved to Athens, McMinn County. A Whig presidential elector in 1840, he failed to win election to the U.S. Senate in 1841 but two years later achieved his goal and served in that body from 1843 until defeated for reelection in 1847.

4. Blurred ink transfers render word or words illegible here and below. Probable readings have been included in brackets.

## FROM JOHN A. BRYAN[1]

Dear Sir: La Fayette, N. York, 23d June 1846

Perhaps I ought to say, that, after my letter some weeks since,[2] circumstances required me to be at my fathers[3] in this state, and your being *intensely occupied* at my departure from Washington, in the negotiations upon the Oregon question, I did not make my intended call. Since that period, the great question at issue has been settled. Some of our Western friends, and, among them, Col. Allen of my state, have evinced great dissatisfaction at the result. But his retirement from the Post he held upon the Committee of Foreign Relations will be no matter of regret in Ohio, or elsewhere. It is a position no man ought to hold of his imprudence and incompetency. He can accomplish nothing by his course but his own certain destruction, and, much as he has sought, and will continue to seek to create disturbance in the party, he can effect but little I assure you.

Your popularity, Sir, cannot be shaken. The country, however some may have divided upon the Oregon difficulties, will rejoice at the settlement made. This is the feeling here. It is the feeling of the country where I have been recently traveling. I have been in 5 states since leaving Washington and the tone and feeling of the people is decidedly with the President everywhere.

Not designing to be burdensome in my allusions, allow me, as ever, to remain ....
JOHN A. BRYAN

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

1. An Ohio Democrat, Bryan served as state auditor, 1833–39; as assistant postmaster general, 1842–44; and as chargé d'affaires to Peru, 1844–45.
2. Letter not found.
3. Reuben Bryan settled in La Fayette, Onondaga County, in 1794.

## FROM JOHN ADDISON THOMAS

Dear Sir, New York tuesday June 23 1846

Having been constrained to decline the desirable and advantageous position which you tendered me,[1] I did not feel at liberty to trouble you with another request for an interview which would have been sought only for the purpose of submitting suggestions, and I hence departed from Washington yesterday. But on further reflection on the subject several things have presented themselves which I beg to offer for your consideration. It seems to me that New York men are not so well qualified for this service as western men. The former have not the resource or self reliance of the hardy sons of the west. A man brought up in this city or in any other dense society cant comprehend how he could be his own tanner, his own shoemaker raise his own bread and besides kill his meat from the animals of the forest. He has been taught that to procure any one of these articles is as much as any one man can do. But all those things a Tennessean can perform, and it may be said that a New Yorker could be taught to perform them, but while he is receiving instruction, the public service may greatly suffer. Another reason why this force should not be raised in a city, not one man in twenty in the city and especially among that class from which these men would be taken knows how to ride a horse. This may be said of the greater part of the men in this part of the country.

Without meaning to say a word in disparagement of Col. Stevensons qualifications I would name General Albert S. Johnson a native of Kentucky and now of Texas as a man eminently fitted for the position both by nature and education.[2] He is a distinguished graduate of West Point, served with distinction in the war between Texas & Mexico, and is besides a young man about 38, and of fine personal appearance and good constitution. Genl. Houston or any person from Texas could give you complete information concerning him. The man proposed by Col S. for his Lt Col. is not I fear one who would ensure success in the undertaking. Capt Vincent is the person to whom I refer.[3] I do not believe that the right kind of people can be had for this service from any of the cities. In any of the western states, however, they might be immediately obtained and shipped to New Orleans or even Point Isabel and there put on board the vessels of war. If they are raised here I am

persuaded it will be noised abroad and the matter will be in the papers.

I beg again to express my regret that I could not consult my wishes and accept your offer. When I received your note I made up my mind that I would accept whatever service you might offer me, but, that in question, was wholly unexpected, and the circumstances which already surrounded the question and the haste in which it is to be performed rendered it necessary that I should decide as I did. I can assure you that you need not be under the slightest apprehension that I will forfeit the confidence you reposed in me. I did not allow *anyone* to know in Washington, but the Secretary, Col S. & Genl. Armstrong that I saw you. I have observed the same prudence everywhere. I have seen enough of the world to know that to keep ones own counsel is a great element of success, and I surely would not prejudice or jeopardize the success of an administration which I firmly believe will be the most brilliant on record.

I left with Governor Marcy a letter tending the services of the Regt. which I have raised and if you should have use for another I hope we may be called on. The Regt. is 743 men.

Allow me to add that if there is here or elsewhere any special service that you wish to be of a confidential nature, I am willing to perform it, and will indeed do all that I can to forward your administration.

JOHN ADDISON THOMAS

ALS. DLC– JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. See Polk to Thomas, June 16, 1846.

2. Jonathan D. Stevenson and Albert S. Johnston. A native of New York and colonel in the state militia, Stevenson represented New York City in the state assembly in 1846. During the Mexican-American War he commanded a regiment of New York volunteers and took command of California's southern district in 1848. Following the war, he remained in California and prospered in San Francisco's real estate boom. A Kentucky native and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, Johnston resigned his commission in 1834 and moved to Texas, where he served as adjutant-general and secretary of war. He led a unit of Texas volunteers during the Mexican-American War, and later headed the U.S. military departments of Texas and of the Pacific. Commander of Confederate forces in the West, Johnston died at the Battle of Shiloh.

3. Vincent is not identified further.

## TO WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 24th 1846

I have this day appointed you a Paymaster in the army. The regular pay and allowance is, I learn $1794 per annum, with an additonal al-

lowance for travelling under orders, when not marching with the army. Your rank will be that of a Major. When I wrote to you on the 29th ult. a Bill was pending before Congress for the creation of an additional number of Assistant Quarter Masters and Assistant Commissaries, and it was proposed to give some of these officers the rank of Colonel, and one of these I intended for you.[1] The Bill however as it passed Congress confers no rank higher than that of Major. The office of paymaster is much less laborious, and more responsible than either that of Assistant Quarter Master or Assistant Commissary, and therefore I thought would suit you best. The power of appointing the Paymasters is vested in the President alone, by the act of Congress of the 5th July 1838; while the appointment of Assistant Quarter Master and Assistant Commissary must receive the confirmation of the Senate.[2] The compensation to all, is the same. I think the appointment of Paymaster is a more honorable & dignified one than that of Indian Commissioner, which I mentioned in my letter to you.[3] I consulted *Genl. Bradley* on yesterday, and he concurred with me in opinion that you would prefer to be a Paymaster, to be Commissioner to adjust Indian claims. The Paymaster General[4] will transmit to you, your instructions and orders. It will be important that you should decide at once whether you accept or not. I request that you will write to me on receipt of this letter. I think I can appoint your son *James* to a Cadetship next June. In the present state of the service, I fear it will not be possible to gratify the wishes of *Thomas* to be ordered to the Naval School at *Annapolis*. After he has been in service a few months longer I have no doubt he will be better satisfied with his present position. I snatch only a moment from my pressing engagements to write to you, and have written in great haste.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Williamson County, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. "An Act supplemental to an Act entitled 'An Act providing for the prosecution of the existing war between the United States and the republic of Mexico, and for other purposes.'" *Statutes at Large*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 29.

2. "An Act to increase the present military establishment of the United States, and for other purposes." *Statutes at Large*, 25th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 162.

3. See Polk to William G. Childress, May 29, 1846.

4. An artillery captain during the War of 1812, Nathan Towson received brevets of major and lieutenant colonel for his part in capturing the British brig *Caldedonia* and his bravery in the Battle of Chippewa; in 1819, he was

appointed paymaster-general for the army and held that post until his death in 1854. In 1848, Col. Towson was breveted major-general for meritorius conduct during the Mexican-American War.

## FROM GEORGE M. DALLAS

Dear Sir, 24 June 1846

Mr. Horn was rejected by a vote of 28 to 21. Will you pardon me for saying that you cannot too promptly prove, by the course you proposed taking, that this mode of treating your nominations will avail its authors nothing.

G. M. DALLAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally; marked "*Private*."

## FROM JANE L. TAGGART[1]

Respected Sir George Town June 24th 1846

I do not know if you are aware of Mr Taggarts having received his dismissal from office,[2] but I cannot suppose it to be by your orders from the sacred promise made to the most excellent of men General Andrew Jackson that you would see Mr Taggart and his family *well* provided for and that they should not want under your administration and he asked this from you as the only favor he had to ask from his Country that we should be taken care of. Perhaps you may say you did give a situation to Mr Taggart and had provided for him and that from his own neglect he had forfeited the situation. But he had true and good cause for his *apparent* neglect of duty. The circumstances of a bone felon on the second finger of the right hand would prevent any person from performing the duties required of him. For although Mr Washington[3] stated to Mr Walker that his duty consisted in settling some nine hundred accounts pr qr (but in *truth* one thousand) with his usual cander forgot to state that such account was accompanied by two transcripts of mail recd. and sent of from one to one hundred pages each the folding up of which alone it was impossible for Mr Taggart to do. This unfortunately was his case, but independent of all this his situation was a very unpleasant one. It is the opinion of others as well as ourselves that Mr Washington has some secret grudge towards Mr Taggart. He says he does not believe Mr T's excuse of a sore finger was ever a good one. Mr T employed substitutes and paid them out of his own pocket and applied to Mr Walker to sanction the appointment of another. I can most solemnly and conscientiously avow Mr T to have

been alltogether disabled from work by the situation of his hand. He was in hopes to have it gain sufficient strength by next quarter to be enabled to set in and attend diligently to his duties. But for the time previous it was an utter impossibility for him to do any work and had he made the attempt would have been attended with the loss of his finger. Mr Washington had an opportunity of continually entering his complaints to Mr Walker concerning Mr Taggart and Mr Taggart no opportunity of defending himself as Mr Walker has never given him a hearing. Now I appeal to you as a higher power and throw ourselves upon your justice as I am well assured of you being just and guided by pure and good feeling. I ask you once more to place Mr Taggart in some situation where he can do credit to himself and I do well assure you you will find one always anxious to do his duty. I cannot believe it your wish to deprive a man with a wife and seven children of the means of support and place them in the situation in which we must inevitably be placed provided you refuse to restore Mr Taggart to some office of which you may have the disposal. I will rely upon your goodness and ask of you to give Mr T a hearing at least. I hope you will excuse my presumption in addressing you in this way and grant me a speedy answer.

JANE L. TAGGART

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally; marked "Private." Polk's AE on the cover reads, "Mr Taggart was dismissed as a Clerk because of repeated and gross neglect of his duty. July 2nd 1846."

1. Sister of Sarah Yorke Jackson, Jane Taggart married James B. Taggart.

2. Taggart held clerkships in the General Land Office, 1837–43, and in the Treasury Department, 1845–46.

3. Peter G. Washington served as Treasury auditor for Post Office accounts from 1845 until 1850.

## FROM ALFRED BALCH

Dear Sir, Nashville June [26][1] 1846

The treaty with England, just concluded, commands universal approbation. For a long succession of coming years the two greatest nations on the Earth will cultivate in a generous emulation all the arts of peace. When the news reached me my heart was profoundly rejoiced.

I am animated and cheered with the belief that you will be able forthwith to reform the existing wicked and swindling Tariff.

For some time past I have not been pleased with Bentons course.

Our correspondence which had been for many years of the most undisguised character, became infrequent. But, the other day to my great surprize I received from him a most affectionate letter into which he introduced politics. This gave me an opportunity to write him very freely on this subject and in my letter I implored him to come out boldly in favor of a reduction of the present rates of customs duties, and to act as a *great* pacificator between the discontented southrons and the mean mercenary northern *protectionists*. I am vain enough to believe that my advice will have some effect upon him *now* as I know that in past times it has controlled some of his important movements.

ALFRED BALCH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on July 3, 1846.

1. Date taken from postal cancellation.

## FROM CHRISTOPHER E. MCEWEN[1]

Dear Sir Franklin June 26th AD 1846

It gives me great pain to anounce to you; that our mutual friend & your relation Col. Wm. G. Childress departed this life on last Sabath morning after an ilness of about 10 weeks in which time he suffered much, pain. But I am happy to be able to inform you that through the grace of God he died a professed Christian, his sins was pardoned on friday or saturday before his disolution; and he was permitted to retain his perfect mind up to the hour of Death. All of these circumstances was extremely gratifying to relatives & friends here. His funeral services was performed by the Revd. Mr McPherson[2] on monday last, and a verry Large audience present to pay their last tribut of Respect to one whome they loved for his many virtues. I must acknowledge there are but few men who had a greater hold on my effections than the Lamented Col. Childress. Another old friend died on monday morning last, in Nashville old Joseph Litton[3] he died sudenly. His death has occasioned the office he held to be vacated, and my Brotherinlaw Simon Glenn[4] of Nashville wishes to be appointed to that office To it Master of Port of Entrys. Mr. Glenn I am sure is a verry attentive man in business and if you should think him worthy, and you would confer that appointment on him, he with many of his relatives & frends would ever be gratefull to you for the favour. Mr. Glenn is poor and has hard work to get along clear of imbarsment from the past that so much Eastern work is broght in competion with his, and in addition he

is getting old. You will think on his petition and act in the premises as your Judgment directs and we are satisfyed.

My family are all well except my wife.[5] She is complaining today. Our crops are promising thus far, but we have had work to keep the grass down. To much rain this spring.

Please remember me to Mrs. Polk and Except for yourself my best wishes for your suckcessfull administration of the Government and your future happiness &c.

C. E. McEwen

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on July 5, 1846.

1. McEwen, a Democrat, owned a large plantation in Williamson County.
2. McPherson is not identified further.
3. Litton served as surveyor and inspector of revenue at Nashville from 1839 until 1846.
4. Glenn worked as a bootmaker in Nashville.
5. Mrs. McEwen is not identified further.

## FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear Sir Missisia, June 26th 1846

Having receved your Leter dated 2th of June, I hope you dount think I have forgoten you as I rought to Col Campbell. I will now give you dyrect of youre plantation, and the way It giting on. Youre people are all well at present. We have a Good prspect for corn.

I have afar stand of coten. Coten is small But Improving vary fast. My coten is as good as eny I have seen. The stock all looks well & I hope we will Rase aplenty of pork.

We have received the Rope & bagin & Twin. No salt has come yet. I got Col J T leigh to right your commishon merchant about It. I have sold some corn & oats. I think I shud have some bacon to spar. The land sales came on in Grenada. This Month I dyed lern you had not entered the Eight your bildings were on.

If not and you wish I will attend to It for you. I have nothing more worth your attention. Onlly the demacrats & whigs seam to be peased with you.

John A. Mairs

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on July 11, 1846.

## FROM JAMES W. CHALMERS

Dr. Sir Coleman's 27th June 1846

My anxious Solicitude about the Excitement prevailing in the State of Mississippi in consequence of the Smallness of the call for Volunteers from the State, induces me to call your attention to the fact that if possible Something may be done to allay it. And in justice to the people of the State I must be allowed to Say the excitement is natural; for while Louisiana with only 21000 voters has 4,000 volunteers in the field and Arkansas with 14000 voters has one & a half Regts. Mississippi is cut down to *900 infantratory*,[1] when all know & her people claim for her an earlier & more devoted attachment to the cause of Annexation than either of those States, with both men & horses acclimated for & panting to enter the service & defend the Territory acquired by annexation. If you cannot give our State another Regt. (of mounted men) which She is so well entitled to do give us one of the Brigadiers authorised to be appointed by the late law. It will do Something to Sooth our wounded feelings & will at least give me cause of gratulation & Something to Stand on in defending the bill against the bitter assaults now being made by our best friends as well as opponents.

We have all decided upon Genl. Quitman[2] as *preeminently qualified* for the office.

JAS. W. CHALMERS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover reads in part: "June 27th 1846. *Genl. Quitman* nominated June 29th 1846."

1. Chalmers probably intended to write "infantrymen."

2. A New York native and Natchez, Miss., lawyer, John A. Quitman served as state assemblyman, 1826–27 and 1835–36, as state chancellor, 1828–35, and as governor, 1850–51. Quitman received commission as a brigadier general of the volunteers in 1846 and as a major general of the army in 1847. He later served in the U.S. House as a Democrat from 1855 until his death in 1858.

## TO JOHN W. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir Washington City June 27th 1846

I have received your letter[1] in reply to mine of the 2nd Instant, and shall rely upon you to make the purchases requested, if you can do so, without interfering with your own business or taking up too much of your time. In my former letter I authorized you to draw on me for $1800 or $2000. Since that time my business has been so arranged

that I can advance $3000 and I now authorize you to draw on me for that sum, or so much thereof as you may have it in your power to lay out in carrying out my wishes. I have thought it possible that your own business might occupy so much of your time that you might find it inconvenient to give the requisite attention to my business. Though I would greatly prefer to extend the business to you, as you understand my views fully, yet I do not desire to impose too great a tax on your time and if you shall find it inconvenient to do so I suggest [ … ][2] *Col. Robert Campbell jr.* of Columbia. He would I know readily relieve you of the labour. *Campbell* is a good judge of property and would I have no doubt look to my interest in making the purchases. I only mention *Col. C.* in the event you should find it to be out of your power to attend it. If you should turn the business over to *Col. Campbell*, you must charge him not to give publicity to it. I mention this for the reasons which I stated to you when you were here. You may draw on me for the $3000, in such sums as you may need from time to time, or if you should turn the business over to *Col. Campbell* you can draw for the whole amt., pay it over to him and take his receipt for it, specifying in what manner it is to be applied. I shall rely on you to furnish me with a good strong plantation wagon and some good young plantation mules fit for service. You will of course write to me from time to time on the subject.

I continue to be much occupied with my public duties, and have seized only a few minutes from them to write to you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Murfreesborough, Tenn.; marked *Private.*

1. See Childress to Polk, June 15, 1846.
2. Light ink transfers render word or words illegible.

## TO ROBERT PATTERSON[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 27th 1846

I have this day nominated you to the Senate of the United States, as major general to command a *Division* of the Volunteer forces which has recently been called into public service. It has given me sincere pleasure to confer upon you this important command.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. A native of Ireland, Democrat, and wealthy Philadelphia businessman, Patterson served as an officer during the War of 1812 and as a general of the

Pennsylvania militia from 1837 until 1867. The Senate confirmed Patterson's appointment on July 7, 1846.

## FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir, Sunday Morning, 28 June 46

I hope you will excuse me for being one day behind my promise in communicating to you my wishes in relation to the Judgeship wh you have so very kindly placed in my power. I have concluded, though with much hesitation, to accept it. Indeed, at one moment since our conversation, I rather inclined to remain in the Cabinet. So strong is my desire for the success of your administration, that had I thought this could depend, in any material degree upon my poor services, I should have waived my preference for the Judgeship.

I send you this hasty note of wh. I keep no copy because I suppose it possible that you may desire to write to London or Paris by the Packet[1] & I could not find a convenient opportunity of conversing with you on the subject yesterday.

I remain most gratefully & respectfully ....

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by Cave Johnson. Polk's AE on the cover reads in part: "Expressing his desire to go on the Bench of the Supreme Court of the U. States. Handed to me by the P. M. Genl. June 28th 1846."

1. Buchanan probably anticipated that Polk would replace him as secretary of state with Louis McLane, minister to Great Britain, or with William R. King, minister to France.

## FROM MARY B. CHILDRESS[1]

Dear Sir, Williamson June 29th [1846][2]

You will doubtless have heard of the death of my husband, before this reaches you. He expired on the morning of the 22nd.

He returned home from the South quite ill, and continued so until his death. He was perfectly sensable of his situation; and made preparation to meet his God. Took leave of his family, and servants, and exhorted them to meet him in heaven.

It is unnecessary for me to speak of our distress, and loss. You must know. My object in writing is to entreat of you, to write Thomas immediately, and advise him to remain where he is; provided you think it best he should. He is quite dissatisfyed on the Frigate Raritan. Wrote his Pa, he would resign unless he could get in at Anapolis. He is anx-

ious to devote a part of his time to his books. We will have but little to give to our children.

We have spent $300 on Thomas fitting him out for the navy. I am anxious he shall be benfited by his trip. Should he come home I should be at a loss what to do with him. I am anxious that he and James, shall make useful men of themselves. They have the qualifications, if they will only apply themselves. James had commenced the study of medicine. He will not prosecute the study farther, I think, as it would be very expensive for him to go through with it, as he would desire. I have no idea what business he will engage in. Perhaps you could give him some advice that might assist him to determine what course to pursue.

He and Thomas, are study,[3] and quite apt when at school. They are of an age, that boys need the counsel and advice of a father; and as theirs has been taken from them, I concluded to petition for yours believing you, so capable of doing so, and knowing you to be so great a favourite with their Father.

He made no will. We have not yet determined who will administer on the estate. Your attention to the above will confer a special favour upon me. My love to Cousin Sarah. Say to her, I would be pleased to hear from her. Write me immediately, as I am anxious for your opinion about the boys.

MARY CHILDRESS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE states that he received and answered this letter on July 6, 1846.

1. A resident of Williamson County, Tenn., Mary Berkley Childress was married to William G. Childress, a cousin of Sarah Childress Polk.

2. Date identified through content analysis.

3. She probably meant to write "studious" in place of "study."

## TO THOMAS L. HAMER[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 29th 1846

I have this day nominated you to the Senate of the United States, as a *Brigadier General* to command the Brigade of Volunteers called into the service from Ohio. I have only time to say, that I have never performed any public duty with more pleasure, than in conferring upon you this important command. That you will discharge your duty gallantly, and satisfactorily to the brave men you are called to command, as well as to the country, I have the greatest confidence.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. Addressed to Ohio.

1. An Ohio lawyer and Democrat, Hamer served three terms in the U.S. House, 1833–39; commissioned a brigadier general in the Mexican-American War, he died in the service in 1846.

## TO WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 29th 1846

In answer to your note of this morning,[1] requesting a letter from me to *Dr. Patterson*[2] of Phila., requesting him to admit *Mr. Stone*[3] into the mint at Phila. for the purpose of ascertaining whether he is qualified to discharge the duties of *coiner* of the Branch mint at Charlotte, N.C., I have to state that I have no recollection of ever having had a personal acquaintance with *Dr. Patterson*. As a faithful public officer I know him well. I hope *Mr. Stone* may prove himself to be qualified for the station which you desire him to fill, as in that event there is no gentleman whom it would give me more pleasure to appoint. You can if you choose address *Dr. Patterson* and enclose to him this letter. I know *Mr. Stone* to be a gentleman of high character, and it will give me sincere pleasure to gratify your wishes and his, if I can do so consistently with the public interests.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. See William H. Haywood, Jr., to Polk, June 29, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP.

2. Robert M. Patterson served as director of the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia from 1835 to 1851.

3. Polk's reference probably is to David W. Stone of North Carolina.

## TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir: Washington City June 29th 1846

I have this day nominated you to the Senate of the United States as *Brigadier General* to command the Brigade of Volunteers called into service from Tennessee. I have done so with sincere pleasure, because I was so well satisfied of your eminent qualifications for such a command. You may have been informed, that when some days ago, I intimated my desire to appoint you, it was seriously resisted from quarters in which I had no right to expect such opposition. Indeed at one time some of your friends thought that your nomination, if made, [ . . . ][1] rejected. I am now however happy to say that I apprehend no such danger. *Turney* will support you heartily. I had occasion to see

*Jarnegan*[2] this morning on public business, and took occasion to say to him, that I thought of nominating you to the Senate. He at once said that he would support the nomination, so that I think you may calculate that your confirmation may be [ . . . ]. You will of course place yourself at the head of your command at the earliest possible moment after you receive your commission.

Before you leave I wish you to close the business transaction between us, so that it can be consummated in your absence. As to the terms your letter of the 11th Instant is satisfactory.[3] *Col. Campbell* who is authorized to draw on me, can make the payment on the 1st of October next, the time named by you. He can draw a Bill on me for $1450, less the difference of exchange, which is generally from 1 to 2 percent. I mean he can draw a Bill for such sum as will nett that sum in Tennessee. If *Campbell* is not at home, I will honour your Bill for that amount on the 1st of October. On your part you can draw or make a Bill of Sale for *Harbert his wife* and *her son*, and give an order to your overseer to deliver them on the first of October. You can also execute a paper to the effect, that the health and life of the property is to be at your risk until it is delivered. These papers you can give to *Col. Campbell*, if he is at home. If he is absent you can enclose them to me.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia and marked "*Private*."

1. Blurred ink transfers render word or words illegible here and below.
2. Spencer Jarnagin.
3. Pillow's letter has not been found.

# JULY

## TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir: Washington City July 2nd 1846

The Senate on yesterday confirmed your nomination as *Brigadier General* of Volunteers, under the act approved June 26th 1846, and I have this day issued your commission. It will be transmitted to you by tomorrow's mail accompanied with your orders. As the troops have already gone to the seat of war, it will be expected that you will place yourself at the head of your command within the shortest possible period. I write in great haste, and have no time to add more.

JAMES K. POLK

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

## FROM JOHN HENDERSON[1]

[Dear Sir,] Pass Christian July 3d 1846

Preliminaries of the Oregon question having been agreed on a general conviction obtains with the public mind that the difficulty is as good as settled.

On the success of this measure I most heartily congratulate you. While I concurred with you in opinion, that England had no rights to *the soil* of oregon, her *claim* to *rights* had become so complicated by the former *concessions* of our government, that we were in a great degree estopped by those concessions. Your proposition therefore of 12th of July last was in all respects strictly proper & consistent, & its withdrawal when rejected equally proper. England with an unusual degree of humility for so arrogant a power, by a retrograde movement, has by her late proposition besought those Terms *substantially*, which a few months since she so promptly if not haughtily rejected, for the *third* time. This must satisfy evry punctilion of our national pride. You have vindicated the national Honor in the *highest sense*, & could hardly do less than to grant to the sober second thought of our great rival, her pacific *solicitation*. And while a large proportion of the american people, convinced of our rights & wide awake to the agressive character of our adversary, were *keyed up* to a point of comparative indifference whether England made this a question of *war* or *peace*; yet four fifths of the country will approve the Treaty. Nor is this all. The intelligence of the country will not mistake, that to the firmness & energy of your administration are we indebted for the prompt & honorable settlement of this embarrasing subject.

It is quite amusing to see the English Press, & English *apologists*, explaining the English proposition to her good natured *indifference* to the subject, & the air of apparent surprise, at which her attention has been challenged by our noisy clamour. But we may excuse this when we remember, that to acquire a few thousand acres of land on the NE boundary was recently sufficient to move her to a special mission.[2] While, so long as by *wheedling* and *menace*, to our timid & *peace loving* administration she could *hold & use*, *millions* of our Oregon Territory we could hardly expect her to volunteer its surrender & may excuse her affected surprise on being told so peremptorily the time for *settlement* & *surrender* had arrived. The issue has been gratifying, & again I congratulate you on the result. Like success in our Mexican affairs will signalize your administration with that elevated degree of American spirit, which I think heretofore we have rather slowly attained to.

JOHN HENDERSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on July 12, 1846.

1. Henderson, a lawyer, served in the Mississippi House prior to his election to one term as a Whig in the U.S. Senate, 1839–45.

2. Henderson refers to the events leading to the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842.

## TO JOHN Y. SAVAGE[1]

Dear Sir: Washington City July 4th 1846

I have examined the gold watch manufactured by you, and which you propose to present to me. I thank you for this manifestation of your personal regard. The watch is one of beautiful finish and workmanship, and I do not doubt is a superior time-piece. While I must decline to accept so valuable a present, it gives me pleasure to bear my testimony to the skill and perfection which you have attained in this branch of American industry. That you deserve and will receive a liberal public patronage in your business, judging from the specimen before me, I cannot doubt.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New York.

1. Savage, a New York City watchmaker, is not identified further.

## TO MARY B. CHILDRESS

My Dear Madam: Washington City July 6th 1846

I have received your letter of the 29th ultimo, and I need not assure you that I sincerely sympathize with you, in the irreparable loss you have sustained in the death of your excellent husband.[1] Next to yourself none can lament it more than I do. He was my sincere friend and I was ardently attached to him. He wrote to me on the 7th of June and I answered his letter on the 24th, little thinking that at that moment he was numbered with the dead. The Commission in the army which I issued to him, he did not of course live to receive. I concur wholly with you in opinion that your son *Thomas* should remain in the Navy, and I have as you requested me to do, written to him a kind letter of advice, urging him to do so.[2] It is a most desirable situation for a young man of his age, and after he has been in the service a few months longer, I have no doubt he will become pleased with it.

In my last letter to your late husband,[3] which has no doubt been received by his family since his death, I stated that I thought I could appoint your son *James* to a cadetship at West Point next June. I will now say that he may rely upon receiving the appointment, and my advice to him is to accept it, as I have no doubt he will do. I transmit for him herewith the printed regulations, shewing the preparatory studies, upon which he must be prepared to stand an approved examination, previous to entering the institution. My advice to him, is to

place himself under the instruction of some competent teacher, and be thoroughly prepared to pass the examination. If *James* will do this and *Thomas* will remain in the *Navy*, your two sons will be in the best possible position, to make useful and respectable men. They will both be enabled to acquire good educations in their respective professions, without expense, and will be enabled, if necessary, to render aid to yourself and their sisters in after-life. I have written an earnest letter to *Thomas*, and beg you to tell *James* he must take my advice and prepare himself to enter the military Academy at West Point. Mrs. Polk is much grieved at the death of Mr Childress, and will write you soon.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Williamson County, Tenn.

1. William G. Childress.
2. See Polk to Thomas B. Childress, July 6, 1846.
3. See Polk to William G. Childress, June 24, 1846.

## FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

Dear Sir, Columbia, Tenn. July 6th 1846

I have this day paid your state & county taxes for 1846

| | |
|---|---|
| amounting to | $18.36 |
| Jane Polks do. | 17.43 |
| Marshall T. Polk's heirs do. | 2.70 |
| In all | $38.49 |

Inclosed please find Collectors receipts for two last, & your receipt I have on file. I have just seen your mother at Mr Frierson's[1] *quilting* for the Missionary Society. She is very well. A. O. Harris[2] & family are here, all well. Pillows appointment reached here to day. He is greatly lifted up.

It is said that Jonas E. Thomas will be elected colonel of the cavalry at Memphis. If so he will not accept the office you have given him,[3] & you can give it to some one else. Doubtless you will be at no loss for applicants.

Your servant woman[4] that I hired to Campbell is still much afflicted with her eyes & has been since I left staying at your Mothers, & I have directed her to remain there until she is entirely restored. Dr. Hays is prescribing for her, & when she does recover I will see that she has a *place* where she will not be exposed.

My wife was dangerously ill during my absence but is better & out of present danger. I have seen but few persons yet & know little of

our people. So far all seem satisfied with the Oregon treaty & the Administration generally. I will be at the Marshall court next month & see the friends there. I think I will endeavor to get some of them to send for the Extra Globe[5] & see the votes of certain Tennessee members. Should leisure permit I will be pleased to hear from you.

JAMES H. THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on July 15, 1846.

1. Samuel D. Frierson, a Polk family friend, practiced law in Columbia.

2. Adlai O. Harris, widower of Polk's sister, Naomi, had engaged formerly in business with James Walker in Columbia, Tenn.; in the 1830's he formed a New Orleans cotton brokerage firm with Madison Caruthers; after Naomi's death in 1836 Harris moved to Memphis and engaged in sundry mercantile pursuits.

3. Polk had appointed Thomas an assistant quartermaster in the army on June 24, 1846.

4. Mathilda.

5. Washington *Globe*.

## TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir: Washington City July 7th 1846

Enclosed is an unsealed letter to *Genl. Pillow*,[1] which you can read, and then seal and forward to him.

If you knew how constantly my time is occupied you would not be surprized that I write so seldom to my friends. I have only time now to acknowledge your two letters of the 10th and 14th ult.,[2] and to say that however great your vexations and troubles may have been in organizing the volunteer force called out from Tennessee, they are nothing to be compared with mine, when in addition to the management of the War, I have so many other important matters pressing upon my attention.

I know that no President can know, what public opinion is, in regard to his administration, because it is difficult for *him* to learn the truth. Judging however "from the lights before me,"[3] I am led to conclude that I have thus far not been wholly unsuccessful. The Executive arm was greatly paralysed on the Oregon question, by the debates and proceedings in Congress, especially in the Senate, but after all better terms have been obtained than were ever before conceded by Great Brittain. For the first time in more than a quarter of a century, did that Power recede from her demand of the Columbia River as the boundary, and

concede to the U. States up to the forty ninth degree of North Latitude. That even better terms could have been obtained but for the course of Congress I do not doubt. I have however no time to go into the subject at length. I content myself by simply remarking that when the veil of secrecy is removed, from the proceedings of the Senate, on the Brittish proposal and upon the Treaty, it will be found that I maintain consistently and firmly the ground taken in my annual message in December last. It was my duty under the circumstances to submit the proposal to the Senate for their previous advice, and to conform my action to that advice when given.

You will be greatly rejoiced I know, at the passage of the Bill through the House to modify and reduce the tariff. It hangs in doubtful suspense in the Senate. The opinion today is that its fate will depend upon the casting vote of the Vice President. Should such be the fact I am confident that *all will be well*, though I have had no opportunity to confer with the Vice President on the subject. I would be glad to write much more, but must close. I have written in great haste.

Though closely confined to my office for more than sixteen months my health was never better.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked "*Private*."

1. See Polk to Pillow, July 7, 1846.
2. Brown's letter of June 14, 1846, has not been found.
3. Quotation not identified further.

## TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir: Washington City July 7th 1846

By the Rules and Articles of War, in cases where officers of the same grade in the army, are appointed on the same date, their relative rank when serving together is to be determined by lot. A few days ago I nominated and the Senate confirmed six Brigadier Generals of Volunteers, of whom you were one. In pursuance of the Rules and Articles of War, the relative rank of the six Generals was this day decided by lot at the War Department, in presence of the Secretary of War, the Commander in Chief of the army and the Adjutant General,[1] and resulted as follows, to wit,

Brigadier General Marshall of Kentucky drew No. 1.[2]

Brigadier General Pillow of Tennessee Do. No. 2.

Brigadier General Hamer of Ohio Do. No. 3.

Brigadier General Lane of Indiana Do. No. 4.[3]
Brigadier General Quitman of Mississippi Do. No. 5.
Brigadier General Shields of Illinois Do. No. 6.[4]

From this you will perceive that you are the second in rank among the Brigadiers. The fact will be made known in general orders, but supposing that it would be gratifying to you to know your precise relative rank, I have seized a moment from other engagements to state it to you.

Supposing it possible that you may have left home to assume your command, I enclose this letter to *Gov. Brown* to be forwarded to you.[5]

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. William L. Marcy, Winfield Scott and Roger Jones. A native Virginian, Jones joined the marines in 1809, switched to army artillery in 1812, and served as adjutant general of the army from 1825 until his death in 1852.

2. Thomas F. Marshall won election to several terms in the Kentucky House, 1832–36, 1838–39, and 1854; he sat for one term in the U.S. House, 1841–43.

3. A North Carolina native, Joseph Lane removed to Indiana in 1810, served several terms in the Indiana state legislature, 1822–23, 1831–33, 1838–39, and 1844–46; as a general officer of the volunteers in the Mexican War; as governor of the Oregon Territory, 1849–50; as territorial delegate to Congress from Oregon, 1851–59; and as U.S. senator from Oregon, 1859–61. Lane ran as the vice-presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket in 1860.

4. An Irish-born lawyer from Kaskaskia, Ill., James Shields held a number of state offices, including a place on the Illinois Supreme Court in 1843. He served as commissioner of the General Land Office, 1845–47; as a general officer in the volunteers during the Mexican War; as governor of the Oregon Territory, 1848–49; and as a U.S. Senator, 1849–55. Shields removed to Minnesota and won election to a partial term in the U.S. Senate from that state, 1858–59; he commanded a regiment of Union volunteers in the Civil War.

5. See Polk to Aaron V. Brown, July 7, 1846.

## FROM JOHN A. BRYAN

Dear Sir: Bryan, Ohio, 8th July 1846

Since I wrote you last,[1] I have passed through New York, and the northern part of Pennsylvania & Ohio to this place, where I have some local interests to look after. Much has been said in my hearing during my journey, relative to the settlement of the Oregon question. And it may be of some gratification for you to learn, that, altho most of the people of the west were 54.40 men, still, that they are disposed quietly

to acquiesce in the amicable adjustment which has been made of the matter. Indeed, there is nearly a unanimous feeling of approval among the democratic party of this country. I have myself ever been among the firmest and most unscrupulous of the advocates for *the whole of Oregon;* but I as frankly say that I now decidedly and unequivocally approve of the course pursued by yourself in the negotiation.

Your position, Sir, has been a delicate and responsible one. You felt it such. Some condemned your course. A few in Ohio have done so, and *one certain individual*[2] who recently held a high place on an important committee of the Senate, is now busying himself in stirring up dissention and strife in the party at home. This I *know*, whatever his professions to the contrary may be at Washington. Several of our recent conventions have indeed adopted strong resolutions here in Ohio, within the past two weeks, *no doubt all at his bidding*. After having utterly ruined the party in this State, by his excessive ultraisms and overbearing course, he has become absolutely desperate, and seems to care little what he does.

But, Sir, you have nothing to fear. All will be made to go right; and your course will be zealously and resolutely sustained by the whole democracy of the country.

When I arrive at Columbus (200 miles from this) I will write you again, giving you an intimation of how I find things there. However unimportant in itself, I trust it may not be found entirely unacceptable to you.

JOHN A. BRYAN

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

1. See Bryan to Polk, June 23, 1846.
2. William Allen.

## FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir Columbia July the 8th 1846

On the 6th of this Inst. I gave Gen G. J. Pillow a draft on you for $1436, due 1st Oct next. I have taken a bill of sale for the three Negroes from Gen Pillow (Viz) Harberd[1] Mary his wife & son Lewis & taken his obligation to be delivered in good health & condition on his plantation in Carrol County Miss on the 1st Oct next to you on order; they are at his risk up to that time. I do not think I can sell your property here at fair prices. I received a letter from Mr Mairs some two weeks ago. He wrote that his prospect for corn was flattering but the cotton was not so promising on account of the cold wet spring. He wrights that every

thing is going on well and that another one of your women had a child (I believe Dafney,[2] not having the letter before me). She is doing well. He flatters himself that he will make more cotton this year than he did last year. Your Mother is enjoying her usual health. The connection are all well as far as I know except my wife. She is still helpless & speechless & no hope of recovery.

ROBT. CAMPBELL JR.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on July 17, 1846.

1. Harbert.
2. Neither Dafney nor her child is identified further.

## FROM SPENCER JARNAGIN

[Dear Sir,] [Washington City][1] July 8th 1846

I must ask to be informed if it be your pleasure to withdraw the name of Powell,[2] now before the Senate? I make this request, because Mr Turney attempted to get up the nomination on yesterday, and because Maclin[3] has been withdrawn. Permit me to say, I have no wish to make war upon your administration, but feel it an imperious duty to oppose Powell. I frankly confess I feel embarrassed by his nomination, and will repeat the expression of the hope, you will withdraw his name.

SENCER JARNAGIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Place determined by content analysis.
2. Polk nominated Robert W. Powell as assistant commissary on June 24, 1846.
3. Sackfield Maclin represented Fayette, Hardeman and Shelby counties in the Tennessee Senate, 1841–43. After his legislative service, he moved to Texas. Polk withdrew Maclin's nomination as quartermaster on July 6, 1846.

## TO ROBERT ARMSTRONG

My Dear Sir: Washington City July 13th 1846

I have been as much engaged as usual in my office, since you left here. Congress since the settlement of the Oregon question, have been engaged upon the great questions of domestic policy which I recommended in my annual message. The Bill to reduce the tariff to the revenue standard[1] passed the House a few days ago by a majority of 19 votes. Its fate in the Senate, it is said will depend on the casting

vote of the Vice President. I have not conversed with *Mr Dallas*, but am satisfied, if its passage depends on his vote, that he will represent the Democracy of the nation and not the State of Pennsylvania. The Senate passed the Land graduation Bill[2] some weeks ago. It has been before the House of Representatives for the last three days, and its fate is extremely doubtful. The Democratic delegation from Pennsylvania and a few others are dissatisfied and excited at the vote of the House in passing the revenue tariff bill, and by uniting their votes with the *Whigs* who act in a body, the fate of the measure is doubtful in the House. These last measures, the tariff and graduation bills together with the Ware-House bill[3] and the Constitutional Treasury bill,[4] constitute the leading domestic measures of my administration are endangered by the want of harmony and the distraction extant at the moment in the democratic party in Congress. I am not without hope that all these measures may yet be saved, but have serious fears that all may yet be lost. That the sentiment of the country is sound upon all these questions I have not a doubt. My experience in past time however is that when members of Congress are seperated from their constituents for seven or eight months, [ . . . ][5] to forget what public sentiment is, become divided into sections and factions, and large majorities at the opening of a session, dwindle down into minorities before its close. This was often the case in *Genl. Jackson's* time and is likely to be so in mine with the present crisis in my administration. A few days will decide whether I am to be successful or be defeated.

Congress will not adjourn until the exchange of ratification of the Oregon Treaty is received here. In the midst of the confusion which prevails in the Democratic party, I can calculate upon nothing with certainty during the present session. When Congress shall return to their constituents & and mingle with them I have little doubt they will return next winter renewed in the Democratic faith.

*Mr Buchanan* has not yet definitively decided whether he will retain his present position or go on the bench of the Supreme Court of the U. States. I had a conversation with him on the subject on yesterday. He still expresses a preference for the bench, but desires an *immediate nomination*, which at the present critical moment I cannot with any safety make, without rendering the defeat of all my leading measures now before Congress, almost certain. To change the head of the Cabinet at this moment, would undoubtedly increase the confusion and distraction in the Democratic party which already prevails. For this reason and because I needed his services during the Session of Congress, I told him on yesterday that I could not nominate him until near the close of the Session. He then said that as nomination

was not to be sent to the Senate until near the close of the Session, he did not think it necessary for him to decide at that time that he would elect to go on the bench and added that events might transpire between this time and the close of the Session, which would change his determination on the subject. In this embarrassing condition the matter now stands. I have written to *Mr McLane* today, and have stated to him the uncertainty which [ . . . ] as to *Mr Buchanan's* ultimate decision. The truth is as I learn that some of his friends apprehend violent opposition to him, if his nomination is postponed until the close of the Session. I do not think there could be any doubt of his confirmation. I had as you know left it to his own election to remain in his present position or go on the bench, and he still holds that option in his hands.

You will conclude that I have my own troubles and you will conclude truly. I can in all sincerity say "save me from my friends and I will take care of my enemies."[6] I have siezed a moment from my pressing engagements to write, and have no time to revise what I have said.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Our friend *Wm. G. Childress* died on the 22nd of last month. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Liverpool and marked "*Private*."

1. "A bill reducing the duty on imports, and for other purposes." House Bill No. 384, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

2. "A bill to reduce and graduate the price of public lands, and for other purposes." Senate Bill No. 12, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

3. "A bill to establish a warehousing system, and to amend an act entitled 'An act to provide revenue from imports, and to change and modify existing laws imposing duties on imports, and for other purposes'." Senate Bill No. 57, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

4. "A bill to provide for the better organization of the treasury, and for the collection, safekeeping, transfer and disbursement of the public revenue." House Bill No. 1, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

5. Blurred ink transfers render word or words illegible here and below.

6. Paraphrase of quotation attributed to Claude Louis Hector, Duc de Villars: "Defend me from my friends; I can defend myself from my enemies."

## TO LOUIS MCLANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City July 13th 1846

My letter to you of the 22nd ultimo entrusted to the care of *Genl. Armstrong* will have made you acquainted with my wishes in the event of *Mr Buchanan's* retirement from the Department of State. Up to

this moment it is not absolutely settled whether he will remain in his present position or go on the Bench of the Supreme Court. I held a conversation with him on yesterday, on the subject, with a view to obtain his final decision, that I might communicate it to you. He still expressed his preference for the Bench, but thought as the nomination (if made) was not to be sent to the Senate until near the close of the Session of Congress, it was not necessary for him now to decide definitively, as something might possibly occur to change his views between this and that time. I still think he will go on the Bench, and indeed have scarcely a doubt of it, though occasionally he seems to hesitate. In that event I can only repeat to you the wish expressed in my letter of the 22nd ultimo. I hope to receive your answer to that letter before the adjournment of Congress, which will probably take place about the 10th of August.

The period of your departure from London is left to your own judgement and discretion. If the exchange of ratifications of the Treaty has taken place, and you shall perceive no disposition on the part of any of the European Powers to interfere in the Mexican war, or any other reason of public importance to detain you, there will be nothing to prevent you from returning. I know it would have been important for your successor to have reached London before your departure, but this I fear will be impossible without detaining you longer than you desire to stay. It is not yet absolutely certain who your successor will be, but I will know in the course of a few days. I have found much difficulty in my own mind in making the selection. The probability at present is, that he may be a member of Congress, and in that event he cannot go out until after the adjournment of the Session.

Since the Oregon question was settled the attention of Congress has been directed to measures of internal policy. The present is a most important moment of the Session. The Bill to reduce the tariff passed the House by a majority of 19 votes. Its fate in the Senate is said [to] be extremely doubtful. The prevailing opinion is that in a full Senate there will be an equal division and that it will depend on the casting vote of the Vice President. I have not conversed with *Mr Dallas* but have no doubt if it depends on him, he will vote as the Representative of the Democracy of the Nation, and not as the Representative of Pennsylvania. The ware-house bill, the graduation land bill and the Constitutional Treasury Bill, which with the reduction of the tariff constitute the leading domestic measures of my administration, are all pending, and the fate of each it is ascertained will depend upon a very close vote in the one or the other house. Unfortunately a want of harmony, produced by various causes, has recently prevailed,

between different sections of the Democratic party in Congress. The Pennsylvania delegation and a few others, are dissatisfied and excited at the action of the House in the passage of the tariff bill, while other democratic members are dissatisfied from other causes. These dissatisfied sections, by uniting with the Whigs who act in a body, have rendered the Success of all the important measures of the Session doubtful. Still I am not without hope that a better feeling and more harmony may prevail, and that these important measures may be carried.

I should add that in the event of your departure from London before the arrival of your successor, you will of course leave your Secretary[1] in charge of the archives of the Legation. He is young and without experience in diplomacy, and you will of course instruct him to do no important act without a previous reference to his Government.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to London and marked "*Private & Confidential*."

1. James M. Boyd.

## TO WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Sir: Washington City July 14th 1846

We have no intelligence from *Mr Greenhow* who was the bearer of the ratification of your Treaty, since he passed Liverpool. *Genl. Armstrong* who paid a short visit to this country recently, informed me that he thought *Mr Greenhow* when he passed Liverpool had time to reach Naples, within the time provided for the Exchange of the ratifications. I hope he did so.

Since the settlement of the Oregon question for which purpose a Treaty was signed on the 15th ultimo, and was subsequently ratified by the Senate by a vote of 41 to 14, the attention of the Government has been directed to the vigorous prosecution of the Mexican war, and to our internal policy. Congress will not adjourn until after information shall be received that the Exchange of ratifications of the Oregon Treaty has taken place. This information we expect by the Steamer which will leave Liverpool on the 19th Instant. The adjournment will probably take place about the 10th of August. You are I suppose aware that before I made the Oregon Treaty, I submitted the Brittish proposal to the Senate for their previous advice, and that a constitutional majority, indeed three fourths of that body advised

its acceptance. When the writ of secrecy shall be removed from the confidential proceedings of the Senate, you will see from my message that I adhered to the opinions which I had expressed in my annual message of the 2nd of December last, but avowed my willingness to conform my action to the advice of the Senate. The country generally seems to have acquiesced in the Treaty, and but little excitement now prevails.

In regard to the Mexican war, my impression and hope is, that it will be of short duration. I doubt whether there will be much more fighting unless it be in a guerrilla warfare. It is possible that President Paredes may make one more bold stand and stake every thing in a single battle. If this take place it will be before many weeks. *Genl. Armstrong* when he was here expressed the apprehension, that you might be inclined to return home to engage in the war. If you have had any such thought you must abandon it. All the officers of the volunteer forces, which have been called out have already been appointed, and there would be no place such as you would desire for you to fill. But then again, it is probable that the war will be over very soon. *Armstrong* saw that there was no glory probably to be acquired in the war, even though anxious for a command in any contest, in which fighting was to be done he very quietly and willingly returned to his post at Liverpool. Among the officers who have been appointed, is *Genl. Gideon J. Pillow*, whom I appointed to command the Brigade of Volunteers from Tennessee.

Congress are now engaged upon the tariff, the land-graduation Bill, the ware-house bill, and the constitutional Treasury Bill, all of them leading measures of my administration. What the fate of these measures may be, it is impossible now to say.

In regard to your request to have permission to travel for a short time, *Mr Buchanan* will write you by the Steamer which will convey you this letter. You should not at any time leave your post for more than a few weeks. An occasional short absence, when no public duty requires your presence at Naples could not be objected to by your Government. Upon this point however *Mr Buchanan* will write to you explicitly and fully. I hear from Tennessee by almost every mail. Mother is enjoying I learn excellent health for a person of her age.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Your acquaintance and friend *Wm. G. Childress* of Williamson County, died on the 22nd of last month. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Naples and marked "*Private*."

FROM LOUIS McLANE

My dear Sir, London July 17, 1846

I had the honor to receive, by General Armstrong, your letter of the 22 June; and beg leave to return you my thanks for the flattering invitation it conveys, and for the confidence you are pleased to repose in me. If an earnest desire for the success of your administration, and a firm determination as far as may be in my power to conduce to it, as well for the sake of your own reputation as for the advantage of the Country entitle me to the latter, I feel that I am not altogether unworthy of it.

You are aware that in coming here my chief temptation was the hope of rendering you some assistance in the settlement of what was at that time regarded as the most important and critical question of your administration; and I had not contemplated a continuance in political employment after that subject should be finally disposed of. I will frankly say however, that I have lost none of my desire for the harmony and success of your administration which in my opinion, is not less necessary for the wellfare of the great party it represents than for the best interests of the Country at large; and it is evident to me that, from a variety of causes, to which it is not necessary here to advert, notwithstanding your success in the settlement of the oregon question, you may expect to encounter further difficulties not only in your foreign but in your home policy in which you may not only need but will be fully entitled to expect and require every countenance & support from your friends.

So far as I am able to comprehend the policy by which you have been guided in the past, & according to which you propose in the future to administer the government, I am not aware of any branch of it in which my opinions are not in strict harmony with your own; and in the promotion of which I would not most cordially co-operate whether the sphere of my action should be in public or private life. Therefore, as you have made up your mind that my services would be more useful to you in public office, and that I could better contribute to your personal comfort and public success by an official cooperation, I do not see that I could consistently withhold it. I have the honor to state, therefore, that in obedience to your invitation I will accept the office of Secretary of State, and, as soon as you may desire it on my return to the United States be prepared to enter upon the duties. I may add that your own suggestion of sending my nomination to the Senate during the present Session will be more agreeable to my feelings, and, as I think, on every

ground more appropriate and more likely to be satisfactory to the Public. This however, I of course submit to your own judgment & wishes.

Under these circumstance, not anticipating that Congress will continue in Session longer than the first of September, and supposing that the official duties of the Department might, in the present crisis, require early attention, I propose to embark to the U.S. on the 19h August, or 4 September, most probably the 19h of August.

I congratulate you upon the ratification, by her Majesty, and the final exchange of the ratification of the Oregon Treaty, which took place today; and which I hope to send home by the Steamer of the 19th instant. On this Subject I have only to add *the wish that in communicating the Senate the intelligence of the Exchange, you will cause so much of my dispatch of the 19th instant* accompanying it, as relates to the subject to be communicated with it, at the same time.

I hope also you will excuse me for taking this occasion to suggest that there may be some ground to apprehend that a practice may grow up in the Senate of a far too direct interference with the policy of our foreign relations. I apprehended that as an effect likely to grow out of the course of the oregon negotiation, and, I believe I expressed my apprehensions more than once to the Secretary of State. The full force of my apprehension is likely to be realized and the voluntary interference of that body in our realtions with Mexico is no small evidence of it. Might it not be corrected by a very firm, and manly and temperate & fair course upon the part of the Executive? I hope it might; but as I expect so soon to be able to converse with you freely upon it, I will not further discuss so important a point in a letter.

Mrs. McLane unites with me as I send on a respectful regards to Mrs. Polk, and I pray to add the assurance, with which I remain, my dear Sir, most respectfully and as sincerely ....

LOUIS MCLANE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Private & Personal*." Polk's AE on the cover in part states: "Recd. Augt. 5th 1846. *Note*: *Mr Buchanan* subsequently determined to remain in the State Dept."

## FROM CAMPBELL P. WHITE

My Dear Sir Convention, Albany July 20, 1846

The Democratic Party if the present Tariff Bill becomes Law will be on the verge if not in the Gulf of political Destruction. The sentiments of Pennsylvania upon this subject cannot be mistaken. New York will not I apprehend support the system of Ad valorem duties: which it

must be admitted open a wide door to fraud without any corresponding benefit to the People & will assuredly, in their operation prove equally injurious to the Revenue as to the honest Importer. You know I have been a decided & consistent enemy of the Tariff through a political life not now short. But I love the Democratic party & feel solicitous for its supremacy. I would therefore say to our friends pause, for Heavens sake pause!

I will not say more. My regard for you will not permit me to say less.

CAMPBELL P. WHITE

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

## FROM NATHAN GAITHER[1]

Dear sir Columbia (Ky) July 21st 1846

I cannot forego the pleasure of expressing my feelings in behalf of my Country, at the brillient events that are about to adorne your administration. The voluntary annexation of a nation to our free institutions, the addition of which is not less at this time than Louisiana was when added. The settlement of the Oregon question altho with you I believe our title to 54º40' better than any other nation. And the Tariff law to the revenue & free trade standard are results that will be hailed by our people with joy unserpassed by any acts that have taken place. I am reconciled to the treaty with Briton at 49º because the border feuds of contiguous nations never fail to produce disturbance & coolness. And with Russia & England I have no objection that their dislikes be kept up, & because the addition of that portion of Oregon to her possessions here will add weight and make them slough off more certainly than without them. But the strongest reason is the consummation of the free trade principles that must force their way throughout the world, which would have been blighted with a war, & probably fixed upon us for ever the protective doctrine.

It remains now to quiet the disturbance with Mexico which I have no doubt will be done with equal credit to yourself & Country. We desire no enlargment of teritory by the sword, but will be willing when things are ready to embrace all North America in our Confederacy and extend our free institutions by the moral force of public opinion to the limits. But for the partizan cry of Mexican robery injustice & desolution of the Union by annexation we never should have had war with Mexico. Yet it will have its good effect. All Europe now knows that we prefer peace, but if war must come we say lay on McDuff &c.[2] The rancor of partizan feeling has subsided here very much & the truth of the

Democratic principles will prevail.

It has been so long since you knew me perhaps I am forgotten. Based upon that acquaintance, I have ventured to thank you for what you have already done for our Country & hope that the balance of your administration will be as [ . . . ][3] as the past has been brilliant.

NATHAN GAITHER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. A North Carolina native and Columbia physician, Gaither served in the Kentucky House, 1815–18 and 1855–57, and in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1829–33.

2. Paraphrase from William Shakespeare, *MacBeth*, act V, scene 7, line 62: "Lay on, MacDuff, and damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'"

3. Word obscured by sealing wax.

## FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir Nashville July 22 1846

In consequence of having no overseer and also being engaged in making some addition to my house this summer, I have been unable to ride about, so as to make purchases for you to any advantage. I come to the conclusion after your last letter,[1] that it would perhaps be to your interest that I should act upon your suggestion, to see Col. Campbell and get his assistance. I requested him by letter to meet me here, this day, and I have just had an interview with him upon the subject. He very willingly undertakes to make the purchases for you, and I have no doubt will be able to do so at cheaper rates than I could, being engaged in the business a good deal for himself, he will of course have more frequent opportunities to buy, than one who is not often in the market.

I have explained to him your wishes in full & he will doubtless carry them out. The purchases will be made in his own name, and the property sent to Mississippi at the time you may appoint as his own. He informs me, that you do not need another waggon upon your place as you supposed, and the property can be as well carried upon the mules (which are necessary) as in a waggon, and of course it will be unnecessary to lay out money for the waggon & Gear. I will see that four good mules are procured in time.

I[n] pursuance of instructions in your last letter I have this day drawn upon you for three thousand dollars ($3000) payable ten days after date, at the Philadelphia Bank, Philadelphia, to the order of Col. Campbell[2] & by him endorsed to the Bank of Tennessee, for which I

obtained from the Bank ($300 30)[3] three thousand & thirty dollars, or 1 pr ct premium, which is the best we could do at this time. The ten days after date, with the three days of grace, will give you some 4 or 5 days more to make your arrangements, than a draft one day after sight. The Bank preferred it because they did not want the trouble of sending to Washington & then to Phila. I have handed the funds over to Col Campbell and have taken his receipt for it specifying the purpose &c as instructed.

We have made an arrangement by which I am to purchase, whenever a good opportunity occurs & notify Col. Campbell immediately so that we may not exceed the amount of funds. I have also told him to send them to my house, if they are in his way, in town, and I can find employment for them, untill October, or such time as you may wish to send them away. I have given your views fully to Col. Campbell in relation to the age size &c. of the property, and I think he will be able to make the purchases at an average of about $500.

I would have attended to the business in person, with a great deal of pleasure, but believing under the circumstances mentioned above, that Col. Campbell could act for you to more advantage than myself, I concluded to pass it over to him, knowing that you have the utmost confidence in him. You will please notify me of the receipt of this letter.

JOHN W. CHILDRESS

P.S. Since writing the above, we have bought at this place, a very likely girl,[4] 13 years old well grown & smart, active &c. for $405.00, and Col. Campbell has just left with her for home. I consider it a fine bargain. J. W. C.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AEI on the cover states that he received this letter on July 30, 1846.

1. See Polk to Childress, June 27, 1846.

2. Draft enclosed to Polk with this letter. D. DLC–JKP. Polk's AES on the draft states that he paid it on August 4, 1846.

3. Childress intended to write "$3030."

4. Not identified further.

## FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir, Washington City, July 22, 1846

Feeling, I hope, a becoming pride in the success and prosperity of the Genl. Land Office, I beg leave to submit a remark in regard to its head, in the present absence of Judge Shields, which I know you

will not misconstrue. I am perfectly sure that the office never was better (if as well) filled by any of his predecessors as the Judge has filled it. His ability and diligence had gradually introduced many improvements before he left. Others, which my experience teaches me are important, were in contemplation and progress. No new head, for a long time, can acquire the general and detailed kowledge he had of the department in all its operations. He has the rare qualification of commanding the respect and esteem of all the numerous subordinates, and leading, and where necessary forcing, all into a diligent discharge of duty. He had shown too, to Congress and the world, such rare legal qualifications and ability in deciding and settling all disputes and controversies growing out of our land system, as has commanded universal confidence and respect. I, therefore, as one feeling no common interest in the honor and prosperity of the office, and with no possible reference to who may be his successor, would respectfully suggest, and even in this confidential manner ask, that the office may be held in abeyance as it were, until the Judge can fullfil his present patriotic mission, and return to this city and again take charge of his late post. In saying this I have no knowledge of the views of the Judge, nor have I mentioned the matter to any one concerned in the administration of public affairs, except the Hon. Cave Johnson, to whom I have expressed the views above stated. The return of the Judge here, would gratify every person in the land office unless there may be possibly some one or two idlers there who would not regret his withdrawal.

For myself, in my position, I will perform any sort of double duty the condition of the office may impose on me in keeping the Commissioners place open for any length of time, so important do I deem it to the public service to retain the Judge. And in the meantime, Col. Piper,[1] the Chief Clerk and Acting Commissioner does, and can get on with the business to the entire satisfaction of the public. It affords me pleasure to bear testimony to his diligence and ability.

You and I have both been boys. Felix Grundy, when he can be spared from Annapolis, such is the attachment of him and my son, chooses to stay with us. While he is here, he and young Breese[2] who visits us here also, are both in undress uniform. My poor boy John, equal at least to either in size, age and attainments, with a most creditable zeal for learning, sees these boys thus promoted while he has to associate with them; and having the same wishes, he feels and shows deep mortification, for boys have no reason. In his anxiety on the subject, I am happy to see that he is free of envy. He would not willingly have his friend Felix's place if it were tendered to him by Felix himself. If he

can be appointed, I had rather he should owe it to your favor and personal right of appointment, but if your bounty has been exhausted, I hope the claims of Tennessee, and especially of our Congressional district, with the recommendation of our democratic members of Congress in favor of it, now on file, will authorize his appointment, so that he may commence the precise studies suitable for entering the school at Annapolis.[3]

If you could find it proper to furnish him and Felix, with a direction to Mr. Bancroft to have his appointment made, you will this morning have made two happy and proud young citizens at least. Nothing but the daily witness of the secret grief of John James, and the intreaty of Felix and himself induced me to ask leave for them to wait on you; for if I know my own heart, I would not annoy you by any improper importunity for myself or any one else.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

P.S. Large and well grown as my son is, he was only 14 years old, as I find by my Bible, on the 8th day of March 1846. If successful in his applicataion, he will be the first *Tennessee Mountain Sprout,* as our 4th Congressional district boys are called, ever transplanted into the U.S. Navy, in any capacity. *S.H.L.*

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally and marked "Confidential."

1. James H. Piper served in the Viginia Senate, 1840–46, before receiving appointment as principal clerk in the General Land Office.

2. Samuel Livingston was the son of Samuel L. Breese, who served as a naval captain in the Mexican-American War.

3. Polk appointed John James Laughlin to the U.S. Naval Academy as a midshipman in May, 1847.

## FROM JOHN A. DIX[1]

My dear Sir: Washington 23 July 1846

After giving to the kind offer you made me the full and deliberate consideration it required, I have come to the conclusion that my duty compels me to decline it. It was my wish to make this communication to you personally; but I am unable to leave the Senate Chamber, and I know your desire to be apprized of my decision at the earliest moment. I will only add, that I shall always retain a grateful sense of the confidence implied in offering me a post of such magnitude and responsibility. In declining it, I have the gratification of reflect-

ing that I shall, in my present position, be able to contribute all the efforts in my power to sustain the democratic measures of your administration, and at the same time to leave you at liberty to fill the place refered to with one more capable than myself of discharging its duties to your satisfaction.

JOHN A. DIX

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover in part reads: "Recd. July 23rd 1846. *Mr Dix* to whom I had tendered the Mission to *England* in place of *Mr McLane* who has asked leave to return: *declines* accepting the same: but thanks me for the tender of it."

1. Soldier, lawyer and railroad president, Dix served two years as adjutant general of New York, 1831–33, and one term as a member of the New York House in 1842. Elected as a Democrat to the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Silas Wright, Jr., in 1845, Dix ran unsuccessfully in 1848 as the gubernatorial candidate of the Free Soil party, served in the Union army as a general officer during the Civil War, and won election to the governorship on the Republican ticket in 1873.

## TO RICHARD H. ALLEN[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City July 25th 1846

Although I have scarcely a moment's leizure to write to any of my friends, I take time to inform you that having learned that your son *William Allen*,[2] was a private in the ranks, with the army on the Rio Grande, I nominated him to the Senate on yesterday, for Assistant Quarter Master of his Regiment with the rank of *Captain*. I have seen *Mr Turney*, and although your son was not one of his supporters, he will cheerfully give his nomination his support, and I entertain no doubt of his confirmation. I write in haste, and only because I suppose the information will be agreeable to you. I received your letter[3] recommending *Genl. Pillow* for Brigadier General, some weeks ago, and as you have no doubt learned, have since appointed him.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Lawrence County, Tenn.

1. A prominent militia leader in Giles and Maury counties, Allen attained the rank of general in the Tennessee militia in 1838; he subsequently removed to Lawrence County.

2. Elected as a Democrat to the Tennessee House in 1845, Allen served as a captain of the volunteers in the Mexican War and was killed at the Battle of Monterrey in 1846.

3. See Allen to Polk, June 8, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP.

FROM JOHN ADDISON THOMAS

Dear Sir, New York, July 28, 1846

As you are but partially acquainted with Col. Stevenson I deem it due to you that I should ask you to consult some disinterested person from this city in reference to his standing and qualifications for the duty for which he has been designated. It cant be doubted that his appointment is extremely unpopular with all parties and the very worst things are said of him. I have heard of no appointment which has caused so much dissatisfaction with your administration, and in connection with this, it is alleged by persons entitled to consideration that the appointments in this state are made from that class of the democracy unfriendly to Gov. Wright, and this is the reason assigned for giving your administration a lukewarm support. You are not unacquainted with the fact that there are two sections of the democratic party in this state & to the leaders of those sections I beg to call your attention, that they may be both brought to your support.

On a recent visit to Albany I satisfied myself that you had not the hearty cooperation of *men* of *consideration* in this state and I offer these suggestions hoping that your attention may be directed to them.

JOHN ADDISON THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*."

# AUGUST

## FROM WILLIAM S. ARCHER[1]

My dear Sir, Sunday August 2d 46

Reflexion has confirmed my accordance with your views on the subject of your proposed message,[2] which I think will have a favorable reception.

I think a commission preferable to a single minister, nor do I see any objection to its appointment, more than to that of a single minister, except the larger expense. Far more will depend however on the judicious selection of the functionary, than giving him associates.

If the selections be of persons not having the confidence of the Country, the number will form an objection, as the disposition to provide for Partisans, would be imputed for the lure of the money. I do not apprehend serious difficulty, and if your information were to give you tolerable assurance to the easy arrangement of terms, more than one minister ought to be dispensed with.

If you have more than one, your last minister[3] must not be included. This would spoil the proceeding, or expose it to infinite dissension.

If you do not grasp at more than will be readily yielded for a consideration, there can be no doubt of successful arrangement, if the Enemy consent to *treat* at all.

If you should wish to have further conversation with me I will go to your House at any time. I should have given this forecast if the day had been other than the sabbath.

W. S. ARCHER

[P.S.] *Private.* You will have to send in a nomination for the vacancy on the Bench of the supreme court. Can you do better than to send in our friend who is just coming home from England?[4]

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally; marked "*Private*."

1. A Virginia lawyer and Whig, Archer served in both the U.S. House, 1820–35, and in the U.S. Senate, 1841–47.

2. Polk sent a special message to the Senate in executive session on August 4, 1846, requesting an appropriation of money to facilitate peace negotiations with Mexico.

3. John Slidell.

4. Louis McLane.

## FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Deaer Sir, New York, August 2, 1846

I came here to select from kinds of parchments heretofore contracted for from sample, and if better kinds can be procurred without a material increase of prices, to contract for a lot of parchments for Land Patents. Heretofore, often, by purchasing by sample, the public has been wronged. In using good parchment, of the same price, instead of such as have secret defects, the same clerk, in the same number of hours, can add 25 per cent. to each day's work in the number filled up.

I feel much solicitude in regard to the *head* of the land office. Mistaken friends in regard to any wish I can have in relation to office, have urged me to apply for it. I am too well aware of what is right to ask for, or accept if offered, I hope, an office that no man from Tennessee, as I believe, ought to fill, whatever his pretensions. If the question were new, and I had the oppointing power, however, I would not give it to the new states where the lands lie. I would therefore be sure of a man who had no feelings, wishes, or purposes to effect in regard to the thousand and one schemes by which *all* the new states are endeavoring to ob-

tain donations, right or wrong, out of the public domain. A man free—wholly free, from all such feelings, possibly could be found. I say so, because I am sure the late Commissioner, Gen. Shields, was wholly free of any such influences.

Therefore, as I took leave respectfully to suggest to you in a note a few days since,[1] if the office can remain in *abeyance,* filled *ad interim* as at present, until next session of Congress, I think no possible appointment could be made, by which the office could be better, or so well filled, as by the reappointment of Gen. Shields. I have never known any man in whose integrity, capacity, strict honor, and peculiar fitness for the station he filled, I have more confidence. Without any wish to exclude any human being from the office, —for I have no knowledge of who is or who is not, seeking it—I can say with perfect truth, apart from my personal regard for him, and with a view singly to the good of the public service and the importance of the station for good or evil, that I had rather see him filling it for the next few years at least, when the revenue from the public lands is of so much importance to the country and the success of late democratic measures in regard to finance, than any man on the whole callender of your republican friends.

I must say, however, in regard to Col. Piper, the Acting Commissioner, that if the office is to be filled before Judge Shields can return from his voluntary Campaign, which I hope will be short, that I know of no gentleman likely to be an aspirant for the post, better fitted and qualified to fill it with honor and usefulness. He already has some experience in the affairs of the office, and his industry, vigilance, and zeal in the discharge of its duties know no resting place. You are fully aware of his talents and capacity, and the excellence of his moral character. His industry and devotion to the interests and honor of the office are such, that if he were appointed, my satisfaction in serving in the same office, though in a subordinate position, would be greatly increased. These remarks, in total ignorance of the wishes of any man or set of men, I have deemed it my duty to make to you upon the foot of old friendly intercourse, and with no view to improperly advance or thwart the plans or purposes of any man or set of men.

Here the passage of the tariff Bill, and of the Treasury Bill —the word *sub* ought never to have been a prefix or pre-nomen to its title—in the Senate, have been hailed with undivided approbation by the real democracy, as I learn from Capt Tyack, Mr. Mayor Mickle and others of your best friends here.[2] Mr. Dallas is highly commended for his noble stand against all local influences and dictation. The common say-

ing is, that he has now proved himself to be the Vice President of the United States, as you have proved yourself long since to be the President. A loud well-done is in waiting to be spoken out and proclaimed whenever you shall have sent in your anticipated Veto on the foul, anti-republican, and anti-democratic, unconstitutional Harbor Bill. I am sure, in so great a matter, with so much at stake for future good or evil, dependent now on your firmness and constitutional discretion, in the discharge of the great functions committed to your hands by your countrymen, that the same wise providence which inspired your fellow citizens to bestow that trust, will lead an overwhelming majority of all good and wise men, in every sectioin of the Union to approve the act. It is providential that the first voice from Tennessee, if not the first in the Union, raised to defend and justify the Maysville Veto in the Councils of the Nation, should now become the first voice from the same state, rendered potential for the accomplishment of the same blessed object, to pronounce the constitutional sentence of condemnation on the same evil principle, called by another name, which was then condemned by your great predcessor, whose act you then so ably justified. I may be speaking unadvisedly, but for myself I have never doubted, nor do I now doubt *what* your course has been before today, or will be soon. When others have expressed apprehensions, and some friends of the destructive measure expressed hopes, I have uniformly told them for months, that if they doubted your consistency, or your firmness in carrying out the dictates of your own clear judgment, regardless of consequences, they know you not. When I left Washington on Wednesday evening, nothing was publicly known— I know I knew nothing— but I had no more doubt than I will have when I see your message. I don't, I can't feel that it [is] possible for you to have affixed your approval to the Bill as it was passed by Congress; and I won't believe it even if I see it, unless some reasons shall exist for your approbation entirely beyond any thing I have ever read, seen, or heard.

Pardon the trouble of reading so long a letter, while I remain ....

S. H. LAUGHLIN

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

1. See Laughlin to Polk, July 22, 1846.

2. William Tyack and Andrew H., Mickle. Associated with the "Hunker" faction of the New York Democracy, Tyack resigned his post as master warden for the Port of New York to campaign for Polk in 1844; he served as president of the Polk and Dallas Association of New York City and spoke at the Democratic mass meeting in Nashville of August 15, 1844. Mickle won election as mayor of New York City and served in that post for two years, 1846–47.

FROM LOUIS McLANE

My dear Sir, London August 2, 1846

I had the pleasure to receive yesterday your letter of the 13 July; and I hope you will be in possession today or tomorrow of my letter of the 17th July announcing my acceptance of your invitation to the Department of State.

Mr. Buchanan's present hesitation at leaving the Department, I am obliged to say, does not surprise me, nor indeed would his final refusal. Very soon after I formed the determination announced to you in my letter of the 17th July I learned that he particularly desired Col. King should succeed him in the Department and that sanguine expectations of that which had been raised with the latter gentleman. Before I transmitted my letter however, I was informed that there began to be some doubt whether such arrangement could be immediately effected, in which case it was thought best that a vacancy in the Department should not occur; and a Mr. *Grund*,[1] the U.S. consul at Antwerp, immediately from Paris informed me that he was then proceeding to the U.S. on leave of absence and that one purpose was to prevent Mr. B. from quitting the Department. Mr. Buchanan, in a letter to me particularly urged me to prolong my stay abroad, and in a letter to my son enforced a more specific and earnest appeal to the same effect.[2] Col. King himself arrived here a few days ago, expressing a similar desire; and although, under the confidence enjoined in your letter I have not felt at liberty to give him an intimation of its contents or of my answer, it is quite ovbious that while he is not ignorant of your intention he expects that a present opportunity of realizing them is not likely to occur. I abstain at present from any comment upon these facts which I am obliged to confess however, have affected me painfully. For the present perhaps it may suffice to know that they need make no change in my views for the future.

I am bound to remark that until the receipt of your letter, of the 13th July, although I had been furnished with my letters of recall, I was left without any instructions as to the proper disposition to be made of the Archives of the Mission; which necessarily left the period of my return altogether embarrassed and uncertain. The permission given in your letter confers the requisite authority, and, for the first time, leaves me at liberty to regulate my conduct according to my own and your wishes and to the state of public affairs.

I have every reason to believe that the views of the late ministry,

in regard to the war with Mexico, as fully communicated in my public despatch No. 55 of the 18 June, are entertained by the present; and that there need be no apprehension of any interference with us in our dispute with Mexico from this quarter. I am very sure that it is the desire of the *Government* and *People* of *this Country* to avoid any future difficulty with us, and that it must be a very strong case indeed, which will ever embroil us. No doubt the effect of the war upon the commerce and other interests of British subjects will inspire a strong disposition for peace, and we may expect every amicable effort for that purpose urgently to be made. I have taken the proper steps however to put & keep us right, as to our aims and purposes; and to convince every body that a vigorous prosecution of the war is the only mode of vindicating our own rights and of obtaining a permanent peace. I have not failed, moreover, to point to the distracted condition of the Mexican Empire, as destroying all legitimate or stable authority, and rendering it almost impossible to negotiate for peace in the usual way. Indeed, I have myself apprehended that for some time to come, whatever we might desire, we will be apt to be forced to maintain an armed occupation of certain important points, until an authority shall be established of sufficient power and permanence to warrant the conclusion of the war, and the formation of a Treaty. The reasonableness of this view, as far as I have expressed it, appears to be generally conceded, and I suppose under any circumstances, it would be better to talk about *British* connection with *Mexican* affairs in *Washington*, rather than in *London*. At present it is certain such a thing need be thought of nowhere; and if there be any thing in the Mission unfinished, and requiring further immediate action from the Minister I am not aware of it. I have entirely cleared off my table; have made all the communications required in every case in my charge, and until there be some further step taken upon the part of this government, in none of them could any American Minister do any thing more. There is, in fact, nothing in the Mission requiring attention; and Mr. Boyd is so entirely discrete and cautious, so unassuming, and so little apt to do any thing not absolutely unavoidable, that there cannot be the slightest risk in leaving the archives in his charge, his duty consisting, besides the proper care of them, almost entirely in granting Passports. He is moreover considerably more than thirty years of age, of extensive knowledge & accomplishments, and of admirable principles, sense & judgment.

I am obliged to assume too that as in any circumstances it is not your wish that I should remain until the arrival of my successor, & that it would almost be my duty to return not later than the 4th or middle

of September, and there being no cause of detention in the state of the Mission, perhaps my return could not be too early. If you read Mr. Buchanan right, and it become necessary that I should go into the Department, it seems to me that, in the present state of our public affairs, my absence ought not to be unnecessarily prolonged; if on the other hand, the facts I have adverted to deserve the significance I am disposed to give them, respect to myself would require that I should return to other duties which by some at least, I have been thought already to have too long neglected.

With these views it is my intention, under the permission considerately given in your last letter, to embark in the steamer from Liverpool on the 19th instant, hoping to reach Boston by the 3rd of September.

Mrs. McLane unites with me in the kindest regards to Mrs. Polk, and I beg to add the assurance of the high respect and regard with which I have the honor to be, my dear Sir ....

LOUIS MCLANE

P.S. On reading over my letter, I am afraid that in that part of it relating to the arrival of my successor and the period of my departure I have not been sufficiently perspicuous. I intended to say that as it was now obvious that my successor would not arrive before October, perhaps later, and there being nothing else in the state of the Mission to require my presence here it seemed almost a duty under the circumstances to leave on the 19th instant rather than on the 4th September.

I omitted also to refer briefly to some reports circulating here of a contemplated change of the U.S. Bankers[3] in London. I sincerely hope that there is no cause for a change, and that the reports are unauthorized. I am very sure that a change at present would have an unfavorable aspect in the public mind, and hender the great ability of the present Bankers, and their uniform attention & accommodation to our countrymen, I think it very uncertain whether they could be replaced without considerable disadvantage. The Rothschilds,[4] who were at one time our Bankers are bitterly anti-american in their feelings and conduct, and should be the last thought of. Indeed unless there be some very cogent and public reason of which I am ignorant I hasten to express the hope that no change may be made. L. McL.

Of course, if by the steamer leaving the U.S. the 8 instant I should receive intelligence making it proper to do so, I will postpone my departure in conformity with any public exigency that may arise.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. A native of Germany, Francis J. Grund removed to Philadelphia in 1825,

where he worked as an author and journalist. Appointed U.S. consul to Antwerp in 1844, Grund served in that position until 1847.

2. Neither of these letters has been found. An 1837 graduate of West Point, Robert M. McLane served in the army until 1843, when he resigned to practice law in Baltimore. He won election to four terms in the U.S. House, 1847–51 and 1879–83; served as a Democratic presidential elector, 1852; represented the United States as a commissioner to China, 1853–54; and served as governor of Maryland from 1883 until 1885. Resigning the governorship in 1885, he accepted appointment as U.S. minister to France and held that position until his removal in 1889.

3. Baring Brothers and Company.

4. Taking advantage of Baring Brothers and Company's close association with Nicholas Biddle during the struggle between Andrew Jackson and the Second Bank of the United States, Rothschilds replaced Barings in 1834 as the official bankers of the United States in Europe. In 1843 the government's official account went back to Barings.

## TO ROBERT C. GRIER[1]

Dear Sir: Washington City Augt. 3rd 1846

I have this day nominated you to the Senate, as one of the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of *Judge Baldwin*. Supposing that it might be agreeable to you to receive the information, I take pleasure in communicating it.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Pittsburgh, Penn.

1. A Pennsylvania attorney and president judge of the district court of Allegheny County from 1833 until 1846, Grier served as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1846 until his death in 1870.

## FROM JOHN CATRON

Dr Sir Nashville, Tuesday Augt 4, [1846][1]

The last mail brought us the senate's vote on the tariff bill. Because of Mr. Haywood's resignation, a different result was anticipated by the best informed of the democrats, and not doubted by the Whigs; these latter are highly excited at Mr. Jarnagan's course.[2] Naturally, there is a great outcry of ruin, prostration of American industry, & all that; and the noisy younger portion of party men, are backing, boldly, and

openly, Mr. Webster's speech and policy, & putting him forth as a leader in the great Tariff battle that is to come next year, and the year after. Would it not be well for the Union[3] to give comments on Mr. Webster's speeches, disregarding, & *sinking* all others, on the same side, so as to bring Mr. W. forward as the great champion of the opposition, and without a rival on this controlling question? The assailing of Mr. W.'s policy would of necessity co-erce a defence of it in speeches, and by the Whig press. Mr. W. was the first to declare, that he had no amendments to offer on the principles the bill was constructed; that he went for totally different principles of taxation; to wit, specific duties, and minimums. The entire Whig phalanx followed, including (in the end) Mr. Crittenden.[4] Mr. W.'s issue is, between the ad valorum, & specific modes of taxation, pretty much exempt from details, both sides have a broad platform to fight from; and Mr. W.'s speeches leave no middle ground to occupy, so far as appearances go. I am a poor politician, & may fall within the old sarcasm, "that ignorance is ever confident"; but if I had been called on to make up the issue on the greatest American question, none would have occured more definite, or promising better for the consumer's side, than the one made in the senate by the Whigs. Can the act of 1842, be sunk in the obscure distance, and the contest of 1848, be forced on Mr. Webster's issue? Every effort, in circulars by Members of Congress, newspapers &c. should be made, as it seems to me, to bring about this state of public opinion; that is, that the Whigs propose to tax by specific charges all articles of the same kind, equally, be they worth one dollar or ten dollars: and 2dly, that should an ad valorum duty be levied, the low priced article shall be valued at the price (falsely of course) of the high-priced article. So that the coarse shirt, or coarse coat, pays as much tax as the fine one, this being in effect, and fact a specific duty, because alike on cheap and dear goods. The question, between foul subterfuge, and open fairness, may require a few years for its settlement, beyond debate, but this long agitated controversy will be settled if the House concurs, or has concurred, in the slight alteration of the Senate. The party line will be crossed with timidity, but new states are coming in, & new voters coming to their majorities; and most of such will go with the democracy on this question. The graduation bill would have helped, & if Mr. Crittenden is run for the presidency, "Stand and deliver,"[5] will be a phrase, thought worthy of a good-deal of commentary in some twelve states, or more.

Our crops are good, & the country tolerably healthy, not so much so, as usual however.

J. CATRON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on August 12, 1846.

1. Year determined by content analysis.
2. Spencer Jarnagin.
3. Washington *Union*.
4. John J. Crittenden.
5. Archaic command "to halt and hand over valuables." *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged.*

## FROM GEORGE W. BOWMAN AND CHAMBERS McKIBBIN[1]

Adjutant General's Office
Dear Sir: Bedford, Aug. 5, 1846

The passage of the late Tariff Bill has caused considerable excitement in Pennsylvania, and bitter denunciations are daily heaped upon your head and that of the Vice President. This course of proceeding is *general* on the part of our political opponents, and I am sorry to say that a number of professing Democrats in every part of the State join in this unholy crusade. These disreputable rascals are headed by Simon Cameron, who obtained his election to the United States Senate through an infamous coalition with the Whig and Native American Parties, and are no doubt stimulated in their exertions by the *money* of the Middletown Bank,[2] an institution under the especial control of Cameron. The true Democracy of Penna. abhor and detest Cameron, yet, by the agency of his Bank and the station he holds in the Senate, he is enabled to draw around him the support of some men who have heretofore acted with us.

And this is what gives us trouble. The *Whigs* quote the opinions of these men, some of whom wield *printing presses*, and attempt to place us in the position of a *divided Party*, which, of course, is calculated to have considerable effect with some men. Had Cameron been kicked out of the Democratic Party, as he should have been, immediately after his *corrupt* election to the Senate, we would now have no trouble in our good old Commonwealth, but he still holds on, *professedly*, to the Democracy whilst it is perfectly apparent that he is a mere cats-paw in the hands of Whiggery to do their dirty work. Mr. *Dallas* denounced his election to the Senate in proper and pointed language, and had his views been followed up, we would now be clear of this *scape-goat* of Federalism. But many of our Pennsylvania Democrats think the charges made against Cameron's political honesty unfounded, from the fact that the General Government has deposited in *his* Bank fifty thou-

sand Dollars of the Public Funds, and from the additional fact that he has succeeded in getting appointments at Washington for some of his especial pets and favorites. Now, Sir, it does not seem to be right that Cameron should be allowed to hold this position in the ranks of thew Administration, because it is putting into his hand a weapon to assail those from whom he receives favors.

Cameron is to be the rallying cry of Whiggery in Pennsylvania on the Tariff question, and the only thing that can possibly give him any influence is the fact that he is supposed to have influence with the *Administration*. He has succeeded in getting a number of letters published in this State, *in his own praise*, and, if the fact could be ascertained, I have not a doubt but that *money* would be found to be the secret mainspring to their publication; and to suffer him to have the control of fifty thousand dollars of the public money, under these circumstances, is calculated to do the Democratic Party of Pennsylvania great injustice, and we appeal to you to take this matter into consideration and aid us in our efforts to purify the political atmosphere.

The honest position of the Democratic Party in this state *can* overwhelm Whiggery and *Traitors*, too; but, I assure you, we feel very unpleasantly situated in finding the General Government lending countenance to a man whose every effort is directed to the prostration of the Democratic Party of our own State. You will pardon the unceremonious manner in which I have addressed you, as I am actuated by no other motive than a desire to promote your own welfare as well as that of the Democratic Party generally. We have men enough in Pennsylvania who are honest, and think as you do on the Tariff question, and, eventually, they are bound to triumph.

GEO. W. BOWMAN

[P.S.] I concur in the above statements as the facts are within my own knowledge.

CHAMBERS MCKIBBIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter in August 1846.

1. Longtime owner and editor of the *Bedford Gazette*, Bowman served twice as state adjutant general, 1845–48 and 1852–55; in 1857, he became editor of the Washington *Union*. Polk appointed McKibbin postmaster of Pittsburgh in 1845.

2. Chartered by the State of Pennsylvania in 1832, the Bank of Middletown acted as a depository for state and federal funds. One of the bank's original stockholders, Simon Cameron served as its cashier.

FROM PETER V. DANIEL[1]

My dear Sir Richmond Augt. 5th 1846

My opinions or my thanks are I dare say, of very little consequence, but the latter I have been unwilling to withhold as a just tribute to the act of vetoing the River & Harbor Bill. I have considered this bill a source of more serious alarm, than was the probability of war with Britain or Mexico; & its passage & sanction as constituting a greater calamity than would be actual war with either of those powers: for without principle & political integrity what are we, & what security have we for our liberties & the permanence of our institutions? With virtue & political integrity, we can overcome any external evils. The growing laxity of principle & conduct in many of our public men, & their seeming inability to resist the temptation of dipping into the treasury on every occasion, & their facility in putting by all constitutional restraint under such temptation, have for some time been viewed with deep alarm & mortification. In proportion to the intensity of these feelings is the gratification felt at finding in the Executive a sternness of principle which meets & rebukes the growing & dangerous deliquency just mentioned. These expressions on my part, may perhaps be considered officious & out of place; yet I have deemed the service rendered to the Constitution & to the Country on this occasion, of such essential benefit, that I have been unwilling as a citizen to suppress my sense of that service. Since I have been upon the Bench of the Supreme Court, *one* occasion has occurred for declaring my opinion relatively to this power of making internal improvements claimed for the federal government; that occasion presented itself in two suits between mail contractors on the Cumberland Road, & the road commissioners of Pennsylvania & Ohio. In these cases I have taken care to record my opinions on this question very *emphatically*, & shall not fail on every similar occasion to do the like, even if I shall be solitary in the act. The cases alluded to are in the 3rd Vol of Howard's Reports, & in that from Pennsylvania particularly (viz Stockton & Stokes agst the Road Commissioners) the question of federal power is examined. I again tender you my thanks for arresting what in my estimation is an evil as much to be dreaded as almost any other which can supervene in the progress of our government, & conclude with the assurance of my very high regards.

P. V. DANIEL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "Private." Polk's

AE on the cover states that he received this letter on August 7, 1846.

1. A native Virginian, Daniel served as associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1841 until his death in 1860.

## FROM JOHN FAIRFIELD

My Dear Sir, Aug. 7, 1846

Before speaking with you last night I could not suppose for a moment that there was any foundation for the rumors that you was contemplating a veto of the Bill providing paymt. for French spoliations, or to keep it back which is the same thing, in effect.[1] And I have not come to a different conclusion now so much from anything you did say, as from what you did not say. I cannot refrain therefore from addressing you by every consideration of policy and right, as relating to party and yourself, as well to the large number of persons directly & personally interested in this matter, to weigh it well before coming to such a conclusion as the one alluded to. For the sake of brevity and method let me say:

1. I can hardly concieve it possible for any one, especially one of any legal acumen, to examine this subject without coming to the conclusion that the claims are *just*. Being so, should not a successful result to a forty years pursuit, be permitted to remain undisturbed?

2. Further, is not the question of justice of these claims, & the expediency of paying them a question peculiarly within the province of the *legislature* to determine? As no *constitutional* question is involved would not a veto in such a case be without a precedent? Or, if not without a precedent, does this Bill so imperiously disturb the *general interests* of the Country, as to sanction the thwarting of the opinions and will of the legislative branch of the government upon a question of *expediency* merely?

3. This, in one sense, is a *northern* bill—the river and harbor bill was a *western* bill. Should not each stand upon its own merits, without any attempt to *balance accounts* by a favorable or unfavorable disposition of either?

4. The New England States are particularly interested in this bill—the claimants are *numerous*—the interests under it, by their extensive ramifications, now pervade nearly the whole northern community. All the Legislatures of the Northern States, besides many others, have again and again, urged the allowance of these claims in the strongest terms. Our whole society has been strongly excited upon the subject, and are now rejoicing in the apparent success which has crowned their

long and weary efforts. Under such circumstances would it be well or politic to dash this cup to the ground? Most seriously, solemnly and deliberately, I say no.

The democratic party at the north have now to contend against the anticipated disasters, or rather the whig prophecies of disaster, resulting from the new tariff, against a supposed neglect in the distribution of public favors, against a supposed undue influence of *Southern* men, and *Southern* policy. Can it then be politic to add to the list by a veto of this northern bill? We hope to sustain ourselves under any circumstances, but with the loss of N. Hampshire before us,[2] we should not unnecessarily multiply points of attack for the whigs.

Let me add, that this bill makes no draft upon the treasury either now or hereafter, except for the mere expenses of the commission. Nor will it interfere with the land revenue probably for three years as it will take that time to close up the commission.

I have written freely & frankly as I know you would like to have me write upon all subjects. I have written as a true friend of yours, and of the party, and have discharged what I consider a solemn duty.

JOHN FAIRFIELD

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally; marked "Private."

1. "An act to provide for the ascertainment and satisfaction of claims of American citizens for spoliation by the French prior to the 31st day of July, 1801." Senate Bill No. 68, 29th Congress, 1st Session. Polk communicated to the Senate his veto message on August 8, 1846; he returned the bill on grounds of its inexpediency. Polk concluded his message with the observation that only in extreme cases should approval be withheld from legislation that otherwise met all constitutional tests. Richardson, ed., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, pp. 466-69.

2. New Hampshire Whigs had won victories in recent legislative, gubernatorial, and U.S. senatorial elections.

## FROM JAMES D. WESTCOTT, JR.

Sir, Washington Aug 8, 1846

Since I have been in the Senate I have not recommended a relation or connexion for office in Florida or elsewhere. I have recommended several personal and political friends, but *in not a single instance* in which *I made* such recommendation, has such personal & political friend of mine in or out of Florida received the appointment sought. In Florida every appointment made *in the State* with but *one solitary exception* has been of Democrats opposed to me! Every appointment from the

State in the Army or Navy has also been of similar character. The office of Navy Agent the best in the State was kept vacant after the term of the former incumbent had expired and given to my competitor Walker Anderson[1] as soon after the result of the Senatorial election as it could be sent to this City from Tallahassee. Several members of the State Legislature have been appointed to office, and invariably, without an *exception* have they been those who voted for Mr Yulee & Mr Anderson in Democratic caucus against me for the U.S. Senate. I could advert to other facts, and especially to that of which I have evidence of the most authentic character that some of the most prominent of those who have received the favor of the administration in Florida *boast* that their influence is paramount, and of the hostility of the President & some of his cabinet to me personally.

I know of efforts to produce such a state of things.

But I will proceed at once to the subject of which this is but the introduction. Charles S. Sibley of Middle Florida has been US Atty there since 1836. No one will venture to assail his character in any respect. He has always been a Democrat. He has been passed over without any cause unless his being my brother in law is such cause, and while no Judicial officer is selected in Middle Florida on the recommendation of Mr Yulee of East Florida & of Mr W Anderson a Mr C. C. Yonge[2] of West Florida whose qualifications for the office bear no comparison to those of Mr Sibley, *supercedes* Mr Sibley. The Judge & marshal[3] are both known political opponents of mine & the marshal Mr Brown was one of the members of the Legislature who voted for Mr Yulee & Mr Anderson against me for Senator.

I state these facts in writing (as I have done before verbally) to you for the purpose of submitting to you whether the withdrawal of Mr Yonge's name as US Atty this morning and the nomination of Mr Sibley is not called for by justice & propriety. The nomination of Mr. Y will be passed upon this morning by the Senate. I shall not oppose their nominations, improper as I regard every one of them, and though my friends regard them as evidence of hostility of feeling to me personally.

JAMES D. WESTCOTT JR.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. A native of Virginia, Walker Anderson studied law in North Carolina and for a brief period taught history and literature at the University of North Carolina, 1831–32. Polk appointed him naval agent at Pensacola, a post he held from 1845 until 1849. Anderson served as chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court from 1851 until 1853.

2. Charles C. Yonge received appointment as U.S. attorney for the western

district of Florida in 1845.

3. Isaac H. Bronson and Joseph B. Browne. A New York native and lawyer, Bronson served one term in the U.S. House, 1837–39; he received appointment as U.S. judge for the eastern district of Florida in 1840, and presided as U.S. district judge for Florida, 1846–55.

## TO RALPH I. INGERSOLL

My Dear Sir Washington City Augt. 9th 1846

You will no doubt be surprised to learn that you have, without your solicitation or knowledge, been nominated to the Senate of the United States and confirmed by that [ . . . ][1] Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia. You were selected for this important mission from my personal knowledge of you, and without the suggestion of anyone. When I went to the Capitol on last evening for the convenience of Congress and especially of its committee on Enrolled Bills, [ . . . ] on the last night of the Session, I informed the two Senators from your State[2] of my intention. It was the first they heard of it. It is proper that I should explain to you how it happened that I did not consult you in advance. Some months ago I had intimated indeed said that I would appoint another person,[3] at the close of the Session of Congress, and it was not until yesterday [ . . . ] that the person alluded to had made up his mind to decline it. I had of course but a few hours left within which to make another selection. In this instance at least office has sought the man, and not the man the office, and allow me to say that it is to be regretted that this is not more frequently the case and especially in regard to the higher positions under the Government. I hope you may accept the highly honorable and responsible station now tendered to you. In that event I have no doubt you will do good service to the country and do honour to the station as well as to yourself.

I find myself much exhausted by the intense labour I have performed, and the close confinement I have suffered during the long Session of Congress, now about to close.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New Haven, Conn.

1. Blurred and light ink transfers render word or words illegible here and below.

2. Jabez W. Huntingdon and John M. Niles.

3. Charles J. Ingersoll.

FROM BRIGHAM YOUNG ET AL.[1]

Mormon Camp
Sir, Near Council Bluffs, August 9th, 1846

A large portion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints having passed from the nation of our nativity and the Republic over which you have the honer to preside and finding ourselves on the western shore of the great Missouri while others of our friends are following close on our rear, beg your Excellency's indulgence for a moment while we pour out the pure feelings of our souls before you.

The cause of our exile we need not repeat, it is already with you. Sufficient to say that a combination of fortuitous, illegal and unconstitutional circumstances have placed us in our present situation, on a journey which we design shall end in a location west of the Rocky Mountains, and within the bason of the Great Salt Lake or Bear River Valley, as soon as circumstances shall permit; believing that to be a point where a good living will require hard labor and consequently will be coveted by no other people while it is surrounded by so unpopulous but fertile country.

While on our way thither, and beyond the borders of the states, we were me by Capt J. Allen,[2] of your army of the West proffering us the enrolment of 500 men, to be marched into california, via Santa Fee, there to be discharged at the expiration of one year, receiving the pay of regular soldiers and other valuable and unusual emoluments. To this proffer we promptly responded, though it has left 500 of our loaded teams standing on the prarie of the Potawatamie and Omaha Nations, and nearly as many families destitute of their head & guardians, only as they are counselled and nourished by their friends who were already overborne with cares, and worn out with anxiety and fatigue. But, in the midst of this, we were cheered with the presence of our friend, Mr Little, of New Hampshire,[3] who assured us of the personal friendship of the President in the act before us. And this assurance, though not doubted by us in the least, was made doubly sure bythe testimony of Col Kane, of Philadelphia,[4] whose presence in our midst, and the ardour with which he has espoused the cause of a persecuted and suffering people, and the testimony he has borne of your Excellency's kind feelings, have kindled up a spark in our hearts, which had been well nigh extinguished. Not a spark of love of liberty or democracy, *that cannot be*, but love of a country, *or rulers*, from whom previously we had received but little save neglect or persecution.

We also received assurances from Lieut. Col. Allen of the "Mormon Battallion" that we should be safe, and that it would be proper for us to stop on any indian lands, while it was necessary, considering our hindrance in filling his command, and during the pleasure of the President, which we fully anticipate, will be during all necessary time. And, in view of all things here referred to, and many more, which the hurrying duties of the Camp will not permit us to mention at this time:

Resolved, that as children of the United States, we have not been disappointed in our anticipations of a brighter day, and a more righteous Administration in our Endeavors for the canvass of his Excellency James K. Polk to the presidency.

Resolved, that the thanks of this people be presented to President Polk for his friendly offer of transferring 500 of our brethren, to the land of their destination under command of Col Allen.

Resolved, that should we locate within the territory of the United States, as we anticipate, we would esteem a territorial government of our own, as one of the richest boons of earth. And while we appreciate the Constitution of the United States as the most precious among the nations, we feel that we had rather retreat to the deserts, islands or mountain caves, than consent to be ruled by Governors and judges, whose hands are drenched in the blood of innocence & virtue, who delight in injustice & oppression, and whose greatest glory is to promote the misery of their fellow for their own aggrandizement or lustful gratifications.

Resolved that we have heard from various sources, and have the same confirmed by Col. Kane, that the friends of Ex-Gov. Boggs[5] are endeavoring to make him governor of California, &c. And that we, as a people are bound to oppose said Boggs in every point and particular that shall tend to exalt him in any country where our lot may be cast. And that *peace* and "*Mormonism*," which are always undivided, and *Lilburn W Boggs cannot dwell together*. And we solicit the attention of President Polk to this important item in the future prosperity and welfare of the newly acquired territory of our Glorious Republic.

Resolved, that as soon as we are settled in the Great Bason, we design to petition the United States, for a territorial Government, bounded on the north by the British, and South by the Mexican dominions, & east and west by the summits of the Rocky & Cascade Mountains.

Having received the strongest assurances of assistance and protection from President Polk through our highly esteemed friend, Col Kane, and that he will continue to use all constitutional power at

his disposal for our good, regardless of popular clamor and cabinet intrigues, to establish us in a land where we can sustain our wives and children; to help us to a territorial government, so that we may dwell in peace under our own vine, and eat the fruit of our own labor; that he will defend us against every aggression, by the strong arm of twenty millions of freemen, & all their immense resources; that he will ward off the scourge of oppression, the rod of Tyranny, and the sword of death, by all the means that God and his country have placed at his disposal:

Therefore, Resolved, that we have the fullest confidence in the friendly protestations of President Polk; that our hearts are with him to do good, and sustain the best government of earth; that he may depend on our warmest gratitude, and our cordial co-operation in all things that shall tend to exalt him, and our fellow creatures; and that our faith, prayers, and blessing shall rest upon him so long as he shall magnify those glorious principles, he has espoused, which, we trust, will be eternally.

Done on the west bank of the Missouri River near Council Bluffs, Omaha Nation, August 9th 1846, in General Council of the Church Aforesaid, & Camp of Israel.

BRIGHAM YOUNG

P.S. Please give us your views of Lieut. Col. Allen's permit for us to stop on Indian lands as soon as your convenience will permit. Direct to N. K. Whitney, Jonathan H. Hale and Daniel Spencer.[6]

LS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*Confidential*."

1. This letter was drafted in the hand of Willard Richards as secretary of the council. A native of Windham County, Ver., Young joined the Mormons in 1832; achieved recognition for his missionary work; assumed the leader's role following Joseph Smith's murder in 1844; and supervised the Mormon's move to Utah upon their expulsion from Nauvoo, Ill. He served as Mormon president from 1846 until his death in 1877.

2. An Ohio native and West Point graduate, James Allen served as a captain in the First Dragoons; he died in command of the Mormon Battalion on August 23, 1846.

3. Brigham Young's nephew, Jesse C. Little served as a special emissary to the U.S. government; he and Amos Kendall met with Polk to discuss recruiting the Mormon Battalion on June 3 and 5, 1846.

4. Thomas L. Kane.

5. A Kentucky native and St. Louis businessman, Lilburn W. Boggs served as governor of Missouri from 1836 until 1840 and played a prominent role in the expulsion of the Mormons from Missouri. He removed to California in 1846, where he served as alcalde of the Sonoma district, 1847–49.

6. Newel K. Whitney served as a bishop of the Mormon Church; Hale and Spencer are not identified further.

## FROM THOMAS HERRING[1]

Dear Sir, New York 12 August 1846

Allow me to express my conviction of the beneficial tendency of your visiting this quarter, at the present time, as it were on your own spontaneous suggestion.

The considerations are both personal and political. I am not deceived in the weight attached to them nor in the importance of your acting on this impulse, and under their direction.

The adjournment of Congress may, not unlikely, diminish the urgence of demands on your time in the processes of official employment, and allow you a chance of temporary relaxation. The physical condition of man is rightfully the object of care, and you ought not to be insensible to the implied obligations of a maxim, individually so interesting. For a short period, it strikes me, you might devolve on the heads of departments the management of public affairs, under special instruction, and reinvigorate your health by travel, and release your mind from the tension of unmitigated application.

I do not know that Mrs. Polk of you yourself have hitherto been at Niagara Falls. If either of your has not, it might furnish reason of itself for an excursion to see one of nature's most magnificent works, and would amply repay the pains of a far more distant journey. The facilities of travel are now so great, and the season so inviting, that the incentives become stronger in proportion as the gratification is more attainable. You might properly excuse to the rapidity of movement, and the requirement of despatch, all ceremonious parade that would impede your progress. The purpose of the journey imparts the obvious desire of reaching its point of destination, with the least interruption possible. The argument is always at hand to answer solicitation, and preclude formalities.

The general motives for you to set yourself in motion, and that speedily, are abundant & adequate. Those of a more particular nature need not be adverted to. They are too obvious to require detail, and too cogent to be slighted. There is a dead calm now on the political surface of the body-politic. We are emphatically an excitable people here in New York. The juncture could not be more favorable for the objects of your visit.

The statements and view which I have heretofore laid before you, the

truth and justice of which every hour is now verifying, fully sustain the grounds whereby I am induced to address you the present communication. Your assured friend, C. P. White, fully concurs in the course recommended, and desires me to say he regards it as eminently judicious for your adoption. Fifteen to Eighteen days might, if desirable, comprise the period of your absence.

Accept the assurances of esteem and respect from ....

THOMAS HERRING

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Confidential*." E in an unknown hand states that this letter was received on August 15, 1846.

1. Herring wrote a number of editorials for the New York *Evening Post* supporting Polk and Dallas during the 1844 Presidential campaign. In 1845 he received appointment as a weigher in the New York Customs House.

## FROM THOMAS B. CHILDRESS

U.S. Ship St. Marys
off Vera Cruz
August 13th 1846

Dear Sir:

I received your letter on the 3d instant, informing me of the death of my dear father.[1] Sir you may be assured it is painful to me to reflect that I left him in full hopes of seeing him again in the flesh, and to think that all my hopes are cut off. I shall see him no yea no more till life shall end—but blessed be the name of the Lord—the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. I hope after death I shall see him again. Yes sir he was a true friend of yours. I believe he would have spent the last cent he had for you. I am sorry he did not live to receive his commission. I am sorry to learn that I cannot get in at the Naval School at annapolis (Maryland) for it is the only thing that induced me to join the Navy. I thought there would be no difficulty in getting in when I wrote to my father—as I had been informed that they had sent five or six of the students to sea. I can assure you sir nothing would be more gratifying to my wishes than to be ordered to the naval school at annapolis. You stated in your letter that my mother[2] expressed apprehensions lest I should not be pleased with the service, and fears I may resign. I wrote her that I intended resigning immediately if I was not ordered to the naval school and I am more determined on resigning than ever, for I become more disgusted with the Navy every day. I have seen enough of the Navy to satisfy me. In the first place it dont suit my health. I expressed a fear of that before I consented to join the navy. I enjoy nothing around me but live as one destitute of hope. If I can get

in at the naval school, I would be verry much pleased if you would let me know. I dislike to resign without receiving some benefit of the naval school, for it is the only thing that induced me to join the Navy. You stated in your letter of march,[3] when I accepted of my appointment that you thought it would be better for me to join the Navy, than to go to west point, that I would be ordered to the naval school immediately. Therefore I verry redily accepted of the appointment, with the expectation of getting a good education at the Naval school at Annapolis. I must confess I was verry much disappointed.

I have no opportunity of improving myself have no instructor, and even if I was inclined to improve myself I am not allowed any time. I am almost continnually on duty, either scraping the Guns or at some other foolishness. I would be verry much pleased if you would have me placed at the naval school, otherwise I intend resigning immediately. I intend Seeing the Commodore[4] and see if he will let me go home for three or four months. If he will permit me to do so, I will return home about the Latter part of this month as we expect to be at Pensacola by that time; it is true my share of my fathers estate will be small and if I were to remain, in the navy it would continue to be so. As for my own part, I can make a living any where. That is one thing I am thankful to my departed father for— he learnt me how to work when small. As it reguard a midshipmans duty he is nothing more than a messenger boy. He is looked upon by his superior officers with as much contempt as if he was a dog. I have not time to write any more at the present. Answer my Letter as soon as possible. Give my Love to Cousin Saraeh, and Excuse my Scribbling, for you may well suppose I am not prepared to write.

T. B. CHILDRESS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE states that he received the letter on August 30, 1846, and answered it on September 1, 1846.

1. William G. Childress. See Polk to Thomas B. Childress, July 6, 1846.
2. Mary B. Childress.
3. Letter not found.
4. David Conner.

## TO LOUIS MCLANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City Augt. 13th 1846

Though I think it probable that you may have left London, and be on your return-voyage to the United States, before this letter can reach you, yet as it is possible you may delay your departure and come over

in the *steamer* which will leave Liverpool on the 4th of September, I conclude to write you this hasty note. It was not until the 1st Instant that *Mr. Buchanan* communicated to me his final determination. He then informed me that he had made his election, and decided to remain in the Cabinet, and not to accept the offer which I had made him, to appoint him an associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. This he informed me he had done upon full consideration, but under existing circumstances had done so, cheerfully & with his own full consent, although as he said he had long desired a seat on the Bench. When I wrote to you on the 22nd of June and the 13th of July, I had every reason to believe that *Mr. Buchanan* would finally elect to vacate his present office and go on the Bench. It was under this strong conviction, that I invited you in that event to take his place in the Department of State.

*Mr. Buchanan* having come to his conclusion, I nominated *Judge Grier* of Pittsburg for the vacant Judgeship and his nomination was confirmed by the Senate. I confidently believed when I wrote to you, that the State Department would become vacant, and in that event, I preferred you to any other citizen to fill it, and was gratified to learn by your answer that you had consented to accept it.[1] Though I was mistaken in believing that it would become vacant, I beg to assure you that my estimate of your character and eminent qualifications to fill that or any other station under your Government remains undiminished.

Congress adjourned on the 10th Instant, in more than usual confusion and disorder, growing out of a variety of causes, which it is not necessary to state. In consequence of this several measures which had been material failed, in the last hours of the Session. During the Session however most of the great measures of this Government prevailed. Among [them] the act to modify the tariff of 1842, the ware-house bill, and the establishment of a Constitutional Treasury became laws.

With my respectful regards to Mrs. McLane ....

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Your successor will not probably be appointed until your arrival in the U. States. I have had great difficulty in making the selection. The probability now is, that the present Secretary of the Navy[2] will be your successor, though this is not absolutely certain.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to London and marked "*Private*."

1. McLane to Polk, July 17, 1846.
2. George Bancroft.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City August 15, 1846

I have received a letter from *Major Childress* of Murfreesborough, written at Nashville on the 22nd ultimo, notifying me that he had drawn a Bill on me in your favor for $3000, and that he had placed the proceeds of the Bill being $3030 in your hands, to be used by you in the purchase of property for my plantation. The Bill has been presented to me and has been paid. *Majr. Childress* informs me that he made you fully acquainted with my wishes and of the description of the property which I want. He informed you also of the reasons why, it should not be known to any one but him and yourself that you were making the purchases for me. There is nothing wrong [in] it, but still the public have no interest in knowing it, and in my situation it is best they should not. You can make the purchases in your own name, and then make quit-claim conveyances to me, and enclose both to me. *Majr. Childress* will furnish you with the mules which I may need on the plantation. He informs me that you are of opinion that I do not need another wagon, & of course no other need be purchased. *Majr. Childress* wrote to me that he has made one purchase since you [ . . . ][1] Nashville, of which he has given you notice. He states also that you made one before you left Nashville. I wish you to make the balance of the purchases, and send them below as soon as you think it will be safe, in reference to health to do so. By the 1st of October there will probably be no danger, as there is generally a frost by that time. I would greatly prefer that you should go down with them in person if you can possibly do so. If you go, you can arrange their houses and other comforts which may be [ . . . ] better than any one else. Having an increased force the growing crop can be gathered early, and you can give the necessary directions to the overseer about clearing more land. All this you can do better than any one else, and if it does not put you to too much inconvenience, I hope you will go down. You need not pay *Childress* for the mules which he will furnish you. I will settle with him for them myself. I have paid the Bill which you drew in favor of *Genl. Pillow* for $1436. You will of course give the necessary directions to *Mr. Mairs* to go down to *Pillow's* place on the 1st of October and bring up *Harbert and his wife and her child*.

As *Mr. Mairs* is doing well and the hands are pleased with him and are contented, I wish you by all means to employ him for the next year and indeed during the whole period of my absence from home, if you can do so. I wish you when you go down to settle all my accounts at

the plantation including the balance of the overseer's wages, and your own compensation for your expenses and trouble, and give me a full statement of the amount, as you did last year and it shall be settled. I wish my cotton sent to *Pickett & Co.* of N. Orleans, in the same way it was last year. Give directions to have it hauled to *Troy* as fast as it is ginned, and have it shipped by the first rise of water.

If my blacksmith *Harry* is willing to come to my plantation, and you think it for my interest, you can direct *Mairs* to have him brought up, at the beginning of the next year. In that event a set of blacksmith's tools must be bought. They would be bought cheaper & better by *Pickett & Co.* at N. Orleans than in the neighborhood of the farm, if they could be brought up in time. If *Harry* comes up, one of my boys, I think the boy *Tom*, should be put in the shop with him to learn the trade. But all this I leave to your judgement. Do as you would for yourself and I will be satisfied. I enclose this letter to *J. Knox Walker* who is fully acquainted with my business and who will converse with you on the subject. I enclose this letter to him to hand to you.[2]

I wish you to write to me what purchases you have made, and whether you can go down to my plantation this fall. I rely wholly on you during my absence to see that my business at the plantation is wisely managed, for, to that source I will look for my future support.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. Word or words here and below illegible.
2. See Polk to Walker, August 16, 1846.

## TO JOHN W. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Augt. 15th 1846

I received some days ago your two letters of the 22nd and 26th ultimo, the former written at Nashville and the latter at Murfreesborough & addressed to Sarah under cover to me,[1] but have been so much occupied that I have found it impossible to give them an earlier answer or even to acknowledge their receipt. In your letter of the 22nd you informed me that you had drawn a Bill on me in favor of *Col. Campbell* for $3000, the proceeds of which to be appropriated in the purchase of property for me, and had taken his receipt. I approve what you have done, especially as you found it inconvenient, as I apprehended you would do, to give the business your personal attention. *Campbell* is a good judge of property and will I have no doubt make good purchases.

The purchase which he made at Nashville I have no doubt, from what you state is a good one. In your letter of the 26th I am informed of a purchase which you have made, with which I am fully satisfied. I will rely on you to furnish to *Col. Campbell* the mules which he may think will be needed on my plantation. When you do so, you can draw on me for the price of them. The Bill for $3000, in favour of *Col. Campbell* has been presented to me, and has been paid.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Murfreesboro, Tenn.; marked "*Private.*"

1. Reference is to John W. Childress to Sarah C. Polk, July 26, 1846. ALS. DLC–JKP.

## TO J. KNOX WALKER

Dear Sir: Washington City August 16, 1846

Enclosed is a letter in which I informed you before you left I would address to *Col. Campbell*.[1] I wish you to deliver it to him, and to converse fully with him concerning my business, so that you will be able to give me the information which I desire. The public have *no* interest in knowing anything of my private affairs, and you can explain to *Col. Campbell* the reasons why he should not give publicity to the business he is transacting for me.

I hope you will make your stay in Tennessee as short as possible. My time continues to be constantly occupied: indeed I am not sure that the pressure upon me is not quite as great as it was before the adjournment of Congress. In the midst of these engagements several hundred land-patents have been sent over to me for my signature, and I learn from *Mr. Piper* that many thousands remain unsigned in the General Land Office. The very day on which you left I was called upon to sign a large number. I cannot perform so great a labour. All the patents that are prepared must be signed before the meeting of Congress, or there will be well-founded and just complaints. I state these things to you for the purpose of saying that it is desireable that you should transact whatever business you may have as speedily as possible and return to Washington.

I apprehended that the signature of Land Patents was in arrears, and enquired of you concerning the matter on the day before you left, and learned from you that there were none requiring immediate attention. In this I find you are greatly mistaken.

I am more debilitated by the heat of the weather & my long confine-

ment, than I have been since I have been in Washington. I am urged to go to Old Point Comfort[2] for a few days. I desire to do so but scarcely see how I can do so. I think however that I will buck off, some time this month if I only remain two or three days.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. See Polk to Robert Campbell, Jr., August 15, 1846.

2. Located near Fort Monroe on Hampton Roads, Old Point Comfort served as a popular nineteenth-century recreation spot.

## FROM JOHN H. WHEELER

My esteemed Sir Beattiesford N.C. 17th Aug. '46

As I promised as soon as our Elections were known, I would write to you. The result at present is known. The Whigs have the Legislature but *by a decreased* majority. Two years ago it was 22; it is now about 15.

As to the Governor's election, our candidate is defeated. This whole affair was miserably managed. Several who could have made a good run declined. The nominee of our convention[1] declined; then we had two candidates (Leake and Shepard).[2] This produced a breach, never cordially healed. Then on the very eve of the election, came the news of Haywood's dissaffection, which while it encouraged the enemy, as to them *affording evidence that the principles of our party were not tolerable to a conscientious man*, tended to dampen the exertions of our friends. His conduct is everywhere execrated. I enclose to you a paper from your native county,[3] which shows the light in which his conduct is received. It also affords to you the real sentiments of the country as to your *veto on the Harbour bill*.

With assurances of my perfect esteem and respect ....

JNO. H. WHEELER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Greene W. Caldwell.

2. Walter F. Leake and James B. Shepard. Shepard represented Wake County in the North Carolina General Assembly from 1842 until 1845; he stood as the Democratic candidate for governor in 1846 but lost to incumbent William A. Graham.

3. Wheeler enclosed two recent extracts from the Charlotte *Mecklenburg Jeffersonian*. DLC–JKP.

## TO McDONOUGH J. BUNCH[1]

Dear Sir: Washington City Augt. 18th 1846

Your letter expressing a desire to enter the military service was received a few days ago.[2] Today, I received the resignation of *Robert W. Powell* of Elizabethton, of the office of *Assistant Commissary* of the Regiment of the infantry called out from East Tennessee, which I had conferred upon him. Supposing it probable that this office would be acceptable to you, I have appointed you, and have directed your commission, with the necessary instructions and orders to be forwarded to you. You will hold the rank of *Captain* and I have no doubt will discharge your duty in a manner creditable to yourself and satisfacily[3] to the country.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Tazewell, Tenn.

1. A Claiborne County lawyer, Bunch served one term as principal clerk to the Tennessee House, 1845–46; as assistant commissary of the volunteers, 1846–47; and as captain and major of the volunteers, 1847–48.

2. Letter not found.

3. Misspelling of "satisfactorily".

## FROM SIMON CAMERON

To the President Middletown, Aug. 20, 1846

Will you, my dear Sir, permit me to address you frankly upon a matter small in itself, but vastly important to the harmony and interests of the democratic party in Philadelphia.

It is said that Judge Grier has been induced to promise the Clerkship of the Court in Phila. to some hanger on about the city of Washington, hailing from Pennsylvania, but having neither habitation or name there. And among all to whom this has become known there is but one feeling, that of disgust and anger. From the many evidences, I have seen of your desire to harmonize our conflicting party troubles, I am sure you will not aid in this wrong with knowledge of it. It is an office worthy of the best man in the party, producing as it does from $4000 to $6000 per annum, as I am told, and could be made by a decision to harmonize the whole city and county. You were good enough to ask me to think of something that would suit Sutherland. It would more than gratify him, or McCully[1] either. I mention these names only to shew you its importance, and care not for myself who gets it only that

it be given to some one worthy of it, and who will reconcile rather than foment our unfortunate divisions.

I beg, at all events that when Judge Grier arrives in Washington, you will ask him to delay it for the present, and until you and he can have time to learn the opinion of your friends in Philadelphia on the subject.

I find a good deal of excitement in the interior of the state regarding the tariff, but as our delegation stood by the wishes of the party here, I am in hopes all will soon calm down, without injury to it. We have an abiding hope that our friends in other states will aid us in getting just modifications, and proper protection to our interests.

SIMON CAMERON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover reads: "The Judge makes the appointment of Clk. & I think it improper to interfere in the matter."

1. Probably Thomas McCully.

## FROM GEORGE S. HOUSTON[1]

Sir Athens, 20th August 46

I find your internal improvement veto the most popular act of yr. administration. I heard much Said about it on my way home & Since my arrival and find great, very great unanimity on the subject. I think a majority of the whigs in my destrict (away from the Muscle Shoals) will Sustain you. I have met with Some of our leading whigs who are publickly giving you great credit for the act. I am in hopes you will be able to Keep it down & if you are *afraid*! to go against all of the System that you will be prepared to draw Such distinctions as to Keep all under you can.

I travelled with Some South Carolinians on my way home & Spent some four hours in Charleston, heard a good deal Said about yr. appointment of asst. treasurer there & have no hesitation in saying that you made the very best appointment. It is & will be very popular. I dont care who opposes it. I Saw yr. old frd Col. Elmore who told me that yr. appointee (Col. Lavall)[2] could beat the other applicants for it if left to the people at least five to one. He thinks him eminently qualified & Suitable & that yr. apptment was precisely right such was the general, I might say universal Sentiment in that State as far as I heard, & I heard it much spoken of, the only thing I heard any doubt about was that Holmes & Simpson[3] Said you had promised it to Mr Calhouns man, & had failed to redeem yr promise of that. The people of course

knew nothing tho. That was the only thing they thought any one could complain of, but Elmore says no one can create any feeling on the subject, that the people will fully endorse the apptment & all excitment will subside at once.

I find yr. administration thus far fully endorsed by the democracy of the Country thro which I have travelled & especially by the democracy of Ala. Politicians may complain & growl & twist & turn but you may rely upon the support of the masses as long as your [administration] is marked with the same bold & fearless adherence to principle.

GEO. S. HOUSTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "Private." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on August 27, 1846.

1. George S. Houston of Athens, Ala., served nine terms in the U.S. House, 1841–49 and 1851–61, and two terms as governor of Alabama, 1874–78; he won election to the U.S. Senate in 1879, the year of his death.

2. Franklin H. Elmore and William Laval. A South Carolina lawyer and Calhoun supporter, Elmore sat in the U.S. House, 1836–1839; presided over the Bank of the State of South Carolina, 1839–50; and served briefly in the U.S. Senate in 1850. Laval served in the U.S. army from 1808 until 1822; and under the command of General Andrew Jackson, he received the rank of brevet major for distinguished service in the capture of Pensacola, Fla., in 1814. In August 1846 Polk appointed Laval assistant U.S. treasurer at Charleston, S.C.

3. Isaac E. Holmes and Richard F. Simpson. A Charleston lawyer, Holmes served several terms in the South Carolina House, 1826–33, before winning election as a Democrat to the U.S. House, where he served from 1839 until 1851. Simpson, a Pendleton lawyer, served several terms in the South Carolina Senate, 1835–41, and three terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–49.

## FROM ALEXANDER WALKER[1]

Dear Sir New Orleans 22 August 1846

The course pursued by some of your pretended friends in this City, in reference to the disbanding of the Louisiana Volunteers, induces me to write to your Excellency to remove from your mind, any anxiety or concern as to the view taken by the unprejudiced and sensible portion of our people of this act; and also to warn you against a certain individual, who boasts that he has your confidence, and claims to be your especial friend, but who is in truth your enemy and the enemy of every honest man, I allude to Col J.F.H. Claiborne editor of the New Orleans "Jeffersonian."[2] By some act you have made him so hostile to yourself and your administration that in my opinion he has undertaken

the editorship of a Democratick Paper, for the purpose of more effectually attacking and injuring you. This has been evinced in more than one article in the Jeffersonian, but especially in the articles, so eagerly copied by the Whig papers, in relation to the disbanding of the Volunteers. That act has been approved here by all reflecting men. It was unavoidable. The Volunteers were offered an enlistment for 12 months, and they all, or nearly all, refused. The truth is they were nearly unanimously in favor of leaving, and would have left of themselves, if they had not been legally disbanded. It is then the height of folly to censure the administration for doing what the volunteers clamourously demanded, and for which the Law afforded no alternative. This is the view taken here by the impartial and reflecting citizens of all parties.

Knowing the harassment and anxiety, inseparable from the performance of your Excellency's duties; knowing that whilst the Papers of the country, and the factionous, and political wire workers are ever eager to censure and misconstrue your every act, but few have the honesty to speak out the truth, even when it is forced upon them, I have taken the liberty to address you this letter, stating my belief that your administration is regarded here by the moderate men of all parties; and by the Democracy in solid mass as eminently justifying the high hopes, and ardent zeal of the Canvass of 1844.

I beg to subscribe myself....

ALEXANDER WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Marked "Private"; Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on August 30, 1846, and the AE reads in part: "*Note*: The cause of *Mr Claiborne's* hostilitiy is the fact that he was dismissed as *Live Oak agent* of the Government."

1. A journalist, author, and party operative, Alexander Walker assisted in the management of the New Orleans *Jeffersonian Republican*, the Louisiana Democracy's leading newspaper; in 1856 Walker published his *Jackson and New Orleans*, a sketch that he subsequently revised and reissued as *The Life of Andrew Jackson* (1860).

2. A lawyer, editor, and historian, John F. H. Claiborne served two terms in the Mississippi House, 1830–1834, before his election to the U.S. House in 1835. His bid for a second term in Congress failed when Sergeant S. Prentiss contested the 1837 election and the House voted to seat Prentiss. Claiborne edited the Natchez *Mississippi Free Trader* before moving to New Orleans, La., in 1844 and pursuing there his editorial work on the *Herald and Jeffersonian*, the *Louisiana Statesman*, and later the *Louisiana Courier*. He also wrote several historial works including a history of Mississippi. Claiborne served as a Live Oak timber agent for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama in 1845 and received a similar appointment for Louisiana and Mississippi in 1853.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

My dear Sir, Bolivar T. Augt. 25 1846

Congress having adjourned, allow me to congratulate you & the Country upon the success of the great measures, of the reduction of *Taxes* in the new Tariff, the warehousing bill, the Constitutional Treasury, and above all the settlement of the Oregon difficulty. Glory enough for one session, leaving the "graduation" bill for the next.[1]

We have succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations, in all our leading measures & not withstanding the various cliques & undercurrents so natural in a government like ours & so much dreaded by our friends when I left Washington. We have got all of *Oregon* that I Ever wanted & as much as any of our *West* Tennessee democracy cared for. *Peace, honourable peace* with our best customer is worth infinately more to us that the "bleak hills & rock"[2] north of 49.

I fear the influence of the Iron & Coal interest will loose for us in Pennsylvania. They will be active & clamorous whilst the people, the honest farmers, though really opposed to high Taxes, not being governed by pecuniary impulse will even suffer themselves to sympathise & be carried allong with their noisy neighbors. Nothing can save us there but an honest independent *press* speaking boldly the truth to the *people*.

Our Mexican War drags on slowly. The public mind seems at ease with regard to it. I guess Taylor will find it dificult to meet an enemy soon. Paredes will avoid him at least until we pass the mountains or perhaps in the gorges. Their greatest expectation will be to weary our people in a sickly climate. In fact I expect but little more good from Taylor & hope to see a landing effected at Vera Cruz or Tampico & our main army stoped at Montery—that place garrisoned & most of the trops conveyed to a nearer point to invade the capital, unless an Honourable peace can be had soon. Remember me kindly to Mrs. Polk.

JHO. H. BILLS

P.S. Mrs McNeal's health is without change. She is quite confined to her room, but with great care may survive some year or two yet to come.[3] B.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. E in an unknown hand states that this letter was received on September 7, 1846.

1. Reference to the graduation of public land prices.
2. Quotation not identified further.

3. Clarissa Polk McNeal, widow of Thomas McNeal and mother of Bills' late wife, Prudence Tate McNeal, died on December 8, 1846.

## FROM FREDERICK P. STANTON

Dear Sir, Memphis 25 Augt. 1846

When I last saw the secretary of the Navy[1] before leaving Washington, he suggested to me the propriety of dispensing with the Office of Navy Agent at this place, leaving its duties to be performed by Mr. Harris, the Purser. I dissented from this arrangement and requested that nothing of the kind should be done, at least until I should arrive here and learn the exact situation of affairs.

From the state of feeling here, I am certain that such a change would be very disastrous to us. Most of the leading Democrats are greatly dissatisfied with Mr Harris and confidently expect you to fulfil the promise made some time since of ordering him away from Memphis as soon as he should be confirmed. Nothing less will satisfy your friends in this quarter. I do not pretend to explain the cause of this feeling against Mr Harris, nor do I participate in it; but I am certain of the fact that such feeling exists among the most prudent and discreet of our friends, and for the sake of harmony if for no other reason Mr Harris ought not to remain here.

I should be sorry to see Col. Watkins removed.[2] He is an excellent Officer and a man of sterling integrity in all respects. He is moreover possessed of great influence and his friends would receive his removal with much regret and dissatisfaction. If the public interest should require his office to be abolished, no man would acquiesce in the necessity more cheerfully than Col. Watkins himself. But I think he ought to be retained. He has now the management of contracts amounting to near two hundred thousand dollars, most of which, if not all, he has made himself; no man can carry out this extensive business with more energy, promptness and fidelity than he.

At all events, if the Office of Agent should be abolished here, do not substitute Harris for Watkins. I hope Watkins will be continued, and I think the public interest will be promoted by it. But if it must be otherwise, I beg that Mr Harris will not be permitted to take his place. With the contracts now in existence here, about two hundred thousand dollars will have been expended. There will then remain $100000 appropriated, all of which will be required for the Rope Walk and the requisited machinery. From this state of things you will be able to judge of the propriety of abolishing the Navy Yard. Such a measure

would involve the loss of two thirds the appropriations already made. I hope you will find it consistent with your views to notice this matter in your next communication to Congress, and to insist upon carrying out the original design of this establishment. Mr McKay[3] is the only obstacle—his hearty cooperation would doubtless secure success.

FRED. P. STANTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 6, 1846, and answered it on September 16, 1846.

1. George Bancroft.

2. A former member of the Virginia legislature and leader of Martin Van Buren's friends in the Virginia Democracy, Joseph S. Watkins served as naval agent at Memphis from 1845 until his resignation in 1848.

3. James I. McKay, a lawyer and Democrat from North Carolina, served in the U.S. House from 1831 to 1849; earlier he had won election to several terms in the state senate and had served as the U.S. attorney for the District of North Carolina.

## FROM J. GEORGE HARRIS

U.S. Navy Yard
My Dear Friend, Memphis, Tenn. August 26, 1846

If I were in your presence at Washington I should not fail to communicate to you privately that which I am about to write. Why then should I hesitate to write it?

Some two weeks ago an old gentleman by the name of S. Allen[1] from Ohio came to Memphis, and after being here a week died in a fit of intemperance. Having no relatives here, Mr. Beard (a contractor) who was an acquaintance of his performed the last offices to his remains, wrote to his family, and took possession of his effects.[2] Yesterday Mr. B came into my office and said he had some letters to show me. I examined them and found them to be some thirty different letters written by Doct. Fowlkes of this town to Allen in Ohio between the 1st of Feb last and 1st July, concerning a grand scheme of financial imposition. Altho' they were not marked private I did not feel at liberty to copy or make any extracts of them, yet I feel it to be my duty to communicate to you some of the main points of the correspondence with refer to *government affairs* here.

Fowlkes was making arrangements through Allen to revive the charter of a defunct Library Co. at Newtown Ohio with banking privileges, himself all the while unseen in it. The object of reviving it was to get an emission of from $100.000 to $300.000 in bank-bills to be paid out

here to contractors and laborers on the public works. Not one dollar of capital was to be invested beyond the cost of the plate, the printing, and the paper. The bills were to be made to resemble Tennessee bills in *appearance,* to be signed by a Pres. and Cashier, and then brokers to be *hired* to quote them at par. in Cincinnatti and other northern places. The bills were all then to be sent to Dr. Fowlkes, and he was to exchange them for government funds sent here to the Navy Agent[3] to pay contractors &c. After the bills were quoted at par, Time checks were to be sold to get money to redeem circulation if any bills should be presented for redemption. Such was the arrangement to pay all persons in the government employ here with worthless shinplasters. And they had carried this scheme so far as to have the bills and checks all printed and signed, and brought to Memphis, $36.000 of which were and still are in the hands of Fowlkes, the balance of which in the trunk of the deceased. But they dare *dare not offer* to pay out a dollar here because an attack had been made on *the Newtown Bank* at Cincinnatti and this place, and therefore *brokers dare not* attempt to quote its issues at par or slight discount. They *could not* pay out any here *within* the yard (ie. to laborers and officers) for their wages pass through *the Purser's* hands, and are made invariably in specie.

This correspondence develops a deep scheme to flood this section of the country with a worthless currency— wonderful and astounding! Fowlkes tells Allen that he has taken a store on Front Row "I operate (says he) under the Style of the Savings Bank of Memphis— the Merchants Insurance office of which Navy Agt is President is one door above him, the Navy Agents office one door below him, and that all payments to contracters &c are *therefore* to be made *through* the Insurance office." He adverts to the corporation of which he is an Alderman, states that he is about to purchas the Northern Bank of Mississippi, speaks of his agents throughout the U. States —and concludes by the assertion that although not seen in the Insurance office of which the Navy Agent is President "*I have the controlling power!*" Think of that in a man over whose head executions are hanging for very small as well as very great amounts, not one dollar of which can be satisfied.

I have alluded only to the *contents of this correspondence* —nothing second-hand, nothing hearsay, no gossip, nothing merely circumsstantial, but *letters* in the hand writing and over the proper signature of "Jeptha Fowlkes."

By ordering Naval Officers to this port you disturbed the arrangements of a clique of which the Doctor is the spokesman and fugleman. Their schemes have nearly all failed, yet the public know little or nothing of them— being a government officer I do not *talk* of them, for I will

give no one just cause of offence in the community where I am posted, but it is my duty as a friend, a citizen, an officer, to inform you in this private manner.

I do not say, for there is nothing beyond circumstantial evidence to prove, that the Navy Agent was privy to this correspondence, and an active party to the arrangement. It is true there is Dr. Fowlkes' written testimony to the fact, his fast friend. But it does not become *me* to suppose it, notwithstanding his open and generous offer in a public manner to discharge the Purser's duty at this port *for nothing,* and *his* frequent wish that I might *eat my bread somewhere else.* Still he *appears* very friendly to me. In everything he is vastly over-rated.

Connected with this grand scheme is, I am inclined to believe, the Wolf-River Canal project, which they are trying to have the corporation undertake by the issuance of bonds now that the government has refused to cut it under the assumed necessity of a dry-dock here. Their worthless currency was to carry on extensive manufactories on the canal. But this is *a mere opinion* of my own.

In all this you may account for much of the difficulty which occurred here a few months ago. Dr. Fowlkes introduced resolutions into the corporation over which he had controling power to procure the removal of naval officers from this station! Failing in this Dr. F. took the lead in preventing my nomination from being confirmed! You will perceive that the objection to naval officers here was of a more formidable character than the glare of their buttons or the manner of regulating their own affairs.

Since I have discovered the length and breadth and depth of their schemes, it seems almost providential that the disasters should have been averted by our straight forward mode of doing business according to the rules of the Department.

I have written you this, not to inform against any one, not to prefer charges, not to reflect upon any officer, not to do injustice to any citizen— and in this I hope I have done no more than my private duty to a good friend.

I am pleased with my position— Capt Pendergrast[4] is highly popular with us, a discreet gentleman, a good officer.

J. GEO. HARRIS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington; marked "*Private–Important.*"

1. S. Allen of Ohio is not identified further.
2. Beard is not identified further.
3. Joseph S. Watkins.
4. Garrett J. Pendergrast gained promotion from lieutenant to commander

in the navy in 1841 and commanded the U.S.S. *Boston* sailing in waters near the Rio de la Plata prior to his posting at the Memphis Navy Yard.

## TO CORNELIUS W. LAWRENCE[1]

Dear Sir: Washington City August 26, 1846

I have received your letter of the 24th Instant,[2] and sincerely regret that you have tendered your resignation as collector of the Port of New York. When I selected you for that highly responsible office, it was without your solicitation. I did so because I had great confidence in your integrity, and eminent qualifications to fill it, with credit to yourself and advantage to the public. This confidence is undiminished and it would be gratifying to me, as I am sure it would be to the public, if you could consistantly with your own views of propriety, consent to reconsider your determination and to retain the office. You are now familiar with its duties, and have given entire satisfaction to the Government. Your successor whoever he may be, would require time to qualify himself to discharge, his duties. If however your mind is made up to retire, I must ask you to retain the office until I can select your successor. Who that successor should be, I am wholly at a loss to determine, and would be pleased to have your opinion on the subject, which if given, will be reguarded as *strictly confidential.* I must ask of you another thing, and that is, that you will not make known that you think of resigning, until I am prepared to fill the vacancy. The only affect of making known your intention in advance, would be, to produce excitement and agitation in New York, and to bring down to Washington scores of persons, pressing their favourites for the appointments.

It is not likely I think that I would be enlightened in regard to the selection proper to be made, by such a proceeding, and therefore I desire to avoid the importunities and embarrassment which it would produce. In making the selection my sole object will be to procure an officer of integrity and ability, who would perform his duties well, and in whose hands the public money would be safe. The large amount of revenue collected at New York, making it a matter of great solicitude with the Government, that the collector should be perfectly trust-worthy and a safe business man, such as you will permit me to say, you are known to be.

In regard to the increased penalty of the bond, it was I understand required, in pursuance of a general regulation, applying to all collectors, under the late acts of Congress.

Public considerations induce me to respect the desire that you may

yet consent to retain the office. If you cannot do so, then I desire to have your opinion *confidentially,* in regard to your successor.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New York City; marked "*Private.*"

1. Formerly a member of the U.S. House, 1833–34, and mayor of New York City, 1834–37, Lawrence served as collector of customs at New York from 1845 until 1849.

2. Letter not found.

## FROM ROBERT F. STOCKTON[1]

Dear Sir, Ciudad de los Angeles, August 26th 1846

You will no doubt be informed by the Secretary of State, and the Navy Department, of the doings of the Frigate Congress under my command, at Honolulu and in California; and you will be enabled to judge of my conduct, without a word from me on the subject, how far I have fulfilled my own promises, and to what degree I have come up to your expectations.[2]

By the month of October, I think I will have the whole Civil Government of the Territory, in peaceful and successful operations. The foreign population is now so small in comparison with the native population, that I am of opinion that a mixed government of old and new forms, will be at present most beneficial and wise.

I will therefore make the Organic Laws of the Territory very few and strong, and leave as much of the old municipal regulations in force, as will be consistent with the entire change of Government.

The most important and serious subject connected at present with the Government of California, and on which account this letter is principally written, is the arrival at San Francisco of some of the Mormons, and the expected arrival of a great many more, who are likely to give me more trouble than our decided enemies.

You will see by my Proclamation of the 17th that I have had my eye upon them. I write this private letter, and send it overland by Express, that you may, if you see fit send me by the return messenger some instructions on the subject, or let me work it out on my own responsibility.

We have taken most of the military leaders, and will not doubt take the others who have not fled to Mexico. I have Expresses going constantly from one end of the Territory to the other, and all is now peaceful and quiet.

My word is at present the law of the land. My power is more than

regal. The haughty Mexican Cavalier shakes hands with me with pleasure, and the beautiful women look to me with joy and gladness, as their friend and benefactor. In short all of power and luxury is spread before me, through the mysterious workings of a beneficent Providence.

No man could or ought to desire more of power and respect; but my work is almost done here, and my duty calls me again upon the ocean, to protect as well as I may, the lives and property of our fellow citizens engaged in commerce. I will go without the least hesitation, and will transfer my power to other hands without repining.

As soon as I can safely do so, I will appoint Major Fremont Governor, and Captain Gillespie Secretary of the Territory.[3] They both understand the people and their language, and I think are eminently qualified to perform the duties which I shall assign to them, until your pleasure is made known to me.

The ardent zeal shown by them throughout deserves this compliment; besides they are fully possessed of my views, which if they are worth anything, may be some advantage to them.

The Battalion increased to Three hundred picked men, will be kept in the service, and will be quite sufficient to defend the Territory.

I enclose my last order to Major Fremont, that you may see how the force will be disposed of.[4] I earnestly request you to confirm them in their places, as the most salutary arrangements that can be made for the good of the Territory.

One word for my officers and crew—more devoted men never walked a ships deck. They are quite willing to stay with me as long as I stay, and go with me wherever I may go; and I should be sorry to leave them behind. Will you not compliment them *under your own hand in a general order*, giving me permission to bring the ship and them home with me, *as soon as the war is over*. They deserve it, they did the work, and have secured by their toil and daring this beautiful empire. I have made this request of the Secretary, but your name would be better.

Major Fremont will send this letter with my despatches to the Secretary of the Navy, by Express over the mountains, and in four months I will if nothing happens to prevent, be a San Francisco to get your reply, which I hope you will return immediately that no unnecessary delay may take place in my operations here.

R. F. STOCKTON

LS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private." E in the hand of J. Knox Walker indicates that Stockton's letter was received on November 30, 1846.

1. Stockton received a midshipman's appointment in 1811; rose to the rank of commander while serving in the Mediterranean squadron, 1816–21; took an extended duty leave from 1828 until 1838; as captain, commanded the U.S.S. *Princeton* when in 1844 its gun, the Peacemaker, exploded and killed the secretary of state, Abel Upshur, and the secretary of the navy, Thomas W. Gilmer; directed sea and land operations clearing California of Mexican control in 1846–47; resigned from the navy in 1850; and won election as a Democrat to the U.S. Senate in 1851.

2. References to official documents here and below can be found in Senate Document No. 1, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 668–75.

3. Stockton conferred these ranks on John C. Frémont and Archibald H. Gillespie as officers of the recently mustered California Battalion. Frémont attended Charleston College before receiving at the behest of Joel R. Poinsett an appointment as a mathemathics instructor aboard the U.S.S. *Natchez*. Resigning from the navy, he joined the Topographical Corps as a second lieutenant and assisted in surveying a projected route for the Louisville, Cincinnati and Charleston railroad. He married Jessie Benton in 1841 and thus gained another influential patron in her father, Thomas Hart Benton. Frémont shared Benton's view of westward expansion and published two highly popular reports on his western expeditions of 1842–43 and 1843–44. He conducted a third western exploration in 1845 and the following year undertook without written orders the reduction of Mexican authority in California. Appointed by Stockton to serve as civil governor of the territory, Frémont refused to obey the orders of Stockton's replacement, Stephen W. Kearny. Arrested for insubordination, Frémont lost his case before a court martial and resigned from the army in 1848. Frémont later served as a U.S. senator from California and as the Republican presidential nominee in 1856. A New York native, Gillespie received commission as a second lieutenant in the marines in 1832; went to California as a special agent in 1845; achieved the rank of captain in 1847; and resigned his commission in 1854.

4. See Stockton to Frémont, August 24, 1846. L, copy. DLC–JKP.

## FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir Columbia Ten. Aug 27th 1846

I received yours of the 15th Inst. expression of your wishes & Instructions which Shall be attended to before receiving your Instructions. I had Sold your Land to Mr McRady[1] at $20 per Acre the last payment falling due at the expiration of your 4 years term with Interest from the time he takes possession.

Maj. Childress placed in my hands $3030 to be laid out for your benefit in property according to his instructions from you. I have made the Following purchases (Viz)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sally | Bought in Nashville | 12 | years old | $405 |
| William | by Decree of Court | 17 | " | 600 |
| Jim | " | 12 | " | 392 |
| Caroline | from Wm D Hennelly[2] | 16 | " | 500 |
| | Maj Childress purchased | 14 | year old boy | 450 |
| | | | | $2347 |

The name of the boy purchased by Maj Childress I do not know. You will See from calculation there is $683 in my hands to be laid out. As my Son Robt had to go to Virginia on business of my own I Sent the money of yours with Some of my own for him to lay it out there if he could do better. If not to return the money. He is with Maj Thos. Leftwick[3] who has extensive acquaintances in that country. My object is to buy you an other girl 14 or 15 years old & the balance of the money to pay Mr Mairs or any other expences that may be nessary. I had agreed to take Major Childress Mules before you wrote & I will let him Know when to Send them down with the Boy that he has bought. I will start down to your place after the Chancery Court which commences the 3rd Monday in Sept. I have all ready apprised Mr Mairs of the purchase of The Pillow Negroes & directed him to go down to Gen Pillows 10 miles below Carrolton, & receive Harbert his wife & little boy if I was not there by the 28th Sept. I have Pillows obligation for them to be delivered on the 1st of Oct. next in good health & condition. I will either be there my Self or direct Mr Mairs to go after them. If I can get of from court in time I will be there my-Self by the 1st Oct.

You wright me that you have paid the Bill that I drew for the purchase of the Pillow Negros. I feel certain that it was not payable until the 1st Oct. the time that I was to receive the Negroes.

I have also apprised the overseer to what extent I would increase his force & for him to prepare for them I had 40 Acres of your best bottom land cleared last winter & put in corn, & also Instructed Mr Mairs to clear more this Summer & Seed the ridge land.

I expect to have to increase Mr Mairs wages the next year. That is if every thing is going will when I go down & I have no apprehentions but what every thing is going on will.

I recd. a letter from him a few days ago. They were all will & doing will. He Say he is paying the closest Kind of Attention to the Stock & they look will on account of to mutch rain. The Cotton is going to Weed to mutch. The corn crop is fine. I will when down give the propper directions for early Shipments. In Short I think I Know your wishes & your Interest & they will be attended to according to circumstances as they present themselves.

Each Bill of Sale that I take I wright a relinquishment on the Back of each & Sign it & file them with your papers. If you prefer it I will Send them by Knox.[4]

As to Harry (your Smith) I do not Know what to do with him. He is loosing his Sight verry fast & has contracted habits (that I am fearful would not Suit the plantation) of Intemperance. I am fearful he might corrupt those that are now will trained. The only objection he has (he Says) to going to the plantation is his children. As his wife is dead that he ought to be near his Children.[5] My own opinion is that he Know that he could not get his pint or quart of Spirits per day as he does where he is. If I can hire him out near your plantation I would mutch prefer doing so.

I have not collected the balance of his last years hire. Yet I will put in train when I go down. I have Bought a few clothing for the Negroes for Some of them were badly clad & will have to buy Shoes for them before I Start.

ROBT. CAMPBELL JR.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 5, 1846.

1. Ephraim W. McRady of Columbia, Tenn.
2. William D. Henly of Maury Co., Tenn., and the five slaves are not identified further.
3. Thomas Leftwick of Maury Co., Tenn., is not identified further.
4. Joseph Knox Walker.
5. Blacksmith Harry's wife died in November 1845.

## TO FRANKLIN PIERCE

My Dear Sir: Washington City August 27th 1846

The office of Attorney General of the United States will probably become vacant in the course of a few weeks, when it will be necessary for me to select a successor to *Judge Mason*, who has filled it since the commencement of my administration, with great ability and to my entire satisfaction. *Judge Mason* and *Mr Bancroft*, the latter of whom has also been an able and efficient member of my Cabinet, will probably, with their own voluntary consent, be transferred to other positions, than those which they at present occupy, and in that event (of which I entertain no doubt) it gives me sincere pleasure to invite you to accept a place in my Cabinet, by tendering to you the office of Attorney General of the United States. I have selected you for this important office from my personal knowledge of you, and without the solicitation

or suggestion of anyone. I have done so because I have no doubt your personal association with me would be pleasant, and from the conviction that in the discharge of the duties of the office you could render me important aid in conducting my administration. In this instance at least, the office has sought the man, and not the man the office, and I hope you may accept it. You are fully informed of the policy of my administration and of my opinions and views, upon all the great questions now before the country, and which have been before it, since I first met you in Congress, and I have no doubt there exists a general accordance of opinion between us in reference to them. I make this communication to in *great confidence*, as I do not desire that the contemplated change of position of *Mr Mason* and *Mr Bancroft*, shall become known, until it shall have actually taken place. In the event of your acceptance, it will not be necessary for you, to enter upon the duties of the office, before the first or middle of October. Indeed, if it shall suit your convenience better, it might be delayed until the first of November.

It is necessary however that I should know your determination with as little delay as possible, and therefore, I hope to receive an early and favourable response from you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–FP. Addressed to Concord, N.H.; marked "*Confidential.*"

# SEPTEMBER

TO THOMAS H. BENTON

My Dear Sir: Washington September 1st 1846

Since I saw you today, information has been received at the Department of State that *Monterey* on the Pacific has been taken by our Squadron and that the American flag has been hoisted at that place. Information has also been received that a party of detachment from *Col. Fremont's* force took possession of a frontier post called *Sonoma* to the North of *St. Francisco*, that *Genl. Castro*, the Commandant General attempted to dislodge them, but that after a slight skirmish and the arrival of *Col. Fremont* in person he *Castro* retreated.[1] The dates from Monterey are to the 6th of July and from the vicinity of that place to the 9th of the same month. Supposing that you would be gratified to learn this intelligence, and particularly to learn *Col. Fremont's* whereabouts, previous to your departure for the West, I write you this note. By calling at the State Department you can learn particulars.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. The Mexican-American skirmish at Sonoma came to be known as the Bear Flag Revolt. A leading Californio, José Castro resisted the American conquest of California but returned to California at the end of the war.

## TO THOMAS B. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir: Washington City, Sept. 1, 1846

I have received your letter of the 13th of August and in conformity with your request the Secretary of the Navy will forward to you an order today, to report yourself at the Naval School at Annapolis on the 10th of October next. I repeat my advise to you, that you should not for a moment, think of resigning your situation in the Navy. Were you to resign you would deeply regret it in future life. At Annapolis you will have an opportunity of being instructed in your duty, and when you shall again go to sea, I hope you may have a greater taste for the honorable profession which you have chosen. I write you this private note as the old friend of your father,[1] because I take a deep interest in your future welfare. You will of course be governed by your orders from the Navy Department.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Home Squadron.

1. William G. Childress.

## TO ARCHIBALD WRIGHT[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept. 1st, 1846

Your letter of the 24th of June was received several weeks ago, but my public engagements have been so constant and unceasing, that I have had no opportunity to attend to your request at an earlier period. *Judge Mason* agrees without hesitation to become your security in the refunding bond, for the amount collected for you at Richmond, by *Mr. Stanard*[2] your attorney. I have said to *Judge Mason* that I would myself give him a collateral obligation to bear him harmless, which he has accepted although he did not require it. I however preferred to make myself responsible. *Judge Mason* has written to *Mr. Stanard* authorizing him to affix his name to the refunding bond as one of the securities.

I find My Dear Sir: that the Presidential office is one not only of great responsibility, but of constant confinement and incessant labour. Even the adjournment of Congress has not relieved me much. My health however continues to be good. I shall have to adhere to principle and

will do my whole duty, and leave the rest to God and to the country. I am flattered with the belief that my administration thus far, has not been wholly unsuccessful.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Pulaski, Tenn.

1. Born in Maury County in 1809, Archibald Wright studied law and commenced practice at Pulaski in 1832. A Democrat, he was a presidential elector on the Van Buren ticket in 1836. He served in the Seminole War and represented Giles County in the Tennessee House, 1847-49. In 1858 Governor Isham Harris appointed him to fill a vacancy on the Tennessee Supreme Court.

2. Robert C. Stanard, is not identified further.

## FROM LEVERITT TREADWELL[1]

My Dear Sir New York 2d Sept 1846.

As an American having my Countries good at heart, it has always been my greatest desire to see the Atlantic & Pacific Oceans united.

Please receive this communication in that light & do what you may conceive most Judicious in the premises.

Heretofore the Isthmust of Darien[2] has been considered the most prominent point for a ship Channel. True it is so from its proximity of the two oceans. A failure however on the part of France to the present time appears evident, which I trust is providential, provided our Government shall in accordance with your advice take such steps as shall secure to the states either by annexation, conquest or Treaty the province of Tobasco up to 90 Degrees of Longitude. This acquisition would embrace the narrowest space of Land between the Gulf of Mexico & the Gulf of Tequantipec on the Pacific, by uniting the Rivers Tonala or Guozocoalcos to the river Tequantipec, which lays in Longitude 94º 20' and are about *Eighty miles apart.*[3] This is but an insignificant distance to cut, when compared to our great Western Canal. Its accomplishment and advantages will readily be seen on reference to a general map in as much as it will lessen our distance to California Oregon & the East Indies several thousand miles, give us a commercial ascendency over all Europe & turn into the Coffers of the United States an incalculable foreign revenue.

As we are now Justly at war with Mexico a Golden opportunity presents itself for its immediate acquisition, which in all probability will never again occur. Should we fail to take advantage of the great vital & lasting benefit at this auspicious epoch, a gloom may well hang over our days, & those of our Posterity who will feel it more sens-

ably than ourselves, as our Commerce & growth of Country advance. France will have lost the Laurel so long sought, & we shall have gained it. I therefore pray that your Excellency will use your utmost influence in bringing about, and consummating this all important project either by prompting Yucatan to take the Territory up to 95 Degrees, & then come in by way of annexation, or send our Troops there and take the province of Tobasco embracing the point in question. We then being a Barrier, Yucatan would naturally fall in.

With high consideration I have the honor to be one of your constituents and devoted ....

LEVERITT TREADWELL

P.S. That your Excellency may have some knowledge of your communicator I would respectfully state that I was born at Ipswich Mass: Brot up in the Consulate of the United States at Lisbon by Hon. Wm. Jarvis Consul Genl & Charge des affairs to that Court; at the age of 21 was admitted a Partner of Mr. Jarvis's extensive Commission House, doing business under the firm of Wm. Jarvis & Co. So continued until our war with England, when we withdrew. Am Brother of John White Treadwell President of Merchants Bank, Salem Mass. Have been a resident of this City since the year 1816 at which time I married. Was the first American permitted to sell a cargo in Mexico after their declaration of independance during the presidency of Iturbide.[4] Have since that time had frequent commercial intercourse with Vera Cruz & Tobasco, speak the Spanish Language about as well as my own, and am at my countries service. The following faint sketch is respectfully submitted.[5]

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; Polk's AE on the cover states that Polk received this letter on September 7, 1846.

1. For Treadwell's identification, see his biographical postscript below.

2. Darien is located on the Isthmus of Panama, which was a part of New Granada (Colombia) from 1821 to 1903.

3. In November 1846 the State Department sent a confidential agent to Mexico to determine the feasibility of a canal connecting the Tehuantepec and Coatzacoalcos rivers; those findings proved inconclusive. On December 12, 1846, the United States signed the Bidlack-Mallarino Treaty with New Granada granting American transit rights over the Isthmus and safeguarding the neutrality of Panama against European intervention. The United States Senate ratified the treaty on June 3, 1848.

4. Agustín Cosme Damián de Iturbide y Arámburu initially served as an officer in the Spanish colonial army and fought against the revolutionary forces; he led his troops to switch sides in 1820 and two years later at the invitation

of the Mexican Congress took the title of "Agustín I, Consitutional Emperor of Mexico." Overthrown by republicans in 1823, Iturbide went into temporary exile in Spain and England; upon his return to Mexico in 1824 he was arrested and executed by republican authorities.

5. On the bottom half of the third page Treadwell added a crude ink pen map of (1) the Island of Cuba; (2) the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico with labels designating Florida, Texas, Mexico, Yucatan, and Guatemala; (3) the location of the "Guozocoalcos" and "Tequantipec" rivers; and (4) the Pacific coastline of Mexico and Guatemala with a notation stating that the "Tequantipec is about 900 miles from Panama."

## FROM J. KNOX WALKER

My dear Sir, Nashville T. September 4, 1846

I would have written you sooner in relation to your business in Columbia &c but that I knew Col. Campbell wrote you fully in relation to most of the matters to which my attention was directed by you.[1]

The proceeds of the draft for $3000 is all vested except about $600 and as far as concluded I will bring you bills of quit claim.

The Paxton[2] tract was sold at the price & time first asked & without any alteration of time. Col. Campbell has executed bond for title when notes are paid. The house & lot in Columbia of yours it is not possible just now to sell at any thing like its value as you regard it. The arrangement for mules &c is nearly completed between Major Childress & Col. C & Campbell will take the property down about the 1st October, probably the last days of September.

I have not seen Lucius Polk to talk with him about the redemption of the home place of yr Mother's, but from what I learn from Father[3] & Campbell I Know it is of no use. Campbell tells me he offered him the store house for it and he wouldn't think of it. I Know he thinks you are determined to improve that place *for yourself* and therefore will pay out Williams[4] debt or make him do it—and he will not give himself much trouble about it.

Dr. Dickinson's estate is still in that unsettled state that it is not known whether Dolly will be sold or not. The last conversation Father had with Miller he preferred not selling her at all if it could be helped & thus it stands.[5] If she is sold Father will buy her in for the old Lady and it can be settled afterwards.

I have nearly or quite settled all my business that I can attend to here or about Columbia—and if Leacock[6] was at home would be ready to start back. He will be at home about the 12 September & Sam

Walker & I will leave for Louisville in about a week from this time, & may be detained there three or four days.

All are well at home.

J. KNOX WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 12, 1846.

1. See Robert Campbell, Jr., to Polk, August 27, 1846.
2. Paxton is not identified further.
3. James Walker.
4. William H. Polk.
5. William G. Dickinson, Dolly, and John Miller. Born and educated in New England, Dickinson moved to Franklin, Tn., in 1816; a prominent surgeon, he was the father of William H. Polk's first wife, Belinda, who died in March of 1844. Dolly was a slave on Dickinson's plantation. Miller is not further identified.
6. Reference probably is to William T. Leacock of Maury County, who was renting Polk's Columbia house.

## FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

United States Hotel

My dear Sir/ Saratoga Springs 5 September 1846

I arrived here an hour ago from Albany & a delightful spot it is. We reached Albany about 4 yesterday afternoon. I went into the Convention & saw that body in session.[1] Many of the members paid their respects to me there & treated me with great kindness: but among this number were none of the peculiar friends of Governor Wright, except, the President Tracy & Governour Kemble. Hoffman was within a few feet of me but did not speak.[2] They all kept aloof from me both at the Hotel where some of them boarded & in the convention.

I called to see Governor Wright & was received very kindly both by him & his lady.[3] There were several persons present, and I had no opportunity of a private conversation with him. As I was retiring he told me that if possible he would come to this place next week & pass a day with me & Mr. Kemble has since told me that this was his intention. *Nous verrons* as father Ritchie says[4].

I have had much conversation with several members of the Convention. The friends of Governor Wright consider, or affect to consider Governor Bouck's appointment[5] as conclusive that your administration has taken sides against Governor Wright & his friends. I have

done you ample justice in this particular; without going too far.

Of one thing I feel quite confident. Your administration is highly popular with the mass of the Democratic party in this State; whilst the Albany Regency is odious.[6] It is to deprive them of power that the Convention, with such unanimity, has deprived the Governor of all patronage. Wright himself, however, still retains much popularity. He will, undoubtedly, be renominated. They will not dare to make any open demonstration against the administration.

Their conduct to me was marked, even that of Cambreleng[7]; although on meeting me accidentally he urged me, in the strongest terms to go home with him on Friday & seemed unwilling to take any denial. He did not call upon me.

Campbell P. White[8] told me that they never said any thing against me & when they did speak of me, spoke in the kindest terms. Their conduct was the more marked on this account. I took no notice of it in word or manner; but circulated among them as joyously as if nothing had occurred. White was the only person who told me he had noticed it. In great haste ....

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS, copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 7, 1846.

1. Reference is to the New York Constitutional Convention of 1846. Between June and October over one hundred delegates fashioned a new state constitution that reflected the people's desire for more democracy and to that end included a provision for the direct election of all state officers. New Yorkers gave their approval in November by a vote of 221,528 to 92,436.

2. A lawyer from Buffalo, N.Y., Albert H. Tracy served as a Democrat in the U.S. House,1819–25, but joined the Whig Party in the 1830's. An ordnance manufacturer from Cold Spring, N.Y., Gouverneur Kemble served two terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1837–41. A lawyer from Herkimer, N.Y., and one of the convention's more outspoken delegates, Michael Hoffman won four terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1825–33, and served three years as canal commissioner, 1833–35.

3. Silas and Clarissa Moody Wright, Jr.

4. A French expression meaning "We shall see."

5. Leader of the conservative wing of the New York Democrats, William C. Bouck served as canal commissioner, 1821–40, and as governor, 1842–44. During the state constitutional convention, Polk appointed him assistant federal treasurer in New York City, a post Bouck held until 1849.

6. Reference is to the powerful Democratic party machine that ably served the political interests of Martin Van Buren.

7. A North Carolinian by birth, Churchill C. Cambreleng achieved success in New York both as a businessman and as a Democratic member of the U.S.

House from 1821 to 1839. In 1847 he bolted his party and headed the Barnburners faction, which included those radical Democrats who opposed the extension of slavery and who later melded into the Republican Party.

8. Here Buchanan cancelled the words, "Several gentlemen" and interlined the name, "Campbell P. White."

## FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir Columbia Ten Sept. 5th 1846

Inclosed you will See Mr Mairs letter,[1] which will give you all the information that I am in possession off respecting your farm. Every thing appears to be opperating well from his letter which I have no doubt is correct. I have been compilled to apprise him of the fact that I would increase your force So that he might have Suitable building ready for them by the time I would get them which will be between the 1st & 10th of Oct. next. I gave you a full history of my preceedings in my last[2] & think it unnessary to repeat what I have allready written. If Mr Mairs conducts him-self as he has done I expect to continue him altho I expect to have to increase his wages. I have no Idie that I can get him fer less than five hundred dollars. I will governed intirely by circumstances when I get down. I will not make a half crop on my farm this year. The worm has been So distructive that the planters in the Praries dare not count on more than a half crop. I was pleased to learn that your crop was good.

ROBT CAMPBELL JR.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 13, 1845.

1. Letter from John A. Mairs has not been found.
2. Campbell to Polk, August 27, 1846.

## TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir: Washington City Sept, 7th, 1846

I have received your letter of the 27th ultimo, and am entirely satisfied with the purchases which you inform me you have made for me. I am glad to learn that you will go down yourself with the property, and that you expect to be at my plantation about the 1st of October. When there you will of course give such directions concerning my business and interests as you may judge proper.

You are right in your estimation that the Bill which you drew on me in favor of *Genl Pillow* did not fall due until the 1st of October. I have paid it off, on protestation, upon having the interest deducted.

You say that you expect to have to increase *Mr Mairs* wages for the next year. Though he now receives fair wages, it is better to give him more than to risk the employment of another man. He understands my business, and has been faithful and done well for the last two years. The hands are satisfied with him and his services are worth more than that of any other man would be. I wish you therefore to employ him upon the best terms you can. If you can do so make the engagement with him for the next two years. I wish you to pay him off whatever is due him when you go down and at the end of the present year make arrangements to have him paid punctually, as I do not wish to pay interest on his wages after they fall due.

As to my *blacksmith Harry* I leave it intirely to you to decide whether he shall be brought home or not. As you say his habits are becoming bad, there may be danger if he remains where he is, that he may indulge to such an extent as to destroy himself. When I suggested to you in my last letter[1] the idea of bringing him home my impression was that he could do my own blacksmith's work, which will be increased as my farm is enlarged, and might at the same time instruct one of my young boys in the trade. If in addition to my own work, he could not get work enough to do for the neighborhood to occupy his time, he might be employed in making such tools as implements of husbandry as would be in demand. I would not fear the example he would set to the other hands, but still I leave it to your better judgement whether to bring him home or not.

I intend to appropriate the proceeds of my present year's crop to a further increase of my force. Several of my men have *wives*, and several of my women have *husbands* in the neighborhoods. Among these I remember that *Addison* and *Gilbert* have *wives*, and *Elizabeth* & *Caroline* (*Clairs* daughters) have *husbands*, who do not belong to the place.[2] When you go down, if you find that any of their *wives* or *husbands* can be purchased at fair prices, and they are such as you think I ought to buy, you are authorized to purchase them, and draw a *Bill* for the amount on my Commission Merchant *Wm S. Pickett & Co* of New Orleans. In the event you do so you will of course give this Bill sufficient time to run, to enable *Mairs* to have the cotton shipped, in time to be sold before the Bill falls due. My crop last year netted me [...].[3] Most of this was of course taken the price of the bagging, and other articles which you ordered. What it will bring this year I have no idea. The price I have every reason to believe will be as good, if not better,

than last year, but how the crop will turn out I have no knowledge. Out of it must be paid the wages of the overseer for this year, and the articles for the next year which you may order from New Orleans, and all the balance whatever it may be I wish applied to an increase of force. My *Blacksmith Harry* has some children in the neighborhood where he is, and possibly you may be able to procure some of them. If you make any of the purchases suggested, then draw on *Pickett & Co*. If you do not make them, & have to purchase in Tennessee after you return, you must advise me of it before you do so, and I will give further instructions. The increased force should be on the place sometime during the winter, so as to be ready for the next year's crop. But when I learn from you whether you purchase any below or not, and also hear how the crop will turn out, I will know better what to do. In the mean time *Mairs* should be asked to clear land this winter for 5 or 6 additional hands to cultivate next year. I think I can buy that many (unless the crop turns out very badly) and if so it ought to be done in time for next years crop.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I shall expect to hear from you while you are at the plantation.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. See Polk to Robert Campbell Jr., August 15, 1846.
2. Polk's slaves and their spouses are not identified further.
3. Blurred ink transfer renders the sum illegible.

## FROM JAMES H. CAUSTEN[1]

Sir: Washington Sep. 7, 1846

In pursuance of my suggestion submitted some days ago, and by your approval, I have the honor to transmit, herewith, sundry Books and Documents relating to the class of claims to indemnity of our citizens, on account of spoliations committed on their commerce by the French, prior to the ratification of the Convention with France of the 30th of September 1800.

I have not felt at liberty to reduce the mass of documents, including Speeches in pamphlet, nor to remove the slips from large volume, placed there by the members of Congress, who examined the subject, supposing they might facilitate your contemplated research. The wide spread ramifications of the details extend to very many other volumes

and documents, which your reading and required elucidations will bring into view or requisition; and these, or any explanations you may desire within my power, it will be my duty and my pleasure to furnish at your convenience, and whenever you may desire my attendance.

Permit me to add, Mr. President, that the course I am now taking is at my own impulse, without consultation with any person whatever; and that my sole motive is to enable you to discover, as I have done, the great truths in this case from the text itself.

As you cannot be supposed to have knowledge of my standing and degree of confidence to which I may be entitled, I beg leave to refer to my friend Governor Marcy who has honored me with many kind attentions.

JAMES H. CAUSTEN

P.S. Be pleased to return to me the Books &c when you have done with them.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. A Washington lobbyist, Causten, who was born in Baltimore in 1788, unsuccessfuly sought monetary compensation for the loss of American ships and goods incurred during the naval war between the French and the British in the late 1790's.

## FROM JOHN FAIRFIELD

My Dear Sir, Saco Sept 7. 1846

From all I see and hear I regard it as highly probable that Mr. Bancroft will go to England and Judge Mason take his place at the head of the Navy Depart. If such be the case allow me to suggest the expediency, to use no stronger term, of taking the *Hon. Nathan Clifford*[1] of this state for Atty Genl. I make this suggestion at the request of my colleague, elect, Hon. Jas. W. Bradbury[2] and other distinguished democrats.

I have heard Peirce of N. H. and Rantoul of Mass named for the same place.[3] Of Peirce I have nothing to say, except that he is a noble fellow and deserving of the highest honors of his party. But with the appt. of Judge of the Supreme Court[4] sub tera uns &c &c[5] has not N.H. been remembered? And may I not well ask what claims has old federal Massachusetts to another such a notice and especially, by the appointment of a man so obnoxious to the true democracy of New England as Rantoul? On this point I would say much but I forbear, and will only add that I hope it will not be entirely forgotten that there is such a state in the Union as Maine, and that her democracy probably have

*some* sense of what appertain to *justice*.

Our election[6] comes off next monday and I wish I could give you a more flattering account of our prospects than to say, I *fear* there may be no election of Governor. This will be exceedingly mortifying to us, the causes of which I can give you at another time. Hammons and Smart, both excellent nominations, will probably be elected to the next Congress. So will Wiley [and] Williams. Clapp's election is doubtful. McCrate cannot be elected as all accounts from his district show. Kennebec will as usual return a whig.[7]

I am doing what I can to secure our success and shall continue my efforts up to the moment of election.

J. FAIRFIELD

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

1. A lawyer and two-term member of the Maine House, 1830–34, Nathan Clifford won election as a Democrat to the U.S. House in 1839 and 1841; he served as U.S. attorney general under Polk, 1846–48, and sat as associate justice on the bench of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1858 until 1881.

2. A lawyer and newspaper editor from Maine, James W. Bradbury served as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate from 1847 to 1853 and later led his state's War Democrats during the Civil War.

3. Franklin Pierce and Robert Rantoul, Jr. A congressman, 1833–37, and senator, 1837–42, from New Hampshire, Pierce attained the rank of brigadier general in the Mexican-American war and served as president of the United States from 1853 to 1857. A Massachusetts lawyer and Democratic state legislator, Rantoul served as U.S. district attorney for that state from 1845 to 1849; elected to U.S. Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Daniel Webster, he served for one month before winning election to the U.S. House, where he served from 1851 until his death in August 1852.

4. Levi Woodbury.

5. Phrase not identified.

6. Reference is to the controversial state elections of 1846, in which John W. Dana, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, failed to win a majority of the popular vote but won election in the Democratic-controlled state legislature.

7. David Hammons served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1847–49; Ephraim K. Smart held a variety of state offices before serving as a Democrat in the U.S. House for two non-consecutive terms between 1847 and 1853; James S. Wiley served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1847–49; Hezekiah Williams held a number of local offices before serving two terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1845–49; Asa W. H. Clapp served one term as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1847–49; John D. McCrate served the Democratic Party of Maine as a state legislator and customs collector before winning one term in the U.S. House, 1845–47. With the exception of Clapp, who earned a living as a merchant, all of the candidates practiced law.

TO LOUIS McLANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept. 7th 1846

I learn from the newspapers that you have arrived in safety in the United States. Although I thought it probable that you would return in the last Steamer, still it was possible that you might delay your departure until the sailing of the Steamer of the 4th Instant, and in view of such a possibility I wrote to you on the 12th ultimo. That letter you have not of course received. In it I informed you that it was not until the 1st of August, that *Mr. Buchanan* communicated to me his final determination, which was to remain in the Cabinet. When I wrote to you in June and July last I had strong reasons to believe that *Mr. Buchanan* would before the close of the Session of Congress, elect to go on the Bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, and in that event, it gave me pleasure to invite you to accept the office of Secretary of State. When I wrote I confidently believed that the State Department would become vacant by the voluntary retirement of *Mr. Buchanan*, and in that event I preferred you to any other citizen to fill it. Though I was mistaken in supposing that the vacany would occur, I beg to assure you that my estimate of your character, and eminent qualifications to fill this or any other station under your Government remains unchanged. I saw your son *Robert* shortly after it was known that the office of Secretary of State, would not at present become vacant, and conferred with him fully on the subject.

I write you this hasty note, apprehending that you might be at some loss to understand, how it was that upon your arrival in the United States, this matter was not in the condition in which you had reason to believe it would be.

I hope as soon as you recover from the effects of your voyage, as may suit your convenience, to see you at Washington.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Baltimore, Md.; marked "*Private*."

FROM BRIGHAM YOUNG ET AL.[1]

Cutlers Park

Sir, Omaha Nation. Sept 7th, 1846

Since our communication of the 9th Ultimo.[2] to your Excellency, the Omaha Indians have returned from their summer hunt and we have had an interview in general council, with their Chiefs and Braves, who

expressed a willingness that we should tarry on their lands and use what wood and timber would be necessary for our convenience while we were preparing to prosecute our journey as may be seen from a duplicate of theirs to us of the 31st of Aug. which will be presented by Col. Kane.[3]

In council they were much more specific than in their writings, and Big Elk[4] in behalf of his nation requested us to lend them teams to draw their corn at harvest and help keep it after it was deposited; to assist them in building houses, making fields, doing some blacksmithing, Ect. Ect. and to teach some of their young men to do the same, and also keep some goods and trade with them while we tarry among them.

We responded to all their wishes in the same spirit of kindness manifested by them, and told them we would do them all the good we could, with the same proviso they made, if the President was willing and this is why we write.

Hitherto we have kept aloof from all Indian intercourse, except in councils as referred to, and giving them a few beeves when hungry, but we have the means of doing them a favor by instructing them in agriculture Mechanic arts &c if it is desirable. It might subject us to some inconvenience in our impoverished situation to procure goods for their accommodation, and yet if we could do it we might in return, receive as many skins and furs, as would prove a valuable temporary substitute for worn-out clothing, and tents in our camp, which would be no small blessing.

US Mail division of our camp is some 2 or 300 miles west of this, on the mush bottoms among the Puma Indians, where similar feelings are manifested towards our people.

Should your excellency consider the requests, of the Indians for instruction &c. reasonable and signify the same to us, we will give them all that information in Mechanism and farming, the nature of the case will admit, which will give us the opportunity of getting the assistance of their men to help us herd & labor, which we have much needed since the organization of the Battalion.

A License, giving us permission to trade with the indians while we are tarrying on, or passing through their lands, made out to the name of Newel K. Whitney our agent in camp, would be a favor to our people, and our red neighbors; all of which is submitted to your Excellency's consideration and the confidence of Colonel Kane. Done in behalf of the council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, at the

time and place before mentioned, in the camp of Israel.

BRIGHAM YOUNG

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*private*." Cover reads "*From the Mormons* Favor of Colonel Kane."

1. Letter drafted by Willard Richards, clerk for the Mormons, and signed by "Brigham Young President."

2. See Brigham Young et al. to Polk, August 9, 1846.

3. Thomas L. Kane.

4. A prominent Omaha leader and powerful orator, Big Elk had visited Washington in 1821 and 1837 to negotiate treaties for his tribe. In 1846 he gave the Mormons permission to travel across Omaha lands.

## FROM FRANKLIN PIERCE

My dear Sir Concord N.H. September 8, 1846

Your letter of the 27th ult. was received a week since.[1] Nothing could have been more unexpceted and considering the importance of the proposition, in a great variety of aspects. I trust you will not think there has been an unreasonable delay in arriving at a decision. With my pursuits for the last few years and my present tasks, no position, if I were, on the whole, in a situation to desire public employment, could be so acceptable as the one, which your partiality has proffered. I ought not perhaps in justice to the high motives by which I know you are governed to attribute your selection to personal friendship, but I cannot doubt, that your judgment in the matter has been somewhat warped by your feelings. When I saw the manner in which you had cast your Cabinet I was struck by the fact, that from the entire range of my acquaintances formed at Washington, you could not have called around you men with whom it was my fortune to be better acquainted or of whom I entertain a more delightful recollection than Mr Buchanan, Mr Walker, Mr Mason & Mr Johnson. A place in your Cabinet thus far, so far as personal association is concerned, could not be more agreeable had the whole been the subject of my own choice. When I add, that your important measures in the foreign & home administration of the Government have commanded not merely the approbation of my judgment, but my grateful acknowledgment as an American citizen, you will see how desirable on every ground connected with your administration, the office tendered would be to me. And yet, after mature consideration I am constrained to decline.

Altho the early years of my manhood were devoted to public life it was never really suited to my taste. I longed, as I am sure you

must often have done, for the quiet & independence that belongs only to the private citizen and now at forty, I feel that desire stronger than ever. Coming unexpectedly, as this offer does, it would be difficult if not impossible to arrange between this & the first of Novr the business of an extensive practice in a manner at all satisfactory to myself or to those who have committed their interests to my care and who rely upon my services. Besides you know, that Mrs Pierce's[2] health while at Washington was very delicate, it is I fear is even more so now, the responsibility which the proposed change would necessarily impose upon her ought probably in itself to constitute an unsurmountable objection to leaving our quiet home for a public station at Washington. When I resigned my seat in the senate in 1842 I did it with the fixed purpose never again to be voluntarily separated from my family for any considerable length of time except at the call of my Country in time of war. And yet this consequence for the reason before stated on account of the climate would be very likely to result from my acceptance.

These are some of the considerations which have influenced my decision. You will, I am sure, appreciate my motives. You will not believe, that I have weighed my personal convenience and ease against the the public interest, especially as the office is one, which if not sought, would be readily accepted by Gentlemen, who would bring to your aid attainments and qualification vastly superior to mine. Please to present Mrs Pierce's kindest regards with my own to Mrs Polk.

FRANK PIERCE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. See Polk to Franklin Pierce, August 27, 1846, where in Polk offers Pierce the post of U.S. attorney general.

2. Jane Means Appleton Pierce.

## FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

Sir, Washington Sept 9. 1846.

With the most grateful acknowledgement of the confidence and personal regard with which you have honored me since you associated me with your administration, and of the high distinction which you have this day conferred upon me, I resign my office as Secretary of the Navy, and on receiving my instructions shall repair without delay to the new post[1] which you have assigned me.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover states he received this letter on September 9 and responded on September 10, 1846.

1. Minister to Great Britain.

## FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Sir. Washington City. Sept. 9th 1846

I have recd. the commission as secretary of the Navy, which you have done me the honor to send me. I accept the appointment with a full sense of the arduous duties assumed, and with a grateful sense of your Kindness and confidence. I hereby resign the office of Attorney General of the United States.[1]

J. Y. MASON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 9, 1846.

1. On the same day Polk appointed Mason to serve as acting attorney general until an appointment could be made to that office.

## TO GEORGE BANCROFT

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept. 10th 1846

In accepting your resignation as Secretary of the Navy, it gives me pleasure to bear testimony to the able and efficient manner, in which you have discharged the duties of that station. I take occasion to add that the greatest harmony has prevailed in our personal and official intercourse, during the eighteen months which have elapsed since I called you to aid me in conducting my administration. In retiring from the Post which you have so honourably filled, to assume the more responsible duties of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Brittain you will bear with you my sincere prayers for your future welfare and prosperity.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MHi. Addressed locally.

## FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir/ Saratoga Springs 10 September 1846

I enclose you a letter which I received yesterday from Governor Wright.[1] From its character, as well as its express injunctions, you will please to consider it as well as the copy of my answer *strictly confidential*. You will perceive that my appoinment of the Atlas[2] was well

timed. Please to keep both safely for me until my return.

I have not the least doubt but that Governor Wright will be renominated. Indeed Judge Douglass[3] told me, last night, that this had been admitted to him by Mr. Croswell.[4] Why then does the Argus keep up such a bitter war against the Governor? Should that party cause his defeat, either by remaining at home on the day of election, or voting for the Whig Candidate, (wh. is impossible) this will prostrate them & in the end do the Governor no injury. Mr. Van Buren, I understand, is now in Albany. I do think from what I learn that his influence & that of his son John[5] with the Governor are propitious.

I think I cannot be mistaken in assuring you that your administration is decidedly popular with the whole party in this State. Neither branch of it will attempt any serious opposition: and I predict that Congress will return in a much better state of feeling than when they separated. I wish Stevenson's Regiment[6] was fairly off. It is now an eye sore.

There is one small portion of Mr. McLane's generally discreet letter[7] which will be used to annoy us by the 54º 40' men.

It is my present purpose to leave this place for Buffalo on Monday morning next & from thence proceed through Erie to Meadville where my sister Mrs. Yates[8] resides; unless I should make an arrangement to meet Governor Wright on the North River. The temperature here is delightful, though we have fires in the morning & evening. Most of the fashionables have dispersed.

Will you please to remember me, very kindly, to Mrs. Polk, Mrs. Walker & Miss Rucker.[9]

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 12, 1846, with its enclosures "to be returned to Mr B."

1. Buchanan's exchange of correspondence with Silas Wright, Jr., is not further identified.

2. The *Albany Atlas*, a staunchly Democratic newspaper, began publication in 1841.

3. George Douglass, a merchant from New York City.

4. A strong supporter of Martin Van Buren, Edwin Croswell edited the *Albany Argus*.

5. A lawyer and member of the Barnburner wing of the New York Democracy, John Van Buren won a single term in 1845 to the office of New York attorney general; he married Elizabeth Vanderpoel, the daughter of James Vanderpoel, who was a prominent Albany lawyer and wealthy landholder.

6. Toward the end of September, 1846, the First New York Volunteers, under

Colonel Jonathan D. Stevenson, deployed to California.

7. See Louis McLane to Polk, August 2, 1846.
8. Maria Yates.
9. Sarah Naomi (Sally) Walker; Johanna Rucker, Polk's niece.

## FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear Sir Missipia Sept 10the 1846

Received yours dated 31 of agust wishing to nough the helth of your people and your plantation—in gineral.

we are all well at this time has Bin generally helthy. I am sorry that I have to state to you that we have had a worm on our coten that has et all of the leaves of and I think the top bols is ingered. It is a gineral thing in this naborhood ten days a go I had a find prospect for coten. I stil think I shal Make More than I dyed last yeare but nough cant make a hevy crop of coten. I shal Make a good crop of corn.

The oats turned out well I dyed not sough a large crop of them. We have about 30 acros grubed & and the under groth taken out. We have a bout 30000 thousand pounds of seed coten out of the field started the gin yesterday. I think the stock all are doughing will.

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 25, 1846.

## TO DAVID WILMOT[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept 10th 1846

I have received your letter of the 3rd Instant. I had not forgotten my promise to our friend *Beaumont*,[2] and before your letter came to hand, I had written to him[3] tendering the office of Commissioner of Public Buildings to his acceptance. The present Commissioner[4] has resigned to take effect on the 1st of November, and I have invited *Mr Beaumont* to take charge of the office at that time. I addressed my letter to Wilkesboro Penn. which I believe is *Mr Beaumont's* residence.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Towanda, Penn., and marked "*Private*."

1. David Wilmot, a lawyer from Towanda, Penn., served three terms in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1845–51; gained prominence as a Free Soil Democrat in 1847 and 1848; played a leading role in the founding of the Republican

Party in 1854; filled a partial term in the U.S. Senate, 1861–63; and sat on the U.S. Court of Claims from 1863 until his death in 1868.

2. Andrew Beaumont served several terms in the Pennsylvania House, 1821, 1822, 1826, and 1849, and two terms in the U.S. House, 1833–37. In March 1847 the Senate rejected Beaumont's nomination as commissioner of public buildings in Washington City.

3. See Polk to Andrew Beaumont, September 4, 1846.

4. William Noland served in the post from 1834 until 1846.

## TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir: Washington City Sept. 14th 1846

In your letter of the 27th ultimo, you informed me that you had sold my land (the *Royall* Place) West of town to *Mr. McGrady*.[1] The title of the land as you will find by examining the Registrars office, at Columbia, is vested in *Samuel H. Laughlin* and myself jointly. This makes it necessary that *Laughlin* should join me in the conveyance, and I accordingly forward to you Power of Attorney from him ratifying the sale which you have made. Half of the purchase money when collected will be due to *Laughlin*. I send you this Power because without it, you could not make a perfect title to *McGrady*.

I received on yesterday your letter[2] enclosing one from *Mr. Mairs*, and am glad to hear that at the time he wrote the prospects of a good crop were flattering. If you find another opportunity to purchase one other hand before you start down you can do so, and draw on me for the money.

I shall be anxious to hear from you as soon as you reach my place, whether the worms which have been so destructive in many parts of the South, have made their appearance in my crop.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. Misspelling of Ephraim W. McRady.

2. See Campbell to Polk, September 5, 1846.

## FROM LAURA WILSON POLK TATE

My dear brother. September 14th 1846.

Marshall[1] left home on the 10th for Washington in good health. Marshall has grown larger and stronger than I expected to see him. But I do not feel happy about Marshall. The fact is I feel very un-

happy all the time. I do not like to have him go to that school.[2] We all know my dear brother that all roman Catholic priests are governed by false principles. The highest authority we have is the Bible. If they do not make roman catholics of our children they will disgust them with religeon and make infidels of them which is worse. While Marshall was here every week he had a foolish pamphlet sent him setting forth the exalted virtues of Roman catholic priests, talking about the Virgin Mary the cross and the Holy saints. This we are taught to believe is idolatry. For Marshall to have this constantly before his eyes, to have him *taught it* every day by example, it is obliged to effect his Religious character—to me it is perfectly tormenting to think of it— let me beg you my dear brother let me entreat you to take my child from that school—if you regard his future happiness—or my peace of mind I know that you will. I sent Marshall back to you because I know that you are more capable of directing him than I am and because I believe that you love him, and I know that he loves you very much and has the highest respect for your character. I observed him carefully to find this fact—and I was indeed pleased to find it so, for I know that it is useless to place a child under the care of any one if they do not love and respect them.

Now my dear brother I have said all that I wish to say on this subject, and I beg of you not to be offended with me. I feel so badly about it that I am obliged to write, and I have no one to appeal to but you.

I pray that God may direct you and make you happy—your sister who loves and honours you.

L TATE

[P.S.] Give my love to sister Sarah. Tell her that I would be pleased to read a letter from her.

LS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's cover AE states that he received this letter on September 18 and answered on September 24, 1846.

1. Marshall T. Polk, Jr.
2. Georgetown College.

## TO J. GEORGE HARRIS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept 16th 1846

Your private and confidential letter of the 26th ultimo,[1] was received several days ago, but my time has been so constantly occupied, that I have had no opportunity to acknowledge it sooner. The facts disclosed in your letter are of an astounding character, contemplating, as they

did, before they were discovered, a stupendous fraud upon the community. As however the imputations which they carry, do not seem to attach to any office of the U.S. Government, but are confined to indivuduals, unconnected in any way with the Government, I do not see that I can take any action on the subject. Should it hereafter appear that any officer of the Government, is concerned directly or indirectly in the contemplated fraud, I will not fail to take prompt measures, to remove him from the public service, and cause him to be otherwise punished in such manner as the laws may authorize. *Mr. Bancroft* informs me that before he retired from the Navy Department, he issued an order trusting you to go to sea. *Pursers* usually perform a cruize shortly after their appointment, and I have no doubt you will cheerfully perform any duty which may be required of you. I think Mr. B. told me that you would go to sea in the *Albany*, but you will be fully advised upon the subject, by the Department if you have not already been so.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Memphis, Tenn.; and marked "*Private*."

1. See Harris to Polk, August 26, 1846.

## TO FREDERICK P. STANTON

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept 16th 1846

My time has been so much occupied, by my official duties, that I have found it impossible to give an earlier answer to your letter of the 25th ultimo.[1] Indeed I have but little opportunity to attend to the correspondence of my friends and scarcely write a letter in a week, and some times not one in a month.

Your letter gave me the first inclination I had received in relation to the removal of *Mr. Watkins*[2] as Navy Agent at Memphis. I certainly had not contemplated, and do not contemplate such a step. I have but a slight personal acquaintance with *Mr. Watkins*, but have long known his character to be that of a high-minded and honorable gentleman, and as far as I know he has been a faithful public officer. It is due in frankness that I should say that I have heard that he is in some way associated with an insurance or trust company at Memphis, (perhaps as President of the same) and that this has been alledged as an objection to him as Navy Agent. I think, if the fact be as it has been represented to me, that it would be desirable for him to disassociate himself from such an institution while he handles the responsible station of Navy Agent. In regard to the importance of the Navy Agent at

Memphis, you know my opinion. At the next Session of Congress, I will take pleasure in asserting any proper influence which I may possess to have it restored to what Congress contemplated it should be, when it was established. I hear from the Navy Department that *Purser Harris*[3] will go to sea in the course of a short time.

I expected to hear a few days ago, from a letter addressed by my old friend *L. H. Coe* to the Secretary of War,[4] and which was submitted to me, that he seems to be much dissatisfied, with the appointments which I made by and with the advise and consent of the Senate, of surgeon and assistant surgeon to the Tennessee Mounted Regiment.[5] In his letter to the Secretary of War *Mr. Coe* demanded all the recommendations of *Drs. Robards* & *Washington*[6] (the persons presented by him) and also all the recommendations of the persons appointed. Although no citizen has a right to make such a demand, and although there was no obligation on the War Department to depart from the established practice in such cases, yet I would not believe that *Mr. Coe* was willing to censure without just cause, and in order that he might be fully possessed of the information on which I acted, I directed copies of the papers which he desired, to be transmsitted to him. I send you herewith duplicate copies of the same papers which were transmitted to him, including a copy of his own letter, recommending *Dr. Robards* & *Dr. Washington*.[7] I appointed *Dr. Alsup* and *Dr. Stout*: They were both volunteers in the ranks, serving with the Regiment.[8] You will perceive that *Dr. Alsup* was recommended by the three field officers, by six Captains & six Lieutenants of his Regiment, and that *Dr. Stout* was recommended by *Captain Porter*[9] and some of the first men of Memphis and by yourself. Surely when *Mr. Coe* learns these facts he will find no cause of Complaint. In *Mr. Coe's* recommendation of *Dr. Robards* you will perceive that he states that he was "personally known to the President." This is true. *Dr. Robards* has resided at Columbia (my own village) for several year, and I think its possible that if *Mr. Coe* had known him as well and as long as I have, he would not have been likely to take any interest in his success. Had I appointed him, it would have been a matter of astonishment to my friends and *Mr. Coe's* friends in Maury, where he is best known. He had no claims whatever on me, and none upon the score of superior qualifications. I am sure if I could see *Mr. Coe* for five minutes I could satisfy him that I was right in the selections which I made. They were volunteers in the ranks & they were represented to be well qualified, and I have no doubt they are certainly satisfactory to the Regiment. This is a small matter, in the midst of the pressure upon my time, about which to write you so long a letter. I do so because *Mr. Coe* has been heretofore my constant friend,

and *your friend* (for I have often conversed with you in relation to him) that I have never entertained for him any other that the most friendly feelings. I will only add that in tendering to *Mr. Coe* a staff appointment with the rank of Major, it was far from my interests to incur his displeasure. It was the best as the law stood at this time, that I had in my power. I had heard that he was with the troops of Memphis; & supposed given that circumstance that it might be acceptable to him. I surely did not intend by it to offend him, as I apprehend I have done. Afterwards Congress authorized me to appoint the *Brigadier* and *Majr Generals*. *Mr. Coe* had not been presented by any of his friends for either of these stations. *Genl Pillow* had been strongly recommended, and among others by *Jonas E. Thomas* (afterward elected Col. of the Mounted Regiment), before he left Middle Tennessee, on the march, by *Gen. Richard H. Allen* of Lawrence Co. and others. I appointed him & think I appointed a good officer, but did not mean by doing so to disparage any others. I could not have meant to wound *Mr. Coe's* feelings, for I had no knowledge written from himself or his friends, that he requested or sought the situation.

I write you thus fully because I dislike to have incur the displeasure of as old a friend as *Mr. Coe* has been, and that too without the slightest ground for it, and that you may if you think proper, avail yourself of some suitable occasion to hold a conversation with him, and state to him the facts as they are. This I would not do towards any one, for whom I had not intertained the sincere regard I have ever done for *Mr. Coe*. You know my opinions of him, as expressed to you on more than one occasion, and my *intentions* in regard to him, should a proper opportunity occur. It is because I dislike to lose, the friendship of such a man, from a total misconception, as it might be, of the grounds upon which I have acted, that I make these statements to you. Although my letter is *private,* you are at liberty to communicate its contents to *Mr. Coe*.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. *Dr. McKnight*[10] who was recommended by *Mr. Coe*, was recently appointed a surgeon. He was recommended also by the Commandant of the Regiment after its organization on the *Rio Grande*. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Memphis, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. See Stanton to Polk, August 25, 1846.
2. Joseph S. Watkins.
3. J. George Harris.
4. William L. Marcy.

5. Organized in Memphis in June 1846, the 1st Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment was comprised of 944 men and distinquished itself in several battles during the Mexican-American War.

6. H. R. Robards (spelled variously "Robarts" or "Roberts") later served as a surgeon in the 1st Tennessee Infantry Volunteer Regiment; J. S. Washington is not identified further.

7. Enclosures not found.

8. On May 31, 1846, George M. Alsup, a physician from Statesville, Tenn., received a presidential promotion to surgeon of the 1st Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment; on August 7, 1846, John W. Stout assumed his duties as assistant surgeon.

9. N. R. Porter of Lewis County, Tenn., served as adjutant, 1st Tennessee Mounted Infantry from June 1846 until his death in April 1847.

10. A physician from Memphis, David McKnight received in June 1846 a commission as surgeon, 2nd Tennessee Infantry Regiment.

## FROM JOHN T. LEIGH

Yolabusha, County, Miss. September 17, 1846

Leigh reports that an "army worm" has devastated the cotton crop throughout the region of Polk's plantation in Mississippi. He explains that for those plants which had not yet reached maturity "there is not *one single leaf* left upon a stalk." Although he commends the efforts of John A. Mairs, Polk's overseer, Leigh predicts that the president will lose over half his cotton crop. Leigh notes, however, that the president's corn crop is good and that his slaves are healthy (unlike his own, many of whom are ill with whooping cough). After providing this report, Leigh then requests that Polk sell him Caroline, for the sake of reuniting her with Patrick, her husband. He hopes that this transaction might ensure that Patrick would "*be always at home*." Leigh offers some encouraging comments regarding Polk's performance as president. He closes with a desire that Polk and his family might eventually retire to Mississippi.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 28, 1846.

## FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Murfreesboro, Tenn., September 20, 1846

Childress requests Polk's assistance in completing a complicated land transaction with a purchaser from Alabama. Childress further relates that he, most of his family, and virtually all of his slaves have been sick for several weeks with "fever & whooping cough." Among the sick is a slave boy whom Childress purchased for Polk. Childress informs Polk that he will not send the slave until the illness subsides lest he infect the president's other field hands. Childress

closes with a report that Robert Campbell, Jr., will soon depart with several mules destined for Polk's plantation in Mississippi.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 29, 1846.

## TO WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept 21st 1846

I have received your letter of the 17th Instant, requesting me to furnish you with a copy of a letter which you addressed to me during the last year,[1] upon the subject of "entering into a Treaty with Texas." After considerable search I have found the letter to which I suppose you refer, and transmit to you herewith a copy of it. Being much engaged myself, the copy was prepared by a young gentleman[2] fully in my confidence, who is acting as my Private Secretary, during the absence of *Col. Walker* on a visit to Tennessee. If the letter or copy of which I send you is not the one to which you refer, write to me, and I will make a further search for it.

I continue to be constantly employed in my office. The adjournment of Congress, has given me but little respite from the daily duties which press upon me. I am helped however with my usual good health & can endure, as you know as much labor as most men.

*Judge Mason* and myself conversed a few days ago in relation to our contemplated visit to the University[3] at the next commencement. Unless something unforeseen shall occur to prevent it, we will make the visit, when I hope we may have the pleasure of your company.

Will you be pleased to make my kind salutations to *Mrs. Haywood*?

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Raleigh, N.C., and marked "*Private.*"

1. See Haywood to Polk, August 25, 1845.

2. Reference probably is to William V. Voorhies, William H. Polk's law partner in 1844.

3. John Y. Mason traveled with Polk on a visit to their alma mater, the University of North Carolina, from May 28 to June 5, 1847.

## TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept 22nd 1846

This letter is not written in the official character assigned me by the Constitution of "Commander in Chief of the Army." It is unofficial and

you will regard it as from a private friend. All military orders will go through the War Department.

You will learn from an official communication this day addressed to *Majr. Genl Patterson* by the Secretary of War,[1] that it has been ordered to send an expedition to consist of 3000 or 4000 men, from the lower Rio Grande, to the Southern and Western portion of the Department or Province of *Tamaulipas*, with an aim to take and hold *Tampico*, & other important places in that Province. You will learn further that *Brigadier General Shields* and *yourself* will constitute a part of the expedition and will be under the command of *General Patterson*. The communications to *Genl Patterson* will no doubt be made known to *Genl Shields* and *yourself* as he has been instructed to consult you upon the several points embraced in it. A copy of an order to *Majr Genl Taylor* on the subject has been enclosed to *Genl Patterson*.

The Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs[2] having declined to accept our overtures to reopen negotiations, with a view to conclude a peace just and honorable to both countries, no alternative is left but to abandon the war or to prosecute it with the utmost possible energy. I hope *Genl Taylor* may be able to advance with his column to *San Louis de Potosi*, and that the column under *Genl Patterson* with the aid of our squadron in the Gulf, may be able to take and hold *Tampico*, and indeed the whole Province of *Tamaulipas*. I have great confidence in your sagacity and vigor & have no doubt you will prove yourself to be worthy of the commission you have should an opportunity be afforded you to meet the enemy. Our informatioon here is too limited to determine whether this expedition should move by land or water. That will be left to the decision of *Genl Patterson*, who will consult *Genl Shields* and *yourself* upon this point. The necessary instruction will be given him to have four or five large steam boats—with lighters—all laden with munitions and supplies ordered to the Brazos Santiago. If it shall be determined to go by sea to the Bay of *Santander*, and then by land via *Soto la Marina* to *Tampico*, or to any other point on the coast, these Steamboats, under the convoy of a Vessel of War will be ready, to transport the troops. The Bay of *Santander* is the point you will remember at which *Genl Mina*[3] landed in the Mexican Revolution. Should it be determined to take the expedition by land, the supplies furnished by these transports will the furnish the army. *Tampico* is deemed to be a very important point for a depot and we must possess it.

I request that you will write me fully, giving such information as you possess, in relation to the topography of the country on the coast, its scenery, the character of the population, the difficulties to be encoun-

tered in conducting a campaign through it, and any other information or suggestions you may think proper to make. Your letters will not of course be regarded as official, but still they may and no doubt will carry information useful to the Government.

My impression is that if we are successful in taking *Tampico* and *San Louis de Potosi*, the enemy will soon sue for peace. The healthy season is approaching and we must make a vigorous effort to bring about that desirable result. I have no military experience and would not venture to set an opinion against that of military men, but I have a strong conviction that it will be impossible to conduct a successful military campaign in such a country as Mexico, with a long and heavy train of baggage and guns. *Bonaparte* conducted some of his most brilliant campaigning without them: Genl Jackson was never encumbered with them, and from all I can learn of the Mexican history they have never been used in the wars in that country. It strikes me that pack-mules and light artillery are all that are needed, especially in marching through the interior. Should heavy guns be needed on the coast they can furnished from the squadron. These are however mere suggestions.

I look to the movements of the army with great anxiety. Having been fortunate enough to accomplish & have carried out, most of the leading measures of my administration during the late Session of Congress, I am the more desirous to bring the Mexican War to an honorable close. It is the only matter which now gives me much concern. I hope by the meeting of Congress in December, to be able to announce that our army has conquered and are in possession of all the Northern Provinces, including the whole of *Tamaulipas*. Our squadron in the Pacific we learn are in possession of *Montery*, the *Bay of San Francisco*, and every considerable place on that coast. *Genl Kierney*[4] will be at the head of a land force of between 2000 and 3000 men, in Upper California, before the Spring opens, unless some unexpected disaster befalls him. Though I have written a long letter I have done so in great haste, and more for the purpose of eliciting information from you, than of communicating it to you.

Be pleased to make my respectful regards to *Genl Patterson* and *Genl Shields*.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to the headquarters of Tennessee Volunteers, Mexico, and marked "*Private & Confidential.*"

1. William L. Marcy.

2. A Mexican jurist, Manuel de la Peña y Peña assumed the duties of

foreign minister in 1845 and later served as provisional president, 1847-48.

3. A Spanish soldier turned Mexican revolutionary, Franciso Javier Mina won a number of battles before his capture and execution in 1817.

4. Stephen W. Kearny.

## FROM RICHARD RUSH

Lydenham near Philadelphia, September 24. 1846.

Rush discusses his plans to publish a collection of nearly forty letters by George Washington; and, as a gesture of thanks for Polk's assistance with this endeavor, he encloses copies of two letters[1] bearing the former president's autograph. Rush further expresses his concerns about the upcoming state elections in Pennsylvania. Although he believes that the Democratic Party will prevail, he notes that the Whigs have conducted an aggressive campaign with the president's tariff policy their main target. Rush closes with praise for Polk's veto of the French spoliation bill.[2]

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on September 25, 1846.

1. Enclosures not found.

2. Designed to satisfy outstanding claims by various American citizens for shipping losses during the nation's Quasi-War with France in the late 1790's, the bill called for the appropriation of $5,000,000, to be expended in land script. On August 8, 1846, Polk vetoed this bill principally on the grounds that the U.S. government was not liable for damages owed by France.

## TO LAURA WILSON POLK TATE

My Dear Madam: Washington City Sept 24th 1846

I have received your letter of the 14th Instant.[1] *Marshall*[2] reached here in safety on the 16th Instant, and that night had a slight chill. I kept him with me the next day, and having no return of the chill he returned to college on the 18th and continues well.

I take a great interest in the welfare of your son, and I may add, perhaps, a greater interest that any one living, except yourself. Your solicitude in regard to him is natural and proper. He is a boy of good principles and fine talents. His playful disposition prevents him from being, as studious as I could wish, but time and experience will I hope correct this. I kept him in my house & sent him to a private school for the first six months after I came to Washington, but I found that in the midst of a constant round of company, there were so many objects to divert his attention, that he neglected his studies. The College of Georgetown (not two miles from the President's House) is an in-

stitution conducted by very learned and able professors, and is under excellent discipline. Many young men of the most respectable families, and from every part of the United States, and of various religious persuasions are sent to it. All that is necessary for a youth at the College, is to be studious to acquire as good an education as can be conferred at any other institution in our country. There are no temptations at it, to lead young men astray, or seduce them into paths of dissipation. The restraint of confinement within narrow limits may be a little unpleasant at first, but is for their ultimate good. I do not apprehend the dangers, which you point out, and think that in *Marshall's* case, no such danger exists. I greatly prefer to have near me, where I can have a constant eye upon him, and give him my counsel and advice, and in the event of sickness that his aunt[3] and myself may give our personal attention to him. I have counselled him since his return and have urged him to increased application in his studies. He has promised me and I have confidence in him that he will be more studious than he has been. One of the tutors against whom he had contracted a prejudice, has left the College, & is in no longer connected with it. I have confidence that he will now do well. If he was at a distance from me, he would be subject to all the dangers, which beset youths of his age, and would have no one near him to counsel of restrain him. My judgement under all the circumstances is, that he had better be continued at Georgetown. If a year or two hence it is deemed best to send him to some other institution I would adjust to it, but at present I am sure it is better for him to remain where he is. We hear from him every day or two; he often visits us, and some of the family see him every week. You may rest assured. that I will give to *Marshall* all the attention and paternal care which you could do, if you were present with him. With my respectful regards to *Dr. Tate*.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Morgantown, N.C.

1. See Laura Tate to Polk, September 14, 1846.
2. Marshall Tate Polk, Jr.
3. Sarah Childress Polk.

## TO NATHAN CLIFFORD

Dear Sir: Washington City Sept 30, 1846

The office of Attorney General of the United States having become vacant in consequence of the resignation of *Judge Mason*, it is my duty to fill it by the appointment of some other citizen. You are fully in-

formed of my opinions and views upon all the leading questions now before the country, and of the General policy of my administration. Presuming from what I have learned of your public character, that you accord with me in those opinions and approve that policy, and that you would cordially cooperate with me in carrying them out, it gives me pleasure to tender for your acceptance the office of Attorney General of the United States. I have selected you for this important station in my Cabinet, because of my conviction of your qualifications to fill it, and that in the discharge of its duties you could render me important aid in conducting my administration.

In the event of your acceptance a due regard to the public interests renders it desirable that you should repair to Washington and enter upon its duties at your earliest convenience.

*Judge Mason* who since his appointment as Secretary of the Navy, has discharged also the duties of Attorney General, ad interim, finds the labors of the two stations greater than he can well bear. His health is rendered somewhat impaired, and poses, the necessity, of relieving him of a portion of his duties at the earliest practicable period.

I shall be pleased to receive from you an early answer.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Newfield, Maine, and marked "*Private*."

## TO JOHN FAIRFIELD

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept 30th 1846

I received in due season you letter of the 7th Instant, in which you request me to appoint the Hon. *Nathan Clifford* of Maine, Attorney General of the United States. I have received also similar letters from your colleague in the Senate *(Mr. Bradbury*[1]*)* and from two or three other leading gentlemen in Maine.

I have but little personal acquaintance with *Mr. Clifford*, but from his public character and the opinion expressed by yourself and others, of his political orthodoxy, and his qualifications to discharge the duties of the office, and presuming, too that he accords with me in opinion, and approves the course of, my administration; and that he will heartily cooperate with me in conducting it. I have this day addressed him, and invited him to accept the office of Attorney General. Your opinions and wishes have had much weight with me in coming to this decision.

In the event of Mr. C's acceptance it is desirable that he should repair

to Washington and enter upon his duties of office with as little delay as possible. *Judge Mason's* health is not very good, and he finds the labors of the Navy Department, as much as he can well bear. Since his appointment as Secretary of Navy, he has acted also at Atto. Genl. ad interim. The sooner his successor as Atto. Genl. takes charge of that office, the sooner of course he will be relieved from its duties, and be enabled to devote his whole time to the Naval service.

I have addressed my letter to *Mr. Clifford* to *Newfield Maine*. If I have mistaken his Post Office, will you do me the favor to inform him, that I have written to him, & addressed my letter to "*Newfield.*"

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Saco, Me., and marked "*Private.*"

1. James W. Bradbury.

# OCTOBER

## TO GEORGE M. DALLAS

My Dear Sir: Washington City, Oct 1st 1846

In answer to your note of the 27th ultimo[1] I regret to say, that I fear it will be impossible for me to pay my contemplated visit to Philadelphia and New York, until after the next Session of Congress. Many obstacles interfere to prevent me from leaving my post, even for a few days, at this time. I desired to have done so because I really require, some respite from my daily duties. The State of the Mexican War and the constant attention which our relations with Mexico require, constitute the chief objection to my leaving at this time. Both the Secretary of War[2] and of the Navy,[3] upon whom and upon whose actions, the conduct of the war mainly depends, have been indisposed for several days, so much so as to be confined to their houses, and it has become indispensable, that I should give my personal attention to many details, as well as to matters of importance, which otherwise I could have avoided. It is barely possible that I may be able to leave the city for a few days or fortnight hence, but it is by no means probable. Should I conclude to do so you shall be advised of it.

I continue to receive numerous letters from western Pennsylvania urging me to recall *Mr. Irwin*[4] from Copenhagen and appoint *R. P. Fleneken*[5] of Uniontown. I have just opened the enclosed package[6] received to day, upon that subject. Many similar communications are upon my files. When you have read them I request that you will place them under an envelope and return them to me through the mail. I have heretofore abstained from yielding to similar requests, among other reasons, because I found it might not be agreeable to *Mr. Walker*[7] and yourself. When you were here at the meeting of the Regents of the Smithsonian Institute[8] I mentioned the subject to you, and was happy to learn that on your part, you had no feeling on the subject. I had once before that time delicately named the subject to *Mr. Walker*, and have since you were here, held a conversation with him in reference to it, and frankly communicated to him my embarassments. He appreciated properly my embarrassments, and interposed no objections to my excercising my own judgement, but from the delicacy of his relations with *Mr. Irwin* and *his relatives* preferred not be the medium of suggesting to *Mr. Irwin* that he should ask to be recalled, as I suggested to him he might do, if he did not think it improper.

Under all the facts before me I shall feel it to be my duty to appoint a successor to *Mr. Irwin*, but do not desire to wound the feelings of himself or of his friends if I can avoid it. I would much prefer that he should ask for his recall, than to recall him without giving him notice of it, and against his will. I do not know him personally, and perhaps, if, I did I ought not to write to him on so delicate point. I mention these facts to you, that you may, if you see no impropriety, or objection to it, intimate to him that he should ask his recall. If however you feel the slightest difficulty in doing so, of course I do not desire it. I am willing to delay action until an answer can be received from him; but if you prefer not to write to him; I may act sooner.

Mrs. Polk unites with me in kind regards to *Mrs. Dallas*[9] and in the tender of our thanks for your kind invitation to your house, in the event we visit Phila. this autumn.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. Phi-Dallas Papers. Addressed to Philadephia, Penn., and marked "*Private*."

1. Letter not found.
2. William L. Marcy.
3. John Y. Mason.
4. A Whig politician from Pittsburgh, Penn., William W. Irwin served in the U.S. House from 1841 to 1843 when he received his appointment as chargé d'affaires to Denmark.

5. Robert P. Flenniken represented Fayette County in the Pennsylvania House in 1838 and 1840–41. Polk appointed him chargé d'affaires to Denmark in January 1847.

6. Enclosure not found.

7. Robert J. Walker.

8. Meeting on September 11, 1846, the Regents, including George M. Dallas, discussed building plans for the recently chartered Smithsonian Institution.

9. Sophia Chew Nicklen Dallas.

## FROM FREDERICK P. STANTON

Dear Sir, Memphis 1 Octr 1846

I know your time is precious; and in replying to your favor of the 16th Ult. I will be brief, and not expect you to answer this.

Mr. Coe was deeply mortified at the appointment offered him. The volunteers were enthusiastic in his favor with unbounded confidence in his talents and bravery. I was not aware of the state of things, and did not know that he desired to go to Mexico—indeed I even thought he would not wish to go in any capacity. But you had intimated, through one of your relations, some disposition to give him an appointment such as he thought worthy of his character & position, and I suppose this was the cause of his great disappointment. He says, if you had passed over his name in silence he would not have complained. He has a great many warm friends who have considered him some what badly treated; but all to whom I have mentioned the spirit of your letter, declare it to be perfectly satisfactory. I think, Mr Coe, though still very sore, will soon become more calm and eventually satisfied. His only object in demanding the correspondence in reference to the surgeons was to place himself right with his friends in the army. I regret myself that Dr Washington had not been appointed assistant, though I recommended Stout. I did not know Washington but have learned since my return that he is a physician of extraordinary talent, residing in Hardeman, son of Capt. Washington[1] decd, with numerous influential connections. If my request could be of any avail, I would ask his appointment to any vacany which may hereafter occur. He is a strong Democrat.

I am now aware that groundless reports, prejudicial to Watkins have been in existence. I know too that J. George Harris Esq, the purser, has given circulation to them. A more scrupulous officer than Jos. S. Watkins does not live in the Union. When the Bank in this place proposed to pay him a premium upon the public funds, and urged that he

was personally entitled to this advantage, according to the custom of every officer, he indignantly refused to make any such arrangement, but said he would deposit the funds upon condition it should be faithfully paid in specie to his checks. I have examined his accounts and find that every draft he has received has been thus instantly deposited. One of the treasury drafts in Nashville was given by the bank to Dr Fowlkes to bring the specie to Memphis, and from this circumstance, through Mr Harris as I understand, the false report originated that Watkins had improperly disposed of the draft. I assure you that you might risk the whole revenues of the government with Col. Watkins without the slightests danger, and you will probably find hundreds of the best men in Virginia who would swear to the truth of what I say.

As to the connection with the Insurance Office, it originated entirely in his known emnity to all fraud and to all visionary schemes of every kind. It was thought, that his known integrity, stability, and solidity of judgement, would afford to the public a guaranty for the honesty of the Institution over which he presided. I will, however, make to him the suggestion contained in your letter; though I feel perfectly certain, if you yourself knew the man and the circumstances, you would not require it.

I have done nothing, at any time, against Mr Harris. In the very first instance, when no other member of the Tennessee Delegation in the House would say a word for him, I did so. Afterwards, against the wishes of many influential friends, I endeavored, as far as I could, to remove all obstacles to his confirmation. He was then profuse in protestations of friendship etc. With all deference to your opinions, I am now satisfied, that he is destitute of sincerity or honor. He said to me once since my return here, that he knew of a gigantic scheme a foot to make an improper use of the public money to be disbursed here, though he neither mentioned names nor facts. It is more than probable such representations may have been made to you. I pronounce them basely false in every particular. From the beginning, Mr Watkins, in every return of his accounts, sent the certificate of the Bank, showing the balance to his credit. The Secretary of the Navy,[2] afterwards adopted this wise suggestion, and required all other officers to do the same. *It is impossible that any thing can go wrong in the hands of Col. Watkins*.

Every thing is quiet here now and satisfactory. Harmony will prevail in the management of the public works. The appointment of Judge Mason gives universal satisfaction.

FRED. P. STANTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on October 14, 1846.

1. Not identified further.
2. George Bancroft.

## TO DANIEL STURGEON[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 1st 1846

I received today your letter of the 29th ultimo,[2] with the letters enclosed in behalf of *Mr. Flenniken*. It has been my intention for many months past, as you know, to confer on *Mr. Flenniken* the appointment of Chargé d'affaires abroad, and have only been prevented from doing so by the embarrassments which have been constantly interposed. These embarrassments have not arisen from any objections, to Mr. F. as to his qualifications to fill such a station, but from the difficulty of finding, a suitable situation which would become vacant. I can now say to you that you may give him assurances that I will appoint him, Chargé abroad, at the meeting or shortly after the meeting of the next Session of Congress, and possibly at an earlier period. It may be that in the course of a short time a vacancy will exist, and in that event it will give me plasure to appoint him at once. He may in any event rely upon receiving the appointment shortly after the meeting of Congress, if not sooner.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Uniontown, Penn., and marked "*Private*."

1. A Uniontown physician, Sturgeon won election to several terms in both the Pennsylvania House and Senate, 1818–30; served as state auditor general, 1830–36, and as state treasurer, 1838–39; and sat two terms in the U.S. Senate, 1839–51.
2. Letter and enclosures not found.

## FROM JOHN FAIRFIELD

My Dear President Saco Oct 2d 1846

Yours just received informing me of your appointment of Mr. Clifford as Attorney General has given me great pleasure.[1] I think it is one which you will never find cause to regret. You will find him not only a reliable friend but one possessing a great deal of political sagacity. If the appointment had been made prior to our election, I have no doubt it would have been favorably felt. Our late partial defeat however, in-

dicates nothing *permanent* as to our present condition. A variety of causes combined to effect it, some of which will not exist hereafter. Maine is essentially democratic and I am sure we can carry our elections whenever it is absolutely necessary to do so. With the warmest wishes for your health and happiness personally and for your success and glory politically ....

J. FAIRFIELD

LS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on October 7, 1846.

1. Nathan Clifford. See Polk to Fairfield, September 30, 1846.

## TO WILLIAM H. POLK

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 2nd 1846

I forward to you herewith a letter from *Dr. Hays* with its enclosure as I received it.[1] *J. Knox Walker* who has just returned from a visit to Tennessee, represents the *Doctor's* condition, pecuniarily, to be one of great embarrassment. All his property must be sold to meet his liabilities, for himself and others. If it be possible for you to afford him any relief for the amount which he has had to pay on your account you ought to do it. His family I learn are not prudent in their expenditures, but live upon a scale which he cannot afford. In speaking of our family, in every member of which I know you will take an interest, it gives me sincere pain to inform you that *James Caldwell* since his father's death[2] refuses to continue at school and complete his education and is likely to turn out to be a spendthrift. *Sister Eliza*,[3] writes melancholy letters to me on the subject. You know she knows nothing about business and the management of property. She administered on her husband's estate and is already in great trouble in reference to it, and especially in regard to the course of *James*. She writes that his demands for money are incessant and nothing else will satisfy him. It is a great misfortune for the family, that his father is gone. Had he lived he would have restrained and controlled him. I fear that his portion of the estate will be squandered, as soon as he can get possession of it.

Mother[4] I learn continues to enjoy excellent health for a person of her age. What her small income does not supply, I furnish to her, so that all her wants are supplied and she is entirely comfortable in her circumstances.

I appointed *James H. Walker*[5] an assistant Quarter Master in the army with the rank of Captain. He is attached to the Arkansas Regiment commanded by *Col. Yell*,[6] and is now on the march to *Chihuahua*

in Mexico. I have given you these things of family news supposing they might not be without interest to you.

In regard to public affairs, there is as you know not much of interest occurring especially as relates to our domestic [ . . . ][7] during the recess of Congress. The engrossing topic at present is the Mexican War. The Mexican Government (if Government it may be called) have postponed a definitive decision upon our overtures for peace until the meeting of their Congress in December next. *Santa Anna* is again in power, and though I have reason to think that he is disposed to make peace, he does not yet feel himself secure in his position, and is cautious in his movements. He fears no doubt that if, he were to accept the overtures for peace so soon after regaining power that the popular excitement would be roused against him and that he would be overthrown. I have little doubt but that he will ultimately be disposed to make peace, but his policy and it may be the security of his power, is procrastination. In this state of things we will prosecute the war with even more vigour than heretofore. We have more than 20,000 troops Regulars & Volunteers now in Mexico; and we must bring the enemy to terms with as little delay as possible. The expenses of the war are necessarily very heavy, and we must put an end to it at the earliest practicable period. Despatches have been received from *Genl Kearney*[8] to day, that on the 18th of August he took possession of *Santa Fe* without firing a gun, had hoisted the flag of the U. States, and proclaimed the province of New Mexico of which *Santa Fe* is the capital to be a part of the U. States. He will leave a sufficient force to hold it, and march with the main body under his command to Upper California. He will be joined in California by a Regiment of Infantry[9], sent by sea from New York, and also by a corps of artillery of the regular army, with a large number of heavy guns, sent by sea some two months ago. Our squadron in the Pacific have already taken all the towns on the coast of California and hold them. So that you see that although there may not have been much fighting we will soon be in undisputed possession of valuable provinces, and will hold them until a just and honorable peace is concluded. If there be any battle at any point, it has probably taken place before this time, at *Montery* in the interior by the force under Genl Taylor's command. You need not be surprized to have seen that we have taken *Tampico*, and other important places on the Gulf coast. In a word I hope by the meeting of Congress to be able to gain a good account of the army and navy, in the prosecution of the war. I am anxious to terminate the war upon just and honorable terms, & hope to do so before many more months shall have elapsed. You may calculate I think that *California* & *New Mexico*, being now possessed by

our forces, will not be given up, but will be retained, to indemnify our claimants upon Mexico & to defray the expenses of the war. Indeed you need not be surprised if other provinces also are secured in like manner. The longer the war shall be protracted by the stubborness of Mexico, the greater will be the expenses incurred & the greater the indemnity required. We have tendered peace to Mexico & are ready at any moment to conclude a Treaty just and honorable to both nations, and we will not therefore accept the *mediation* of any Foreign Power. It has been more than intimated that *Great Brittain* would be willing to tender her mediation, if it would be accepted. We learn too that *Spain* would be willing to act as *mediator*, and *Genl Saunders* thinks would be anxious to do so, if it were ascertained to be acceptable. My policy is settled, not to accept or permit any foreign interposition or interference. If Foreign Powers choose by their council and good offices, to assert their influence with Mexico to induce her to open negotiations & treat upon just and honorable terms, we will view such efforts on their part with favour, but cannot permit them to have any agency in forcing, the *terms* of settlement, or in any other manner to interfere in the quarrel.

I am still much confined to my office although my health continues to be good.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Naples and marked "*Private*."

1. John B. Hays' letter and enclosure not found.
2. Silas M. Caldwell died on March 20, 1846.
3. Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell.
4. Jane Knox Polk
5. Polk's nephew, the son of James Walker and Jane Maria Polk Walker.
6. A mounted regiment under the command of Archibald Yell.
7. Blurred ink transfer renders one word illegible.
8. Stephen W. Kearny.
9. The First New York Volunteers under the command of Jonathan D. Stevenson. See James Buchanan to Polk, September 10, 1846.

## TO ARCHIBALD YELL

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 2nd 1846

The enclosed letter is from your son.[1] He wrote me a note from the College of Georgetown enquiring when a letter, addressed to you would find you. I answered him and requested him to enclose his letter to me and that I would forward it to you. He is I hear doing well. You may

rest satisfied in regard to him. Should he, at any time require the counsel or attention of a friend I will attend to his wishes.

I suppose before this time you are on the march to *Chihuahua*. As the authorities of Mexico have declined to accept our overtures for peace, there is no alternative left but to prosecute the war with the utmost energy and vigor. We have despatches to day from *Genl Kearney*.[2] He has taken *Sante Fe* without firing a gun. I hope ere long to learn that Genl Wool's[3] column is in the possession of Chihuahua. I have nothing of interest to communicate to you, and have but little time to write if I had. I hope at the meeting of Congress to be able to give a good account of the army.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed "With the army in Mexico"; marked "*Private.*."

1. See DeWitt C. Yell to Polk, September 19, 1846.

2. Stephen W. Kearny.

3. A New York native, John E. Wool received a commission as a captain in the infantry in 1812; fought in the War of 1812, most notably at the Battle of Plattsburg, where he suffered a wound but also earned a brevet lieutenant colonelcy; served as inspector general of the army from 1816 until 1841, when he received a promotion to brigadier general; fought in the Mexican-American War, most notably at the Battle of Buena Vista, where he earned a brevet major generalship, a rank that became official in 1862; and retired in 1863.

## TO VERNON K. STEVENSON[1]

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 3rd 1846

*Gov. Brown* and *Majr. Graham* are here attending to business with the War Department in which the State of Tennessee has an interest. They expect to close their business, and I hope satisfactorily, in the course of a few days. they inform me that *Mr. Bass*[2] is desirous to sell the *Grundy Place.* I mean the residence of the late *Judge Grundy,* and they advise me to purchase it. I believe I would prefer it to any other in Nashville, and I am willing to purchase it, if it can be had upon terms which I can afford to pay. *Gov. Brown* informs me that he has been in treaty with *Mr. Bass* on the subject, but has declined to accede to the terms proposed to him, and indeed does not now desire to purchase it on any terms. *Gov. Brown* informs me that *Mr. Bass* offered to take *Seven thousand Dollars* for the *Grundy Place,* proper, and *Three thousand Dollars* for the wing attached to it, which was occupied many years ago I believe by *James P. Grundy,* and his impression is that he would take this price on one and two years time. I am not familiar with

the premises except the approach to the main dwelling, from Church Street and do not know what extent of back ground, or yard, there may be. Nor do I know anything of the back buildings but presume they are ordinarily good. *Gov. Brown* & *Majr. Graham* also inform me that there is a vacant lot, owned by *Mr. Bass* adjoining the Building on the East and extending to the street, which passes the former residence of *Dr. Newnan*[3] (I do not know the name of the Street) which ought to be attached to the property, if I purchase. The price asked for this lot they do not know. Now my Dear Sir: I ask the favour of you to call on *Mr. Bass* and acertain his price and time of payment for the property including the main-house, the wing and vacant lot. I have saved the proceeds of my last years crop, as I will that of this year for the purpose of vesting it in a residence. I can pay $3.000 on the 1st of December next; $3.000 in March or April next, and the balance at the end of twelve months from that time, say in March or April 1848. I suppose the whole property, judging from the offer of it, which was made to Brown, may be had upon three payments for $11.000, or at most $12.000. If on examining the premises you think the property worth that price, you are authorized to close the contract and I will ratify what you do. Of course, if you can get it for less sum than that amount ($12.000) you will do so. If it should be a matter of importance to *Mr. Bass* to have more frequent payments than I propose, and the time should be a difficulty in the way, I could without much inconvenience negotiate a loan here, and make the payment of the whole sum by the middle of next year, say the middle of June. This I could do, in anticipation of my next years crop and some other money, which will be due to me at that time. If therefore a better contract can be made, by making more prompt payment, I would undertake to pay $4.000, in December, $3.000 in March and the balance in June next.

The whole matter is submitted very much to your judgement. You are a better judge of the value of Nashville property than I can be. I mean to say, that if you think the property is worth the price asked for it, I prefer it to any other, and desire to buy it. I would not purchase the single *Grundy Place,* without the wing and vacant lot. I would have all if I take any. I think it probable that the house would require to be repaired and modernized, but this could be done in the last year of my term. Should you prefer it, you can, instead of closing the contract, you can ascertain *Mr. Bass's* terms, and after examining the premises, write to me and give me your opinion. I shall rely much on your judgement. I do not desire that it shall be publicly known that you are negotiating for the property for me. I have no objection that you shall communicate the fact to *Mr. Bass* if you choose, and you can

take *Judge Catron's* opinion in the matter, if you think proper to do so.

As it is an important transaction for me, I hope to receive an early answer from you on the subject.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Of course I have consulted *Mrs. Polk* on a matter in which she is so much interested, as the purchase of a residence. She says that *she knows* the house would require thorough repairs and modernizing, before she would be willing to occupy it. This will cost a consideraable sum, and may be a consideration presented to *Mr. Bass* in making the contract with him. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. A wealthy Nashville merchant, Stevenson organized a number of railroad construction projects throughout Tennessee in the 1840's and 1850's, including the Nashville & Chattanooga and the Nashville & Northwestern, both of which he served as president.

2. Son-in-law of Felix Grundy and father-in-law of Vernon K. Stevenson, Bass served as mayor of Nashville in 1833 and subsequently headed the Union Bank of Tennessee in the late 1830's and early 1840's.

3. Newnan is not identified further.

## FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My dear Sir, Boston October 4, 1846.

On reaching New York, my first object was to see Mr B. F. Butler.[1] I found him on Saturday evening eight days ago, and passed with him four or five hours. On the next Tuesday evening I was with our friend Gov. Wright. The next day I saw the great New York Convention,[2] and on Wednesday evening and night was at Kinderhook. I endeavoured with the utmost caution, not referring to you, but speaking as from myself alone, to carry out your views.

On the subject of the Tariff, I received assurances, that the New Act[3] had been opposed and would hereafter be opposed, by *none* but the conservatives, & those unfriendly to Mr Wright. Mr Wright said to me emphatically and authorized me to repeat, that he considers the New Tariff a great democratic measure, that he adopts & sustains it, that he considers himself & his political friends equally responsible with yourself for it, and equally bound to give the measure, as it stands, a fair trial. I was most confidently assured, that there would be no opposition to it, but from the very men, who have given Mr Wright & his friends so much trouble. Able articles on the subject are preparing,

& some have already appeared, in which it is shown that this Tariff & that proposed in 1844, are in principle & practically essentially the same. In a word, you could not wish for a better state of feeling on that point. The plan of an immediate modification of the Tariff which would but be an immediate condemnation of it, meets with no favor from the sound Democracy of New York.

On the subject of a minister to France, they, as yet, have none to propose. I suggested Fennimore Cooper[4]; but it found no response. I spoke of Dix, who told me he should perfer Paris to England; but the idea of allowing Dix to leave the Senate seemed inadmissible.

Gov. Wright assured me, that the autumn canvass in New York would join support of the *national* with support of the *State* administration, and I am confident, that his recommendations on this subject to members of the Syracuse Convention, were emphatic and repeated; hearty and unequivocal. Desirous to bring Mr Wright into nearer relations with you, I advised him to write to you in the spirit of frankness & confidence. He left me with the impression that he should do so.

Of you firm purpose not to be a candidate for reelection, I spoke decidedly; and your determination to be impartial as to the selection of you successor, met thorough approbation.

In referring to the past, you will readily understand the topics dwelt upon. It was said, that factions in New York had acted, as though hostility to Mr Wright was a recommendation at Washington; that the Postmasters of New York, of Albany, of Utica, of Buffalo, the Collectors of Oswego, of Rochester, of Buffalo, the District Attorney of Oswego, were among the most active & restless & open opponents of the present state adminstration; & that such a mass of the most important patronage in the hands of unfriendly persons, was used to sanction the belief, that the President himself was also unfriendly. Then the old story of Mr Flagg[5] & Mr Butler as proposed members of the cabinet of Mr Coddington[6] as collector at New York, was recapitulated. But I deceive myself, if Mr Wright & Mr Butler are not convinced, that the points which they regretted, were the result of circumstances & not of want of confidence & regard for them & their friends.

Of Governor Marcy some spoke with less friendly views. Men who were rather friendly originally to his selection for the cabinet, spoke with regret but very decidedly, that "he had disappointed them"; and attributed much that was complained of to him. This I repeat to you, because you charged me to give you a full account.

As it regards your administration, *all* were resolved in giving it full & hearty &most reliable support. It is proper for me to state, because it

is necessary for you to know, that Mr. Van Buren, while he supports the measures of the adminstration, shows no disposition to the re-opening of friendly intercourse with it. My advice on that point would be, never again to think of it. I regret that it is so; but I do not believe, that Mr V. B. is disposed to re-open personal intimacy and confidence. Your own desire to have a better relation subsist, does you great honor; but I am *sure*, your own self-respect, and the determined inflexibility of the other gentleman, (I write this with infinite regret in reference to two statesmen to both of whom I am bound by the strongest ties,) will never permit the re-establishment of your old intercourse. I have no hesitation I add, that the result would have been different, if your candor & hearty desire of reciprocal confidence, had been met in the same spirit. But Mr V. B. avowed strongly his purpose of supporting the administration while he shuns all personal communication with its head, whether recommendations for office or otherwise.

I repeat that Mr Wright speaks and acts very differently; & if he should write to you, as I understood him that he would, you may rely on an agreeable & every way satisfactory correspondence with him.

GEORGE BANCROFT

[P.S.] Nobody approved of John Van Buren's omission in reference to yourself in his letter to New York.[7]

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Secret For the President alone*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on October 7, 1846.

1. A law partner and close confidant of Martin Van Buren, Benjamin F. Butler served three terms in the New York House, 1827–33; as U.S. attorney general under Andrew Jackson, 1833–38; and as U.S. attorney for the southern district of New York, 1838–41 and 1845–48.

2. Reference is to the state constitutional convention.

3. Enacted on July 29, 1846, the so-called Walker Tariff, named after its principal sponsor, Treasury Secretary Robert J. Walker, modified existing tariff policies by reducing most import duties while still providing a modicum of protection for American manufactures.

4. Popular writer and amateur historian, James Fennimore Cooper earned literary fame for his Leather-Stocking novels and political notoriety for his vicious criticism of the Whig Party in New York.

5. A New York legislator and leader of the Albany Regency, Azariah C. Flagg served as secretary of state for New York and as state comptroller for nine years during the 1830's and 1840's. A strong opponent of the Bank of the United States, he joined the Barnburners and eventually headed that faction of the New York Democracy.

6. A New York City merchant, Jonathan I. Coddington served as postmaster

of the city in 1836 and collector of the port in 1845. He ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 1843.

7. The particulars of this letter are not known, but John Van Buren frequently and publicly criticized the Polk administration.

## TO JOHN CATRON

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct. 7th 1846

I wrote to my friend *V. K. Stevenson* on the 3rd Instant, authorizing him to purchase the Grundy place for me at the price at which *Mr. Bass* had offered it to *Gov. Brown,* if in his judgement it was worth so much. From the description given to me of the property by *Gov. Brown* and *Majr. Graham* I was willing to give the price asked for it, but still I had more confidence in *Stevenson's* judgement than my own, and therefore I left it very much to him to determine, whether he would purchase or not. I requested him in my letter to consult you on the subject. He will no doubt show you my letter. I wish now to say that as I have determined to settle in Nashville I prefer the *Grundy place* to any other, and am willing to pay a full price for it. The payments which I can make I have stated in my letter to *Stevenson.* I request that you will do me the favor to confer with *Stevenson* on the subject, and if he and yourself are of opinion that the property is worth a few hundred dollars more than I authorized him to give, I would not suffer the difference to break off the contract. My impression was when I wrote to *Stevenson,* that a vacant lot, lying East of the building which belongs to *Mr Bass* and extends to the street running by *Dr. Newnans* old residence (the name of the street I do not remember) should be attached to the property, so as to prevent the approach from that direction from being closed off by buildings. This is still my impression though in this I may be mistaken. Should that lot not be deemed important by *Stevenson* and yourself then I am willing to buy the *main-house* and wing without it. *Mr Bass* offered the main - house to *Gov. Brown* for $7500 and the wing for $3000. Both *Brown* and *Graham* think the property worth this price, & I am willing to take it, provided *Stevenson* and yourself think I should do so. I would prefer to buy the vacant lot with it, but if that cannot be had at a fair price, then if you advise it, I am willing to take the *house* and *wing* without it. Having made up my mind to reside in Nashville, I prefer to do so now rather than postpone it, until the near close of my term. By purchasing this long in advance I will have full time to cause the necessary repairs and improvements to be made, before I will be ready to occupy it. *Mrs. Polk* thinks the house would require improvements and modernizing before

she would be willing to go into it. The situation of the place is convenient and eligible, and all things considered would I think suit me better than any other I could get. Say to *Mr Stevenson* that if he agrees on the terms with *Mr. Bass* that he can close the contract and I will ratify it, by executing the necessary papers upon being advised of it by him.

I have nothing of much interest connected with public affairs to communicate. The Mexican War occupies much of my time at present. Since the answer to our overture for peace was received from Mexico, measures have been taken, to prosecute the war with still more vigor, and I still hope that before the winter is over, the Mexican authorities may be willing to conclude a just and honorable peace. *Genl Kearney*[1] you see is now in posession of New Mexico & having left a sufficient force to hold it, is probably now on his march to Upper California. The high opinion which you expressed of him to me I have no doubt he deserves. He has proved himself to be an officer of great energy & merit. Will you make my kind salutations to *Mrs. Catron* ....

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked "*Private.*"

1. Stephen W. Kearny.

## FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir Columbia, Ten. Oct. 9th 1846

You may think Strange of receiving a letter from Columbia from me I expected to have been at your plantation before this time when I last wrote you.[1] But one of the girls I bought for you (Caroline) has had a spell of fever, I now able to travel I sent a part of your money by John P. Campbell[2] to Virginia to be laid out then he has not returned yet My Wife[3] has also been verry low for the last two weaks as the fall season approches she gets worse she still remains speachless & helpless & I can not leave untill John returns I have received three mules from Maj J. W. Childress for you I think they are worth $170 the Boy (Charles) that he Bought is still unwell with the whooping-cough & chills & fever & we think it most advisable not to start him out until he gets well.

I have Sold the boy Jim that I bought for you I gave $392 for to the Widow Colbern[4] for $450 & bought a girl (Jane) 20 lb heavier for $425. and likely 12 or 13 years old it is one of the best trades I have made I would have given the boy for the girl even I will start down as soon as John P Campbell returns I have every thing ready I have to take down 4 or 5 for General Pillow he furnishes a Carriage & you the mules & I

can take them down cheaper than to have gone Seperate as I will have to go to Pillows plantation for Harbert & wife.[5]

I have not heard from Mr Mairs Since the letter I Sent you I have written to him that I would be down early in October with Some more hands & I would bring two more up from Pillow plantation & for him to prepare to receive them which I have no doubt he has done I also advised him to clear more of the rich bottom lands he cleared last winter 40 acres between the Gin & Creek when I go down I act according to my best Judgment about the husbands & wives of your people I want to take down likly young girls for wives for your young men as their are to grat a proportion of men on your farm for the women.

My present impression is that I will moove Harry up to the farm as it is more trouble & expense to attend to him at Carrolton than it would be at your farm or in the Neighborhood I will either collect or put in Suit his (Harry) hire for the last year when I go down to Pillows plantation as I will have to go through Carrolton.

I am fearful the worm has struck your farm, as we have doleful accounts from the South Generally my Overseer writes me he can-not make more than one third of the crop & a great many of the planters will not make more than 100 pounds of Seed cotton per Acre from the best information I can get. the Baal worm and Army worm has been very destructive in the Cotton region when I get down I will give you a full Statement of all your affairs & what the prospects are.

As I have been detained this long I will write to Maj Childress this evening and if he thinks the Boy Charles is well enough to travel to Send him down here & I will take him on with me I will leave that intirely to him I enclose you the bill of Sale for Jane with my relinquishment on the back of it. you will pleas return to me the Bill of Sale for Jim which will make all things right. I will do the best I can to promote your Interest if I Should err it will be of the head not of the hart.

ROBT CAMPBELL JR

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE states that he received this letter on October 18 and answered it on November 14, 1846.

1. See Campbell to Polk, September 5, 1846.
2. The brother of Robert Campbell, Jr., John Polk Campbell founded Springfield, Mo., and held the post of receiver of public monies at that place from 1839 until 1842.
3. Elizabeth Polk Campbell.
4. Not identified further.
5. Mary.

TO JOHN W. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 10th 1846

I received your letter of the 20th ultimo,[1] about two weeks ago, but have been so much engaged that I have been unable to attend to it sooner. I transmit to you herewith as you requested, the Power of Attorney from *Sarah* and myself, authorizing you to convey in our behalf, the Quarter Section of land in Alabama, which you sold some years ago.

You did perfectly right not to send the boy[2] which you purchased for me, to my plantation until he recovers from the hooping-cough. You can as soon as you have an opportunity after he recovers, send him down. If necessary you can purchase a mule for him to use. The mule will probably be needed on the place. I suppose *Col. Campbell* has gone down though I have not heard of his departure from home. I wrote to you in a former letter[3] to draw on me for the price of the mules, which you might furnish him for me. I will pay your draft at sight. I learn from my place that the worms have been very destructive on my cotton crop, as they have been on all the crops in that neighborhood. From the great falling off in the cotton crop this season, I have no doubt that the staple will continue to rise in price for some time to come. I have given orders, to my Commission merchant in New Orleans,[4] not to sell mine until the spring. We are in usual health.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Murfreesborough, Tenn.; marked "*Private.*"

1. See Childress to Polk, September 20, 1846.
2. Charles.
3. See Polk to Childress, August 15, 1846.
4. William S. Pickett.

TO JAMES HAMILTON, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 10th 1846

I received to night your letter of the 7th Instant.[1] I am sincerely friendly to *Mr. Stevenson*[2] and have a high regard for him, as I believe I informed you, in one or two conversations I have had with you. I have been desirous to gratify the wishes of his friends, but have been prevented from doing so, by the embarrassments, (perhaps indispos-able from my office) which have surrounded me, and which no one can

so well know as myself. I have learned, but not from himself that it is the intention of *Mr. Wise*[3] to ask for his recall soon. Should he do so, I regret to say, that I fear it will not be in my power to gratify your wishes, even should *Mr. S.* be willing to accept the place, which I doubt. I cannot so fully explain, as I could in conversation, the embarrassment which would exist in selecting him, in the event of *Mr. Wise's* return. It is enough to say, that I have been severely pressured to recall *Mr. W.* by persons, in parts of the Union, which is without a representation abroad. I have resisted their importunities, by answering that there was no vacancy, at present, but have said that if one should occur, I would be disposed to consider favorably their application for their friend. Though I have made no positive promise, I would feel almost constrained from what has occurred to bestow that mission, should a vacancy occur upon another section of the Union.

I shall be pleased to receive from you, the views which you promise to give me, in regard to the manner of prosecuting the Mexican War.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Savannah, Ga.; marked "*Private.*"

1. See Hamilton to Polk, October 7, 1846.

2. A lawyer from Richmond, Va., Andrew Stevenson served several terms in the Virginia House before winning election to the U.S. House where he served from 1821 to 1834. In 1836 he received an appointment as minister to Great Britain and served until 1841, when he retired to "Blenheim," his plantation in Albemarle County, Va.

3. A lawyer from Accomac County, Va., Henry A. Wise served in the U.S. House from 1833–44 before accepting an appointment as minister to Brazil, 1844–47. Initially a strong Democrat, Wise broke with Andrew Jackson during the Bank War and briefly joined the Whig party. A strong proponent of slavery, Wise later served as governor of Virginia, 1856–60.

## TO WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 10th 1846

I have received your note, without date, but Post Marked at Raleigh on the 9th Instant.[1] I have made a further search among my letters, and presume I have found the one addressed to me by you, a copy of which you wish. I transmit the copy to you herewith.

I have nothing of interest connected with public affairs to communicate. Since the rejection, or rather indefinite postponement by Mexico of our overtures for peace, the war with that country, occupies more of my attention than any other subject. The postponement of a defini-

tive answer until the meeting of the Mexican Congress in December, left in my judgement, no doubt of the policy of prosecuting the war with the utmost vigor. I am satisfied that no other course would result in a speedy peace, and it may be that even this course will not produce that desirable result. From all the information I have, I am strongly inclined to believe, that *Santa Anna* desires peace, and will be prepared to re-open negotiations as soon as he feels himself secure in his power. He desires probably, to make the responsibility upon the new Congress to be chosen, both so as to save himself from any public odium which may attach to that measure. At the same time there is reason to believe that he will exert his influence with the Congress to dispose them to peace. If by the time our Congress assembles, we should be in military possession of several of the Mexican Provinces or Departments (as we shall be), and shall be threatening others, it may and I hope will operate as a strong inducement to put an end to the war, upon terms which shall be just and honorable to both countries.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Raleigh, N.C.; marked "*Private.*"

1. See Haywood to Polk, October 9, 1846, and also Polk's letter to Haywood, September 21, 1846.

## TO JOHN T. LEIGH

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 10th 1846

I thank you for your letter of the 17th ultimo.[1] The account you give of the great injury there to the cotton crop by the worms confirms the report which we had heard from the central region. If the falling off of the crop shall be as great as it is now generally believed it will be, there must be a large increase in the price before the season is over. Confidently anticipating upon a considerable rise in the price I will give directions to my commission merchant[2] at New Orleans not to sell mine until the spring.

You inform me that one of my women *(Caroline)* is the wife of one of your men,[3] and that on that account you desire to purchase her. It would give me sincere pleasure to accomodate you, but as *Caroline* is a family servant, I would feel great reluctance in parting with her. Most if not all of her relatives are in our family, and nothing would induce me to dispose of her, unless it would be to keep her with her husband. As your plantation and mine are only a mile or two apart, I will promise you never to remove her so as to separate her from her

husband. I fully appreciate the commendable motive which induces you to desire to purchase, and I am sure you will appreciate, the considerations, which induce me to prefer not to separate her from her family relations.

*Judge Mason* informs me that he has received a letter from you, and that his son[4] will probably visit Mississippi during the ensuing winter.

With very respectful salutations to *Mrs. Leigh* ....

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. See Leigh to Polk, September 17, 1846.
2. William S. Pickett.
3. Patrick.
4. John Y. Mason, Jr.

## TO SAMUEL P. WALKER

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 10th 1846

I have directed my present year's crop of cotton, to be forwarded from my plantation in Mississippi to your House at New Orleans. My impression is that there will be a further rise & perhaps a large one in the price of the staple, before the close of the business season. It will certainly be so, if the accounts we hear of the destruction of the crop, by worms and other causes are not greatly exaggerated. I prefer not to sell until the season is somewhat advanced, and it is ascertained whether my anticipation of an increase of price, shall be realized, or not.

In *May* last I enclosed to you two orders,[1] one for $50. in my favor, and the other for $20. in favor of *Mr. Whitthorne* drawn on *Benjamin Bledsoe* of *Desoto* County Mississippi, by his son *N. J. Bledsoe*, who called on me in distress and to whom the money was advanced to enable him to reach his father's House. You did not acknowledge the receipt [...][2] have collected the money or shall do so. [...] enclose it to me in a check or place it to my credit with your House in New Orleans.

We are all in usual health. For myself, though I continue to be laboriously employed in my office, I never enjoyed better health.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Memphis, Tenn.

1. See Polk to Walker, May 29, 1846.
3. Blurred ink transfers render word or words illegible here and below.

## FROM WILLIAM J. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir Franklin October 12/46

In the letter you wrote to *Ma* on the 6th of July[1] you stated that I might rely upon receiving the office of Cadet in the military School at West Point and your advice to me was to place myself under a Competent teacher. I am at this time going to a verry good Teacher. I know nothing about West Point except what you sent in the regulations. I therefore wish you would inquire and write me word what the pay is: and how long I would be compelled to remain there. I would like verry much to get in some buisness that I could make somthing at. I do not think that *Ma* is willing for me to go to West Point: as *Thomas*[2] is so much displeased at his situation. He returned from the Navy a few days ago, and he is verry much displeased with his situation in the Navy. He thinks nothing is to be made there, he says the officers have to spend more than their wages comes to, therefore he speakes of resigning. The sale came a few days and the Propety sold verry low. Excuse my short letter.

WILLIAM J. CHILDRESS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter in October 1846.

1. See Polk to Mary B. Childress, July 6, 1846.
2. Thomas B. Childress.

## FROM NATHAN CLIFFORD

Hon James K. Polk Newfield October 12 1846

Your favor of the 30th ult. postmarked Oct. 1st reached this place on the 6th inst. and came to hand on the following day, tendering for my acceptance the office of Attorney General of the United States. The proposal came upon me unexpectedly, and with some surprise, as I had been led to suppose that your Cabinet arrangements had been fully completed when Mr Bancroft retired. It therefore became necessary for me to spend a few days in arranging my private affairs before I could safely determine what course I ought to pursue with reference to a proposition so important and so magnanimously made. I hope the delay may not be deemed unreasonable. I shall leave for Washington this morning and shall probably arrive there in a day or two after the receipt of this communication by you, for the purpose of accepting the office tendered and entering upon its duties if you shall continue to

desire me to pursue that course after such conference if any—as you may suggest.

Following the suggestions of your letter and in answer to the same it becomes necessary for me to say that I believe I am sufficiently informed of your opinions and views upon all the leading questions now before the country, and of the General policy of your administration to justify the remark that I accord with you in those opinions and approve that policy, and that I could not do otherwise than cordially cooperate with you in carrying them out, without departing from the principles which I have held sacred in political action, thus far, through life.

It affords me satisfaction to be able to say that present indications fully warrant the hope that the leading politicians of Maine, friendly to your administration, will embrace this occasion to enter seriously upon the effort to conciliate the jarring interests of faction which have grown up among them, with the view to reestablish the harmony of the democratic party, on a basis which may afford promise of future success and permanency—I deem it proper to remark that the Newspapers caught the rumor of your intentions several days in advance of myself or of any friend in this vicinity.

NATHAN CLIFFORD

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to the "President of the United States."

## TO ADLAI O. HARRIS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Octo 12th 1846

I think it probable that your daughter *Jane Amelia* would enjoy a visit to Washington, and I wish to say that it would give *Mrs. Polk* and myself great pleasure to have her with us next winter. I have no doubt your Representative *Mr Stanton* would if requested to do so, take her under his charge & bring her on with him. At the close of the Session of Congress in March she could return with him. *Jane Amelia* is the only one of my nieces who is grown, except *Sarah Walker* who spent the last winter with us. Say to her that her aunt and myself, both desire that she will come. She would be placed in a secure society here and I am sure would be pleased with the visit.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Memphis, Tenn.

## TO GEORGE M. DALLAS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 16th 1846

I have received your letter of yesterday.[1] Your suggestion as to the *time* of Mr. *Irwin's* return from his mission, is reasonable and meets my approbation. You can write to him as you propose, and I will postpone the appointment of his successor until the meeting of Congress. This I agree with you, will be the most agreeable mode, to all concerned, of disposing of this matter.

I see at present no prospect of being able to visit the North, during the present recess of Congress.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Philadelphia and marked "*Private.*"

1. Letter not found.

## TO NATHAN CLIFFORD

Sir: Washington City Oct 17th 1846

Having in a letter which I addressed to you on the 30th ultimo,[1] tendered to you the office of Attorney General of the United States, and learning from your answer of the 12th Instant,[2] that you have consented to accept the same, I deem it proper to place you in possession of a copy of a letter addressed by me in March 1845, to each of the Gentlemen whom I invited to accept a place in my Cabinet. Each of these Gentlemen, in their several answers gave their assent to the principles and views contained in that letter, and I have no doubt they will meet your approbation also. Indeed the most material points have been satisfactorily responded to, in your letter of the 12th Instant.

JAMES K. POLK

Copy[3]

Sir Washington City March 1845

The principles and policy which will be observed and maintained during my administration, are embodied in the Resolutions adopted by the Democratic National Convention of Delegates, assembled at Baltimore in May last and in the Inaugural address, which I propose to deliver to my Fellow Citizens, on assuming the duties of President of the United States, and which is herewith handed to you for your perusal.

In making up my Cabinet I desire to select gentlemen, who agree with me in opinion and who will cordially co-operate with me in carrying out those principles & policy.

In my official action I will myself take no part between Gentlemen of the Democratic party, who may become aspirants or Candidates to succeed me in the Presidential Office, and desire that no member of my Cabinet shall do so. Individual preferences, it is not expected or desired to limit or restrain. It is official interference by the dispensation of public patronage or otherwise that I desire to guard against.

Should any member of my Cabinet become a Candidate for the Presidency or Vice Presidency of the United States, it will be expected upon the happening of such an event that he will retire from the Cabinet.

I disapprove of the practice which has sometimes prevailed of Cabinet Officers absenting themselves for long periods of time from the Seat of Government, & leaving the management of their Departments to Chief Clerks or other less responsible persons than themselves. I expect myself to remain constantly at Washington, unless it may be that no public duty requires my presence, when I may be occasionally absent, but then only for a short time. It is by conforming to this rule that the President & his Cabinet can have any assurance that abuses will be prevented & that the subordinate Executive officers connected with them respectively will faithfully perform their duty.

If Sir you concur with me in these opinions and views, I shall be pleased to have your assistance in my Administration as a member of my Cabinet & now tender to you the office of, and invite you to take charge of that department. I shall be pleased to receive your answer at yr earliest convenience.

(Signed) James K. Polk

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. See Polk to Clifford, September 30, 1846.
2. See Clifford to Polk, October 12, 1846.
3. Copy in J. Knox Walker's hand.

## FROM NATHAN CLIFFORD

Sir. Washington City Oct. 17th 1846

Your favor of this morning is duly received enclosing a paper which I understand to be a copy of a letter addressed by you, in March 1845, to each of the gentlemen whom you then invited to accept a place in your Cabinet; and that it is placed in my hands for the purpose of calling my attention to the principles and policy which you propose to observe and maintain during your administration, with a view to ascertain from me whether I agree with you in the principles therein refered to, and approve the general policy of your adminstration. Having already resonded to several of the material points of the communication in my letter of the 12th inst[1] I presume it will not be

necessary for me to repeat those views. It however affords me pleasure to add that after a careful consideration of the contents of the communication that I fully concur in those views, opinions, & rules of action, and shall be ready at all times to cooperate in carrying them out. If a more particular answer is desired on any point, it will be cheerfully given.

NATHAN CLIFFORD

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on October 20, 1846.

1. See Clifford to Polk, October 12, 1846.

## FROM SILAS WRIGHT, JR.

My Dear Sir, Albany 18 October 1846

At the conclusion of a very free conversation with Mr. Bancroft, while here on his way from Washington to Boston, at his solicitation, I promised to write you a frank private letter, a promise which I had intended to fulfill before this day, but the pressure of official business has prevented. Indeed I write now with but a few moments at my command, and rather to fulfil my promise than to write the very long and minute letter I had intended. Upon reflection, I think I may spare myself the labor of repeating details, if you will permit me to refer you to a letter I wrote, about a week ago, to the post master General, and if he will permit you to peruse that letter.[1] It was written in reply to a letter from him and was strictly private. Of course it was not intended for your eye, and I may have used expressions in it, which I should not have used in a letter to yourself, though I am not aware that I have. I certainly did not intend to say any thing disrespectful or unkind, or which I thought could wound the feelings either of Mr. Johnson, or yourself. My object was to let him know precisely our situation in relation to the administration, and to those who principally hold its patronage in this state, but not to complain of any one, or to lay blame any where.

It is unfortunately true that there has been an apparent conflict of object and purpose between your administration and mine, from the commencement, so far as men in this state have been concerned, and with a few elevated exceptions, such as Butler and Hoffman, every man holding an office under you has seemed to consider it his duty, as his interest, to oppose me. I speak not of yourself, or of myself, as individuals in this remark, but as personating the respective administrations. This has been so marked, so universal, and so actively

evinced, as to have produced the almost universal impression in the minds of our democrats that the object at Washington was to change the power in the State to the hands of our little conservative faction, or to the hands of the whigs. That impression still prevails to a very wide and injurious extent, although it has been considerably modified within the last few weeks. We know that this faction could not have survived the winter of 1845, if the impression had not been produced and sustained that it was to have the countenance and support of the federal administration.

I have been very unwilling to believe, at any time, that yourself and Mr. Johnson, especially, could have this intention, or could have any object in entertaining, or acting upon it; and yet I will not deny that there have been periods when I have been wholly unable to defend either you or him against the suspicion and the charge.

I am assured, however, by Mr. Gillet, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Bancroft that such a suspicion has, at all times, been unjust as to yourself, and such a charge without foundation.[2] I am more than willing to believe these assurances, for it has been exceedingly painful to me to suppose that I had, in any way, incurred your hostility, or forfeited your confidence politically. I knew that I had not justly subjected myself to either misfortune, and therefore my personal sorrow was far inferior to that experienced on the public account, for I could not fail to see that the course of things was tending to break up our party in the state and throw us into the power of the common enemy, and was equally certain to destroy your support from the state, and have your administration, so far as this state is concerned, powerless and friendless as to any power which could and would sustain it. I knew very well, if you adhered to the principles and measures upon which you was elected, that the interests of the conservatives, which have always governed their political action, would soon render them at best luke-warm friends, as upon the subject of banks, the Independent Treasury, and the Tariff, their interests are in direct conflict with the democratic policy. On the contrary, the great body of our democracy are perfectly sound upon these measures and will stand by them, whatever party may bring them forward. These very questions, and kindred questions as to our own finances and banking, have produced the division which exists in our party in the State; and it was so absurd as to be repulsive to the feeling and sense of our sound democracy, to see such a faction assuming to be the exclusive friends of your adminstration, professedly elected to carry out this very policy, while they were fighting the policy as applied to the state government with perfect desperation.

I am forced to the conclusion that, without your knowledge or agency,

means have been taken at Washington to disseminate these impressions among the democracy of this and other states, because the impression has been produced most effectually upon both sides of the democratic party, and I do not doubt that many of those who hold federal offices have been induced to take the course they have, solely from the conviction fastened upon their minds, how and from what quarter I know not, that it was necessary to secure their good standing at Washington. I am forced to this conclusion because those whose whole former associations and feelings have been different, upon receiving office, have at once fallen into this course of action. Appointments have been pressed, and contested, to establish this conviction upon the minds of our people, as we have been constantly aware, and the trick, if it has been one upon you, has been emminently successful.

I do not mention these things to complain of the past, but to let you see what state of feeling has been produced and how it has been brought about.

Still the measures of your administration have been such as to command much more of the respect, admiration, and attachment of our true democracy, those of this conservative faction which as assumed exclusive friendship towards you and your administration, as our public press cannot fail to show you daily. The truth is, if you pursue these measures and this policy faithfully, as I trust in God you will, this party will soon stand towards you and your administration, as it did towards Mr. Van Buren and his, in 1840, and will prefer to exchange you for a whig, to get rid of your sound democratic measures.

Not so our sound democracy. If not forced off by constant manifestations of want of confidence, they will stand by you, and in any event they will stand by these measures.

As to myself, I am prepared, as fully as I ever was at any moment of my life, to give you any aid in my power, to maintain the confidential personal and political intercourse, which has so long existed between us, and so far as this state is concerned, if you will permit me to do so, to give you advice as to appointments which cannot fail to change the existing feeling, and to restore to you the good feeling as well as political confidence of the great body of our sound democracy. To do this usefully and effectively, it will not do to have it understood, and especially if I hold my present office, that I am to be consulted in all these cases of conflict for office; but that I may be left to advise you confidentially and as to mens opinions, interests, relations, and preferences, and that, possessing the facts truly, you may yourself, and for yourself, make the selections, and that the appointees may feel that they have been selected by you and not by me. This is an office I do

not seek, because the discharge of its duties with fidelity would be laborious and often very delicate and unpleasant, but to protect you from impositions I will cheerfully perform it, on any occasion, upon your request.

If in writing thus freely I seem to you to be indelicate, I reply that I do so because my own personal feelings and my anxiety for the welfare of the democracy permit it, and because Mr. Bancroft assumed to speak authoritatively for you and urged the course uon me, as one strongly desired by yourself. If he has misunderstood your wishes, you need feel no embarrassment from this letter, as from stating that fact to me, as the last thing I can wish is to press myself, or my advise upon you unexceptedly.

I am interrupted and must close this hasty letter, and I am well aware that I should rather apologise for its length, than for not making it longer.

SILAS WRIGHT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*Strictly Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on October 21, 1846.

1. Wright's letter to Cave Johnson is not identified.

2. Ransom H. Gillet, James Buchanan, and George Bancroft. A lawyer from Ogdensburg, N.Y., Gillet served two terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1833–37; under Polk he served two years as register of the U.S. Treasury, 1845–47, and two years as its solicitor, 1847–49.

## FROM JAMES E. SAUNDERS

Mobile 19th October 1846

Saunders reports that Thomas B. Childress has died following a three-day bout with yellow fever. He further elaborates that under the care of Dr. Nott[1] the victim's condition seemed to improve, but that in the early morning hours of October 18, Childress suddenly succumbed to the "black vomit." Saunders states that he intends to appoint his brother[2] to replace Childress temporarily as weigher in the Mobile Customs House and hopes that the Treasury Department will pay the Childress family the deceased's entire salary for the fiscal year.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "Private." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on November 10, 1846.

1. A prominent Alabama physician and pioneer in the study of yellow fever, Josiah C. Nott founded in 1859 the Alabama Medical College in Mobile.

2. Turner Saunders.

## TO ROBERT M. McLANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 20th 1846

I request that you will visit Washington to night or on tomorrow morning when I will inform you fully of the matter about which I desire to see you. It is only necessary now to say, that I desire to avail myself of you offer made a few days ago, to go out as bearer of dispatches to *Genl Taylor's* army in Mexico. You will have time to return from here to Baltimore, on tomorrow, as we will not have the dispatches ready before thursday morning.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Baltimore; marked "*Confidential.*"

## FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

Columbia Tenn. Oct. 20th 1846

Thomas informs Polk that he is attempting to sell the president's home in Columbia to a James McLaughlin,[1] but cannot do so until a law suit involving the property is settled. According to Thomas, a widow named Weathered[2] is claiming ownership of several hundred acres around Columbia, including Polk's home, based on the will of her father-in-law, Anthony Bledsoe.[3] Although the litigation is pending, Thomas explains that Nashville attorney Godfrey M. Fogg examined the will and determined the widow's claim groundless. On other matters, Thomas reports that both Polk's mother and his slave Matilda are doing well and that local Democrats "wear a smile of satisfaction" over the president's political successes.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on October 29, 1846.

1. McLaughlin was an Irish Democrat from Williamson County, Tenn.

2. Milly Weathered Bledsoe married into the Bledsoe family in 1805 and, at the time she entered her property claim, apparently resided in Mississippi.

3. A prominent leader in the early Middle Tennessee, Anthony Bledsoe owned land in Sumner and Maury counties; he was killed by Indians in 1788.

## TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 22nd 1846

*Majr McLane*[1] of Baltimore will leave here on tomorrow and will bear important dispatches to *Genl Taylor*. I take great pleasure in

making him known to you as my friend, and as a gentleman of high character and fine talents, possessing great devotion and a sound discriminating judgment. He is the son of the *Hon. Louis McLane*, late minister to England, is a graduate of West Point and served six or eight years in the army, and since his resignation in the army has been a member of the Maryland Legislature. He possesses the confidence of the Secretary of War and myself, and is fully informed of the views of the Government, as communicated in the dispatches which he bears. Should he meet you, before he reaches *Genl Taylor* he may communicate these views to you *confidentially*. In their nature they are *confidential* but [...][2] doubt, if you are with *Genl Taylor* he will communicate them to you, as you will have an interest in knowing them. I wrote you a private and unofficial letter a month ago,[3] which I presume you have received. The expedition suggested in that letter; and in the official communication, from the Secretary of War to *Genl Taylor*, of the same date; and which was conveyed by the same messenger, will if *Genl Taylor* shall approve; be changed in its destination. This change will render the expedition a much more important one, than that originally contemplated. It is anticipated, that you will be selected by Genl T., with your proper command to constitute a part of it. Its success, as now contemplated, will depend much on secrecy, and concealing its objects from the enemy, until we are ready to strike a decisive blow. As you will no doubt be fully informed of its nature and character by *Genl T.* it is unnecessary that I should say more.

Your brother-in-law *Governor Brown* and your sister,[4] spent a fortnight here in the early part of this month, and left for the North a few days ago.

I very naturally feel the deepest interest in all the movements of the army. They have heretofore been eminently successful, and I have the greatest confidence that they will continue to be so wherever they encounter an enemy.

I have no recollection of having formed the personal acquaintance of *Genl Taylor,* but request that you will present my respects to him, as also to my acquaintances *Generals Butler, Hamer & Shields*.[5]

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. *Mr McLane* is anxious to enter the military service. If there was any position suited to his character & talents which I could confer upon him I would do so with pleasure. I hope when he reaches the army, he may be designated, to some position in the Staff, which may be agreeable to him. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to "Army of Occupation Mexico" and marked "*Private & unofficial.*"

1. Robert M. McLane.
2. Failed ink transfer renders word or words illegible.
3. See Polk to Pillow, September 22, 1846.
4. Aaron V. and Cynthia Pillow Saunders Brown.
5. William O. Butler, Thomas L. Hamer, and James Shields.

## TO JAMES BUCHANAN

My Dear Sir: Washington Oct 23rd 1846

I send to you herewith *Mr Ingersoll's* letter,[1] as you requested me to do, remembering that it arrived here during my absence to Old Point Comfort.[2] My Private Secretary[3] was absent on a visit to Tennessee, and it was several days after my return, to Washington, before I had time to open and read the numerous letters which had accumulated in my absence. On opening and reading Mr Ingersoll's, the 27th of August the day on which he states in his letter the delegates in his District, would meet to nominate a candidate for [...][4] Congress had passed; and being much engaged it was not answered. You afterwards spoke to me on the subject to which it related and I requested you to write to him, which I subsequently learned, from you, you had done. This I supposed was sufficient, and did not dream that *Mr Ingersoll,* had any cause of offense that I did not answer his letter. I am sure I have given him no such cause. Such are my [...] engagements as you know, that I have long since given up the attempt to answer the numerous letters which [...] written to me. If *Mr Ingersoll* has [...] that I did not answer his letter, as I infer he may have done, from his request that I wouldn't return to him his letter through you, I shall regret it; but repeat that I am not conscious of having given him any cause of offense.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally.

1. On August 18, 1846, Charles J. Ingersoll wrote Polk requesting an appointment as minister to France.
2. Reference is to the location of a seaside cottage in Fort Monroe, Va., where Polk took rest between August 19 and August 25, 1846.
3. Joseph Knox Walker.
4. Failed ink transfers render word or words illegible here and below.

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir YellowBusha County Miss. Oct. 23rd 1846

I got down on yesterday with five hands more. I got down in ten days. I found all well & the Crop mutch better than I expected. I think you will make 20. Bales more than you made last year. The worm has Injured you less than what they have me. Mr Mairs has out about 75. or 80 Bales & 54 pact. All in fine order. I will have it hawled to the river next week & I have directed Mr Mairs to hawl to the river as fast as he Bales it & have it Shiped With the first rise. I will start down in the morning after Harbert & Wife.[1] I will be gone four days as the weather is fine & you have a good-deal of cotton to geather yet. I want all the hands togeather to get it out soon so that they can go to clearing. I will give you a full statement of all your affairs whin I get Back . I have agreed with Mr Mairs for the next year at $450. & If I increase the force either in the spring or fall or winter for the next year I am to gave him $500. I will attend to all of your Business as well as I can.

ROBT CAMPBELL JR

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on November 7, 1846.

1. Mary.

FROM WILLIAM C. BOUCK

Dr Sir New York Oct 24. 1846

Allow me to return you my sincere thanks for the honour afforded in my appointment to an office of high and delicate trust.[1] I hope you will never have occasion to feel that your confidence has been misplaced. I accepted the office with great reluctance, on account of its fearful responsibilities, and my strong desire to return to private life. But I felt that my acceptance was due to you, and to that generous public confidence and approbation, so generally expressed.

The plan of an independent Tr. is not well received by the banking institutions and the business men. It is important to make a favorable impression on the public mind in putting it in operation; kind facilities consistent with law should be extended to thoses with whom business is transacted, and every practical security should be adopted to guard against Burglars who are very numerous in this city. Every mishap would be seized upon to excite a prejudice in the public mind. I have

prop[os]ed measures, which if approved by the Secrty of the Tr. will I am confident render the public money secure.

WM C BOUCK

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

1. Federal assistant treasurer in New York City.

## TO SILAS WRIGHT, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 26th 1846

I received four or five days ago, your *confidential* letter of the 18th ultimo.[1] I appreciate properly the frank, but at the same time friendly spirit in which you make known to me the existing state of political opinion and feeling in New York. I should deeply regret it, if any act of mine, shall have added to the distraction and unfortunate divisions already existing in the Democratic party in New York, or that shall tend to place in jeopardy its continued ascendancy in the State. Certainly nothing I have done was intended to have such effect. In the dispensation of the patronage of the Federal Government in New York, as well as elsewhere, I have acted from the best information which I was able to obtain. You know it is all times a delicate duty, and one difficult to be performed in a manner satisfactorily to all. In the appointments which my duty has required me to make in New York, I have endeavoured to secure the services of competent and faithful public officers, and if possible to heal the divisions and conciliate and re-unite the conflicting sections of the democracy, where such divisions existed. I fear from what I learn from you, as well as from other sources, that I have been unsuccessful in accomplishing the latter object in your State. If I have been so, I have the consolation to know that my intentions were good. I see that by a very close vote in the Union, I had been elected, and that I could not have been so, except by the union of all sections of the Democratic party. I saw that unless this union was preserved, our opponents might succeed in electing my successor. It was for these reasons that I thought it wise, to do justice to all branchs of the party, and to proscribe none. In all this I may have erred, but I state to you frankly, the considerations which governed me. That some mistakes may have occured in the selections which have been made, I am free to admit. From the nature of things I must have the *best information* and knowlege of interests which would guard us against error. All my predecessors have been occasionally led into the commission of similar errors, in making appointments, and it is impossible it should be otherwise. In the absence of personal knowledge the Executive must rely upon written

recommendations. I had personal knowledge of very few of the men, and still less of their peculiar political bearing in New York. A few of them I did select mainly from my personal knowledge of them, when in Congress some years ago, and of this class, were *Butler, Gillet, [...],*[2] *Turrill, Lawrence, Hoffman*, and *Moore*.[3] Of others though I may have had a slight personal acquaintance with some of them, I had to rely mainly on the representations of others. Written recommendations are easily obtained and are often deceptive. I have had several striking instances of this during my term. You would I have no doubt be surprized if you could see the recommendations which were made to me, of some of the persons whom I have appointed in New York, whose appointment yourself and the true democracy of the State regard to have been unfortunate. I mention these things, that you may appreciate the embarrassments and difficulties by which I have been surrounded.

In dispensing the public patronage in New York, the idea which you mention, that there had existed an apparent conflict of object and purpose between your administration and mine, so far as you are concerned, is one which surely never entered my imagination, and if any have drawn such an inference they have been wholly mistaken. Equally unfounded is the impression which you state exists in the minds of many democrats, that the object at Washington had been to change the power in the state to the hands of the faction called conservatives or to the Whigs. You know that I have never had any sympathies or entertained any opinions in common with either of these parties. You write that it has given you pain to suppose that you had in any way [...] or forfeited my confidence politically. It gives me equal pain to learn that such an impression has been for a moment entertained, and I can only say that I am not conscious of having given the slightest ground from which such a inference could be drawn. No such thought or feeling ever entered my mind. My measures and my public policy, is the best refutation of the absurd assumption which you inform me the conservatives have endeavoured to impress on the public mind, that they are the exclusive friends of my administration. If any impression of that sort has gone out from Washington, as you intimate, it may have done, it was not only in itself false, but I am wholly ignorant of the agents by whom it could have been dissiminated. I regret extremely to learn, as I do from your letter, that any of those who hold office by my appointment, have been weak or wicked enough to act upon so false an assumption, and to arrange themselves in hostility to the body of the Democracy of the State. I will if possible ascertain whether, without my knowledge, any persons here have been instrumental in fostering such convictions on their minds. If such has been

the case, and I can ascertain who the factious and guilty authors of such a fabrication are, and when discovered they be connected with the Government, I will not fail to hold them to a strict account, for a course of conduct which not only does me great injustice, but inflicts so severe a blow upon the Democratic party and its principles—principles cherished alike by you and by myself.

I am highly gratified to learn from *yourself* (what indeed I never doubted, judging from my knowledge of you, and from the coincidence of opinion which existed between us in former times) that you as well as the true Democracy of New York approve the measures and policy of my administration. You gave me assurance that if I pursue those measures and policy that the sound democracy will stand by me and by them, and express the opinion that if I do so, the conservatives will become luke-warm friends, if not open opponents. I need scarcely assure you, that whatever may be the consequences, I will to the end of my term unwaveringly adhere to the principles and policy which have thus far marked the course of my adminstration. Indeed I have but little trouble comparatively, in regard to the principles and policy which I ought to pursue. My greatest [ . . . ] and embarrassment grow out of the patronage which I am required to dispense. I could frankly wish that I had not an office to bestow. If I had not, my time I am sure would be spent more pleasantly, and I may add that there can be little doubt, my administration would be more successful.

There is one fact which has come to my knowledge since the adjournment of Congress, which goes far to confirm the opinion you express, that if I pursue my measures and policy faithfully, the faction calling themselves conservatives, will be found in opposition to me. The fact to which I allude, is that certain leading conservatives from New York were on a visit to Washington, near the close of the late Session of Congress, and when the tariff bill was in its most critical stages, exerted their utmost influence, as I learn, with members of Congress to defeat that great measure. They asked to see me, but did not interpose the subject & I had no idea what their business was until lately. I have now reason to apprehend that the same persons & those who act with them, will exert themselves to have the late tariff act modified or repealed, at the next session of Congress. I rejoice to see the sound state of public opinion among the true democracy of New York on that subject. The opinions expressed by your Democratic State convention, and in the address of the democratic members recently assembled to revise your Constition, that this revised act should have a *a fair test* is the true issue. If the Representatives from New York, who are of the true democracy are firm in its support, as I cannot doubt they will be, the

tariff of 1846 can neither be modified or repealed at the next Session. I think it of the greatest importance not only for the prosperity of the country, but for the continued success of the democratic party in the union, that it should not be disturbed. I think the only danger is at the next Session. I apprehend none afterwards. As I have introduced this subject, without designing to do so, when I commenced this letter, ought to refer to the course of the [ . . . ] to its opposition to the late act, permit me to add a few words more. The [ . . . ] on this course, will probably be to propose in the first instance, a modification of the duties on that section, but if this be yielded to, it will be but the entering wedge, the whole subject will be thrown open, and by a system of [ . . . ] which has become [ . . . ] the modification will be embraced & we will be again at sea, and where we will end God only knows. If the act can be passed uncontested at the next Session, the Constitutional Treasury act be put into full operation, a gradation of the price of the public lands be effected, a measure which Ohio and other Western states demand, and I shall be so fortunate as to bring the Mexican War to an honourable conclusion, as I am most anxious to do, I shall feel that I may be able to close my term, to hand over the Government to a Democratic Successor who will maintain and carry out the same policy. The success of these measures will I think assure the continued democratic ascendancy. If on the other hand the tariff is kept an open question, and the country continues to be agitated by it, the result may not be so certain. The gradation of the price of the public lands, was the only one of the great democratic measures which failed of success at the last Session. It was recommended by both *Genl Jackson* & *Mr Van Buren* & in my judgment it is important that it should be carried at the next Session. It is not only right in itself, but its success would go far to conciliate and strengthen our political friends in large and important sections of the union. Some of our Northern friends at the last Session had difficulties on the subject as the details of the Bill before them did not suit them, and they voted against it. I hope upon further reflection these difficulties may not be insurpasable. The Whig party as a matter of course voted against it, because it was brought forward as a democratic measure. But I must stop. I find I am running into matters which I had no idea of touching when I commenced writing.

Returning again to your letter, I am exceedingly gratified My Dear Sir: that notwithstanding the unfortunate course of events in New York, as [ . . . ] with the dispensation of the public patronage here, you frankly avow your readiness to give me any aid in your power, to maintain the confidential and personal intercourse which has so long existed between us. This I assure you was to me, under the circum-

stances a grateful sentiment, and is one which is sincerely reciprocated on my part. I never had any other feelings or desire. I will with pleasure avail myself, of the friendly aid which you offer, and hope for the future to avoid the difficulties which have heretofore beset my path, in dispensing the patronage of the Federal Government in New York.

With my best wishes for your personal welfare & happiness, and an anxious desire that you may be rechosen Governor, and that the Democracy may succeed, at your approaching trial, in carrying all their other elections.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to New York; and marked "*Strictly Confidential.*"

1. See Wright to Polk, October 18, 1846.

2. Blurred ink transfers render word or words illegible here and below.

3. Benjamin F. Butler, Ransom Gillet, Joel Turrill, Cornelius W. Lawrence, Michael Hoffman, and Ely Moore. An Oswego attorney, Turrill won election to the New York assembly in 1831; served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1833–37; and held the post of U.S. consul to the Sandwich Islands from 1845 until 1850. A journalist and trade union leader in New York City, Moore won two terms to the U.S. House, 1835–39, and served as surveyor of the port of New York, 1839–45, before receiving an appointment as U.S. marshal for the Southern District of New York in 1845.

## FROM JOHN Y. MASON

Sir: Navy Department Oct. 27, 1846

By the wreck of the Brig Truxtun on the Bar of Tuxpan,[1] Commander E. W. Carpender[2] felt constrained to surrender himself, with the officers and men on board the wreck to the Mexican authorities as prisoners of war. On the 5th day of September ultimo Commd. David Conner, commanding the U.S. Naval Forces in the Gulf of Mexico, informed the Department that he had addressed a communication to the officer in command of the military forces, of the State of Vera Cruz, requesting that the officers and crew of the Truxtun, might be delivered up to him as prisoners of war not to serve against Mexico, until regularly exchanged. To this communication the Captain General of Vera Cruz[3] replied "offering to exchange the officers and crew of the Truxtun, and to liberate them at once, provided Commodore Conner would give the assurance that Genl. La Vega[4] and the Officers that accompany him, will be put at full liberty so soon as the agreement could reach the United States." The Commodore did not consider himself authorized to give the pledge and referred the proposition for instructions

to this Department.

On the 21st of September, under your direction, I instructed Comd. Conner "that in the absence of any general cartel for the exchange of prisoners, he would give the required assurance," and that "So soon as it is known to the Government that the Mexican authorities adhere to the offer, and have liberated Commander Carpender, his officers and men, Genl. La Vega and the officers accompanying him, will be placed at full liberty."

In his dispatch of the 22nd September ult. Com. Conner transmitted to the Department a communication to him from the Mexican Captain General, in which his readiness to deliver on board the Squadron, the prisoners of the Brig Truxtun, adding "that in the mean time, inasmuch as your Excellency is of the opinion that your Government will accept these individuals in exchange for Genl. Deaz de la Vega, and the officers who are prisoners with him, in the United States, and that the latter will be released without condition or restraint, those of the Truxtun will be released in a similar manner, but under the promise and engagement of your excellency that they shall not take up arms, against Mexico, until the exchange shall be completed"; and Commodore Conner informs the Department, that "agreeably to these conditions a portion of the crew of the Truxtun, consisting of the Commander, four officers, and thirty-eight men were delivered to him." The remainder, consisting of three officers and thirteen men, under the charge of the Passed Assistant Surgeon were left sick at Tuxpan, to which place, he writes, "I will direct a vessel to proceed and take them on board."

This Despatch was received at the Department on the 26th Inst. and I hasten to apprise you of the consummation of the agreement on the part of the Mexican authorities as to the officers and men known to have been delivered to Commd. Conner, and of my entire confidence that those at Tuxpan have been also delivered in good faith, and to ask, that you will cause the necessary orders to be issued, to execute the same on our part, with equal good faith—with the necessary passports to enable the Mexican Officers released to return free from restraint to their own country.

J. Y. MASON

L. DNA–RG 45. Addressed locally.

1. The grounding of the brig *Truxtun* occurred in August 1846.

2. A career naval officer, Edward W. Carpender received his commission in 1813; earned promotions to lieutenant in 1825 and commander in 1841; and retired in 1855 at the rank of commodore.

3. Juan Morales.

4. Captured at the Battle of Resaca de la Palma, Romulo Diaz de la Vega later participated in the Battle of Cerro Gordo. A dedicated army officer, La Vega fought the Spanish and the Texans prior to the Mexican War, and the French afterwards. He served briefly as Mexico's president in 1855.

## TO JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 29th 1846

I received to day your letter of the 20th Instant,[1] and have but a moment free to spare from my official engagements, which are at present very pressing, to answer it. I have heretofore asked *four Thousand dollars*, for my house & lot including of course the Stable lot, and at the rates at which property sold when I left Tennessee, I thought the property worth that sum. It may be that such property has depreciated in value since that time. At all events as I do not desire to retain it, I have made up my mind, to take *three Thousand Dollars* ($3.000) in cash for it, if more cannot be obtained. At this price I would prefer the money in hand, but it would make no great sacrifice with me, if it were several in notes, payable in Bank, of unquestionable solvency at reasonable time, bearing interest from the date. You are therefore authorized to sell on these terms, if you cannot get better, though I consider the price very low for the property. As to the suit mentioned by *Mrs Weathered* to recover the town, after the [...][2] of forty years quiet & undisturbed possession, I have not the least apprehension. If you contract to sell you can stipulate that I will make a general warranty title. If you sell you must remember that I have rented the property for the next two years at $750 per annum. Of course I would expect to give up the notes & lose the rents for the unexpired term, and the purchaser would agree to make his own arrangement with the present tenant for possession of it. I expect that I would not take the price stated, but that there is no probability if I retained it, that I would not again occupy it.

You ask if I wish to purchase the *Smiser place*[3] which is for sale, to which I answer that I do not. *Col Campbell* is my regular agent, but as you state, he is about in Mississippi, you can close the contract if you think proper to do so, for the sale of my house and lot, and I will ratify what you do.

In answer to the further enquiry which you make, I inform you that *Mr Stephen's*[4] salary will be $1000. per annum.

I deplore the loss of *Capt Allen*,[5] in the battle of Monterey. It will be a severe blow upon his family. He was a young man of talents and

promise, and proved himself to be a noble & gallant soldier. I am sure that no one except his father and mother can grieve over his death more than I do.

My ordinary responsibilities as you know are vast, but during the pendency of the war they are greatly increased; and I have not a moment in which I am free from deep anxiety and care. I am doing all that human vigilence and labour at this distance from the scene of action can do, to conduct it successfully, and to bring it to a close by a just & honourable peace.

Will you call on Mother and make my affectionate regards to her, and say to her that we are enjoying our usual health. By the way you must at the close of the year furnish her, with any means she may need, to clear her accounts, or for any other purpose.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "*Private.*"

1. See Thomas to Polk, October 20, 1846.
2. Blurred ink transfer has rendered one word illegible.
3. Residence of James Smiser.
4. James H. Stephens.
5. William B. Allen.

## FROM SILAS WRIGHT, JR.

My Dear Sir, Albany 30 October 1846

Your letter of the 26th was recd. on the 28th and read with interest and pleasure. I thank you for its frankness and fulness. My experience has shown me fully how little dependence can be placed upon mere ordinary letters of recommendation and petitions touching appointments to office, even when acting within my own state; but the letters from Mr. Johnson, Mr. Walker, Mr. Buchanan and yourself compel me to believe that there has been a systematic course pursued by our conservatives to produce the impression upon the minds of all those receiving appointments from your administration that opposition to the administration of the state was the way to secure these positions.

We have noticed constant intimations in the Argus[1] and other kindred papers that we were disguisedly hostile to you and your administration; but not suspecting the object, and knowing that the declared measures and policy of your administration were ours, and were those which induced them to faulter under Mr. Van Buren, we were willing they should vaunt their friendship for your administra-

tion, and commit themselves as strongly as they would in advance to that policy and those measures, which there was too much reason to fear they would try to defeat, if they saw the measures likely to meet the sanction of Congress.

We knew also that delegations from these people were constantly visiting Washington, making it a sort of trade to solicit for the offices, to be more for Texas than the Texans themselves, more for Oregon than 54º 40' etc. etc. and to keep up a very active and confidential correspondence, purporting to be very much by authority, etc. etc. but I did not suspect that a fraud upon your administration as well as mine was at the bottom of all this maneuvering. We often heard that from one to four or five of our conservative senators were with you at a time, and invariably found subsequently some new movement about some office, and a renewed activity and zeal in our federal office holders, but we said nothing and did nothing, because we could not suppose the position, or disposition of these men was not fully understood then. I am now constrained to suppose that a game was playing upon your adminstration as well as upon our democracy, and that the mass of those foes whom offices were obtained were made to believe that the condition of their promotion was to serve the views of those men here.

After the tariff and Independent Treasury came up and were likely to pass, we were by no means surprised to find a delegation of the most prominent of these men here leaving hastily for Washington, one at least of them openly charged to defeat the bills, if it could not be changed to meet his interests; nor were we surprised to see, from that time, the cliques perfectly silent on the subject of the Tariff and very much so as to the administration itself, and our hostility to it.

But I will not tire you with these details. It is enough for me to believe that a correct understanding now prevails, and it shall be my effort to see that like tricks are not played, without being expossed, for the future.

Our contest is upon us. We can make no prediction as to the result, but must refer you to the Canvass as it is made. The results in other states have encouraged our opposition a good deal, but do not seem very extensively to have discouraged our friends, and we yet intend and expect to carry the state, though we fear that the ballot boxes may develope opposition which is not apparent. Otherwise we are quite sanguine that we must succeed.

This is a very hasty pen letter, written for your *private eye only*. It is not intended to prejudice any body or charge any body, but to put you on your guard for the future. If you will consider our democracy as one party and so treat it, you will have no trouble and, we shall have none,

but if you attempt to consider us as divided and so to treat us, we shall always be divided, because the desire for the offices will keep us so; while if they are only to be gained by a faithful service of the one party, they will not be the means of division. If we could have a Government without offices, it would be well for the people and for those who are charged with their administration. Our divisions must end with this election, whatever may be its result. If we are beaten, those in our ranks who aid to do it will go off with the majority, and if we succeed they will be compelled to go off, or to come back as friends, not as an independent party.

I will not detain you further but to repeat that this hasty scrawl is *strictly private*, and should you dispose of it as I do of all similar correspondence you will lay it upon the fire.

SILAS WRIGHT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private*." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on November 2, 1846.

1. Reference is to the Albany *Argus*.

## FROM GEORGE W. BOWMAN

Bedford, October 31, 1846

Bowman complains that the administration has retained too many Whigs in Federal office, a circumstance he cites as a factor in the Democratic party's defeat in the October state elections in Pennsylvania. He opines that these developments have "cooled the ardor, of many of the best Democrats in *every county* in the Commonwealth, and men who, during the contest of 1844, would have walked in the *rain* 20 miles in their *bare feet* to have aided the cause of '*Polk & Dallas*' are now *neutrals*." Bowman further reports that Simon Cameron essentially betrayed the Democratic party during the campaign by stirring up opposition to the new tariff and by supporting the Whig candidate for canal commissioner.[1]

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. James M. Power of Mercer County, Penn.

## TO GEORGE M. DALLAS

My Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 31st 1846

I return to you as requested *Mr Schnabel's*[1] letter, enclosed to me in yours of yesterday.[2] I have not seen the Post Master General,[3] but will do so, as soon as I can. I am sure if the nomination of *Mr Rawls*[4] has not already taken place, that it will not be made, after I see him.

I have heard nothing on the subject except what is communicated in *Mr Schnabel's* letter.

I must remind you of your promise to give me a reference to that part of the *Madison Papers* which goes to show the intention of the convention, in reserving to the States, the power to levy a tonnage duty on vessels with the consent of Congress. If you will give me a reference to the page, it will save me the labour of searching for it.

I did not think to ask you, when I saw you a few days ago, if you had written to *Mr Irwin*.[5] Presuming however from your letter to me that you would do so, I wrote to *Dr Sturgeon*[6] that I would nominate his friend to the Senate, early in the next Session.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Philadelphia, Penn.

1. Ellis B. Schnabel, a Philadelphia lawyer.
2. Neither letter has been found.
3. Cave Johnson.
4. Probably Peter Rawls, a Philadelphia Democrat.
5. William W. Irwin.
6. See Polk to Daniel Sturgeon, October 1, 1846.

## TO ROGER B. TANEY[1]

Dear Sir: Washington City Oct 31st 1846

Congress at their last Session passed an act[2] authorizing the President, to take such steps as he may deem adviseable for adjusting the title to the Pea Patch island in the Delaware River.[3]

Before the passage of this act *Mr Eaton*[4] acting as the agent of those claiming adversely to the United States, entered into a written agreement with the Secretary of War,[5] by which it was stipulated, to submit the question of title to your decision as arbitrator between the parties. I learn also from the Secretary of War, as well as from other sources, that when the Bill was pending before the Senate, several Senators gave it their support, upon the assurance that if it passed, the question of title would be submitted to your decision. Should you decline to act, it might not be proper, after such assurances, to select any other person. I am informed further that if you will agree to act *Mr Eaton* and the Secretary of War will enter a new agreement submitting the question of title to your award, which shall be final. Though I have seen your letter on the subject, of the 23rd of August last, to the Solicitor of the Treasury,[6] in answer to one addressed to you by that officer, in which you express a disinclination to assume the office of arbitrator.

I yet hope, that as it is the desire of both the parties in interest, you will do so. It is a matter of importance both to the United States and the individuals claiming adversely to them, that they receive a final decision of the matter in controversy, and I am satisfied that whatever decision you would make would be satisfactory to both parties.

I have to request that you will favor me with an early answer.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Baltimore, Md.

1. A 1795 graduate of Dickinson College and member of the Maryland House, 1799–1800, Roger B. Taney broke with the Federalist party over its opposition to the War of 1812; he subsequently served in Andrew Jackson's cabinet as attorney general and later as secretary of the Treasury. Whig opposition in the U.S. Senate denied him an associate's seat on the U.S. Supreme Court in 1835; however, the following year he went on the Court as its chief justice and served in that post until his death in 1864.

2. "Appropriations for Certain Defensive Works," enacted on August 8, 1846.

3. In 1813 the U.S. Army commenced building Fort Delaware on Pea Patch Island, which the state of Delaware ceded to the Federal government that same year. Beginning in 1831 private parties from both New Jersey and Delaware, each claiming ownership of the island, filed property suits against the Federal government. In 1847 Congress appointed a neutral abitrator, one approved by Polk, who upheld the Federal government's title to the island.

4. A Washington City attorney and former secretary of war under Andrew Jackson, John H. Eaton represented the claimant from Delaware.

5. William L. Marcy.

6. Polk appointed Seth Barton of Louisiana to serve as solicitor of the Treasury on December 29,1845; two years later he was appointed chargé d'affaires to Chili.

# NOVEMBER

## FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

My dear Sir, Near Nashville, Tennessee 1 Nov: 1846

I wrote you on friday the 23d Ult, soon after we had got home, since when Gov: Brown has returned by way of Baltimore & Pittsburg, & Judge Catron has returned from holding his court in the Western District. Catron advised that we should not wait for Stevenson, who has not yet returned from St Louis, and accordingly Brown entered upon & succeeded in negotiations with Bass. He gets the whole for $13,000.00 and Bass pays $500.00 off that for the occupancy of the premises during the next year. I had, in caucus, advised to give $13,500.00 soooner than fail in the contract, so that you see, in my opinion, you have made $500.00 or $1000.00. Brown is a shrewd fellow in a trade, and I have no doubt, did better than if we had waited for Stevenson. You will have to raise $6,000.00 by January but Brown will write you the particulars.[1]

The rumors about Santa Ana concentrating large forces in the neighborhood of Monterey though not specially true, do nevertheless

indicate that his policy will be, to bring all his power to bear on some *one* of our detatchments and to overwhelm it if possible, thereby achieving one victory to boast of, though at the expense of defeat & ultimate disaster at every other point. We learn that Taylor has called up the unemployed volunteers on the lower Rio Grande, and if Pillow has received his orders to that effect at an early day, it will postpone the intended demonstration on Tampico.

All conflicting interests here, have apparently subsided and there will hereafter be no show of opposition to Brown in our own ranks, and he will have to take the field, busy as he is. The candidate of the Whigs will not be known until after their convention. Gentry has not declared off, and has gone into Nashville today to confer more fully with Bell. It is the wish of Jones to run Gentry for Governor that he may have the Congress district for himself. Foster desires your old friend Caruthers or Henry; the Trimble & McEwen party desire N. S. Brown and Haskell is laying in capital for himself at Camargo &c.

Jos. W. Horton, Cashier of the Bank of Tennessee, died last night,[2] and all the democratic directors except doctr Waters, who is absent, have proposed that I shall take the place. Several others, to whose wishes and opinions I owe much, have urged the matter on me, and though much perplexed, my opinion today, is, that I shall have to go into it at least until there will be more time to look out for another. I would, myself, greatly prefer being with you in either of the positions spoken of, but whilst I am employed here, you can take your own time, and re-adjust your relations at Washington without being at all influenced by any expectations on my part, and the matter may be postponed from time to time to suit the current of events, or wholly pretermitted if desirable. I shall not lose sight of serving some period with you before you return to Tennessee, but of this hereafter. So soon as the matter here shall take a definite shape I will write you again.

My wife has recovered from her attack so far as to be up, but is much weakened. She has received Mrs. Polk's short note of the 24 and will write in a few days more at length though not on such fine paper. We recollect with pleasure the kindness of Johnson, Mason, Buchanan & others. Mrs. G. was greatly pleased with Mason's family when we visited for a few moments on the last evening we were with you.

DANIEL GRAHAM

ALS. Polk Memorial Association. Addressed to Washington City with an attached Nashville street map showing the lots and their asking prices. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on November 10, 1846.

1. See Polk to Vernon K. Stevenson, October 3, 1846, and Polk to John Catron, October 7, 1846.

2. A businessman and ardent Jacksonian, Joseph W. Horton served two terms as sheriff of Davidson County prior to his appointment as cashier of the Bank of Tennessee.

## FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My Dear Sir, London Nov. 3d 1846

I shall send you but a short letter today. Our passage across the Atlantic was favorable as to winds, but exceedingly boisterous. Mrs. Bancroft[1] suffered during the whole voyage, and was so much weakened and emaciated, that I was obliged to remain (what in itself was very desirable) four days in Liverpool. Nothing can exceed the interest taken there in the change in the British and American tariffs. They hung upon me as an oracle to hear how much Indian corn the valley of the Mississippi can produce. The consumption of that article is increasing with unexpected rapidity, & it was more eagerly inquired after than wheat and flour. I wish you would have some statement sent me of the actual and *possible* product of Indian corn for export from the United States. Mr Walker, I am sure, will do it.

As to iron, tell Mr Walker to be perfectly at ease. No iron can be spared from England for America. Ships returning without freight could scarcely take it for nothing. It will not pay so high as the price here. Tobacco is in a different condition. I endeavored in every way to ascertain how far the commercial and the manufacturing interest would struggle for a reduction of the enormous import. The great objection lies in the position of the ministry, who are involved in the affairs of Ireland. The demand for reduction, as far as the public mind is concerned, relates chiefly to articles of food, and those which are accessary to the comfort of the poor. But I do not despair: & after collecting full accounts of the waste of morals and revenue, consequent on smuggling and the wholesale adulteration of tobacco, I will write to the Department of State on the subject. It is fortunate for you, (I believe you will get the appellation of Felix)[2] that the course of trade, as explained in my letter to the Department, will *crowd specie* into the United States. My information came from the very best sources.

From the Continent, no doubt, you have received full accounts of the doings of Louis Philippe and Spanish Queens and Infantas.[3] Lord Palmerston is angry: the *entente cordiale* is broken-up; the dead body of the Treaty of Utrecht[4] is dug up to frighten fools with; and even the fools laugh at the imposition. The serious part for us is, that at the

meeting of Victoria and L. Philippe at the castle of Ere, the marriage of Montpesier & the Infanta[5] was spoken of. To conciliate England to this personal object the King of the French meddled with Texas; and now having failed in Texas, to the general satisfaction of the French, he is met by England with a protest against the intermarriage between his family and the royal family of Spain. The breach is the wider because Louis Philippe and Guizot are openly charged with bad faith; but England will rest content with a harmless protest, and the communication of the papers to Parliament.

There never was a better moment for producing a favorable impression in France for your administration. Is the man of whom you spoke to General Armstrong as Minister to France[6] the best man for that place? The person who named him to you as Secretary of the Treasury, does not ask it and will never thank you for it. Mr Wright never proposed him for that place as he emphatically told me. He did nothing in the Congress of 1844 that I know of. He would not, as far as I know, strike the public very favorably, and I doubt his hold on the affections of the N.Y. democracy. I have no objection to Gov. Marcy's knowing this opinion of mine. Neither Genl. Dix, nor Butler, nor Wright, nor Van Buren ever named to me the person in question. I give my opinion freely because I know it will not weight on this question except to cause consideration. It would be bad to give this great appointment to N. Y. except on the explicit request of Mr. Wright.

Best regards to Mrs. Polk. I see Lord Palmerston to day at 5, and dine in his company at 7. So soon as I see the Queen I shall write to the Ruler of the White House. With all sorts of good messages to Mr. and Mrs. Knox Walker, to Miss Rucker, and affectionate greetings to my ancient brethren in the Cabinet.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS. MHi. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Elizabeth Davis Bancroft.

2. A Latin term meaning "the lucky one."

3. References are to Louis Phillipe, King of the French from 1830 to 1848; Isabella II of Spain, elder daughter of Ferdinand VII and his fourth wife, Maria Christina Bourbon-Two Sicilies; and Infanta Luisa Fernanda, only sibling of Isabella II and heir presumptive to the Spanish throne, 1833–1851.

4. Designed to restore the balance of power following the War of the Spanish Succession, the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) compelled France to renounce all claims to the Spanish throne.

5. Antoine, Duke of Montpensier and youngest son of Louis Phillipe, married the Infanta Luisa Fernanda on October 10, 1846.

6. Richard Rush.

## FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Noxubee County Nov. 3rd 1846 Miss

Campbell reviews receipts and expenditures relating to Polk's Mississippi plantation. He requests clarification of certain entries in the plantation ledger and instructions for settling an account with some of the president's slaves for five bales of cotton that they made on their own and then shipped to market in 1844. He also explains that he has collected $100 for hiring out Harry the blacksmith; he notes that the slave's poor eyesight and drinking problems make it difficult to secure future hires. Campbell further reports the purchase of a slave named Calvin, but he relates his failure to acquire any female slaves, noting specifically John T. Leigh's refusal to negotiate a deal. He recommends that Polk consider buying slaves from Virginia, "where a better selection can be made & without delay." Finally, Campbell states that he has employed John A. Mairs for another year and notes that the overseer has planted a promising corn crop.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on November 12, 1846, and that "there is a mistake of $37.85 against me in his account."

## FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

My dear Sir Liverpool 4th November 46

After a long and trying passage in the Western[1] we arrived Safely.

Mr. Bancroft remained a few days & went up to London; he is a Strange Compound and it is impossible to say what Kind of Impression he will make in this Country, but I can tell you he will make *Many*.

I find all my affairs going well but Cotton is advanced as to make it a dangerous business to engage in it; indeed every thing *American* is up and moving. Our Tariff has done it and I find your administration very popular. The War with Mexico progressing as its does has a good influence. The *Conduct* of the Volunteers seems to astonish them and on the whole they are disposed to respect us more. I tell them if they don't we will Make Them.

But I regret that my Country has been engaged in a War—and I have not been in it—it has given me more pain more uneasiness than any thing else in my whole Life and feel as tho' I have no Claim to the Sword of the Old hero. You do not Know how I feel on this subject.

And should the Mexicans not make peace after the meeting of their Congress and the Campaign open again—you will not undertake it

without new Troops and at the point you mentioned, then you Could Call me and let me Redeem what I have said without giving any Section cause to question.

Mr. King[2] I find went home on the Ship New York.[3] He started on board the unfortunate Gr Britain[4]; remember the New York line of Steamers Collins & Sloo.[5] These things add so much to the Importance of a Country rising as ours is at this time and of your [...].[6] You will show the world in the [...]. My Kind respects to Mrs P Mr. & Mrs. Walker & Miss Rucker and little Rachel[7] when you see her.

R ARMSTRONG

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington D.C. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on November 19, 1846; he notes that the "American tariff has produced a fine effect upon American interests in England."

1. The S.S. *Great Western* was the first steam powered ship designed specifically as a trans-Atlantic passenger vessel; a side wheeler, she was placed in service in 1838.

2. William R. King.

3. The packet *New York* is not identified further.

4. The S.S. *Great Britain,* the first iron-hulled, screw-propelled steamer, made her maiden trans-Atlantic voyage from Liverpool to New York in 1845; on September 23, 1846, she ran aground at Dundrum Bay in Ireland.

5. In the 1850's Edward K. Collins, owner of the Dramatic Line of trans-Atlantic steamers, received substantial U.S. mail subsidies for regular service between New York and Great Britain; beginning in 1848 A. G. Sloo provided government-subsidized mail service with twice-monthly sailings from New York to California via the Isthmus of Panama.

6. Word or words illegible here and below.

7. Born in the White House in 1834, Rachel Jackson Donelson was the fourth child of Andrew Jackson Donelson and his first wife, Emily Tennessee Donelson.

## FROM JOHN SLIDELL

My dear Sir, New Orleans. 4 Nov. 1846

Since my return home, I have had occasion to see several intelligent persons from the seat of war & I am led to believe that Genl. Taylor will not feel himself in sufficient force to advance, or at any rate to go beyond Saltillo. If we may credit recent advices, the plan of Santa Anna is to abandon Saltillo & concentrate his forces upon San Luis de Potosi. I think it extremely doubtful whether Genl. Taylor will consider

himself in sufficient force ever to spare the troops which you have ordered on the road to Tampico. I fear that the General either wants the forecast & scope of view necessary for the conduct of a campaign on an extended scale or that he is determined to throw all the responsibility of his movements upon the administration by confining himself to the execution of such definite orders as may be given him; it is impossible that the thousand contingencies which must control all military movements can be provided for or anticipated at a point so remote from the scene of operations. I recollect your telling me when I last had the pleasure to see you that the General failed to keep you advised of his position, resources & intentions and studiously abstained from presenting any plan of a campaign. If he has not since been more communicative, it seems to me that he should be strongly urged to a freer development of his views.

I do not attach any great importance to the late hostile declarations of Santa Anna, excepting that they may perhaps have been forced upon him by weakness of position at home. I am confident that he himself desires to negotiate & unless his letter to Almonte[1] and his subsequent declarations are mere empty flourishes (which may very possibly be the case) you may rely upon it, that he has had more opposition to encounter than he expected.

There would seem to be more hostility towards us on the part of the population of the North Eastern provinces of Mexico than was anticipated. This unfriendly indisposition must I think mainly be attributed to the reestablishment of the constitution of 1824. Under the federal system these provinces would prefer to maintain their connection with Mexico. I have been of opinion that there would be nothing like a popular movement to embarrass the march of our troops, that we should only have to continue with the regular force, and I still think that there will be no excitement among the mass of the people. Yet judging from what we have seen in the late affairs, it would be unsafe not to make considerable allowance for this new element in the contest.

I am no military man & therefore do not pretend to criticize Genl. Taylors past movements, but of one thing I am sure—that no invading army that does not rely upon the country in which it operates for supplies of food, can ever march in *sufficient force*, by *any route* to the city of Mexico. With the total absence of all pecuniary resources I have no idea that the enemy can concentrate more that 15 to 20 thousand troops at any point between Monterey & Mexico. One half of this number, it is true, on our side will always be sufficient to rout them hand to hand, but it would not do to approach the capital with less than 15000 effective men, but we should require at least an equal number to keep

up our communications, especially if there be anything like a popular movement against us. If the Mexican Congress do not in the course of the month of December authorise the opening of negotiations, the war may be terminated by the capture of the captial or you must look forward to its indefinite protraction. It is essential that you should very soon decide on the plan to be pursued. If we are to march on Mexico, you will require an effective force of at least 30,000 men, a full moiety of them should be regulars—they must live on the enemy or at any rate we must ourselves fix the price which we will pay for all our requisitions. I still believe that this is the best course, but if adopted, it should be entered upon at once with the greatest vigor. The only other alternative (in favor of which indeed many strong reasons may be advanced) will be to stop at Monterey or Saltillo, garrisoning two or three strong positions to the westward of these points—if my information be correct there will be no difficulty in occupying Tampico & keeping up our communications from that port with Monterey & Camargo. The blockade of the coast should be rigidly maintained and Vera Cruz should be taken. The possession of Vera Cruz will have a much stronger moral influence in the city of Mexico than the subjection of the northern provinces, but the taking of San Juan de Ullua is still more important in another point of view. The navy has had no opportunity to distinguish itself. It has a stong hold on the affections of the people & such an achievement would excite the highest enthusiasm throughout the country. We are in general a calculating race but be assured that a little glory will reconcile our people to the expenditure of many millions and that nothing but the eclat of victories will do it. The masses must have something to huzza about. The northern provinces & California with Vera Cruz & Tampico in our possession, & all the coasts rigidly blockaded, let it be understood that we shall wage no further offensive war, that we shall patiently await her overtures for peace, but as we can only be indemnified by cession of territory for the expenses of war, the extent of that cession will be regulated in proportion to those expenses. A considerable revenue might probably be derived by opening Tampico, Vera Cruz, Mazatlan & San Blas to the importation of goods, but that advantage would be counter balanced, by the removal of the inducements which the European powers now have in their interstate commerce to exert this influence in favor of peace.

There seems to be but one opinion of the high military qualities of Genl. Worth.[2] All unite in speaking of him in the most unqualified praise. Butler & Hamer are also considered good officers,[3] but I find that Genl. Patterson[4] has not inspired the same confidence & confi-

dence in the commander is one of the greatest elements of success—the movement on Tampico is a very important one and failure would not only be mortifying but disastrous. I believe that we shall encounter no opposition from the people on this line of march. I have had two or three interviews with a Mexican who has just arrived from Victoria the capital of Tamaulipas; he brings letters stating him to be a man of character & influence & that he is authorised to speak the sentiments of the leading persons of that department. He will proceed to Washington in a few days. His object is to know the views of the government in relation to a contemplated confederation of the northern departments. He says that although the federal system is much less objectionable than a central government to the people of the North Eastern departments, yet they have no confidence in its duration, and would not hesitate to proclaim a separation if they could have any assurances of protection when peace shall have been made between the United States & Mexico. I of course did not pretend to say what your views would be, but suggested that in the present state of things the United States could not guarantee the independence of the northern departments, but that if they took part with us at least negatively by proclaiming their independence, it would be incumbent upon us in any treaty of peace, to stipulate for immunity of person & property to all those who had taken part in the movement. He says that an assurance to that effect, which might be given informally, would induce a movement in Tamaulipas. Perhaps such an assurance might best be given by the general commanding the expedition to Tampico. I shall give this person, Doctor Mesa,[5] a letter of introduction to Mr. Buchanan.

I shall continue to hold myself in readiness to proceed to Mexico whenever so instructed, although from present appearances, my services will probably not be required.

The change of the tariff will have no unfavorable effect upon our political prospects in Louisiana. The reduction & prospective abolition of the protective duties on sugar in England, will fully compensate for the diminished duty here & the sugar planters now feel assured that their interests are established on solid & permanent ground. I hope that there may be as much discretion in Pennsylvania, notwithstanding the result of the late elections.

JOHN SLIDELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. A general in the Mexican Army and an old friend of Santa Anna's, Juan N. Almonte served as Mexican minister to the United States from 1842 until 1845, when he was recalled following the U.S. annexation of Texas.

2. A native of New York, William J. Worth served as an infantry officer during the War of 1812; attained the rank of colonel in 1838; was breveted brigadier general in 1842 for service against the Seminoles; and was breveted major general in 1846 for meritorious conduct at the Battle of Monterrey.

3. William O. Butler and Thomas L. Hamer.

4. Robert Patterson.

5. A physician, Aelería de Masa is not identified further.

## FROM CAMPBELL P. WHITE

My Dear Sir New York 4 Novem 1846

We have carried the City by a decided majority not less than 5000—all our ticket except probably one member of Assembly and three out of the four members of Congress and would have carried all had it not been for the miserable nomination made in one of the Congressional Districts of the city. But the accounts from the interior of the State I very much regret to say are unfavorable and I think there is very great reason to apprehend that Mr Wright is defeated!

The unholy alliance between Whigs & Anti-renters and more than all the unfortunate want of harmony in the Democratic ranks arising from the proscriptive course pursued by our leading friends at Albany (which you have endeavored by your example to arrest) to brethren of the same principle has produced an alienation that has most probably caused a defeat of the Democratic party in the State at a moment when in my opinion if a new and entirely unobjectionable Candidate had been presented to the People by the Democracy he would have been triumphantly elected.

I have never advocated & never will, the policy of forcing an individual however exalted his patriotism or eminent his talents on the party: when he is not the free and un[ . . . ][1] choice of that Party. We must adhere to principles and not to Men if we are to command success and maintain the supremacy of the Democratic party.

The new Constitution and Negro Suffrage have met the same fate in this City—rejection. And the Mexican War was presented as a distinct issue by our opponents & nobly have our fellow Citizens vindicated its justice & propriety.

*Our adopted Citizens* have covered themselves with *Glory*.

CAMPBELL P WHITE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on November 6, 1846.

1. Word illegible.

## FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

My Dear Sir Montclov[1] Mexico 5th Nov 1846

Yours of the 2nd Octr. 1846 enclosing a letter from my Dear Boy C.[2] was rec'd a few days since and I was truly gratified to find he had in you a friend & protector. That has relieved much of my anxiety, my Daughters[3] are at school & with their relations & will be protected.

We are here, & when & to what point we march, I know not. We are all in darkness as to what is to be our destination we have fallen into unfortunate hands; and I now dispare of being able to do my country much service or myself much credit—I wish to God I was with Kearny or Taylor but so it is my destiny is sealed, and without remedy, I never murmur, but posibly the time may come when I can expose the *folly* & *imbecility* of this collum.[4] Genl Shields is here & like myself; but little to do with the movements of the collum; when I shall return, I have no Idea, not till I have a chance to do myself some credit, not before if it should be as a private.

My best respect to Mrs Polk and accept for yourself my best wishes.

A. YELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on February 14, 1847.

1. Monclova, Mexico (Coahuila Province).
2. Dewitt Clinton Yell.
3. Jane, Elizabeth, and Artemesia Yell.
4. Yell probably refers to the volunteer militiaman's distaste for the regular army's strict code of officer etiquette required by John E. Wool, his commanding general.

## FROM JACOB GOULD[1]

Sir. Rochester Nov. 6th 1846

Thinking it might not be uninteresting to you to hear from one on the Spot, some of the reasons why the Democracy of New York have so ingloriously fallen. It has not been on account of the acquisition of Texas or the settlement of the Oregon question or of the Tariff, nor because of the absence of friends, in the Mexican War, but it has been, in consequence, of the contemplated change of our State laws, under the new constitution, with the question of equal Suffrage to the colored people, on which our Whigs took the affirmative and thereby succeeded in obtaining the abolition Strength to their ticket. I trust

this part of the constitution, being separately submitted, is rejected or we shall have, at least, 20.000 Whig votes added at once (our Postmaster Mr. Campbell[2] voted in favor of negro suffrage to the fullest extent.) Next, a late law of our State, leaving to Towns & cities, by popular vote, the decision whether Licences to sell Liquors, should be granted or not, had a verry bad effect on the election of Gov. Wright and tended to his defeat.

Then came the Anti-Rent faction, who have been courted by both parties and wedded by the Whigs. They have become quite formidable and carry a large vote in the centre of the State, and they, by great adroitness, taking up part of each of the party tickets in the state and counties, have as it were carried the State. Last, and not least, however, comes what does and should disgrace us as a party more than all besides and that is our own dissensions, which have in many parts of our State, become so personal and violent, that all has been sacrifised. Some, would be, leaders began it and have kept it up in our Halls of Legislation and elsewhere, until the people have become disgusted and when these leaders were willing and did give up their strife, the people could not and would not beleve it all a farce.

Thus you see, Gov. Wright has indeed ingloriously fallen, not for any thing he has done, but from circumstances over which he had no control. He is a pure and honest man, deserving better returns for the sacrifices he has made. I trust a suitable reward may yet be his lot. In the Eight District, usually called "the infected District" we have done quite as well as in 1844, which is not saying verry much, but we are here, truly thankful, that we have not been the cause of the prostration of the Democratic party. We will hereafter try to be the means of its restoration.

JACOB GOULD

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

1. Gould served as U.S. marshall for the Northern District of New York from 1845 until 1849.

2. Henry Campbell.

## FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Sir Naples Nov 6th 1846

I have not written you as often recently as formerly, thinking that your Official engagements scearcely afforded time to read or answer my letters. I have received within the last ten days the numbers of the Union[1] containing the proceedings of Congress immediately preceding

the ajournment, from which I think I have been able in a general way, to understand the tone of the two great Parties, and the feeling cherished toward the Administration, by the different factions belonging to our own, and in view of all feel at liberty, and happy that I am from conviction prepared, to congratulate you on your success thus far, and express the warm hope that it may continue. The struggle on the Tarriff Bill must have been peculiarly exciting, and the inexcusible and ignominious desertion of Haywood in the last hours of the fight must have added a sudden and thrilling interest to the issue. Although before reading the Union I was informed of the adoption of *the bill*, I could not help trembling when the proceedings and incidents attending its passage were developed to the mind, and understood, that at one moment the fate of this great measure of reform so *dear* to the South, and so *just* to all sections of the Union, hung on the *doubtful honesty* of Spencer Jarnagin, a man who I have always heretofore beleived, would not hesitate to sell himself, even if it were made a condition of the bargain, to label the *price* on his front that all might read. His *rare* honesty in this case, is to me wholly inexplicable! Mr Dallas by his firmness in giving the casting vote, has no doubt now a plume for his cap which the most distinguished statesmen in our Country may will envy—it must awaken a warm interest in his favor throughout the South and West, and give him a prominence in the contest for higher honor which he did not before possess.

Since the conclusion of the Treaty,[2] my Mission has lost much of its interest, there being nothing of importance to engage my attention—nothing to employ the mind, from which a hope can be indulged of winning honor and distinction. This is intensely chilling to a warm ambition and frequently fills my mind with gloomy dispondency; particularly when *I* read of the stirring events of my own Country, opening so firm a field for honor and celebrity. The war with Mexico, judging from my last information bids fair to assume an aspect of continuence, if not importance. My latest news is throught the English Journals, in which it is stated that Santa Anna has refused the proposition for peace, and in a manner, calculated to excite the Government of the U.S. to adopt the most rigid measures of invasion *to force a peace*. If this is so, there must be more bloody fighting—and the very thought that I cannot mingle in it depresses my spirits and sorely pains me—for there is nothing which possesses so strong a charm to win public favour as the recitation of millitary services, or the exhibition of honorable scars received in the service of the Country. I was pleased to see that you confered the rank of General on Pillow, for I feel assured, let him enter the service with as mad a current of prejudice,

as envy and jealousy can flood together, that he will if occassion and opportunity offers extort from his bitterest revilers the praise due the *truly gallant*.

I received a few days ago the *minatures* which Sister Sarah sent me, and will have the likenesses cut and send them to her by the first opportunity. They both being full front liknesses, it will be almost impossible, so says the Artist, to cut a good impression in Cameo—the shell being too thin; but that he can do them in *lava* from Vesuvius, which I think is more prefferable; but of this I will write her more particularly—she understands what I mean, probably you do not.

I have not availed myself of the permission from the Department to travel, nor will I do so until next Spring. Give my love to Sister Sarah.

WILLIAM H. POLK

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on December 9, 1846.

1. Washington *Union*.

2. Reference is to the economic treaty between the United States and Naples (the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies) signed on December 1, 1845.

## TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir: Washington City Nov 8th 1846

From your letter of the 30th and one from *Judge Catron* of the 31st ultimo,[1] I learn that you have purchased the *Grundy* place including the wing and vacant lot attached it for me, at the price of $13.000, of which $6.000, is to be paid out the 1st of January next, & the balance twelve months thereafter, *Mr Bass* retaining possession until the 1st of January next, with the privilege of doing so during the next year upon paying a rent of $500. I am satisfied with the purchase and fully ratify it. The payments which you have stipulated for me, shall be punctually made. I shall be able to make the first one without inconvenience. I received a letter[2] from my plantation last night stating, that my place has escaped the ravages of the worm & that I will make at least 20 bales of cotton more than I did last year. If this be so, the crop will bring me at present prices after paying all expenses $5.000, or more, and it will make the first payment perfectly easy to me. You may assure *Mr Bass* that both payments will be made without defalcation.

*Judge Catron* writes to me that you would give me notes. I wish you to enclose to me the notes which I should execute, and I will do so and send them to you, that you may substitute them in place of your own. I am exceedingly obliged to you for having acted so promptly in

the matter, when you found that *Mr Stevenson* to whom I informed you I had written was absent. I have to ask the further favour of you to take out insurance against fire, upon the property—immediately on receiving this letter. I believe the law is, that when property changes hands, that the policy of insurance in the hands of the former owner, is not available to the purchaser. Have it insured for the *full value*. I desire you also to request my friend *Mr Humphreys* to examine the title & see that I have a good title & from the proper parties. I am much pleased and I & Mrs. Polk that we have now a dwelling with which we are satisfied, to which we can return at the close of my term.

I was surprized to learn that you proceeded no further North than the City of New York. I have no news.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. If *Mr Bass* does not want the place for the next year, will you request *Mr Stevenson* to rent out for me to some careful tenant. I shall not wish to improve it, until the year after the next. J.K.P.

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

1. Letters not found, but see Daniel Graham to Polk, November 1, 1846.
2. See Robert Campbell, Jr., to Polk, October 23, 1846.

## TO EZEKIEL P. MCNEAL

Washington City November 8, 1846

Polk states that he is no longer interested in acquiring the section of Mississippi bottom lands that McNeal and Aaron V. Brown were inspecting on his behalf.[1] Instead, the president urges McNeal to expedite the sale of his property in West Tennessee, including 244 acres outside Denmark and 250 acres near Mount Pinson. Polk explains that he intends to use the proceeds to purchase more slaves for his Mississippi plantation. He cautions McNeal to keep these transactions quiet: "occupying the position I do it would unnecessarily subject me to assaults from the abolition newspapers."

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Bolivar, Tenn.; marked "*Private.*"

1. See Ezekiel P. McNeal to Polk, October 22, 1846.

## FROM VERNON K. STEVENSON

Dear Sir Nashville November 8th 1846

On returning from St Louis on Wednesday last I found that your letter to me in reference to the Grundy house had reached here the night after I left and that in my abscence Govr. Brown had Bought the

whole property for you at 13000$ at which Price I do not consider it high but think it will cost more money largely than you stated to me that you wished to spend in that way for if I recollect right you did not wish a house and lot complete to cost exceding twelve thousand dollars and this will when modernized and repaired and fenced will cost you twenty thousand dollars or near it. This I say from a prety good knowlege of the property as it stands and what you will have to do to it to fit it for your residence and I have this further motive in writing this to you which is that you may by knowing ahead what you have to lay out that you may be prepared for it for I am excedingly anxious that you should return with sufficient funds to pay for your house & repairs in a fine style and cash enough to furnish it that your yearly income from your crops may be unimbarrassed for I know that it would be to you a great source of mortification to be stinted and harrassed for money in the situation & under the circumstances that will then surround you.

I had been geting all the information relative to a lot immediably back of the MacGavock & now Hardin lot on the Franklin T.P.[1] I mean west of it the same size & I think I could have bought it for four thousand dollars and a good building such as you would want could have been erected I think at a cost not to excede 8.000$. The front of this lot is higher than the MackGavock lot and it lyes well and is relined & large.

I learn that Govr. Brown was urged to act thus promptly from a fear that the colege[2] would buy this Grundy property which I learn they want very much.

Half of the lot back of MackGavocks belongs to Bentons estate and will be sold soon for his debts half of the bal belongs to Mr. Beckwell of Philada.[3] I think & the bal to persons here.

The lot next to town from Genl Woodfolks where Judge Trimble lived can be bought for about 2000$ &c.[4]

Any information that you want in relation to the cost of repairs to the Grundy house viz any plan you suggest I will attend to for you or any other business you may have with great pleasure and I shall be home the bal of the year you can rely upon prompt attention.

Please present me to Mrs Polk and Mr Walker & family.

V. K. Stevenson

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received and answered this letter on November 16, 1846.

1. Reference probably is to Randall McGavock, owner of a lot joining that of Jesse Benton, who died in 1846. Hardin is not identified further.

2. The Nashville Female Academy was located in the block due east of the Grundy house; John M. Bass owned stock in the Academy from the time of its founding in 1816 until its legal dissolution in 1877.

3. Beckwell of Philadelphia, Penn., is not identified further.

4. Woodfolk is not further identified. A native of Rockbridge, Va., James Trimble received his collegiate education at Washington College in East Tennessee, studied law in Staunton, Va., and first practiced in Knoxville, which he represented in the Tennessee House in 1809. The following year Trimble won election to a circuit judgeship and in 1813 moved to Nashville, where he practiced until his death in 1824.

## TO LOUIS MCLANE

My Dear Sir: Washington City Nov 9th 1846

I have read with no less pleasure than interest, your letter of yesterday,[1] and sincerely regret that your health is such as to prevent you from affording me an opportunity to have a personal interview with you, upon the interesting topics to which you advert. My constant engagements, and especially at this time, must prevent me from going at length into them. The recent reverses of the Democracy in Pennsylvania & New York, have only had the effect to inspire me with greater courage, and cause me to greater energy, in persevering firmly and fearlessly in maintaining the great principles, which I have heretofore laid down for my guidance. I am satisfied with you that the late results in the States referred to, have been produced more from the local causes to which you allude, than from the consideration of any distinct issue presented to the people upon the policy of the Federal Government.

I have only time to day, to add that I should be most happy to see you at Washington when your health and convenience may permit you to come, and to assure you that I shall move forward firmly, without being in the slightest degree intimidated or affected, by the adverse results which may seem for the time to surround me.

I received last night a letter from your son *Robert* written at New Orleans on the 30th ultimo.[2] He was in good health and would proceed on the next day to his destination.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Baltimore, Md., and marked "*Confidential.*"

1. Letter not found.

2. See Robert McLane to Polk, October 30, 1846.

FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir, Columbia. Tenn. Nov. 10th 1846

Your favor is received. I have just returned from Huntsville Ala. Since my return I learn that Col. Robt. Campbell is expected to return home in a few days.

I will endeavor to hold McLaughlin on until his return. I enclose you copy of the declaration served upon Mr. Duncan your tenant; a like one was served upon Capt. Helm for the store house.[1]

We have not determined upon the mode of defense yet, but suppose we will make a joint business of it.

Capt. Helm proposes to rent the store next year at the same rate, and I think it best to take it. I collected $25 on a note of yours on Ledbetter.[2] He was dead & insolvent & we compromised the negro suit, in which you were employed here, & I thought better to take $25. The balance of the note & interest amounted to about $32. I do not know whether you have my receipt for this note; if you have please make the endorsement upon it. I have charged myself with $25 for it. I called upon your mother as requested. She is very well. I will see to providing what she may want.

Gov. Clay of Ala.[3] says the present is one of the "wisest and most succesful administrations" since he has had any knowledge of public affairs. McClung[4] wishes to be Senator from Ala. Says he can be elected next autumn, that he would not accept it from Gov. Martin, that tho. he could easily get it, it would be "ruin" to accept from *him*. That Bagby knowing he will be beaten, wishes or will apply for an office, but that he does not wish you to give it to him until late next summer so as to prevent the necessity of Gov. Martin making an appointment. So much for him.

Gov. Clays son marries John H. Lewis's daughter tomorrow night and thereby I shall be deprived of my assistant counsel at Huntsville.[5]

Dr. Polk moved to Jno Williams' place yesterday & Williams to Polk's—a change of neighbors.[6]

I am doing what I can to get our people to make arrangements to carry the elections in this state, next year. In Lawrence they are greatly dispirited by the loss of Allen, & fear they cannot get any one to carry the county. I will be there next month & see if I cannot set them right. But you have no leisure for such details.

JAMES H. THOMAS

P.S. I believe Pat Maguire sold you the lot upon which your house stands & would it not be well to notify him to defend the suit.[7]

ALS. Polk Memorial Association. Addressed to Washington, D.C. E in unidentified hand states that this letter was received on November 25, 1846; Polk's AE notes that he answered Thomas' letter on January 1, 1847.

1. Cicero Duncan and Meredith Helm. Duncan is not identified further. Enclosure not found.

2. Polk's legal services in behalf of Wilie Ledbetter of Jacinto, Miss., are not identified further.

3. A lawyer and Alabama state legislator, Clement Comer Clay won three terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1829–35; he also served as governor of Alabama, 1835–37, and as U.S. senator, 1837–41.

4. A nephew of Hugh L. White and a native of Knoxville, James White McClung practiced law in Huntsville, Ala. He served in the Alabama House as its speaker in 1835, 1837, and 1838; lost his bid for the governorship as an independent in 1841; but won election to the Alabama Senate in 1845 and served until his death in 1848.

5. John Withers Clay and Mary Fenwick Lewis, daughter of John Heywood Lewis, were married in Huntsville, Ala., on November 11, 1846.

6. William Junius Polk and John Williams. A Maury County physician and president of the Columbia branch of the Bank of Tennessee from 1838 until 1840, Polk was the son of William Polk of Raleigh, N.C., a half-brother to Lucius and Leonidas Polk, and the president's cousin twice removed. Williams, a Columbia merchant, is not identified further.

7. A prominent Columbia businessman and Whig partisan, Maguire is not identified further.

## FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

My dear Sir Liverpool 14th Novemr. 46

I went up to London yesterday and returned this morning. Saw Donelson[1] off and done him some other service.

Mr Bancroft is verry comfortably situated on Eaton Square in a Fashionable part of the City and near Buckingham Palace. He does not seem to apprehend any objections to his nomination from the Senate. I hope it may be so and that he may get on well in this Country. Though he is without doubt the Strangest Compound ever made up into a man, and I believe all the time he means well.

The last Steamer brought the information that the Cotton Crop would perhaps reach Two millions bales. It has had the effect to check any advance and if the crop amounts to Two millions it may hold its

present prices. 5 to 6 pence or 10 to 12 cents—which is about 4 cents advance on the lowest price here for Cotton in March last. This advance was made on the information that the Crop would be short of two millions. The manufacturers are making that time trying to get the price of goods up to to an advance corresponding with the advance in Cotton. They cannot do it. Verry few bales have come out and the demand is Limited which is all the better for us. The great fear as you will see from the Newspapers is that exchange will still come down and that we will drain their *Gold*.

*Corn* and flour are in good Demand at something lower rates, still paying a profit to Shoppers and it will continue unless the price runs too hight on our side as it did last year.

I am in deep distress, and mortified when I think of the Mexican War, not being in it. When I think of it I almost make up my mind never to go home. I feel that I could not hold my head up.

The last Steamer brought nothing new or what we had not received. I see no call for volunteers—or any contemplated movements of the force etc.

My kindest respects to Mrs Polk, Mr & Mrs Walker and Miss Rucker.

R. ARMSTRONG

P.S. When you see my little Rachel giver her my love.

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

1. Andrew J. Donelson.

## TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir: Washington City Nov 14th 1846

I have received your two letters, the first dated at Columbia on the 9th ultimo, and the last written in Noxubee Co. Miss. on the 3rd Instant.[1] I enclose to you herewith the Bill of sale for *Jim* which you request me to return to you.[2] I am satisfied with the exchange which you thought it for my interest to make. I am glad that my business is going so well at my plantation, and that you have employed *Mr Mairs* for the next year. I do not understand certainly, from your letter, whether you have employed him for more than one year or not. If you have not, I desire when you go down in the winter, that you will make a contract with him, for the whole time I will be absent. He has done so well heretofore that I am sure he will suit me better than any other that I can get.

From what you state to me about my blacksmith *Harry*, I am sure it is best to bring him to my place. He is getting old and you state his sight is failing and that he is becoming intemperate. If he was at home he would have less to do, and would not have the opportunity to indulge in drinking so much. If you bring him up, have a comfortable house built for him. He can do my own work and can employ the balance of the time as you may direct. He never worked a day in the field in his life and it would not do to put him at it now. One of my young boys, (probably *Tom*) might learn the trade with him, so far at least, as to do common plantation work. Of course if you bring him up, you will have to buy a set of tools for him. In regard to what is due to my negroes, I wish you to pay them liberally and in specie. They do not appreciate any other kind of money but specie. They have been faithful & I wish them to be satisfied. Pay them for the 5 bales of cotton, that was shipped with mine in 1844, at the price it then sold at. You can guess very near the true amount. Pay them also all that is due to them since that time. By their good conduct they deserve it, and I wish to encourage them. I desire if I find I can spare it, to lay out a part of the proceeds of my crop, to increase my force. I cannot now tell how much I can spare, nor will I be able to do so, until I learn how much is made and what it sells for. I hope *Mr Mairs* will send it off from Troy as soon as the water in the River rises. I will write to you again, upon the subject in the course of the month of December, when I will be better able than I now am to judge of my means.

You state in your letter of the 3rd Instant, that if there is any mistake in the account, which you enclose, it is in the two items of $3.35, paid to *Phil* for making shoes last winter, and $34.50, which you left with *Mr Mairs* to pay the negroes for their cotton. You state that you are not certain whether you put these two items in your last settlement with me, and that if you did, they are to be deducted from the present settlement. I have turned to your settlement for last year which you enclosed to me in your letter of the 17th of January last, and find it includes these two items, as follows—viz—

| | |
|---|---|
| Paid *Phil* for shoe making of nights | $ 3.35 |
| Paid the negroes the balance of their crop (say) 5435 lbs, at $1.25 cts per cent lb.[3] | $34.50 |

These two items were settled for at that time, and as you suppose, it is an error to charge them in your present account. Deducting these two items say $37.85, from the balance of $64.35, on your present account, would leave the balance due you $26.50. This error you can correct when you make the next settlement of my accounts at the plantation.

I wish you to write to me whether you will be at home during the month of December, as I will desire to write to you. I will be able to decide by the latter part of that month, whether I can make my arrangements to add to my force. I am anxious to do so if I can.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "*Private.*"

1. See Campbell to Polk, October 9, 1846, and November 3, 1846.
2. Enclosure not found.
3. Polk's calculation assumes that the slaves' crop had netted $68.00, of which $33.50 had been paid prior to this accounting.

## TO SAMUEL P. WALKER

My Dear Sir: Washington City Nov. 14th 1846

I have this day written to your House in New Orleans, addressing them under the new name of *Pickett Perkins and Co.* and have directed that my cotton shall be sold as soon as received. I do not calculate upon any material change in price from present rates, but I find that I will need the money sooner than I supposed I would, when I last wrote to you.[1] When I last heard from my plantation, seventy or eighty bags had been gathered, most of which was at *Troy* ready to be shipped, as soon as the rise of the water in the Yalobusha River would permit.[2] As I wrote to you during the last month, that I had directed my crop not to be sold, and as in your letter you state that you had so informed your House in New Orleans, I write now to countermand that order.[3] I think it best to sell as soon as it reaches New Orleans. As the session of Congress approaches I find myself exceedingly busy.

I wrote to *A. O. Harris* a month ago enclosing a note to his daughter Jane Amelia from her aunt inviting her to spend the winter with us.[4] I think it would be of advantages to her and we would be much pleased to have her with us.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Memphis, Tenn.

1. See Polk to Walker, October 10, 1846.
2. See Robert Campbell, Jr., to Polk, October 23, 1846.
3. See Samuel P. Walker to Polk, October 30, 1846.
4. Sarah Childress Polk. See Polk to Adlai O. Harris October 12, 1846.

FROM THOMAS T. WHITTLESEY[1]

Dear Sir Danbury Nov. 14th 1846

I have just returned from the West. I went out to Wisconsin in May & returned the first of Nov. I took a family (not my own) to settle on a tract of land. I built a log house, & lived in it, & conducted myself in all respects as a Western man should. My land is near Madison, the Capital, where I had an opportunity of observing the proceedings of the Convention now in session. I have had opportunity of gleaning public Sentiment, and the result of my observation is that the elections in the States are not the result of adverse feeling to your administration. The election in Iowa, I think, was under the influence of an Anti Dodge[2] feeling. The election in Wisconsin was almost purely Democratic, & held after the Harbor veto.[3] The Election in Michigan is the same. In New York, anti-rentism. The Tariff influenced Pennsylvania, or rather resentment. Penna. is like a spoiled child—too much humored—& therefore stubborn from having been petted. New York needs regeneration in more points than one. And her present loss may prove ultimate gain—advances in Political economy seldom retrograde, and I have no fear of the Tariff issue in 48.

There is no doubt but your veto of the Harbor bill occasioned dissatisfaction in the West, or rather regret. The Western people will have improvements & harbors on those great lakes. The great transportation of life & property thereon absolutely require commodious & safe harbors. But my language was, the harbor bill usually is a log rolling bill, & contains many unadvised appropriations. The money in its application is half wasted. But place your claims on distinct & independent ground—let all appropriations of that nature be urged on their several merits. They talk of a Western Convention at St Louis.

The appointment of Mr Ingersoll[4] gives general satisfaction.

It was my intention to have returned early in the Spring to the West. It was my secret intention to remain there. But on my return without any knowledge or suspicion on my part, I have received the nomination at the head of the State Ticket. Toucey & Ingham[5] failed of the nomination, from their agency in the question before the last Legislature, concering a bridge over the Connecticut at Middletown. This question elicited strong feeling. I was 1600 miles off & was not under its influence. The State however is so nearly ballanced that in the absence of national excitement, it usually goes Anti Democratic.

T T WHITTLESEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. E in unidentified hand states that this letter was received on November 23, 1846.

1. A lawyer from Danbury, Conn., Whittlesey served two terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1836-1839. In 1846 he moved to Wisconsin and served in the state Senate there from 1853 to 1854.

2. The son of Henry Dodge of the Wisconsin Territory, Augustus C. Dodge served as registrar of public lands at Burlington, 1838-40; as congressional delegate from the Iowa Territory, 1840-46; and as Iowa's first U.S. senator in 1848.

3. In his veto message of August 3, 1846, Polk emphasized constitutional restraints on Federal expenditures for internal improvements.

4. Charles J. Ingersoll.

5. A lawyer and Democrat from Hartford County, Conn., Isaac Toucey served in the U.S. House, 1835-39; as state governor, 1846; as U.S. attorney general in Polk's cabinet, 1848-49; and as a U.S. senator,1851-57. A lawyer and Democrat from Middlesex County, Conn., Samuel Ingham held several state offices and served two terms in the U.S. House, 1835-39.

## TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

My Dear Sir: Washington City Nov 16th 1846

I received your letter of the 8th Inst. to day.[1] I regretted your absence from Nashville when the letter which I addressed to you reached there, but am fully satisfied with the purchase of the Grundy place, which Gov. Brown made for me, and have since ratified it. Though the price was something greater than I desired to invest in a house, yet I think the property worth it, and I prefer it to any other I could have purchased. I shall I think be able to pay for it without inconvenience. My crop I learn has turned out exceedingly well. My relation *Majr McNeal* of Bolivar writes me[2] that he has had an offer for some of my land on the Western-District, and I have no doubt will sell it. I have authorized my property at Columbia to be sold, and a portion of it has already been disposed of. Upon the whole I am well satisfied with the purchase. I thank you for your offer to give me information as to the cost of the repairs which may be necessary, before I occupy the house. *Mr Bass* has rented the House for the next year, and I will not desire to have any repairs or improvements made until the year following.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. See Stevenson to Polk, November 8, 1846.

2. See Ezekiel P. McNeal to Polk, November 6, 1846.

## FROM CHARLES W. WOODBURY[1]

Sir, Boston Nov 16, 1846

You have, no doubt, seen the disastrous result of the election in Mass. It is to be attributed to the course of certain executive officers here, and their utter loss of the confidence of the party and people. The Collector[2] whom we considered as having unbounded influence, it would seem, has become almost powerless. The whole custom house put forth all its energies, yet there is a very heavy loss in Boston—in the Taunton Disrict (Morton's) we have an astonishing loss. Taunton where the Governor resides we have lost, for the first time for many years. Now these are two districts, in which there is no choice. We can carry those if we can have the patronage of the Boston Custom House, and it certainly of great importance, in view of the prosect of being in a minority in the next Congress. Can't something else be done for Governor Morton, and Rantoul[3] put there in his stead? If this could be done the Democracy would present an unbroken front not only here, but all over New England would it have a good and powerful influence. You will pardon, I trust, the liberty I take in making these suggestions ....

CHAS W WOODBURY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on November 20, 1846.

1. In 1847 Polk nominated Woodbury to be assistant quartermaster in the U.S. army but later withdrew the nomination for unspecified reasons.

2. Marcus Morton, a lawyer from Taunton, Mass., won election to two terms in the U.S. House, 1817-21, and four terms as state governor, 1840–41 and 1843–44, before serving as customs collector for the port of Boston from 1845 until 1849.

3. Robert Rantoul, Jr.

## TO ZACHARY TAYLOR

Sir: Washington City Nov 17th 1846

I transmit to you herewith a copy of a Joint Resolution of Congress, passed on the 16th day of July last, presenting the thanks of Congress to yourself, your officers and men, "for the fortitude, skill, enterprize and courage which have distinguished the recent brilliant operations on the Rio Grande."

These proceedings of Congress are communicated to you and through you to the army under your command, in pursuance of the request there in contained.

The medal of gold "with appropriate devices and inscriptions drawn," which by the Resolution, the President of the United States was authorized and requested to procure, is in the course of preparation and when completed, will be presented to you, as directed by the said Resolution.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to the U.S. Army in Mexico.

## FROM AARON VANDERPOEL[1]

My dear Sir New York (Supr Court) 18. Nov. 1846

You were no doubt surprised at our defeat in this State. All I now purpose saying to you (while a lawyer is making a speech in a cause in which I am already concerned) is, that the passage of the tarriff act of 1846 has not, in the least, contributed to our unfortunate result. Our defeat is attributable, entirely, to other causes. I am now more clearly convinced than ever, that the issue of—ultra protection, or the principles of the tarriff of 1846, ought to be distinctly presented to our People; and that we can not get up, in this State, again, without battling under the free trade banner. I hope, the President will present the issue broadly & boldly in his message. The feeling is becoming a strong one in this State, that a *tarriff Democrat* is no better than a *tarriff Whig*. If men are to be permitted to act and vote as they please on this subject and yet be regarded as good democrats, we shall remain in a hopeless minority.

We are not disheartened in this State. We can get right again before 1848: if true democratic issues are boldly presented and vigorously maintained at Washington. If the manufacturers should now, again, get the ascendancy, they will soon be too strong for *regulation*.

A. VANDERPOEL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington D.C. and marked "*Private.*" E in unidentified hand states that this letter was received on November 20, 1846.

1. A lawyer from Kinderhook, N.Y., Aaron Vanderpoel served in the New York Assembly, 1826-30; in the U.S. House, 1833-37 and 1839-41; and on the Superior Court in New York City, 1842-50.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Sir Naples Nov 20th 1846

I wrote you on the 7th,[1] shortly after the dispatch of which, I received yours of the 2d Oct, enclosing letters from Dr Hays. That I feel to a degree beyond expression, keen pangs of regret that my inability to meet my engagements has inflicted great *inconvenience* and very probably more *ruin*, on those friends who assisted me in the trying hour of my crumbling fortune, I need scarcely state to you. But what can I do? Situated as I am without more means than will reasonably answer my immediate demands, can it be expected with any reason that relief will be received at my hands. If my life could preserve from suffering those persons who befriended me it should be offered a free and willing sacrifise for the purpose. I have at least a clear concience, I have surrendered honestly all my means to protect them from injury, and it seems strange that it should be expected to find gold in a beggars rags. The truth is, I find it impossible, living in the manner adopted by my predicessor,[2] with a proper regard for my position to save any thing from my salary. The first year having the advantage of the *outfit* I was able to appropriate something to my creditors, but am unable to continue to do so without gross, and in the estimation of the world around me, disgrace to myself and a despicable compromise of the dignity and respectability of my Country. I have said thus much to justify myself in your opinion, not indulging a hope that any statement I could make, however honest and true, could win me justice from those who are predisposed to do me wrong, and more I shall not make the effort. I have not time to write Dr Hays by this mail, but relying upon his known disposition to meet out justice in evry case, will by the next Steamer forward him a statement which I hope will prove satisfactory.

I have this moment received a general statement of the result of the three days battle before Montery, though the French *Papers*, and am burning with anxiety and excitement to learn the details, but this I cannot hope to know for one or two weeks owing to the irregularity with which my *newspaper* mail is received. It strikes me that the *war* may continue a long time, if so, is there no chance for me to mingle in the struggle? What would be the impropriety of my returning to the United States to join the army, *suspending* my *salary* here, until I should return? I do not wish, to do any thing without your special advice, but please write me on the subject. It might be that a fine opening might present itself in some one of the new Provinces, which must be ceded to the U.S. as a consequence of the war. I have not time

to write as fully as I desire. I will write you by the next Steamer. My love to Sister Sarah!

WILLIAM H. POLK

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

1. See William H. Polk to Polk, November 6, 1845.

2. A native of Virginia, William Boulware served as chargé d'affaires to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from 1841 to 1845.

## TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir: Washington City Nov 21st 1846

I have made my money arrangements here, to meet the first payment of $6.000, for the Grundy place, and can make it quite as conveniently *at this time*, as on the 1st of January next. If *Mr Bass* will deduct the interest, for the time which will intervene between the time you receive this letter and the 1st of January, as I presume he will, I request that you will draw a Bill on me for the amount, and apply the proceeds to the payment. You can draw on me, payable at this City at sight, or if you find you can sell the Bill for a better premium, by drawing on Phila or New York, you can do so, at one or two days after sight. The premium on Eastern Bills at Nashville, is usually between 1 & 2 percent, but whatever it may be it will be so much saved. I suppose you can readily sell such a Bill to the Bank or the brokers. By making the payment now, instead of waiting until the 1st of January, I shall save the interest for a month, and in the condition of my affairs such small sums are important. I repeat, it is quite as convenient for me to pay *now* as it will be on the 1st of January.

If you should find it troublesome to attend to such matters, I request that you will turn the business over to my friend *V. K. Stevenson*, and request him to attend to it for me. Upon making the payment, take *Mr. Bass's* Receipt & forward it to me. Supposing it possible that you may be absent from Nashville, as I know you sometimes visit your plantation at this season of the year, I will write to *Stevenson*, in the event of your absence, to attend to the business for me. I will request *Mr Stevenson* to take the agency of the property, and give the necessary attention to it. Have you taken out insurance upon it as I requested you to do, in my last letter? I shall rely upon my friend *Humphreys* to see that the *title* is a good one.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville, Tenn., and marked "*Private.*"

## TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

Washington City November 21, 1846

Polk explains that he has written to Aaron V. Brown this day and requested him to prepay the $6,000 due January 1st on the purchase of Grundy Place. After repeating the details of his instructions to Brown, he asks Stevenson to make those same arrangements should the governor be unavailable to attend to the business. Polk urges Stevenson to make certain that fire insurance has been placed on the property.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

## FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir: Columbia, Tennessee Nov 23rd 1846

I have just returned from the South & expect to Start back on the 28th Inst. with pork to my plantation. I expect to be in the South during the winter. I have not received an answer from you Since I wrote you from Noxubee County Miss. I think about the 11th of this Inst.[1] giving you a full Statement of all your affairs Since I received the money from Col. Childress up to the time I settled with Mr. Mairs 29th I think of Sept.

I design writting to Col Childress in a few moments to Send the boy Charles down to me (if he is well enough) So that I can take him down with me & save expence as it is but three days travel from my place to yours & I will have to be at your place Some time before the first of January next. I will have to draw on Picket & Co. for Mr. Mairs wages for this year Say $450 & money sufficient to pay Taxes Doct. Bills Black-Smith Acts. & for Shoes Blankets & hats for the Negroes this Season as I wish to make final settlement of all your Acts. yearly. It is possible that I may collect some of the money due you from Harry's hire. I will make the effort to get it. I have not made any purchases yet of any Negroes on the present crop of Cotton. I have met with Several chances Since my return to have purchased but not hearing from you & also hearing (it being a current report) that you had purchased the residence of the late Judge Grundy of Nashville at the round sum of $14,000 has caused me not to act until I hear from you. It is regretted very mutch here by your friends (if tru) that you are going to leave the County and Friends that took you by the hand & made you what you are. Altho you have Enemies in the County you have upwards of 2,000

true friends in the County who never deserted you when their Services were nessary. Their appears to be a general feeling against you leaving the County it being an unprecedented occurance. But enough of this. If I am to lay out the proceeds of the present crop I wish to know it So that the hands can come in for a full crop the next year. I apprised Mr. Mairs that I expected to put more hands then between this & planting time & to prepare ground accordingly. His wages will not be any higher the next year even If I Should put more hands on the farm. The year 48 I have agreed to rais his wages provided you still increase your force.

In answer to this write me at Macon, Mississippi as I expect to be down their during the winter. I have not met with any chance to Sell your residence nor Store-house.[2] I will use every effort in my power to do so.

ROBT CAMPBELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on cover states that he received this letter on December 1st and answered on December 12th.

1. See Campbell to Polk, November 12, 1846.
2. Reference is to Polk's properties in Columbia, Tenn.

## FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir, Nashville, Tennessee 26 Nov: 1846

At the time of receiving this you will have no leisure for reading long letters.

Our members of Congress have gone on and Turney was here two days waiting for Sims of Mo & Jones.[1] I gathered from him that he has been corresponding with Coe and that he goes to the City intending to press the idea that Coe should be propitiated by an offer of something high, say a full minister, or so. He thinks that Rio should have been offered to him. I asked him if he *knew* that Coe would decline accepting and especially, would he do it with a good grace & becoming temper. He could not say. I assured him that the whole country would rebel against another so high an office to Tennessee, but he persisted that the *offer* at least is due to Coe.

I write this merely to prepare you for meeting the application from Turney. He is still disposed & determined to adhere cordially & firmly to the administration.

DANIEL GRAHAM

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on December 5, 1846.

1. Leonard H. Sims and George W. Jones. A Democrat from Missouri, Sims served one term in the U.S. House, 1845–47. A native of Virginia and a saddler by trade from Fayetteville, Tenn., Jones won two terms to the Tennessee House, 1835–39, sat one term in the Tennessee Senate, 1839–41, and served in the U.S. House as a Democrat from 1843 until 1859.

## FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir Murfreesboro Nov. 30th 1846

Upon my return from Nashville last friday I recieved your letter,[1] and one from Col. Campbell notifying me, that he would start on Saturday for Mississippi. I immediately started Ted[2] with the girl I had got in exchange for the boy, and directed him to follow, if Campbell had left home, when he reached Columbia. He has just returned and says that he overtook him at or near Mt Pleasant, and delivered the girl to him. I also sent a mule, and wrote to Campbell, to keep it if necessary to convey the girl along & if not to send it back. The mule has been returned, with a message that it was not wanted. Having been a good deal overreached in the trade for the boy, and believing that he would not prove valuable to you, I deemed it best to exchange him, as I notified you in my last letter.[3] I accordingly, succeeded in getting for him, a girl in her fourteenth year, of good size, appearance & of sprighty active habits, and believe she will be much more valuable to you than the boy. I enclose a Bill of Sale. If I should not want the money, for the mules, I will not draw for it, & Sarah[4] can bring it with her in the Spring.

J. W. CHILDRESS

[P.S.] I omitted to mention that there was no difference given in the exchange of property. Altho the Bill of Sale reads for $500.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "private business." Polk's AE states that he received this letter on December 13, 1846.

1. See Polk to Childress, November 16, 1846.
2. A slave on Childress' Mississippi plantation.
3. See Childress to Polk, November 4, 1846.
4. Sarah Childress Polk.

## FROM FRANCIS W. PICKENS

My dear Sir Edgewood, near Edgefield 30 Nov: 1846

The recent requisition of the war Department changing the time for which the volunteers had offered their services, from one year to the

indefinite time of serving "during the war" has produced much sensation in this state. Many sons of our most respectable gentlemen had volunteered for the year, and were in the ranks as common privates. They were willing, and as were their parents, to go for a year and serve in that capacity, but when they are called on for so indefinite a period as during the war they feel that it may be losing the best period of their lives to the ranks as common soldiers, and it is requiring too much for them to sacrifice their high prospects in their family at home for such a post. Many of the most experienced who have been in Mexico think the war will be a very protracted one for years. Volunteers from this state are, for the most part, are from our best families who desired to try a year's service even as common soldiers to harden them in a campaign and to give them experience, but they are not willing to pledge themselves for life to that position. I therefore regret exceedingly the change in the requirement. I know it would be better for all officrs to have men for the war than for a year, and might do as well for men too who are from the lowest ranks in life & who never expect a better position. The order might have been changed so far as new volunteers were called for but I wish the old terms could have been adhered to as far as regards those who had volunteered. Could not the Department do something of the kind now?

We have had great difficulties to contend with in this state in relation to the whole war. Mr. Calhoun's great name & popularity here utterly prostrated all our early efforts. You will recollect his course in the Senate, & of course his letters, I suppose took the same ground. All this produced great apathy if not even more, and has its weight now.

Since writing the above we had a meeting today of the old volunteers in this neighborhood, and I was delighted to see the spirit that prevails—it was more than I expected from what I had heard. About half of those who volunteered under the first terms stuck to the last terms, and many new ones enrolled themselves so that the company will be made up, and perhaps the regt in the state will succeed. I hope it will.

I suppose the meeting of our own Congress and also that of Mexico may open some prospect of setting peace. But if not, it strikes me (if not out of place in me to do so) that there ought to be a change in our policy. In the first place it will never do to proclaim that our army will pay the highest prices for all supplies in an enemy's country. This will give a few people the best markets in the world right at their doors, & of course they will be opposed to peace. Invade them as all countries have been invaded, treat them as enemies & responsible for their goverment, and suply the army, as far as it can be done, from their country.

If we could get possession of all the seaports on both Oceans, and allow the demands of the country to be supplied through our fortresses and by the duty levied support our armies, it would over turn the tide and compell them to sue for peace. It would also put them on the offensive and force them to raise & support armies to dislodge us. I have but one more suggestion (and excuse me for intruding myself upon you at all) to make, and that is it will be important to us to prevent England and France from interfering. With that view, could we not through our Diplomatic agents in South America get some of the *S. American Goverments to propose to mediate between* us & Mexico, and thus give us a good excuse to refuse the interferance of European Goverments on the ground that goverments in our own Hemisphere have already proposed and that it is exclusively an American question under their consideration. This would give us the entire control of the whole war in all its aspects. By making such a prescedent now it would give us *the future control of all American Governments*. I could enlarge upon this vastly but of course the suggestion truly is sufficient.

I deeply regret to see that the great states North have gone agst us. I suppose it is upon the anti Slavery feeling which is opposed to acquiring new territory for slavery, combined with the high tariff party. If so, it is dangerous to the future ascendancy of the Democratic party, as well as the Union itself. Things look gloomy. High bearing and bold talent and just cause can yet save the country. I enclose with this a piece which I wrote before the elections.[1]

While I am writing excuse me for asking if it has been through your recommendation or advice that Col. L. T. Wigfall[2] of this place has been appointed in Genl Worth's staff with the rank of Maj.? I merely request this because I told Genl. Bonham[3] if any appointment could be made with propriety from this section that he was promised it. If Col. Wigfall has been appointed by you, *you have been grossly decieved, and his recommendations have not come from your true friends in this state, let them be who they may. Of course this is strictly private between us*. The only two appointments made in the army from this district are Young Hammond[4] paymaster & Wigfall, both of whom have been constant & bitter revilers of yours and of the whole war too. I forbear to say, any more, and would not have said as much but for the sincere regard I have for you, and the deep interest I feel for the success & power of your Administration.

I know it is hard for a President to have the truth spoken to him.

You recollect your remarks to me about sustaining the present Tariff by appointments from the North. I know this has been always calculated on but I begin to doubt it. I am satisfied were it to be carried

at the North in the appointment of [ . . . ][5] offices than the high offices. But above all, that which carries the whole country North or South is *high talent—patriotic purposes*, and great boldness in a vigorous and *practical Cabinet*.

I know it is a great tax upon your time and patience to write you now, and particularly as it comes from a private citizen. You will be so kind as to excuse it as it comes from one who has been your friend ever since 1836 and '37 when you needed friends.

F. W. PICKENS

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

1. Enclosure not found.

2. A lawyer and dueler from Edgefield, S.C., Louis T. Wigfall promoted secession from the Union as early as 1844. Removing to Texas in 1848, Wigfall continued to espouse secession as a state legislator, a position that helped him win election to the U.S. Senate in 1857.

3. Milledge L. Bonham.

4. A lawyer from Newberry, S.C., James H. Hammond won election as a States Rights Democrat to the U.S. House, 1835–36; to the governership, 1842–44; and to the U.S. Senate, 1857–60.

5. Word illegible.

## FROM VERNON K. STEVENSON

Nashville, Tenn Novr 30th 1846

Stevenson reports that he has arranged early payment of the first installment on the purchase of the Grundy house and side lot, thus saving Polk $30 in interest. He advises that he has sold a draft on Polk for $5,896.30 with a 1.25 percent premium payable at ten days sight at the Philadelphia Bank of Pennsylvania. He also states that he will insure the property and provide the president with a full description of the house and lot.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Receipt enclosed.

# December

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My dear Sir, 90 Eaton Square London. Dec. 3, 1846

The steamer arrived so late, that I have scarcely time to write much.

I have spoken with Lord Palmerston on the subject of the reduction of tobacco duties. He called the present high duty preposterous; made no scruple of speaking of it as excessive; admitted the losses to the revenue from frauds & adulteration, & expressed his decided approbation of my addressing him a letter on the subject.

Dr Bowring[1] will call the question up in parliament, will move for the production of the paper, embodying the American request. Mr Roebuck[2] will support the movement; but in England, changes take place slowly, & I would by No means convey the impression, that the reduction will take place this winter. The opposition to the reduction will be very strong; but ultimately it must prevail.

The steamer comes without a scrap of a letter from Washington. The news from New York has astonished me. The hour of adversity is the hour of dignity. I do not doubt you contemplate with calmness the changes & heavings to & fro of public opinion. The Morning

Chronicle[3] of to-day contains a summons to the Whig party of the North to oppose the annexation of California. Up to this time the English people & Government have looked upon it as a matter of course, that California was to come to us. If the whigs come to their aid, they may wish a different issue. I regret the issue of the elections as encouraging Mexico to persevere in opposition. Your old idea of a line to be declared & maintained may come to be the best, & Mexico by delay, seeks to weary us into retreat. Let America use the same policy: shut up the anarchists within narrow limits, keep up the blockade & abide the issue. The wishes of Europe have thus far been with us. Men hope to see Mexico regenerated through us.

I grieve very much for the defeat of Mr Wright. If he could be persuaded to come abroad I should feel it a duty to step aside for him, if that would be agreeable to him.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City .

1. A disciple of Jeremy Bentham and an early advocate of free trade, John Bowring edited the *Westminster Review,* served in the British House of Commons, 1835–36 and 1841–49, and was awarded a doctor of law degree from the University of Gronigen.

2. John Arthur Roebuck, served in the British House of Commons for Bath, 1832–37 and 1841–47, and for Sheffield,1849–68 and 1874–79.

3. Possibly a reference to the *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, a leading Whig newspaper edited by James W. Webb.

## FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Bolivar Decr 5. 1846

McNeal reports that he has sold 244 acres of Polk's lands in Madison County, Tenn., to Simeon Marsh[1] for $1,200 to be paid in four installments over two years. As instructed in Polk's letter of November 8th and 17th last, he will use the proceeds to purchase additional plantation labor: "Negroes are now rating quite high Men from 6 to 750$ Plow boys $600—Women & Girls just grown up from $550 to 600." Relating that he recently bought three teenage slave girls for himself, McNeal promises to acquire for Polk "a Young Negro able to do efficient work—I wont deal in old ones."

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE states that he received this letter on December 19, 1846, and answered it on December 22, 1846; Polk notes that the land formerly belonged to Samuel W. Polk.

1. A land speculator from Giles County, Marsh once sought Polk's assistance in a land venture involving the Chickasaw Nation of Arkansas. See Marsh to Polk, December 25, 1837.

## TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City Decr. 12th 1846

I have not had time to give an earlier answer to your letter of the 23rd ult. written at Columbia.[1] I presume from that letter that you are now at your plantation in Noxubee Co. Miss., and therefore I address you at that place. It is still my desire to appropriate the proceeds of my present year's crop to the increase of my force. The direction which you gave *Mr. Mares*[2] to clear more land with that view, was perfectly proper. I wish you therefore to draw on my commission merchants at New Orleans for an amount, say $3.000 and apply it to the purchase of an additional force. It will be important that this force should be on the place in time to aid in cultivating the next crop. I wish to make the purchases, during the present winter, as I think it probable that such property will continue to rise, in price for several months to come. The more I think of it the better I am satisfied that it will be proper to bring my *blacksmith Harry* home to my place. With my increased force my blacksmith's accounts will be enlarged, and he would probably be quite as profitable to me at home as he would be, if hired out. You will of course have to procure a set of blacksmith's tools for him.

I have not heard of the shipment of any of my cotton. I am a little uneasy about it, as I fear the price may fall. When you visit my place will you see that it is sent off by the earliest opportunity.

I write in great haste, and cannot add more.

Apprehending that this letter may not reach you, before you leave your place in Noxubee, I will endeavour to find time to write you today, to Yalobusha, under care to *Mr. Mares*.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Noxubee County, Miss.; marked "*Private.*"

1. See Campbell to Polk, November 23, 1846.
2. John A. Mairs.

## FROM ROBERT M. MCLANE

My Dear Sir, Philadelphia Dec. 12th 1846

I have read the message with the highest possible satisfaction, and I experience peculiar gratification embracing the privilege of expressing the satisfaction in a letter, while at the same time I submit some reflections induced by my recent visit to the seat of war. The expansive

exposition of the events connected with the Mexican war give the message an historical tone and character, not so susceptible of that lofty and stirring interest which characterised your first message. Yet in view of the unmeasured sources of the Foreign press, so warmly seconded by the opposition in & out of congress, the full and complete vindication of our Mexican policy which it contains, acquires a national importance in no degree secondary to the momentous topics involved in the exposition of the Oregon question it is really wonderful to see how completely the public mind is satisfied. None now dare doubt that we have not only abundant cause for war but for this, that with unexampled forbearances we waived our rightful [ . . . ][1] and only embraced the last resort when the sword was drawn by the enemy upon our own soil, upon full deliberation and after mature and lengthened consideration one of the keenest and most censorious of Senators conceded to me that in regard to the Mexican war, no point for censure remained, but the question of *policy* as to whether we should not have still further shrunk from the last alternative and have still further waived our unquestioned right to carry a vigorous war of chastisement and indemnification into the enemy country which he seemed to think might have been accomplished by remaining at Corpus Christi instead of advancing the army of occupation to the Rio Grande. Fortunately the message fully combats this forlorn hope of opposition by its exposition of Mexican testimony that the war was resolved on and commanded by the Mexican government & generals without regard to the occupation of the Territory between the Nueces & the Rio Grande. The point of attack selected by the opposition in the House of Representatives is of itself conclusive of the consumate ability with which the administration of the government has been vindicated by the message. The objection to the military occupation of "Santa fee"' which has been specially pressed, because it is East of the "Rio Grande," and consequently within the limits of Texas was pressed upon me by Senators Houston & Rusk, whom I met in New Orleans. With them I took the ground, that the *temporary* occupation of that district, was quite as necessary, as the occupation of any other territory conquered from the enemy, and that the only differences in the two cases existed in the subsequent action when *permanent* government was to be provided in the case of "Santa fee" or other territory within the limits of the State of Texas, from which the enemy might have governed. The Legislature of Texas would have the ultimate right to provide *permanent* government, while in regard to Territory without the limits of Texas & the United States their ultimate functions necessarily devolved upon congress. This seems to me to be thus true & satisfactory distinction

in the case. The general right to establish the temporary governments in the conquered country is easily maintained I observe that Mr Davis of Kentucky[2] says that Genl. Taylor has not exercised these despotic powers. He is evidently speaking without the book, and ought to be exposed. Genl. Taylor has given no proclamation and has had too much hard fighting for this entire demonstration upon paper that he nevertheless assumed all the functions of a *Conqueror* in Monterey, having appointed General Smith[3] *governor* of Monterey and Capt Miles[4] chief of the police in subordination to whom he retains in authority the "alcaldes" of the country, and for the present I believe the civil code under which they formerly acted.

Foiled in their efforts to find fault with the political features of the war, the opposition still have even less hope of success in their censure of operations [ . . . ][5] military, for each column of the army has accomplished *brilliant results* while the combined conquest and occupation of [ . . . ] so extensive with the hurried levies of our citizen soldiery [ . . . ] which in itself is worth the whole war in the influence it will exercize upon the public & powers of Europe with whom there has ever existed the want of confidence in our *war power*, the impression having been generally entertained that with all our natural resources we are still in a military view weak & inefficient. The Mexicans have evinced such bravery & skill as seem to distinguish the valor of our troops and establish forever the character of the citizen soldiery. If America with this general view of affairs, I feel persuaded that each day discussion will strengthen the administration, and afford you daily additional inducement & power to exercise a wise and resolute policy which will vigorously prosecute the war to an honorable peace with full & satisfactory indemnification.

ROBT M MCLANE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "Private." E in unidentified hand states that this letter was received on December 13, 1846.

1. Word or words illegible.

2. A lawyer from Paris, Kentucky, Garrett Davis served one term in the Kentucky House, 1833–35; four terms as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1839–47, and one term as a Unionist in the U.S. Senate, 1861–67; he won re-election to the Senate as a Democrat in 1867 and served until his death in 1872.

3. Persifor F. Smith.

4. A career military officer, Dixon S. Miles received a commission in the U.S. army in 1824, fought with distinction at the Battle of Monterey, and died of wounds received defending Harpers Ferry, Va., in 1862.

5. Word or words here and below are illegible.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

My Dear Sir: Washington City Decr 12th 1846

Your letter of the 30th ultimo,[1] was received some days ago. The Bill drawn on me by *Gov. Brown* and enclosed by you for $5896.50/100, was presented to me on yesterday and was promptly paid. When you see *Gov. Brown* will you inform him of the fact. The remaining payment for the *Grundy* property, will be made at the time, stipulated by the Governor or sooner.

I thank you for you willingness in undertaking the agency in the management of the property. I repeat to you my desire, that you will by no means fail to take out insurance upon the buildings to the full amount of their value. In the condition of my affairs, it would most seriously injure me, if they should be consumed by fire & be without insurance.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. See Stevenson to Polk, November 30, 1846.

FROM LOUIS MCLANE

My dear Sir, Baltimore December 13. 1846

Although in the hope of the honor of a personal interview, I have delayed this letter for a few days. You will not I am sure suppose that I am less sincere in tendering you my congratulations upon the character and reasoning of the message, and my assurance of the unfeigned gratification with which I procured it.

The statement of the grounds upon which our troops were ordered to the Rio Grande, of the rightfulness of our occupation and of the causes of the war generally, is so entirely conclusive that it cannot fail to be received with unmeasured satisfaction by every real friend of this Country; and although I do not anticipate any great advantage from the return of S. Anna,[1] I entertain the fullest confidence that our past messages and the rigour with which, I rejoice to perceive, it is apparent the war will be prosecuted, will compel a speedy and satisfactory peace.

The course of the opposition has disappointed me. I have never given them much credit for wisdom or patriotism; but I thought that, profiting by the lessons of the past, they would have had the tact to unite

in all that was necessary to promote a rigorous & successful prosecution of the war; and, at least by attempting to share in the glory of its management, to shun the odium with which the leaders of the War of 1813 had been covered. It would now seem however, that the men of the present opposition are neither more adroit, nor more patriotic than their predecessors in 1813; and that intoxicated by their accidental victories in Penna & New York, they are blindly rushing on to defeat more signal and overwhelming than ever. I think too, that a judgment less severe than that which I believe awaits them, would be inadequate to the occasion; and would neither inculcate a salutary lesson at home nor redeem the national character abroad. I have reason to know and to feel, that whatever war Europe or politicians may affect to make of it for their own purposes, nothing has so great a tendency to weaken the moral force of our union, or the respect for our Institutions than the humiliating spectacle uniformly presented in our disputes with force, or powers, of one of our great parties aiming at the possession of power by impeaching the cause, and degrading the policy, if not paralysing the arms, of their own Country. It is not less remarkable than humiliating that it has ever been the case from our struggle for independence down to the present day! As to Mr Webster, no one who has closely observed his course, especially for the last fifteen years, will feel any surprise at his recent exhibitions. It has been very apparent to me for some time, that he has more ambitions of a European than of a home reputation; and thought more of the adulation of the English press and public, than to desire the affection of his own countrymen. I hope it may not ultimately be equally apparent that with him and a large portion of the opposition in some parts of New England, that a foreign preference has a deeper root and broader aspirations. However this may be, I am entirely satisfied that by the strength of its cause, and the cordial support your administration is destined to received from the country at large and the general indignation with which the present course of the opposition will be resisted, the honor of the country, and the power of our Institutions will be fully vindicated.

The knowledge you already possess of my sentiments upon the Tariff, would renew the expression of my unqualified approbation of the wisdom of the Message in regard to that subject a matter of course. The details of a tariff are always more or less complex, and perhaps only susceptible of perfect adjustment with the aid of a good deal of practical experience. But these are unimportant, compared with the great principle asserted and maintained in the act of the last session. I regard the great achievement of that act to be, the confining the object of the impost to revenue and not to protection, and the recognition of

such incidental privileges to any class of labor as would be consistent with that object, and not productive of inequality with other branches of the home industry. This, in my opinion, is the fundamental principle of our first and early impost law, which has been less understood and more abused than almost any other engrafted upon any part of the organization of the government; and I sincerely believe that if Genl Washington and Mr. Hamilton were now living, they would be the first to detect the departure from the scheme they adopted, and to hail the prospect of a return to the true basis of their policy. The chief task of Genl. Hamilton's celebrated report[2] was to reconcile incidental support to home manufactures in the infancy of society and under the disadvantages of a thin population, want of skill and scarcity of capital with the standard of revenue; and the only distinctive characteristic of the "American System" appears to me to be that, which overturning the practice of all other governments, whose progress is to [ . . .][3] with the growth of their people, persists in augmenting protection just in proportion as the labor of the Country might be supposed to need it the least. When Mr Webster raises up the import acts of '89 and '90, he accomplishes nothing until he could shew that in a nation comprehending twenty millions of people successfully competing in every branch of agriculture and the arts, dispersed over a territory of much vaster extent, and abounding in capital for all their necesary occupations, protection was as much needed by, and could be as equally bestowed upon a few essential branches of manufactures, as in a population of four millions with few of the advantages at present possessed by the American people. I can only hope therefore, that the principle of the act of the last session will be steadily maintained, and I cannot doubt of its ultimate popularity with great body our Countrymen. It needed a firm and honest spirit to assert & uphold it in the face of an inveterate antagonist, but every year will add to the fame of the administration by which it was accomplished.

I am afraid, Sir, that I have already tasked your patience and time, in the midst of your important occupation beyond any privilege I am entitled to; and I, therefore, conclude with a tender of my best wishes for your public and private prosperity; and assurances of my sincere friendship & esteem.

LOUIS MCLANE

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

1. Santa Anna.
2. Reference is to Alexander Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* (1791).
3. Word illegible.

FROM RICHARD RUSH

Dear Sir, Lydenham, near Philadelphia, December 13. 1846

Since getting home, it has been an interesting employment to me, under the gratifying suggestion that dropped from you in our transient conversation, to look into some manuscripts I have of the war of 1812 to see what light they might chance to throw upon the debate which sprung up in the House of Representatives on the rights of war over conquered territory; but, as yet, I find nothing having any special reference to the point. This may arise from the fact that *then* certain first principles were taken for granted, which *now* are disputed. The opponents of the war of 1812, ran counter to first duties, as most of them are at this day ready to admit. The opponents of this war, are running against first duties and first *principles* too. If President Madison could ever have supposed that our *right* to govern territory conquered by our arms, would be disputed, it is presumable that the point would have been presented at some of the many meetings of his cabinet during the war; in which case it is probable I might have met with some notice of it among my papers.

The search, however, incidentally brings up incidents of application to our times. If the course of the British may serve as any authority at all with our modern whigs, I find that General Brock, on Hull's inglorious surrender at Detroit,[1] declared that the laws in being in the territory of Michigan, should continue in force until his majesty's pleasure was known, *or as long as the peace and safety of the territory would admit of it.* The American citizens of the territory were also disarmed—the whole of them— by the conquering British general. General Harrison on re-conquering the territory in 1813 annulled all the commissions derived from British authority. Thus it becomes known that the British had *granted* commissions to carry on the civil government of the territory as long as they held it by right of conquest. When the British forces took possession of Eastport, July 1814, the existing laws were kept in force by British proclamation until further orders. *They also made our people take the oath of allegiance to Great Britain.* The same was done, under the proclamation of Sir John Sherbrooke,[2] when their arms reduced Castine, and the country between Pinobscot river and Passamaquaddy Bay in September 1814. The country in question included some thirty or forty towns within the state of Massachusetts. Furthermore: When General Harrison conquered upper Canada, his proclamation of October 1813 allowed the laws of the country to prevail, and magistates to resume their

functions, *on taking an oath to be faithful to the government of the United States.*

These instances are enough of themselves to attest the principle laid down by the writers on public law, so well invoked by Mr Douglass in the part he first took in the debate, and sustained by citations from battle by others who followed. I have as yet seen none of that debate that may have take place since Thursday's; but Grotius[3] to whose pages I have been turning, and whom I have often found as entertaining by his illustrations and anecdotes as he is instructing, is, if possible, more explicit than Vattel.[4] In book 3rd, chapter 8, he asserts the title of the conquering power to all the rights of the conquered sovereign or state, going the length of saying that the latter may thereby lose its political existence; even if allowed (chapter 15 section 10, for this) to retain laws, privileges, and magistracies, of inferior importance.

The message itself, had previously and broadly covered the whole ground of the principle; nor can I perceive that, as there given out by you both with comprehensiveness and precision, its reasoning has been at all impugned in the debate, or as much as attempted to be, though otherewise flung at. Even Mr. Winthrop,[5] probably the most astute among its opponents, is compelled to admit that the conquerer may establish a government over his conquest; but not a "permanent" government he says. True, and the message does not contend for this as the modern doctrine; but only "to hold military possession of all the provices which have been taken, until a definitive treaty of peace shall have been concluded and ratified by the two countries." I find Grotius, (book 3rd, chapter 6, section 4; and chapter 15, section 5), particularly strong on the right of the conquerer to place garrisons in the country conquered, in order to provide for his security and retain his dominion, as the message recommends.

But Sir, as it has been your lot to have a war with Mexico to deal with, as the nation's head, to which, in my humble opinion, there has been more of provocation than there was to the war with England in Mr Madison's time, great as was the provocation to that, so also the opposition to the Mexican war seems to be hurrying its partisans into greater extremities of error and anti-Americanism. But history will be alike ready with her sentence of condemnation; and it cannot be doubted but that in a few years, fewer than elapsed after the war of 1812, those now assailing you for the war with Mexico and the principles on which it is waged, will be as anxious to throw oblivion over their conduct as were those who denounced Mr Madison for the war against England. It was only yesterday that a candid, but decided

whig, not indeed an active in politics at present, remarked in my hearing, that he never rightly understood the grounds of the present war until reading you message last week; but that you had made them so clear, that he did not see how either its justice or necessity could now possibly be doubted. Here is a little foretaste of the judgments to come.

The truly and highly agreeable dinner at which it was my good fortune to be one of your guests on Thursday, seems to invest me with a claim to the honor of offering my compliments to Mrs. Polk, and the ladies of your family; and tendering to yourself every assurance of respect, mingled with ardent wishes for the full success of your administration with which I believe the best interests of our great and still rising Republic to be identified, I beg to remain ....

RICHARD RUSH

P.S. I have used the freedom, hoping your kind excuse, to put under cover to your address, a book for the Secretary of State, with the sole view of drawing his eye to a passaage or two on public questions.[6] R.R.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. E in unidentified hand states that this letter was received on December 18, 1846.

1. Isaac Brock and William Hull. A professional British army officer who rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel at the age of 28, Brock was posted with the 49th regiment to Canada in 1802; upon the outbreak of war with the United States in 1812 he joined his force of 300 regulars and 400 militiamen with Tecumseh's 800 Shawnee warriors to invest Fort Detroit, defended by Hull and his 2,000 troops. Following a brief bombardment Hull surrendered his post and sought British protection from the Shawnee for his troops.

2. John Coape Sherbrooke, a professional officer in the British army, 1780–1818, fought in campaigns in Flanders, India, Sicily, and the Peninsular before being posted to Nova Scotia with the rank of lieutenant-general in 1811; appointed lieutenant-governor, he organized the defenses of the colony during the war with the United States and in 1816 received appointment as governor-in-chief of British North America.

3. A Dutch jurist, Hugo Grotius argued in the 1630's that wars must be for just causes and that military leaders must take into consideration war's impact on civilian populations.

4. A Swiss philosopher, Emerich de Vattel insisted in the 1750's that statesmen apply natural law to their diplomatic and military decisions.

5. A lawyer from Boston, Mass., Robert Charles Winthrop served as a state legislator in the 1830's before winning five terms as a Whig to the U.S. House, 1840–50. Following unsuccessful bids for U.S. senator and state governor, both in 1851, Winthrop withdrew from politics.

6. Enclosure directed to James Buchanan has not been identified.

FROM HUGH J. ANDERSON[1]

Dear Sir Belfast, Me, 14th Decr 1846

I have just finished a second reading of your most admirable message, and I cannot forbear from offering you my sincere congratulations upon the conclusion & triumphant vindication of the policy & measures of your administration which it affords.

It is precisely such a document as was needed, and cannot fail to operate, most forcefully & decidedly upon the public mind, especially in the northern section of the Union, where a variety of sources have combined to produce results, partially adverse to the democratic party, will it have a striking & salutory influence.

Wherever it is read, its effects will be observed; and as a convincing proof, that such is the view taken by the opposition, several of their papers in this state have published only garbled extracts. In this County, the federal organ has suppresed the most effective & material portion, giving to its readers only its own distorted views.

It will go to the people, however, in the form of extra's from the democratic paper in sufficient numbers to furnish copies to every voter.

I hope this course may be adopted in other sections, and that every elector in the land, whatever may be his politics, will be furnished with the clear, able & dignified refutation of the calumnies propagated in relation to the existing war, which is given in the message. Certain I am that nothing would so effectually disabuse the public mind upon that subject, as the candid, and yet powerful exposition which you have given.

The apprehensions which were entertained some weeks since concerning the Legislative elections in this State have been removed: the recent trials in the vacant districts have shewn beyond reasonable doubt, that we shall have a majority in both branches of the Legislature, and though it will be small in the House, it will be sufficient for all useful purposes, and in the Senate, nearly as large as usual.

Hoping that your communication will prove as efficacious in other sections as I am sure it will be in this, and with my best wishes for the continued success of your administration I am ....

H. J. ANDERSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on December 26, 1846.

1. A lawyer from Belfast, Me., Anderson won election as a Democrat to two terms in the U.S. House, 1837–41; subsequently, he served as governor

of his state, 1844–47, and as commissioner of customs in the U.S. treasury department, 1853–58.

## FROM JAMES K. PAULDING[1]

Hyde Park
Dear Sir. Dutchess County December 14th 1846

I had the pleasure yesterday to receive the copy of your message, you were so kind as to send me, and beg you to accept my thanks for this proof of your remembrance, as well as for the gratification derived from its perusal.

I cannot, however, rest satsified without expressing my cordial approval both of the style and sentiments of that paper, most especially of the part which relates to Foreign Interference. He who speaks in the name of the greatest Empire that exists or that ever existed should speak as you have done. We have been long enough, first the victims, next the dupes of European pretension and intrique, and it is time they should distinctly understand, that the New World has set up for herself.

Permit me also to express the opinion, that the clear, succinct and masterly detail of the warnings received from Mexico, and the exposition of the futility of her claim to the sovereignty of Mexico, is extremely well timed. Although only a recapitulation of facts and arguments already made public in various ways, for those condensed and coming abroad in a message from The President of the United States, which will be read by all Europe, they cannot fail of making the proper impression, and causing the whole case to be understood, by those governments, which are totally ignorant of its real bearings, or wilfully misrepresent them.

I have seen it stated that directions have been given to General Taylor in future to subsist his army by contributions from the people of Mexico. War has its maxims as well as force, and they are equally justifiable in a good cause. The Law of force is not the Law of forbearance. One of the great means of coercing Rulers to do justice, is to make the People feel the consequences of their injustice. It is right it should be so, since if they are free to choose their Rulers, they become in a measure responsible for their action; and if they are not they merit chastisement for submitting to bad ones. It is no sufficient excuse for national outrages to say that the People had nothing to do with them, since unless they at once discover them, and punish the aggressor, they become parties to the offense and must suffer accordingly.

Your intimation that Mexico will be called on in any future settlement of the controversy, to pay the expense of the war, ought to be a warning to her Law she permits in prosecuting it. She cannot pay in money and of consequence must pay in land by the dismemberment of her Territory. She must cancel the debt by the cessation of New Mexico or California, or both. But she is governed by a set of swindlers whose preposterous ambition to rule is only equalled by their incapacity for the task. Their folly takes away all dignity from distress and makes even calamity ridiculous. Were it not for the influence of the Priesthood, I verily would believe the miserable Mexicans would erelong follow the example of Texas. The United States excercise an influence over the world independent of their physical strength and resources—that of liberty and equality, so dear to the heart of men. They are precisely in the position of the Achaean League as described by the Greek Historian Polybius[2] who says—

"From whence has it happened that not the people of Thebes only, but all the rest of Peloponnesus, are so well pleased not only to receive their Laws and form of Government, but their very names also from the Achaeans: In my judgment the cause is nothing else but Liberty and Equality: in a word, the Democratic species of Government which is found more just and perfect in its kind among the Achaeans than in any other state. This Republic was at first composed of a small part only of the inabitants of Peloponnesus who voluntarily associated into one body. But a greater number soon joined them, induced to it by the manifest advantages of such a union. And some, as opportunities offered were forced into the confederacy. But they were satisfied with the violence by which they had been compelled to embrace so excellent a form of government; for the new citizens were permitted to enjoy all the rights and privileges that were allowed to the old. Everything was equal among them."[3] Here sir, is a complete picture of the United States, and such if I don't mistake, will be the ultimate result of the fascination of their government and institutions.

But I am occupying that time which belongs to the Public, and which must now be fully occupied. I must trust for pardon to the honesty of my motives. Though I retired forever from Public Life, I still take the deepest interest in my Country.

J K PAULDING

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on December 24, 1846.

1. A native of a prominent Revolutionary War family from Putnam County, N.Y., Paulding contributed five satirical and political works, 1812–25, in the so-called literary war provoked by British ridicule of American literary efforts; his brother William, sometime mayor of New York City and U.S. congressman, provided valuable political connections for his acquiring appointments as secretary of the Board of Navy Commissioners, 1818–23, as navy agent for New York, 1824–38, and as secretary of the U.S. navy, 1838–41. Author of some sixty short stories and five realistic novels, he achieved measured literary distinction for his interpretations of the New York Dutch.

2. Polybius, born ca. 200–188 B.C., wrote extensively on the history of the Greco-Roman world.

3. See Polybius, *The Histories*, Book 2, Chapter 38.

## FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir: Columbia, Dec. 14 1846

I write at request of your mother.[1] It is now known that Dolly will be sold at Christmas or new year by Dr. Dickinson's estate[2]. The old lady wishes to buy her, and would be a good deal disturbed for her to be sold out of the family. When I returned home in May I told your mother, if she wished to buy Dolly & children, you would pay for them and take Garrison in part & let the balance go in her legacy, and advised her to open a negotiation with Mrs. Dickinson[3] if she wanted her, that I would raise the money to pay according to your instructions. I now tell her if she wishes to make the purchase I will arrange payment but she says she has heard you have made a large purchase at Nashville and it may not now be convenient for you to make payment. She wishes to hear from you before she actually buys, altho she has commenced a negotiation with Mrs. Dickinson. She is willing for you to take Garrison at his current value & to receipt for the ballance on her legacy.

Let me hear from you without delay on this subject, and if I am to draw on you let me know at what time. I suppose a draft at 60 days can be cashed at par, at 4ms 1 pr cent dis.

JAMES WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on cover states that he received this letter on December 23, 1846. Polk further notes that the letter "relates to personal business."

1. Jane Knox Polk.

2. William G. Dickinson.

3. Lucinda Dickinson.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir Nashville Decr. 15. 1846

The message is here—perfectly satisfactory to our friends. The Whigs have said nothing yet in the way of comment but it is evident to every one that they *can* have but little to say until they get their clue from Webster Crittenden & Co.[1] Mr Fogg (Francis B.)[2] remarked on yesterday that you had made out a perfect and unanswerable case against Mexico & it were useless to deny it.

I hurried rapidly over it to see whether you had incorporated into it a full discussion of your internal improvement opinions. I am very glad they are omitted at present however correct they may be, because they would have lost much of their interest in the other absorbing topics of the Message. Nothing has gratified me so much as the late movement of Genl. Scott. If he fights no battles but is only in a condition to fight when a favorable peace is concluded, he will conceive himself so identified with the War & its great results that he will not yield his pretension to Mr. Clay—I long to see this *dangerous leader* laid aside for ever—by any body—*at any hazzard.* I had rather see Genl. S. *actually* elected than to see Mr C have *a very good chance* of success.

*If a suitable opportunity* occurs I should be glad to see more friendly relations between the administration & Johnson & Jones.[3] I think it probable they will make such overtures as might lead to frequency of visits, freedom of conversation & a removal of the little petty suspicions of neglect which zealous minds are prone to adopt. I have said or written nothing to either of them on the subject, but may hereafter make some allusions to them in relation to the unseemliness of their position. You know my distinguished character as a *peace maker*, among friends never among enemies.

My best respects to Mrs. P. in which Mrs. Brown cordially concurs.

AARON V. BROWN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on December 30, 1846.

1. Daniel Webster and John J. Crittenden.

2. A Nashville attorney, Fogg represented Davidson County as a Whig for one term in the Tennessee House, 1851–53.

3. Andrew Johnson and George W. Jones, both from East Tennessee, expressed much disatisfaction with the president's patronage policies. A tailor from Greeneville, Tenn., Johnson served five terms as a Democrat in the

U.S. House, 1843–53, before serving as state governor, 1853–75, U.S. senator, 1857–62 and 1875, and president of the United States, 1865–69.

## FROM DANIEL T. JENKS[1]

My Dear Sir Philadelphia December 16th 1846

All kinds of contrivances are devised by the vice President to reach the *Presidency*, at the next election. He *uses* the Administration by getting its various Departments to sustain a penny paper in Philadelphia, which with all its suport from Washington is now on its last legs. I clip from this paper (the Keystone) the enclosed[2] evidently written by Mr Dallas. The men about the Keystone, have all grown *since* the days of Gov. Snyder[3]—of course then the writer of the article must have lived through Gov Snyders Administration. Dallas is that man, & he is the writer of the article enclosed.

For myself, I think he takes too much upon himself to assert. It is my opinion, that as Penna. and New York, have both gone for the Whigs, that the Party will have to fall back upon *Young Hickory* and compel him to run Nolens Volens.[4] It is in very bad taste for *Mr Dallas, or his Editor of the Keystone*, to take the ground in favour of the single term.

Collector Page[5], says, that Dallas and Walker got him appointed and he just does what they desire. *Schnanbell*[6] who has just been appointed in the Custom House is not only a sworn friend of Dallas, but that he is to marry some of Mr D's relations.

For myself I cannot look on quietly & see what these men are doing and not speak my mind to your Excellency. You should *at once rebuke* Page in his movements and give Mr Dallas most positively the cold shoulder. He is making continued use of your patronage to build up his chances for the Presidency. Pleas[e] therefore, take the subject of your appointments into your own hands every where & especially in Philadelphia & Penna.

Besides I may add, that the course of your Departments is giveing their printing to a paper opposed to Gov. Shunks[7] renomination is calculated to engender bad feelings between the administration of Gov. Shunk and your administration at Washington. One term of 4 years *Beyond which period no man, however patriotic, can be President of this free and happy Republic*. Thus the sentence above you will see in the article.

Mr Dallas has it seems examined *most industriously* all the messages of President Jackson, and in the article afore he says he seven times, recommended a *single term*, no one would put himself to the

same trouble on the subject, but Mr Dallas, and no one about the Keystone has the messages to examine, but Mr Dallas. You will excuse these hasty lines, & put them down to the right account viz. my sincere friendship I personally entertain for you. Remember me kindly to Mrs. P.

DANIEL T JENKS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "Confidential."

1. An ardent Democrat and former party worker in Bucks County, Penn., Jenks moved to Philadelphia in 1845 and secured an appointment as clerk in the customs house in 1847.

2. Enclosed are undated clippings from the Philadelphia *Daily Keystone*, a sheet that ran from 1844 to 1847.

3. Known as the first "common man" governor, Simon Snyder served three terms as governor of Pennsylvania, 1808–1817.

4. A Latin expression loosely translated, "against one's will."

5. Postmaster of Philadelphia from 1836 to 1841, James Page received an appointment as collector of customs at Philadelphia in 1846.

6. Ellis B. Schnabel.

7. Francis R. Shunk.

## FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Dear Sir: Memphis, Tennessee Dec 16th 1846

I ought perhaps to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter[1] before this; but as there was nothing particularly requiring an answer I have neglected it.

When cotton was selling at high prices (as was the case when I received your letter) I was in favor of selling, since however the market has declined almost one cent.

I think it would be your interest to allow your cotton to be held up. Every River from which cotton is shipped is now open & the receipts at N.O. must & will be very heavy & as the heavy payments of the season are in Jany. I fear prices will be low.

I have no fears that the crop will exceed two millions of bales. Whenever it is well settled that such is fact, prices *must* at least be firm at from 9 to 11¢. I think it more probable that the crop *will not* reach two millions. I have seen more evidence of a short crop within the last month than before, although the receipts *are large*.

I would like to have the discretion of selling or holding your cotton up, as we may think best. I may be mistaken, but I don't think I am, in the opinion that cotton will be at its lowest point in Jany, that there

is every thing to make and nothing to lose by holding on. I am no speculator, have *not* bought & will not buy & am therefore not predjudiced in my opinion by my interests.

I give you my opinion for what it is worth—your instructions will be obeyed unless you order otherwise.

SAMUEL P. WALKER

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on cover states that he answered this letter on January 7, 1847.

1. See Polk to Walker, November 11, 1846.

## FROM CHARLES J. INGERSOLL

Dear Sir Dec. 17. '46

Reflecting on what you said yesterday I venture respectfully to suggest a doubt whether,

First, your answer to the Enquiry[1] need be hurried in before you hear further as to the expected change in Mexico.

Secondly, and whether you may not send your orders, without the doings of Kearny and Stockton of which your tidings must yet be so imperfect that you may say that as you have sent no confirmation of them you do not think it proper till you do to make them public.

*You* stand unexceptionally upon the orders you gave. Why give enemies abroad & at home the knowledge and comfort to be derived from excessive and harmless zeal in the execution of those orders.

C J INGERSOLL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally at Washington City.

1. Complying with a request contained in a House resolution of December 15, 1846, Polk communicated on December 22nd reports and documents pertaining thereto from the secretaries of war and navy containing all the "orders or instructions" relating to "the establishment or organization of civil government in any portion of the territory of Mexico which has or might be taken possession of by the Army or Navy of the United States." Stephen W. Kearny had proclaimed the occupied Mexican province of New Mexico a territory of the United States and established a permanent territorial government granting to its inhabitants full constitutional rights enjoyed by the citizens of the United States. Attributiing Kearny's indiscretion to patriotic intentions, Polk noted that such excesses of power had resulted in "no practical injury" and would be corrected in a manner so as "to alienate as little as possible the good feelings of the inhabitants of the conquered territory." Polk stated that Kearny's actions were not known to him at the time he had prepared and submitted his recent annual message to Congress. Richardson, ed., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, pp. 506–07.

## FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

[Polk's Mississippi Plantation]
Dear Sir: December 17the 1846

I recieved yours dated November 14the.[1] I would have ansered it sooner but have just finished my coten. We are all well at present & going on with the farm as well as we can. We like about two days work of finishing of the corn. We will make aplenty of corse for the plantation & aplenty of Pork. We have about sixty five hogs to slaughter. The coten crop dyed not turn out as well as i wonst thought it would of done oing to the worms. I think I rought you the crop was ingered by them.

We have made a hundred an three bags of coten shiped frome troy the tenth of this month 96 bags of coten to New orlens.

We have made the negro clothing at home and have them rough redy.

JOHN A. MAIRS

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on December 31, 1846. Mairs encloses the weights of the last 49 bags of cotton produced on Polk's plantation for 1846.

1. See Polk to Mairs, November 14, 1846.

## FROM ALFRED BALCH

Dear Sir, Nashville 18th Decr 1846

I have read the annual message with pleasure. It demolishes Webster's *great* speech at Phila[1] as the opposition term it. This speech is in my judgment the weakest he has ever delivered. He is certainly lapsing into a state of mental imbecility. The man must be a Tory at heart for come what may he is for ever against his own country.

I hope that Benton will take hold of him and *discuss* his political anatomy as the skilful anatomist discusses the human body. Benton has the courage and the industry and the bitterness necessary to such a task. It is high time that the inconsistencies & the political tergiversations of this man should be laid bare to the view of the nation by a studied and masterly effort. His whole course since 1813 to the present time is obnoxious to the severest criticism and merits the execrations of every patriot.

It strikes me that Santa Anna must desire peace but that his position is too delicate and hazardous to justify such an act. It is probable that he has not regained the confidence of the military, that he has

not conciliated the opposing factions by which he is surrounded and that he deems it judicious to fight before he treats. One things is most certain however—that it is our policy to wage the war with all possible energy and give the gallant spirits of our army and navy full and speedy opportunity to fight and conquer as they surely will.

To my great surprise I received a short time since a political letter from Westcott[2] expressing his disappointment and regret that he had not seen me at Wn.[3] When I resided in Florida it was said as I understood that I was the only man in the world whose advice he would follow. I have made to his communication a studied reply.

Graham and his little wife are boarding with us.[4] He has got into the Books et cetera of the State Bank and seems to be perfectly happy.

Mrs Hodge,[5] the most devine slender and graceful of widows is likewise of our mess. It is my private opinion that Mrs Graham and the rest of the women are intriging to get up a love affair between the widow and myself. If they succeed I pledge you my honor that I will soon make good Locofocos of her and hers which will add immensely to the strength of our party in Tennessee.

The Ladies are hinting to me strongly that Mrs Governor[6] again already finds herself as women wish to be who love their lords. The Govr is still passionately in Love with the madam's fair and soft complexion.

ALFREDBALCH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City District Columbia. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on December 26, 1846.

1. Daniel Webster spoke in Philadelphia on December 2, 1846.
2. James D. Westcott, Jr.
3. Washington City.
4. Daniel and Mariah Graham.
5. Not identified.
6. Cynthia Pillow Saunders, wife of Aaron V. Brown.

## FROM FREDERICK P. STANTON

Dear Sir, House of Reps. 21 Decr 1846

In conversation with Gen Haralson[1] of the military committee this morning, I found him opposing the measure suggested by you some days ago, viz: the power to appoint a Lieut. Genl. I took occasion to suggest to him that he ought not to commit himself in advance &c. I thought he was impressed with the idea that he ought to be consulted.

I hope you will not consider it presumptuous in me to mention these facts and to suggest the propriety, if the measure should be considered

desirable, of sending for Gen. H. and making known to him such facts as you might deem necessary, *and such as you would be willing at the same time for Mr Calhoun to know*.

FRED. P. STANTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probabaly addressed locally. Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on December 22, 1846.

1. A lawyer from LaGrange, Ga., Hugh A. Haralson held various state offices, including a long stint as major-general of the Georgia state militia, 1838–50, and served four terms as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–51.

## FROM JOEL TURRILL

New Bedford, Mass. December 21, 1846

Turrill relates some of the particulars in the case of Ladd & Co. vs. the U.S. Government.[1] According to Turrill, the creditors for the company defaulted on a number of land investments and now owe many of the residents of the Sandwich Islands a substantial sum of money. They inexplicably blame the United States and are suing to recover their losses, although Turrill believes that their arguments are weak and that a settlement is highly unlikely. Turrill further explains that Anthony Ten Eyck[2] is serving reluctantly as counsel for the plaintiffs, a role that has displeased King Kamehameha,[3] who now finds it difficult to interact with a man "who is employed as counsel by the enemies of the Govt." Turrill notes that the Hawaiians continue to value their close relationship to the United States and stresses the need for to protect the independence of the Islands against foreign intervention,[4] especially from Great Britain.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington, D.C.; marked "Confidential." Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on May 20, 1847.

1. Litigation is not identified further.

2. A Democrat from Detroit, Mich., Ten Eyck twice served as U.S. commissioner to the Sandwich Islands, 1841–43, and 1845–49.

3. King of the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) from 1825 until his death in 1854, Kamehameha III transformed the Islands' political system from semi-feudalism to a constitutional monarchy and established religious freedom with Christianity emerging as the predominant belief system.

4. The United States recognized Hawaiian independence in 1842.

## TO EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

My Dear Sir: Washington City Decr 22nd 1846

I have recieved your letter of the 5th Instant, and am well satisfied with the sale, which you have made of the 244 acres of land. I have

written the bank for title which you transmitted to me, and herewith return it. When you receive the payment due on the 1st of February, I wish to purchase a good young hand, of either sex, according to your own judgement and send it to my plantation. The caution which I need not repeat, there will be no necessity to make it known that the purchase is made for me. You can take the Bill of Sale, in your own name, and enclose a quit claim upon it to me, and enclose it to me. When you send down to my plantation, write to my overseer. His name is *John A. Mares.*[1] You can inform him, that the hand sent is mine, and that will be all that will be necessary. I hope you may be able to sell the 250 acres in Madison, and the remnants such as there is and apply the proceeds in like manner. When you have made collections for rents, you will of course forward to me the annual statement, that I may be able to make the proper entries in my books, as guardian of M.T. Polk's heirs.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Bolivar, Tenn.; marked "*Private.*"

1. John A. Mairs.

## TO JAMES WALKER

My Dear Sir: Washington City Decr. 23rd 1846

I have recieved your letter of the 14th instant, informing me that *Dolly and her children,* will probably be sold at the close of this year, and that mother[1] desires to have them, but fears it may not suit me to pay for them for her at this time. In answer to your inquiry on this point, I repeat to you what I said last summer, and that is that I wish you to buy them for mother and draw on me for the amount. I can raise the money here to meet the bill, without inconvenience. I wish you therefore to buy them for her. She ought to own them, and I know that she would not be happy if she did not. If you purchase them for her, she can convey *Garrison* to me, and give her receipt for so much of her legacy,[2] for the balance, in payment for them.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Columbia; marked "*Private.*"

1. Jane Knox Polk.

2. Reference is to that portion of Samuel Polk's estate left to his widow upon his death in 1827.

FROM HENRY HORN

Dear Sir Philadelphia 25 Decem 1846

My Friend Major Tompkins[1] of the army has made application to have his son[2] admitted into the military school at West Point. With the young man I have no acquaintance, but his father the major is a gallant soldier, a true patriot and an estimable citizen, and if his representations of the capacity and qualifications of his son be correct I have no doubt that he would do honor to the service. Major Tomkins like ourselves was a warm supporter of Genl. Jackson's and Mr Van Buren's administrations, and although this may operate against him as it has against me with some of the functionaries at Washington I am sure it will not prejudice him in your estimation.

In connection with this remark I beg leave to refer to a paragraph to which my attention was called a night or two since at our exchange. It is contained in the Baltimore patriot, the Wshington correspondent of that paper under date of the 21st Inst says "Strong efforts are making by Mr. Buchanan Senator Cameron and other Locofoco's to have the nomination of Andrew Beaumont as commissioner of public buildings rejected by the Senate. He is of the *Van Buren* and *Henry Horn* creed &c." Can it be possible that the senator and secretary named in the paragraph refered to are engaged in this nefarious scheme against so good a man as Beaumont? I wish I could disbelieve it, but as it is the same combination that prevailed against me I cannot doubt the truth of the charge.

I trust you will look to it. These men are capable of anything in the shape of a political device. They will endeavor to prostrate any and every man who appears to stand in the way of their selfish and corrupt designs. An exertion of a portion the energy which I know you possess will effectually frustrate their schemes and discomfort them, as I know them both to be deficient in moral as well as physical courage. Spaniel like they will cringe to power when it threatens them.

HENRY HORN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*Private.*" Polk's AE on the cover states that he received this letter on December 26, 1846.

1. Daniel D. Tomkins entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1814 and served in the U.S. army until his death in 1863.

2. Charles H. Tomkins entered West Point in 1847 and later received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his valorous service in the Civil War.

TO JANE KNOX POLK

Dear Mother: Washington City Decr 25th 1846

It has been many months since I have written to you, but you have been constantly in my affectionate remembrance. My whole time has been occupied in the performance of my public duties, and I know that the daily newspapers of this city, which I know you read, would keep you advised, that we are in the enjoyment of health, and of all that you would be interested to hear. This *Christmas day,* and is one of the most quiet days I have spent since I have been President. Congress does not sit, the public offices are all closed, and the population generally attend church. My official term has nearly half expired. My public responsibilities and cares are very great, and I shall rejoice, when the period shall arrive, when I can bid adieu to public life forever. I shall return to Tennessee at the close of my term, and spend the remainder of my life, in quiet retirement.

One object which I had in view, when I commenced this letter, was to say, that I learn from *Mr. James Walker,*[1] that *Dolly and her children,* will probably be sold by *Dr. Dickinson's* estate, at the close of this year. I informed *Mr. Walker* when he was here last spring, that if they sold, I desired that he would purchase them for you. They were born in your family, you raised them, and I know you desire to get them back. I desire that you shall do so and wrote to *Mr. Walker* on receiving his letter two days ago to buy them for you, and draw on me for the amount.[2] I have made my arrangements here to pay for them, without inconvenience. If Mr. Walker should possibly be absent from home when you recieve this letter, send for *James H. Thomas,* or *Robert Campbell,* and either of them will make the purchase for you and draw on me for the amount. In the event the purchase is made you can transfer *Garrison* to me, and give your receipt for so much of your legacy, for the balance, of their price. *Mr. Thomas* will probably have some money of mine in his hands at the close of the year. Besides the rent of my dwelling-house and store-house & the hire of *Elias,* I left some notes with him to collect. I wish you to call on him, and he will furnish you with whatever amount you may need, to settle up, all your accounts, pay for your groceries for the next year, or for any thing else you may require for your comfort. He will take your receipt for whatever amount he may let you have. I desire that all your wants shall be supplied.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. When *Dolly* is purchased, I advise you to bring her home, and keep

her in your own house, to wait on you as long as [ . . . ].[3] Having raised her, she will serve you better than any other would.

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

1. See James Walker to Polk, December 14, 1846.
2. See Polk to James Walker, December 23, 1846.
3. Word illegible.

## FROM RICHARD RUSH

Lydenham, near Philadelphia, December 26. 1846.

Rush comments briefly on the U.S. House debates over Polk's second annual message, noting particularly the exchange between Gentry and Martin.[1] He then offers additional historical examples of U.S. military occupation policy,[2] including Montgomery's treatment of Canadians during the American Revolution.[3] Rush closes with a dismissal of European criticism of the Mexican War, noting sarcastically the "high-handed course" of Russia, Prussia, and Austria in suppressing self-determination in Poland.[4] "If the U.S. had so trampled upon all faith among mankind," Rush declares, "how Europe would have broken out in one loud chorus against the *principle* of popular government, its horrors, its unfitness to exist upon the earth!" He adds, "I wonder how much we shall hear against the *principle* of monarchical government, since this outrage?"

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. E in unidentified hand states that this letter was received on December 28, 1846.

1. A lawyer from Williamson County, Meredith P. Gentry served as a Whig in the Tennessee House, 1835–39, and later in the U.S. House, 1839–43, 1845–53; a lawyer from Columbia, Tenn., Barkly Martin served several terms in the Tennessee General Assembly as a Democrat and won election to one term in the U.S. House, 1845–47.
2. See Richard Rush to Polk, December 13, 1846,
3. In the autumn of 1775 Richard Montgomery led American forces in an ill-fated invasion of Canada. After capturing Montreal, he suffered a disastrous defeat outside Quebec; he was among those killed in the action.
4. Between 1772 and 1795 these three kingdoms systematically partioned the lands of Poland among themselves; in 1846 they cooperated in crushing an insurrection by Polish nationalists.

## TO GEORGE M. DALLAS

My Dear Sir: Washington Decr 28th 1846

I have received your note of the 26th Instant, with the newspaper and letters enclosed.[1] The paragraph in the Pennsylvanian, to which

you call my attention, has not only *not* had my sanction, but I extremely regret its publication. I had no knowledge of it, until you sent me the paper containing it. I can have no objection, that it should be corrected upon my authority, and indeed desire that it should be so. I am gratified to perceive the honorable and friendly spirit of Mr Irwin's letter to the Secretary of State.[2] I will not as you request use this letter, until I can have a personal interview with you, nor then unless with your sanction. May I ask the favour of you to call this morning.

JAMES K. POLK

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

1. Note and enclosures have not been found.
2. William W. Irwin's letter to James Buchanan is not identified further.

## TO ANDREW J. DONELSON

My Dear Sir: Washington City Decr. 29th 1846

I have received your letter of the 17th ultimo[1] written at London, and have conferred with *Mr. Buchanan* in relation to your request to be permitted to return to the United States, for a short period, during the next Spring. *Mr. Buchanan* is of opinion, that during the war with Mexico, it is important that the United States should be represented at all the Courts of Europe, and that your absence from *Berlin,* at this junction might prove to be detrimental to our interests. You are aware that a project has been suggested, of establishing a monarchy in Mexico, and placing a foreign Prince upon the throne.[2] There is reason to believe that some of the principle Powers of Europe have been consulted upon this point, and that they would not be averse to see it carried into effect. Should such a project be attempted, it would be resisted by this Government, at any hazard. This is shadowed forth in a vivid manner in my late annual message to Congress. Though Prussia would not have any special interest in the success of such a project, if seriously entertained by any of the other powers of Europe, it is yet deemed important, that the U. States should be represented at that court, should any such attempt be made. These reasons would seem to be conclusive in favour of your remaining at your post, and in this opinion *Mr. Buchanan* most decidedly concurs. It is with great reluctance that both *Mr. B.* and myself, arrive at the conclusion, that it would not be safe for you to leave *Berlin* at the present time. I hope through your brother *Genl. Donelson,* or some other friend, you may be enabled to arrange your private business in the U. States, satisfactorily, without the necessity of your personal

presence. I should add that leave of absence, has mostly been refused to some other of our Diplomatic Representatives abroad, and for similar reasons.

I have much that I desire to say to you, but such is the pressure of my public duties, that I have been compelled to postpone writing until the last moment, so as to be in time to save the mail for the next steamer. I can only add that we have no opinion when the War with Mexico will terminate. Such is the distorted state of things in that unfortunate country, that I fear no party in power, will feel secure in making, such a Treaty as ought to be satisfactory to the U. States. I will prosecute the War vigorously as the best, if not the only means of serving a speedy peace. I have today sent a message to Congress, calling for authority to augment our regular army during the continuance of the war. I cannot add more & save the mail.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. DLC–AJD. Addressed to Berlin and marked "*Private.*"

1. Letter not found.

2. Between October 1845 and June 1846, Lucas Alaman, a Mexican politician, conspired with Salvador Bermudez de Castro, the Spanish minister to Mexico, to establish a Mexican monarchy with a Spanish prince on the throne. Britain, then embroiled in a dispute with the United States over the Oregon Territory, secretly agreed to ignore Spanish involvement in the plot. The monarchists supported Mariano Parades' military coup of December 30, 1845; Paredes later proved to be a fickle ally who courted the support of both monarchist and republican political factions concomitantly. The plot failed when Mexican military defeats early in the Mexican War discredited the Parades administration and its monarchist supporters.

# CALENDAR

N.B. Items entered in *italic* type have been published or briefed in the Correspondence Series.

## 1846

[1846] From Anonymous, signed "Junius." L. DLC–JKP. Criticizes Polk's conduct of the Oregon negotiations; enclosed in Winfield Scott to Polk, October 17, 1846.

[1846] From Henry C. Mackall et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Petition Polk to retain their relative, Brooke Mackall, in his clerical post in the Treasury Department.

[1846] From Charles Perabeau. ALS. DLC–JKP. Dedicates to Polk his four-hand piano transcription of Ludwig von Beethoven's "Grand March"; discusses the merits and role of the German music masters in forming the culture of the fatherland.

[1846] From Robert J. Rivers. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits public printing for the Austin *New Era;* seeks the appointment of James Webb to a federal judgeship in Texas.

[Jan 1846] From James B. Craighead. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Edward Cantwell, a young gentleman from Charleston, S.C., and a graduate of the Law School of Harvard.

[Jan 1846] From Henry H. Dent. AN. DLC–JKP. Seeks a private interview with Polk.

[Jan 1846] From George McDuffie. ALS. DLC–JKP. Declines a dinner invitation due to illness and inclement weather.

[Jan 1846] From Thomas Ritchie. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges Polk not to break with those trying to block Henry Horn's appointment as collector of customs at Philadelphia.

[Jan 1846] From James Semple. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a meeting "on a subject of considerable importance."

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| 1 Jan | From George S. Catlin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James H. Hovey of Norwich, Conn., who supports the appointment of Charles F. Lester as collector at New London. |
| *1 Jan* | *From John Catron.* |
| 1 Jan | From J. S. H. Fogg. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks to add Polk's autograph to his collection. |
| 1 Jan | From John T. Francis et al. NS. DLC–JKP. Request Polk's autograph for the Patrick Henry Association of Norfolk, Va. |
| *[1 Jan 1846]* | *From John A. Mairs.* |
| *1 Jan* | *From James H. Thomas.* |
| *2 Jan* | *From Samuel P. Collings.* |
| [2 Jan 1846] | From J. R. Elliott. ALS. DLC–JKP. Alleges that James A. Harwood, a customs inspector at Richmond, Va., does not attend to the duties of his office. |
| 2 Jan | From Charles G. Greene. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Lewis W. Tappan, a Boston merchant and the nephew of Benjamin Tappan, late senator from Ohio. |
| 2 Jan | From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that the report of his Senate speech printed this date in the Washington *National Intelligencer* does him more justice than that published in the Washington *Union.* |
| *[2 Jan 1846]* | *From Samuel H. Laughlin.* |
| 2 Jan | From William D. Moseley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Forwards West Point cadet applications; notes that his favorable predictions regarding Polk's success and popularity have come true; suggests improving Florida's defenses against naval and Indian attack. |
| 2 Jan | From James Shields. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that he can find no recommendations favoring Daniel Gregory's appointment as receiver of public money at the Vandalia, Ill., land office; plans to ask Sidney Breese to write for Gregory. |
| 2 Jan | From John G. Tod. ALS. DLC–JKP. Notes that having missed the southern mail packet he will be delayed for one day in Charleston, S.C. |
| 3 Jan | From David R. Atchison. ALS. PHi. Recommends the appointment of Aristides Welch of Missouri to be a purser in the navy. |
| 3 Jan | From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Advises Polk that after examining further evidence his opinion in the case of William J. Belt stands unaltered. |
| 3 Jan | From Robert J. Chester. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that McIntosh declines to purchase any of his land in West Tennessee. |
| 3 Jan | From John W. Ford. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks appointment as U.S. marshal of the Middle District of Tennessee. |
| 3 Jan | From Joseph Hall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Praises the abilities |

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| | of Joel B. Sutherland; expresses concern over preserving the unity of the Pennsylvania Democracy. |
| 3 Jan | From Thomas J. Heston et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Invite Polk to a public dinner in Blockley Township, Penn., commemorating the Battle of New Orleans. |
| 3 Jan | From John Hill et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Invite Polk to an anniversary celebration of the Battle of New Orleans in Kensington, Penn. |
| 3 Jan | From Andrew T. Judson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James H. Hovey of Connecticut. |
| 3 Jan | From William D. Moseley. LS. DLC–JKP. Requests federal financial assistance in resolving the boundary dispute between Florida and Georgia. |
| 3 Jan | From Silas Reed. ALS. DLC–JKP. Opposes the nomination of Frederick R. Conway as surveyor-general of Illinois and Missouri. |
| *4 Jan* | *From David Craighead.* |
| 4 Jan | From Frederick P. Stanton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Kenedy Lonergan; requests that Polk return the letter after reading it. |
| 4 Jan | From Richard Vaux et al. L. DLC–JKP. Invite Polk to join the Democratic citizens of Philadelphia at a dinner celebrating the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans. |
| 5 Jan | From William C. Bouck. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, S. A. Willoughby from Brooklyn, N.Y. |
| *[5 Jan 1846]* | *To Andrew J. Donelson.* |
| 5 Jan | From Charles D. Kasson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Believes that the appointment of Russell G. Hopkinson as collector of customs at Alburg, Vt., has harmed the "Drooping Democracy" of the state. |
| 5 Jan | From Garret D. Wall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Testifies to the health of Peter D. Vroom as a possible candidate for associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. |
| 6 Jan | From George H. Niebuhr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph for his collection. |
| *[6 Jan 1846]* | *To James H. Thomas.* |
| 6 Jan | From Samuel P. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk for letters of introduction for Henry C. Walker, who will tour Europe. |
| 7 Jan | From Thomas Corwin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires to present arguments regarding reservations of copper lands on Lake Superior. |
| *7 Jan* | *To Welcome Farnum.* |
| [8 Jan 1846] | From James H. Birch. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses excerpts of resolutions supporting the administration adopted by a meeting of Missouri Democrats. |
| 8 Jan | From D. C. Herbst. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that |

he has been elected an honorary member of the Franklin Literary Society of Pittsburgh, Penn.

8 Jan — From Henry Horn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his son-in-law, Ebenezer Haskell, a Philadelphia coachmaker.

9 Jan — From William Albright. ANS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a "Peace Almanac" and urges a peaceful resolution of the Oregon dispute. (Enclosure not found.)

9 Jan — From Meredith M. Marmaduke and William G. Minor. LS. DLC–JKP. Transmit a copy of resolutions adopted by a Democratic meeting in Jefferson, Mo.

9 Jan — From James Thompson. ALS DLC–JKP. Recommends Jacob S. Yost of Pennsylvania for appointment as commissioner of public buildings.

9 Jan — From Robert J. Walker. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that the amount of penalty bonds for the collectors and surveyors in Texas be set at $10,000 and $1,000 respectively.

9 Jan — From Silas Wright, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces David Newcomb of Albany, N.Y.

10 Jan — From Thomas Claiborne, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests appointment as bearer of despatches to Texas revenue officers.

10 Jan — From Charles W. Dabney. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks appointment as U.S. consul to the Azores if Samuel Haight should resign his post.

10 Jan — From George B. Kellogg. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires to obtain Polk's autograph for his collection.

10 Jan — From J. B. Kelly. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to add Polk's autograph to his collection.

10 Jan — From George H. Martin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a copy of his letter to several senators in support of Henry Horn's confirmation as collector of customs at Phildadelphia.

10 Jan — From James E. Saunders. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks that George I. S. Walker be allowed to resign should Polk decide to replace him as U.S. district attorney for Alabama.

10 Jan — From John B. Warren. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a position in the Post Office Department.

11 Jan — From William B. Willis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires information on his young nephew, Richard A. Willis, who has run away to volunteer for the military and should be returned home.

12 Jan — From George Bancroft. L. DNA–RG 45. Encloses files regarding the case of William D. Hurst; requests the return of the documents.

12 Jan — From William C. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Endorses George W. Woodward's nomination to the United States Supreme Court; discounts allegations that Woodward holds nativist sentiments.

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| *12 Jan* | *To William G. Childress.* |
| 12 Jan | From George Loyall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his young friend, Thomas W. Jordan. |
| 12 Jan | From William McMaster. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires Polk's autograph. |
| *12 Jan* | *To Ezekiel P. McNeal.* |
| *12 Jan* | *To James H. Thomas.* |
| 12 Jan | From Archibald Yell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Memucan Hunt, who predicts the election of Sam Houston to the U.S. Senate and notes widespread approbation in Texas of Polk's Annual Message. |
| *13 Jan* | *To Sam Houston.* |
| 13 Jan | To Anson Jones. LS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Transmits an official copy of the act creating a revenue collection district for Texas; includes a list of nominees for the posts of collector and surveyors. |
| 13 Jan | To Anson Jones. LS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Transmits copies of correspondence received from Zachary Taylor, commander of "the Army of Occupation in Texas"; requests that the Texas government remit the sutlers' bonds as recommended by the U.S. attorney general, whose report is also enclosed. |
| [13 Jan 1846] | From Richard E. Stilwell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks to add Polk's autograph to his collection. |
| 14 Jan | From Samuel P. Caldwell. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he and Edwin F. Polk intend to visit Washington City in February; notes that Polk's Annual Message has been very well received. |
| *14 Jan* | *From Joseph W. Chalmers and Jesse Speight.* |
| *15 Jan* | *From Alfred Balch.* |
| 15 Jan | From Sidney Breese. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that the Senate has confirmed the nomination of Pierre T. Landry as surveyor-general of public lands in Louisiana; asks that the nomination of Luther Leonard of Illinois as a military storekeeper be withdrawn that he might recommend a friend of the Democracy for that post. |
| *15 Jan* | *From Adam Huntsman.* |
| 15 Jan | From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discounts objections to the appointment of Luther Leonard as a military storekeeper in the army; encloses a nomination prepared for Polk's signature should he decide to send Leonard's name to the Senate. |
| 15 Jan | From James Semple. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he had never heard of Luther Leonard prior to his nomination today as a military storekeeper in the army. |
| 16 Jan | From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommends against the reinstatement of James L. S. Beckwith, a mid- |

shipman dismissed in 1844 for quarreling.

*[16 Jan 1846]* *From William H. Haywood, Jr.*

*17 Jan* *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*

*17 Jan* *From Joseph W. Chalmers and Jesse Speight.*

*17 Jan* *From Louis McLane.*

17 Jan From Henry Vail. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Albert Richards of Troy, N.Y.

17 Jan From Samuel R. Veale. ALS. DLC–JKP. Presents Polk a barrel of Norfolk oysters.

*18 Jan* *From John Slidell.*

*18 Jan* *From James H. Thomas.*

*19 Jan* *From Arunah S. Abell.*

*19 Jan* *From Henry W. Connor.*

19 Jan From Anthony Dugro et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Invite Polk to attend the First Annual Ball of the New York City German Democratic Jackson Association on January 26, 1846.

19 Jan From John Plumbe. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests permission to take a daguerreotype of Polk.

19 Jan From G. H. Veirs. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he named his son "William Polk Veirs" in honor of the president.

19 Jan To Robert J. Walker. ALS. Private Collection of William N. Dearborn, Nashville. Requests that Walker join him and other members of the cabinet in attending the funeral of William Taylor.

20 Jan From Archibald Atkinson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces E. Robinson, a "surgeon dentist" from Norfolk, Va.

20 Jan From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Advises that he has received a very "impudent" letter from John Danforth requesting that his Senate Commerce Committee hold up consideration of Charles F. Lester to be interim collector of customs at New London, Conn., for fear of creating a division in the Connecticut Democracy.

*20 Jan* *From William H. Stiles.*

*20 Jan* *To the Senate of the United States.*

*21 Jan* *From Isaac T. Avery.*

21 Jan From Joseph H. Bradley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Offers to complete the cases of the recently deceased James Hoban, U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia; notes that Hoban's survivors are in need of such assistance.

21 Jan From Robert M. Patterson. ALS. DNA–RG 104. Encloses the resignation of Jonas R. McClintock as melter and refiner at the U.S. Mint; proposes Richard J. McCulloh, a science professor in Jefferson College of Pennsylvania, as McClintock's replacement.

21 Jan From Wilson Shannon and Robert H. Miller. LS. DLC–JKP. Encloses resolutions from a Democratic meeting in St. Clairsville, Ohio, on January 20, 1846. (Enclosure not

found.)

[22 Jan 1846] From Robert Armstrong. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Mr. Steele from New York, who wishes to demonstrate an invention of steam propulsion.

*22 Jan* *From Thomas H. Benton.*

22 Jan From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Richard S. Coxe regarding the death of James Hoban, acting U.S. attorney for the Distrit of Columbia.

22 Jan From Alvin Cullom. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a position in the federal government for Thomas H. Hopkins.

22 Jan From Abby D. Farnham. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an autograph.

22 Jan From Micajah G. Lewis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that the Indian commission in Texas is making progress in its mission, albeit slowly; approves of Polk's annual message.

[22 Jan 1846] From John Martin et al. LS. DLC–WA. Recommend Dr. George McCook of New Lisbon, Ohio, for a position at a naval hospital in Pittsburg or Cleveland.

22 Jan From Gideon J. Pillow. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to be considered for appointment as an associate justice to a proposed new federal circuit in the South; desires a confidential reply to his inquiry.

22 Jan From George Sykes. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Peter D. Vroom of New Jersey as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

*[22 Jan 1846]* *From George W. Woodward.*

23 Jan From John A. Dix. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses regret at the Senate's rejection of George W. Woodward's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court.

*23 Jan* *From Joseph H. Talbot.*

*[23 Jan 1846]* *From Samuel P. Walker.*

24 Jan From Benjamin F. Smart. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to add Polk's autograph to his collection.

24 Jan From James D. Westcott, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses Senator William L. Dayton's letter refuting misinformation concerning the health of Peter D. Vroom, former governor of New Jersey; complains that New Jersey has not received its share of patronage in the federal government; explains why he voted against the nomination of George W. Woodward as a Supreme Court justice.

*25 Jan* *From Alanson Billings.*

25 Jan From Stephen Pleasonton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses two London newspapers in which Polk's Annual Message is mentioned favorably and notes the reestablishment of the Peel Ministry. (Enclosures not found.)

25 Jan From Septimus Tuston. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Reverend Mr. Hoover, a Presbyterian minister.

*[26 Jan 1846]* *From James Buchanan.*

*26 Jan* *From Ezekiel P. McNeal.*

26 Jan From Robert M. Patterson. ALS. DNA–RG 104. Introduces Jonas R. McClintock, former melter and refiner for the U.S. Mint.

26 Jan From Robert J. Walker. LS. DLC–JKP. Submits the General Land Office report concerning the boundary dispute between Florida and Georgia; returns correspondence from William D. Moseley on the subject.

*27 Jan* *From William G. Childress.*

*27 Jan* *From Andrew J. Donelson.*

27 Jan From Samuel Medary. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests Polk's opinion on the Ohio Democracy resolutions concerning the opposition to paper currency in preference to gold and silver and the opposition "to all chartered and special privileges, as destructive to equality, and hotile to free institutions."

27 Jan To William S. Pickett and Co. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Instructs the agency to retain on account seven hundred dollars of the cotton crop proceeds and to remit him the remaining funds.

27 Jan From Daniel Sturgeon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces J. K. Riddle, a minister from western Pennsylvania.

27 Jan From William Wallace. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his son Jesse G. Wallace and recommends him for a position in the general government.

27 Jan From Aaron Ward. L. MB. Recommends the appointment of William H. Morris, son of George P. Morris, to West Point.

28 Jan From J. George Harris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Stephen Hoyt of Boston for a position in the general government.

*28 Jan* *To Louis McLane.*

28 Jan From John Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Claims that he is the originator of the savings bank, which he insists undergirds both the British and the American economies; requests the financial "reward" his own English countrymen have denied him.

29 Jan From Boling Gordon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the appointment of his brother John Gordon of Missouri as a either receiver of public monies or as an Indian agent.

*29 Jan* *To William H. Polk.*

29 Jan From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he has made enquiries concerning the U.S. Mint position vacated by Jonas R. McClintock and has received no reply.

29 Jan From R. C. Washington. ALS. DLC–JKP. Claims that public gardener James Maher refuses to pay a year-old bill

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| | for dry goods and requests Polk's intervention. |
| 30 Jan | From Medicus A. Long. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment as a judge for the Middle District of Florida; expresses concern that the Florida congressional delegation will reject his nomination because he is the son-in-law of Richard K. Call. |
| 30 Jan | From Daniel Sturgeon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, George Sanderson of Pennsylvania. |
| *30 Jan* | *From John H. Wheeler.* |
| 31 Jan | From Elijah Ames. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of the death of Charles F. Lester, collector of customs at New London, Connecticut. |
| *31 Jan* | *To Robert Campbell, Jr.* |
| 31 Jan | From Andrew J. Donelson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Andrew J. Coffee of Alabama for a position as paymaster in the army and Richard O. Currey for secretary of the Prussian legation; explains that he is witholding the sale of his cotton crop in anticipation of higher prices among British textile manufacturers. |
| 31 Jan | From William D. Hurst. L. DLC–AJD. Seeks reinstatement in the navy. |
| 31 Jan | From Edward B. Neely et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Inform Polk of his election to honorary membership in the Union Literary Society of Washington College in Pennsylvania. |
| 31 Jan | From J. G. M. Ramsey. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an office in the general government for Robert B. Reynolds; asserts that Polk has handled the Oregon question wisely and contends that the American people support him. |
| 1 Feb | From Thomas J. Green. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his son, John Barton Green, a physician from Greensboro, N.C., who wishes to relocate to Lebanon, Tenn.; asks Polk to provide his son with letters of introduction to selected aquaintances in Tennessee. |
| *1 Feb* | *From William W. Polk.* |
| 2 Feb | From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces the U.S. consul at Lisbon, Portugal, William H. Vesey, who requests an appointment to another consulate. |
| 2 Feb | From Richard O. Currey. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that he would accept appointment as secretary to the Prussian legation. |
| 2 Feb | From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces Mr. Crosby, an applicant to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. |
| 2 Feb | From William D. Moseley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Notifies Polk of an impending meeting between state commissioners to settle the boundary dispute between Flordia and Georgia. |
| 2 Feb | From Robert Dale Owen. N. DLC–JKP. Encloses material |

relating to the British view on the dispute over Oregon. (Enclosure not found.)

2 Feb — From Isaac Taylor. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of the "almost universal approbation" of his administration; fears a split among Democrats over the annexation of Oregon; recommends the appointment of A. D. Westcott to one of the Texas customs houses; offers his services in settling the boundary dispute between Texas and Mexico.

*3 Feb* — *From William D. Moseley.*

3 Feb — From William D. Moseley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces John P. Duval of Florida.

4 Feb — From Robert Butler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Disapproves of the removal of the General Land Office from St. Augustine to Tallahassee, Florida; states that if necessary he will complete his term in Tallahassee to circumvent the wishes of James D. Westcott, Jr., and David Levy Yulee to replace him; encloses a copy of a letter addressed to Westcott and Yulee in which he asks for their position on the removal.

*4 Feb* — *From Gideon J. Pillow.*

5 Feb — From Nathan Green. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests the appointment of William H. Field to a position in the general government.

5 Feb — From John H. Payne. ALS. DLC–JKP. Submits a scheme to revise the American consular system to the Barbary States.

*5 Feb* — *From John H. Payne.*

5 Feb — From John H. Payne. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses two letters advising changes in American consular system and federal Indian policy.

[5 Feb 1846] — From Thomas Claiborne, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. requests an interview on behalf of Elijah White of Oregon.

6 Feb — To George Bancroft. AL. MHi. Inquires whether or not a vessel of war has been ordered to the Dominican Republic; encloses State Department correspondence concerning the matter. (Enclosures not found.)

6 Feb — From Edward Harden. ALS. NcD. Encloses a letter documenting his reputation among Georgia Democrats. (Enclosure not found.)

6 Feb — From George S. Houston. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses regret that William S. Parrott was not nominated for chief of the Navy's Bureau of Provision and Clothing.

6 Feb — From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges receipt of Polk's letter [6 Feb 1846], and James Buchanan's communication concerning the order to send a vessel of war to the Dominican Republic; encloses a reply from Buchanan on the subject. (Enclosure not found.)

6 Feb — From Henry H. Gilbert. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a reli-

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| | gious message. |
| *6 Feb* | *From John Pollock.* |
| 7 Feb | From George Bancroft. AL. MHi. Encloses Thomas B. Childress' appointment to acting midshipmanship with accompanying orders; notes the postponement of his assignment to the Naval Academy. (Enclosures not found.) |
| 7 Feb | From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends William H. Field for a position in the federal government; encloses Nathan Green's letter of recommendation for Field. (Enclosure not found.) |
| *7 Feb* | *To David Conner.* |
| 7 Feb | From Ralph I. Ingersoll. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks if Andrew J. Donelson has recommended his son, Colin M. Ingersoll, for an appointment as secretary to the Prussian legation. |
| 7 Feb | From Marcus Morton. LS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Henry E. Baldwin, a measurer of salt and coal for the Boston Customs House. |
| *9 Feb* | *To Albert G. Brown.* |
| 9 Feb | From William Linn Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a book on Mexico, including his appendix on the U.S. claim to California. (Enclosure not found.) |
| *9 Feb* | *To William G. Childress.* |
| *9 Feb* | *To Andrew J. Donelson.* |
| 9 Feb | From Marcus Morton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Henry G. Morton, a Boston merchant and Greek consul to the city. |
| 9 Feb | From Robert Barnwell Rhett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits on behalf of his nephew, Thomas G. Rhett, a promotion to captain in a mounted rifle regiment. |
| 9 Feb | From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that Stephen Lownsberry seeks an interview to discuss his regination as interim collector of customs at Fairfield, Conn., and the withdrawal of his nomination for the permanent post. |
| 10 Feb | From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a report from the navy in response to a request from the two Florida senators. |
| 10 Feb | From William Fields, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses disappointment over not receiving a federal appointment in Texas; approves Polk's expansionist policies; recommends a peaceful course with Britain and war with Mexico. |
| 10 Feb | From George S. Houston. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Robert D. Fenner for a position in the general government. |
| 10 Feb | From Anson Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges receipt of Polk's correspondence of January 13, 1846; refers actions requested in the correspondence to the incoming state administration. |

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| 10 Feb | From Thomas M. Pettit. ALS. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges receipt of his commission as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. |
| 10 Feb | From Philip F. Voorhees. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks reinstatement in the Navy. |
| *11 Feb* | *From James H. Thomas.* |
| [11 Feb 1846] | From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces John Gadsby Chapman, an artist commissioned to sketch the presidential portrait for Indian peace medals. |
| 11 Feb | From Daniel T. Jenks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that a faction of the Philadelphia Democracy is exploiting executive patronage to promote George M. Dallas as a presidential candidate in 1848. |
| 11 Feb | From David W. Stone. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment in the general government. |
| 11 Feb | From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Believes that his recent article on Oregon, published in the *American Sentinel*, will persuade the British government to settle the dispute. |
| 12 Feb | From John Appleton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of the proper spelling of nominee Gideon Welles' name. |
| 12 Feb | From George Bancroft. L. DNA–RG 45. Asks Polk for permission to name a new steamer the "Alleghany." |
| 12 Feb | From William F. Bayly. ANS. DLC–JKP. Reports that he has received a ten-dollar donation from Polk to the Poor's Ball. |
| 12 Feb | From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from H. Willis Baxley recommending James M. Buchanan of Baltimore for a position in the general government. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 12 Feb | From Andrew J. Donelson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expects to be able to retire his debts with two good cotton crops; calculates that if Polk can settle the Oregon question and reduce the tariff, he will have done all that would be required to assure his fame; predicts that the "Mexican troubles will then settle themselves"; advises that he "would not play the Californina card until the other more important subjects are at rest." |
| [13 Feb 1846] | From William Allen. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a private meeting regarding a personal matter. |
| 13 Feb | From Charles H. Wheeler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph. |
| 14 Feb | From J. I. Flournoy. ALS. PHi. Threatens Polk, calls him a tool of Satan, and demands a peaceful settlement of the Oregon question. |
| 15 Feb | From David Darnall. LS. DLC–JKP. States that he has been afflicted by apoplexy and requests urgent financial |

assistance.

*16 Feb* *From Alfred Balch.*

*17 Feb* *From James Buchanan.*

*17 Feb* *From James Buchanan.*

[17 Feb 1846] From James Buchanan. N. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to review the enclosed dispatch draft to John Slidell.

17 Feb From John F. H. Claiborne. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk not to judge him unfairly over a dispute with John Claiborne.

17 Feb From James Stewart. ALS. DLC–JKP. Offers to provide daily journals, maps, and affidavits associated with the Meares and Gray expeditions off the northwest coast of America.

17 Feb To James H. Thomas. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Requests receipt for payment of a decree to the estate of Thomas Gregory.

18 Feb From James J. Faran. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encourages Polk to appoint a local Democrat as the collector of customs at the port of Sandusky, Ohio.

18 Feb From Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that he has sent James H. Thomas a check for two hundred dollars as partial payment of the Thomas Gregory decree.

*18 Feb* *From William H. Polk.*

18 Feb From Elijah White. ALS. DLC–JKP. Defends himself against charges of misconduct as an Indian agent in Oregon.

19 Feb From George C. Beckwith et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Implores Polk on behalf of the American Peace Society and the New York Peace Society to avoid war with Great Britain over Oregon.

19 Feb From Thomas Ewell. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that an injury compromised his effectiveness as an 1844 Democratic presidential elector for the Eleventh Congressional District of Tennessee; seeks a position in the army or the general government.

[19 Feb 1846] From J. G. Goole. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks an interview to obtain Polk's autograph.

19 Feb From George W. Hopkins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests the retention of George W. Crump as chief clerk in the pension office.

19 Feb From George Rathbun. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from William C. Kelly concerning Abraham Cutler's application for a federal office.

20 Feb From William B. Clarke. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests Polk's autograph.

20 Feb From Robert H. Morris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a pub-

lic dinner invitation from the New York City Cambrian Society. (Enclosure not found.)

20 Feb — From John E. Wheeler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a position in the general government to relieve his financial hardships.

21 Feb — From Elias H. Haines. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for reappointment as customs collector for Sandusky, Ohio; requests that "due allowance" be given for any slanders or misrepresentations made by his opponents.

21 Feb — From William A. Harris. ALS DLC–JKP. Expresses gratitude for the appointment as chargé d'affairs to the Argentine Confederation; notes that passage of the proposed congressional resolution to give notice to abrogate the Convention of 1827 will expediate the settlement of the Oregon question.

21 Feb — From James Pickney Henderson. ALS. Tx. Notes the transfer of diplomatic documents of the Republic of Texas to the U.S. secretary of state.

21 Feb — From John W. Tibbatts. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses extracts of past presidential messages that support internal improvements. (Enclosures not found.)

21 Feb — From David Wilmot. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that he and six other Pennsylvania Democratic congressmen have written to withdraw their objection to Henry Horn's nomination as collector of customs at Philadelphia.

23 Feb — From Daniel T. Jenks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses concern over aspirations of the Philadelphia Dallas Association regarding presidential succession; encloses a pamphlet describing the association's recent dinner, one where the conversation and toasts revealed a mood highly critical of the president. (Enclosure not found.)

23 Feb — From James H. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses Polk's financial affairs and local news.

23 Feb — From John W. Tibbatts. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses reports submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives concerning past appropriations for harbors and rivers.

23 Feb — From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses treasury department patronage.

24 Feb — From William Allen. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wants to meet with Polk to discuss public affairs.

24 Feb — From John C. Brooke. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses federal patronage in Texas.

24 Feb — From Nathan Kimball. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that he has been elected an honorary member of the Franklin Literary Society of Fredericksburgh, Ind.

*24 Feb* — *From James McKisick.*

24 Feb — From N. M. Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Refutes the grounds

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| | for his removal as third assistant postmaster general. |
| *24 Feb* | *To Romulus M. Saunders.* |
| 24 Feb | From David L. Yulee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to pardon former U.S. Army captain Anthony Drane. |
| *25 Feb* | *From George McDuffie.* |
| 26 Feb | From Henry N. Pitsburg. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph. |
| 26 Feb | From Seth Salisbury. ALS. DLC–JKP. Warns Polk that Pennsylvanians subscribe to "federal doctrines" on the tariff; encloses a printed copy of a letter from Andrew Jackson to James Ross Snowden deposited in the state library. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 27 Feb | From Thomas Ewell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks appointment as a captain in the navy. |
| 27 Feb | From H. Holt. ALS. DLC–JKP. Sends Sarah C. Polk a bottle of his cough syrup. |
| 27 Feb | From A. O. P. Nicholson. ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia. Seeks a position in the general government for Julius W. Blackwell; denies charges that he opposed Felix Grundy's senatorial campaign in 1839. |
| 27 Feb | From Romulus M. Saunders. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for his appointment as minister to Spain; discusses the appointment of legation secretary. |
| 27 Feb | From James W. Shaumburg. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a statement detailing the birthplaces of commissioned officers in the army. |
| 28 Feb | From Benjamin Davies. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for his reappointment as register of the public lands at Palmyra, Mo. |
| *[28 Feb 1846]* | *From Cave Johnson.* |
| 28 Feb | From John Kettlewell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, Samuel G. Williams, a Baltimore attorney and Democrat. |
| 28 Feb | From Annie Pickrell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks an office for her son-in-law, John Milton Walker of Illinois. |
| [28 Feb 1846] | From Julie M. Dickinson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph. |
| [March 1846] | From James Shields. ALS. DLC–JKP. Assures Polk that Congress will approve the appointment of four brigadier generals and two major generals for the duration of a potential war. |
| 2 Mar | From George Bancroft. LS, copy. DLC–JKP. Recommends against the reinstatement of John W. West in the navy. |
| 2 Mar | From George Bancroft. L. DNA–RG 45. Explains his denial of the Alabama Congressional delegation's request to reinstate J. F. Marrast in the navy. |
| 2 Mar | From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a report |

from the chief clerk of the Navy Department.

2 Mar — From James K. Gibson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges the reappointment of his friend, Lilburn H. Trigg, as postmaster of Lynchburg, Va.

*2 Mar* — *From James Hamilotn, Jr.*

2 Mar — From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a report refuting the charge that Jacob Fechtig, postmaster at Cumberland, Md., had defaulted on a loan. (Enclosure not found.)

3 Mar — From George W. Hopkins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks the appointment of James H. Piper in the general government.

3 Mar — From Henry Welsh. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for his reappointment as a naval officer for the district of Philadelphia, Penn.

4 Mar — From Mordecai Bartley. L. OHi. Reports on the condition of the Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike in Ohio.

*4 Mar* — *To Andrew J. Donelson.*

4 Mar — From Robert J. Hemphill. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests Polk's autograph.

*4 Mar* — *To James H. Thomas.*

*4 Mar* — *From David Levy Yulee.*

5 Mar — From R. W. Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Predicts the eventual triumph of republicanism over European monarchies.

5 Mar — From George Bancroft. LS. MHi. Reports that the Democracy of Salem, Mass., desires the appointment of John D. Howard as naval officer and Nathaniel Hawthorne as surveyor of that port.

6 Mar — From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommends against the appointment of Albert G. Cook as a midshipman in the navy.

6 Mar — From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the appointments of Bradford A. Russell and Christopher L. Smith as midshipmen in the navy.

6 Mar — From William H. Brockenbrough. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to delay the appointment of a district judge for Florida until Congress passes legislation increasing the number of judges.

6 Mar — From Alfred Flournoy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits the appointment of William H. Field as register of the land office in Little Rock, Ark.

7 Mar — From John Hogan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter concerning the Dominican Republic. (Enclosure not found.)

7 Mar — From Cornelius W. Lawrence. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces former mayor of New York City, Aaron Clark.

7 Mar — From Cornelius W. Lawrence. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his brother-in-law, Joseph E. Lawrence of New York.

7 Mar — From William L. Marcy. LS. DLC–JKP. Reports on the

activities of War Department clerks.

9 Mar — From Abiel S. Lewis and W. G. Lewis. LS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for appointing John L. Wilson of Philadelphia U.S. consul at Cape Haytian.

*10 Mar* — *To Isaac T. Avery.*

10 Mar — From James Conner et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Present a framed copy of Polk's First Annual Message.

*10 Mar* — *To James Pinckney Henderson.*

11 Mar — From Willis T. Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks appointment as a midshipman in the navy.

[12 Mar 1846] — From John H. Holman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits Polk's autograph.

12 Mar — From Robert H. Morris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces New York Democrat Mordecai Myers.

12 Mar — From William Erigena Robinson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Invites Polk to a St. Patrick's Day dinner in Washington.

12 Mar — From James H. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses documents relating to Polk's financial affairs.

12 Mar — From Francis Timmons et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Invite Polk to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Philadephia at a public dinner.

12 Mar — From Francis Vespre. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of the tuition due for Marshall T. Polk, Jr., at Georgetown College.

12 Mar — From Lunsford P. Yandell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests introduction letters for his son, David W. Yandell.

13 Mar — From William S. Pickett and Co. L. Polk Memorial Association. Informs Polk of the disposal of his cotton crop.

14 Mar — From Alexander H. Everett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses commentary on an article critical of Polk's Oregon policy. (Enclosure not found.)

*14 Mar* — *From Ezekiel P. McNeal.*

14 Mar — From James Shields. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to authorize the sale of public lands in Ohio.

*16 Mar* — *To Thomas H. Benton.*

16 Mar — From Dabney S. Carr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, William Mason of Baltimore.

*16 Mar* — *To Preston King.*

17 Mar — From William Noland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks approval for construction of a public market in Washington City.

17 Mar — To William E. Robinson. LS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Declines an invitation to a St. Patrick's Day dinner.

*18 Mar* — *From John O. Bradford.*

18 Mar — From Albert G. Cook. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a pardon for a courts martial conviction; seeks reinstatement in the navy.

18 Mar — From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to re-

fute charges of partiality concerning Lake Superior mineral land leases.

19 Mar — To Robert Armstrong. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Introduces John G. Newbold of Somerville, Tenn.; asks Armstrong to write letters of introduction for Newbold for use during a trip to Germany.

19 Mar — From Benjamin F. Butler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces New York City Democrat Mordecai Myers.

19 Mar — From Asbury Dickins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that the Senate will resolve to reconsider the nomination of Isaac H. Wright as navy agent at Boston.

19 Mar — From Gamaliel Hodges. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits Polk's autograph.

19 Mar — From John Hogan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks appointment as a diplomatic agent to the Dominican Republic.

19 Mar — To William R. King. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Introduces John G. Newbold of Somerville, Tenn.; asks King to write letters of introduction for Newbold for use during a trip to Germany.

19 Mar — From Dixon H. Lewis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that the Senate mistakenly confirmed Isaac H. Wright as navy agent at Boston, and that his commission should not be issued.

19 Mar — From Charles H. Page. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests that his brother, William Byrd Page, a former Treasury Department clerk, be reinstated to a position in the general government.

20 Mar — To [George Bancroft]. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests that the secretary of the navy submit departmental plans for fireproof buildings.

20 Mar — From Lewis Cass. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Thomas Patrick Moore of Kentucky as Indian agent for the upper Missouri agency.

*20 Mar* — *From Levin H. Coe.*

20 Mar — From William S. Pickett and Co. L. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that his cotton crop of one-hundred four bales was sold and that drafts, including one on Corcoran and Riggs, were paid from the proceeds.

*20 Mar* — *From William H. Polk.*

*20 Mar* — *From Thomas Slidell.*

20 Mar — From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends various promotions and appointments in the revenue marine.

21 Mar — From Franklin H. Elmore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Warns Polk to make inquiries into the capacity of Thomas Gadsden to serve as surveyor at the port of Charleston, S.C.

21 Mar — From James McDowell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests per-

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| | mission for his constituent, J. Warren Brown, to give hickory canes to Polk and the decendants of Felix Grundy. |
| 21 Mar | From Jonathan D. Stevenson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to withdraw his recommendation of Philip Dorsheimer for postmaster at Buffalo, N.Y.; recommends a man named Smith instead. |
| *21 Mar* | *From Campbell P. White.* |
| *22 Mar* | *From John Law.* |
| 22 Mar | From Archibald Yell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Sackfield Maclin, who expresses disappointment over his failure to receive an expected appointment to Texas. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 23 Mar | From Walker Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses candidates for appointment to U.S. judicial districts in Florida. |
| 23 Mar | From John Bruce. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a pension increase for invalid veterans of the War of 1812. |
| 23 Mar | From Samuel Mitchel. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits the appointment of William H. Field as register of the land office in Little Rock, Ark., and encloses a letter from Alfred Flournoy on the same suject. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 23 Mar | From James Page. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Isaac Mickle of Camden, N.J . |
| *23 Mar* | *From Burrell B. Taylor.* |
| 24 Mar | From Samuel H. Cox. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits Francis Grice's transfer to the Brooklyn Navy Yard to rejoin his family. |
| 24 Mar | From R.H. Wendover. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges Polk to refute British claims to the Oregon Territory. |
| [25 Mar 1846] | To George Bancroft. AL. MHi. Requests certain letters regarding the Live Oak timber agency in Louisiana. |
| 26 Mar | From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Transmits letters regarding the Live Oak timber agency in Louisiana. (Letters not found.) |
| 26 Mar | From John McLean. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Thomas K. Beecher, soon of Lyman Beecher. |
| *26 Mar* | *From Frederick P. Stanton.* |
| 26 Mar | From Henry Vail. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James Van Schoonhoven from Troy, N.Y. |
| 27 Mar | From James L. Childress. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a position in the federal government. |
| 27 Mar | From Frederick P. Stanton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Levin H. Coe concerning the Memphis Navy Yard. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 28 Mar | From Matthew Birchard. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Alexander M. Mitchell for the post of lieutenant colonel in a new Ohio militia regiment. |
| 28 Mar | From John P. Burgett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires to obtain |

a copy of John C. Fremont's expedition report.

*28 Mar* *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*

28 Mar From Israel T. Otis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires an appointment as a chaplain in the navy.

28 Mar To William S. Picket and Co. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges receipt of a draft on the sales of cotton; gives instructions regarding the balance of his account.

*28 Mar* *To William C. Tate.*

28 Mar To Nicholas P. Trist. AL, DLC–FP. Enclosed letters to be forwarded with the State Department dispatches to the next overseas mail. (Letters not found.)

28 Mar From Ezra Williams. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses copies of eighteenth-century documents relating to the Masonic lodge at Alexandria, Va. (Enclosures not found.)

29 Mar From Sam Houston. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a private meeting.

*29 Mar* *To William H. Polk.*

29 Mar To Nicholas P. Trist. ALS. DLC–FP. Encloses a letter to be sent with the public dispatches to Europe.

30 Mar From Theodore W. Brevard. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires an appointment as a U.S. district judge in Florida.

30 Mar To Lewis Cass. ALS. MiU. Requests a meeting.

30 Mar From Joseph Hall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a promotion within the Boston Customs House.

30 Mar From Benjamin F. Hallett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces John Albree, a Boston merchant.

30 Mar To John K. Kane. ALS. PPAmP. Introduces his relative, Edwin F. Polk of Tennessee.

30 Mar From George P. Morris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for appointing his son, William H. Morris, to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

31 Mar From Isaac N. Barnet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Isaac Baker of Batesville, Ark. (Enclosure not found.)

31 Mar From Felix Bosworth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to withdraw his name from consideration for a job in the federal government.

*31 Mar* *To James McDowell.*

31 Mar From Jacob L. Martin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to be named consul at Turin.

31 Mar From James Shields. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to discuss patronage in the General Land Office.

31 Mar To Nicholas P. Trist. ALS. DLC–FP. Requests information on a Senate resolution regarding a boundary dispute along the northeastern border of the United States.

31 Mar From R. J. Waugh. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks employment in the federal government for her husband, Townsend Waugh.

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| 31 Mar | From Thomas F. Bacchus. ALS. DLC–JKP. Extolls American greatness and insists that it is the nation's right and duty to dominate the North American continent; expresses concern over the state of American military readiness and offers technical advice on how to improve the fighting quality of the U.S. Navy and the militia system. |
| [April 1846] | To Frederick William IV of Prussia. L, copy. NNPM. Announces the departure of the United States' minister, Henry Wheaton. |
| 1 Apr | From Thomas S. Grundy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Offers his military services if war begins between the United States and Mexico. |
| 1 Apr | From John Hogan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that he has dropped his compensation claims; requests appointment to office in return. |
| 1 Apr | From Semmes, Murray, and Semmes. LS. DLC–JKP. Delivers a bushel of Texas sugar from Archibald Yell. |
| *2 Apr* | *To William G. Childress.* |
| *2 Apr* | *To Levin H. Coe.* |
| 2 Apr | From Arnold S. Harris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges Polk to create a commission to settle the claims of, and the disputes among, the Cherokee. |
| 2 Apr | From Paul K. Hubbs. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a printed copy of resolutions from the Brooklyn, N.Y. Democratic Convention supporting Polk's recent message in increasing national defense. |
| 2 Apr | From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Deleware legislator William Cannon. |
| *2 Apr* | *To A. O. P. Nicholson.* |
| 3 Apr | From Alexander H. Everett. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that poor health prevents him from accepting an overseas position in the federal government; asks Polk to consider him for a domestic position. |
| 3 Apr | From Aaron Vanderpoel. ALS. DLC–JKP. Supports the nomination of Philip Dorsheimer for postmaster of Buffalo, N.Y. |
| 4 Apr | From James Pinckney Henderson. ALS. Tx. Encloses copies of two acts of the Texas legislature authorizing the transfer of public property to the federal government. (Enclosures not found.) |
| *4 Apr* | *From James H. Thomas.* |
| 5 Apr | From William F. Hancock. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a pardon for his son, David I. Hancock. |
| 5 Apr | From Elijah F. Purdy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James A. Sackett of New York City. |
| 6 Apr | From Anonymous, signed "Amor Patriae." ALS. DLC–JKP. Offers a wide variety of political advice to Polk. |

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| *6 Apr* | *To Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell.* |
| 6 Apr | From Thomas Harris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports no delinquency among the clerks of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery for the previous month. |
| *6 Apr* | *To James H. Thomas.* |
| 6 Apr | From N. Thompson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests aid for a group of Oregon immigrants. |
| *8 Apr* | *From Robert Campbell, Jr.* |
| 8 Apr | From William Grandin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James Bergen. |
| 8 Apr | From George C. Washington. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires appointment to the prospective commission to the Cherokees. |
| 9 Apr | From Samuel P. Caldwell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of his arrival at Memphis, Tenn. |
| 9 Apr | From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests information regarding the nominations of Isaac H. Hedges and Conway Whistle. |
| 9 Apr | To Nicholas P. Trist. ALS. DLC–FP. Awaits the translation of a Spanish document. |
| 9 Apr | To McClintock Young. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires delivery of the Treasury Department files of Isaac H. Hedges and Conway Whittle. |
| 10 Apr | From George Bancroft and William L. Marcy. L. DNA–RG 45. Recommend plans for the construction of a fireproof building for the War and Navy departments. |
| 10 Apr | From Robert P. Currin. ALS. DLC–AJD. Recommends Daniel M. Bates of Dover, Del., for appointment as secretary of the legation to Prussia. |
| 10 Apr | From Benjamin B. French. NS. DLC–JKP. Transmits a congressional resolution requesting copies of correspondence between John Tyler and William H. Seward relating to the 1841 trial of Alexander McLeod. |
| 10 Apr | From Alexander Newman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges confirmation of his appointment as postmaster at Wheeling, Virginia. |
| 10 Apr | From George Bancroft. ALS. DNA-RG 45. Transmits a commission as a lieutenant in the navy for Albert G. Clary. |
| 11 Apr | From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. Withdraws support for the appointment of E. V. Everhart to the office. |
| 11 Apr | From William S. Pickett and Co. ALS. DLC–JKP. Settles Polk's account with the firm to-date. |
| *11 Apr* | *From Robert J. Walker.* |
| [Apr 11 1846] | From Robert E. Wright. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Extolls the virtues of Allentown, Penn., as an ideal location for a national foundry. |
| 13 Apr | From William H. Baldwin. ALS. DLC–WA. Recommends |

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| | Winslow F. Sanderson for an officer's post in the army. |
| 13 Apr | From Daniel S. Dickinson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Timothy R. Hibbard, a New York druggist. |
| 13 Apr | From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that Democratic opinion favors additional removal of Whigs from positions in the general government; encloses an editorial from the *Ohio Statesman* on the same subject. |
| 13 Apr | From William S. Pickett and Co. L. DLC–JKP. Encloses a draft on his account. (Enclosure not found.) |
| *13 Apr* | *To Israel K. Tefft.* |
| *13 Apr* | *To James H. Thomas.* |
| 13 Apr | From Milton Wolcott. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Requests Polk's consideration of his improved artillery design. |
| *14 Apr* | *From William McLain.* |
| *14 Apr* | *To William H. Polk.* |
| 14 Apr | From Frances H. Williamson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests Polk's assistance in procuring a Navy Department position for her son Matthias. |
| *15 Apr* | *To James Conner et al.* |
| 15 Apr | From Eleanor J. G. Lewis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests Polk's autograph. |
| 15 Apr | From Mrs. James Morgan. AL. DLC–JKP. Delivers a gift of tobacco from her son James. |
| *15 Apr* | *To Elijah F. Purdy.* |
| 15 Apr | From John Serra. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Requests reinstatement in the navy. |
| 15 Apr | From Joseph D. Ward. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a clerkship in the general government. |
| 16 Apr | From Richard Peltz. LS. DLC–JKP. Encloses the proceedings and resolutions of a meeting of Philadelphia Democrats. |
| 17 Apr | From Ker Boyce. ALS. DLC–JKP. Opposes the nomination of Isaac E. Holmes as assistant U.S. treasurer at Charleston, S.C. |
| 17 Apr | From Thomas Peters. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests Polk's aid in receiving the title to land from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. |
| *17 Apr* | *To John Slidell.* |
| 18 Apr | From J. E. Cowan. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that Missouri Democratic Congressman Dr. James H. Relfe has no allegiance to Polk or to Thomas H. Benton; urges Polk to reject relfe's appointment recommendation. |
| 18 Apr | From Henry La Reintrie. ALS.,DNA–RG 45. Seeks appointment as a purser in the navy. |
| 18 Apr | From Benjamin Patton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Robert C. Grier for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court. |
| *[19 Apr 1846]* | *From James Buchanan.* |

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| *[20 Apr 1846]* | *To Robert Campbell, Jr.* |
| 20 Apr | From Joseph C. Eldridge. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Solicits an appointment as a purser in the navy. |
| 20 Apr | From French S. Evans. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Philip Pelley, a minister in the Pittsburg Conference. |
| 20 Apr | From Thomas L. Hamer et al. LS DLC–JKP. Recommend David Scott of Ohio for a position in the government. |
| 20 Apr | From John P. Heiss. ALS. T-JKP. Recommends Aristides Welch for purser in the navy. |
| 20 Apr | From Abijah Mann, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces William T. Cutter, a New York City merchant. |
| 20 Apr | From William Pitt Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests Polk's autograph. |
| *20 Apr* | *To William S. Pickett & Co.* |
| *20 Apr* | *To Gideon J. Pillow.* |
| 20 Apr | From Leonidas Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges Polk to ensure that Francis D. Newcomb receives a fair trial in New Orleans. |
| *20 Apr* | *From J. G. M. Ramsey.* |
| 20 Apr | From William H. Rogers. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Solicits on behalf of his brother, Eugene Rogers, an appointment as a purser in the navy. |
| 21 Apr | From William F. Havemeyer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James F. Chamberlain, superintendent of the New York Institute for the Blind. |
| 21 Apr | From Elijah F. Purdy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Thomas H. Stoneall for a job as purser in the navy. |
| 22 Apr | From Henry Horn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Refutes charges that he has not removed Whigs from the customs house at Philadelphia. |
| 22 Apr | To Cave Johnson. ALS. Private Collection of William Boozer, Nashville, Tenn. Invites Cave Johnson to a private dinner with Andrew J. Donelson and his wife. |
| 22 Apr | From Thomas P. Martin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to nominate a judge to the vacant supreme court position to hear his lawsuit. |
| [22 Apr] | From Samuel Medary. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports to Polk that Thomas Corwin has not yet returned John Y. Mason's legal opinion. |
| 23 Apr | From Thomas Patrick Moore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses Kentucky politics and encloses an article regarding William O. Butler's aspiration to the vice-presidency. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 23 Apr | From John W. Tibbatts. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a copy of his speech on the rivers and harbors bill. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 24 Apr | From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk |

that assistant quartermaster Osborn Cross has filed his quarterly report.

24 Apr — From George H. Martin et al. LS. DLC–AJD. Recommend Daniel M. Bates to be named secretary of the U.S. legation to Prussia.

*24 Apr* — *From Thomas Ritchie.*

24 Apr — From Henry Welsh. ALS. DLC–JKP. Defends his use of patronage as a naval officer in Philadelphia.

25 Apr — From Henry L. Ellsworth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Joseph G. Wilson, a Presbyterian minister from Lafayette, Ind.

25 Apr — From Thomas Patrick Moore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from William O. Butler regarding his vice-presidential aspirations.

25 Apr — From William Smith. ALS. DLC-JKP. Introduces Lawson Eastham of Rappahannock Co., Va.

26 Apr — From Leonard P. Cheatham. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Aris Brown for marshal of the Middle District of Tennessee and James Barrett for a general position in Texas.

26 Apr — From William A. Sparks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits the position of chargé d'affairs to Austria should William H. Stiles resign that post.

[27 Apr] — From George Bancroft. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a pamphlet on Oregon from Great Britain.

27 Apr — From John Fairfield. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that the Calhounites joined the Whigs in defeating the nomination of Amos Nourse as collector of customs at Bath, Me.; requests a brief delay in the nomination of collectorship while he pursues support of John C. Humphreys for the position.

*27 Apr* — *From Adam Huntsman.*

27 Apr — From Edwin F. Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a former college acquaintance, Harper B. Sheppard of Nashville.

27 Apr — From William H. Rogers. ALS. DLC–AJD. Recommends Daniel M. Bates of Delaware to be appointed secretary of the legation to Prussia.

28 Apr — From Henry Hicks. ALS. DLC–AJD. Urges the nomination of Daniel M. Bates for secretary of the legation to Prussia.

*28 Apr* — *From George C. Wheeler.*

29 Apr — From Walker Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, Benjamin D. Wright of Pensacola, Fla.

29 Apr — From Peter Bensacon, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses news from Galveston, Tx. (Enclosure not found.)

29 Apr — From Ransom H. Gillet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that he will return to his official duties on May 4.

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| *29 Apr* | *To Louis McLane.* |
| *29 Apr* | *To William H. Polk.* |
| 29 Apr | From William P. Preston. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to restore federal funding for Langley B. Culley's appointment at the Memphis Naval Yard. |
| 29 Apr | From William W. Seaton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a title to public land in Washington City in order to build a larger public school. |
| *29 Apr* | *From David Levy Yulee.* |
| *30 Apr* | *From Louis McLane.* |
| 30 Apr | From Elijah F. Purdy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Elijah Baker of New York City. |
| 30 Apr | From William Wheatly. ALS. Phi. Accuses William Minor of financial abuses at the penitentiary in Washington City. |
| 30 Apr | From Frances H. Williamson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a State Department appointment for her son, Matthias Williamson. |
| [May 1846] | From Thomas H. Benton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Concurs with the enclosed recommendation of D. D. Mitchell for lieutenant colonel or major in the army. |
| 1 May | From Dolly Madison. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Charles S. Todd, former U.S. minister to Russia. |
| *1 May* | *From Gideon J. Pillow.* |
| 1 May | From James B. Taggart. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains of unfair treatment received from his supervisor, Peter G. Washington; encloses copies of his communications with Washington. |
| 2 May | From George P. Barker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Announces Democratic success in the recent elections for the New York state constitutional convention; warns Polk of rumored divisions among the Democrats. |
| 2 May | From Stephen A. Douglas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a Mr. Chapman of Oregon. |
| 2 May | From James Shields. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests Polk's signature on land patents in Galena, Ill. |
| 4 May | From Ransom H. Gillet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that he has returned to Washington City and resumed his duties. |
| *5 May* | *To Henry Horn.* |
| *5 May* | *From James E. Saunders.* |
| 6 May | From Samuel Yorke Atlee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests approval for the construction of a temporary platform on the grounds of the treasury department. |
| 6 May | From Ransom H. Gillet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Warns Polk against appointing Fitzgerald Tasistro as a secretary of legation. |
| *6 May* | *To William L. Marcy.* |
| *6 May* | *To Robert C. Schenck.* |

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| 6 May | From Albert S. White. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Joseph G. Wilson, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Lafayette, Ind. |
| 7 May | From David Hayden. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a map of the area where Mexican and American forces have clashed. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 7 May | From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he will be accompanying his daughter to Newbern, N.C., and will return to the Senate within ten days; mentions that he has communicated via J. Knox Walker concerning a legislative matter. |
| *7 May* | *From James E. Saunders.* |
| 8 May | From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests permission for Josiah F. Polk, his chief clerk, to serve in his place during his absence. |
| *8 May* | *From Louis McLane.* |
| 9 May | To George Bancroft. ALS. MHi. Requests his presence at a meeting to be held that evening. |
| 9 May | From William McCullough. ALS. DLC–JKP. Presents Polk with a double goose quill pen; solicits a position in the government on the western frontier. |
| 9 May | From John C. McLemore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces John G. Floyd of Galena, Ill., a former superintendent of mineral lands for the Galena district. |
| 10 May | To William Allen. ALS. DLC–WA. Requests a meeting with the senator concering Mexico. |
| *10 May* | *From J. George Harris.* |
| 10 May | From Henry La Reintrie. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Solicits an appointment as pursuer in the navy; states that he is fluent in Spanish and could render assistance to the government in the event of conflict with Mexico. |
| *10 May* | *From Romulous M. Saunders.* |
| 11 May | From John D. Clark. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests renomination as justice of the peace for Washington City. |
| 11 May | From James Shields. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests appointment as a brigadier general of volunteer troops. |
| 12 May | From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests the appointment of acting commissioner of Indian affairs during William Medill's absence. |
| 12 May | From William R. Watson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Moses Richardson, a merchant from Providence, R.I. |
| [May 13, 1846] | From Alvin W. Bills. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses approval of Polk's administration of government. |
| 13 May | From William R. Gracie. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks an appointment in the general government should the United States go to war. |
| 13 May | From Barnabas S. Gillespie. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Re- |

quests consideration for his design of improved artillery.

13 May — From John Kettlewell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a copy of the resolutions of a Baltimore public meeting supporting the administration's actions concerning Mexico.

13 May — From William J. Leiper. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses printed resolutions from a public meeting in Philadelphia in support of the U.S. declaration of war against Mexico.

13 May — From Charles A. Secor. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests that the United States declare all Mexican privateers with non-Mexican crews to be pirates.

13 May — From Charles T. Steward. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of the progress of volunteer organization in Louisiana for service in the war with Mexico.

14 May — From George Bancroft. LS. MHi. Informs Polk that he has written Gouverneur Kemble regarding the use of his steamers; submits lists of naval vessels assigned to the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. (Enclosures not found.)

14 May — From William P. McConnell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment as commissioner of public buildings.

14 May — From A. B. Morton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits the position of principal for the police of the capitol.

14 May — From John A. Rockwell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests on behalf of Joseph Grinnell and himself an interview with Polk.

14 May — From Daniel Webster et al. L, copy. CSmH. Recommend that the naval commander in the Pacific Ocean keep the whaling industry apprized of the war and render aid and protection to it if necessary.

14 May — From Silas Wright, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, Andrew G. Chatfield, assemblyman for Steuben County, N.Y.

15 May — From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Desires to know how much of the recent appropriation for the conduct of the U.S.-Mexcian War will be alloted to the navy.

15 May — From Charels J. Ingersoll. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces and recommends Augustus L. Roumfort for a military appointment; wishes to have an interview with Polk concerning Oregon.

15 May — From Hugh J. Jewett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Approves of Polk's war message to Congress.

15 May — From Ely Moore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to know whether or not Polk will pardon David Babe, who has been sentenced to death for piracy and murder.

*15 May* — *From John G. Tod.*

*16 May* — *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*

16 May — From Thomas Cook. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he is

removing to Texas and wishes to be appointed to a position near Galveston; notes that volunteer troops from Madison Parish, La., have left for Texas.

*16 May* *To Gideon J. Pillow.*

16 May From Romulus M. Saunders. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that he plans to leave for Spain by the first of June.

16 May From Richard M. Young. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends James Turney of Lockport, Ill., for a position in the general government.

[17 May 1846] From Elizabeth Hamilton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to have an interview with Polk.

17 May From William Jackson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, Joseph N. Bacon of Newton, Mass.

17 May From Henry H. Rhoad. ALS. DLC–JKP. Begs for an appointment to the army or as a White House servant.

18 May From George Bancroft. L, copy. DNA–RG 45. Encloses a list of docked naval vessels being prepared for sea and their projected sail dates.

18 May From George Bancroft. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the appointments of Lewis Warrington as chief of the Bureau of Ordinance and Hydrography and Joseph Smith as chief of the Bureau of Navy Yards and Docks; submits for Polk's signature the commission papers assigning Warrington as acting chief until Senate confirmation.

18 May From James G. Bryce. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces an attorney from Louisiana, Charles Edward Carr, and recommends him for an appointment in the army; states that such an appointment would be popular among the people of that state.

18 May From Charles Fletcher. ALS. DLC–JKP. Advises Polk on the strategic importance of Santa Fe.

*18 May* *From Louis McLane.*

18 May From Aaron Vanderpoel. LS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a former Dutch cavalry officer and recent immigrant, Johannes Roemer.

*19 May* *From Aaron V. Brown.*

19 May From Jefferson Davis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends either William Armstrong or Bennet Riley as colonel of the new regiment of mounted rifles.

19 May From Samuel L. Gouverneur. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a clerkship in the General Land Office for his "unfortunate" son, James Monroe Gouverneur, the eldest grandson of the late president James Monroe,.

19 May From Joseph Hall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to withdraw the nomination of Isaac H. Wright as navy agent at Boston; asks Polk to consider his application for the position. Polk's AE states in part, "I nominated Mr. Hall to

the Senate before I had read this letter."

19 May — From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALI. DLC–AJD. States that Andrew J. Donelson needs to be "reminded" to write a "strong" letter of recommendation for J. George Harris.

19 May — From James Magee. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Introduces his friend, Joseph D. Alexander of Philadelphia, and recommends him as a steamer engineer for the navy.

19 May — From James Robertson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that he has not received replies to the numerous letters that he has sent Polk; asks Polk to remove the postmaster, collector of customs, and navy agent for New York City and Baltimore; encloses copies of correspondence in which he alleges that his mail has been intercepted for political reasons.

20 May — From Anonymous, signed "Junius." L. DLC–JKP. Criticizes the administration's personnel choices and policy decisions.

*20 May* — *To Andrew J. Donelson.*

20 May — From William F. McRee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Proposes to settle the Mexican-U.S. conflict by single combat; desires a position as a chaplain with the U.S. forces.

20 May — From James Thompson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Jonas R. McClintock, a physician from Pittsburg, Penn.

21 May — From William L. Brandon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires to be appointed a general of the volunteers.

*21 May* — *From Thomas Fitnam.*

21 May — From Cave Johnson. ALS. NcD. Informs Polk that James W. McCulloh has failed to respond to requests for information by the Senate Committee on Claims.

22 May — From R. B. Forbes. AL. DLC–JKP. Invites Polk and his family for a short excursion aboard the packet steamer *Massachusetts.*

22 May — From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests use of the appropriation "for fortifications and armament of fortifications" prior to July 1.

*23 May* — *From Andrew J. Donelson.*

23 May — From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to meet with Polk to discuss patronage in the army.

23 May — From Thomas Lockwood. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks that Polk establish a day of "humiliation and prayer" should the United States go to war with Mexico.

*23 May* — *From Francis W. Pickens.*

23 May — From Dr. Isaac R. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for the autographs of Polk and his wife; offers to accompany Polk on a tour of the Valley Forge encampment should he ever visit eastern Pennsylvania.

24 May — From Thomas G. Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires a military

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| | appointment. |
| *24 May* | *From Sashel Woods and John Markle.* |
| 25 May | To Robert Armstrong. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Introduces George P. A. Healy. |
| 25 May | To George Bancroft. ALS. MHi. Requests Bancroft's presence at a cabinet meeting called for that afternoon. |
| 25 May | From Asbury Dickins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that the Senate has rejected the nomination of Henry Horn for collector of customs at Philadelphia. |
| [25 May 1846] | From George R. McFarlane. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Encloses a copy of a memorial from citizens of Hollidaysburg, Penn., praying for the establishment of a national foundry in the community. |
| *25 May* | *To Louis McLane.* |
| 25 May | From Henry J. Seaman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests an interview with Polk concerning a naval appropriation bill. |
| [26 May 1846] | From George Bancroft. ALS. MHi. Requests postponement of a decision concerning the withdrawal of the nomination of Isaac H. Wright as navy agent at Boston. |
| 26 May | From Lewis Cass. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Richard Rush for collector of customs at Philadelphia. |
| *26 May* | *From Charles J. Ingersoll.* |
| 26 May | From John Ritter et al. LS. DLC–JKP. State that the Democratic congressional delegation of Pennsylvania recommends Nathaniel B. Eldred of Harrisburg for collector of customs at Philadelphia. |
| 27 May | To George Bancroft. ALS. MHi. Enquires if Thomas B. Childress has accepted an appointment as midshipman in the navy and reported to duty; desires to have a short meeting with Bancroft. |
| *[27 May 1846]* | *From John Fairfield.* |
| *27 May* | *From William H. Haywood, Jr.* |
| *27 May* | *From Henry Horn.* |
| [27 May 1846] | From Thomas G. Rhett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Express his gratitude for receiving the appointment of second lieutenant in the army. |
| 28 May | From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Thomas L. Kane, son of John K. Kane of Philadelphia. |
| 28 May | From Charles Douglas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a customs house position at New York City or other post in the general government; complains of the reluctant endorsement John M. Niles has given in behalf of his solicitation. |
| 28 May | From Richard J. Hays. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires a commission in the volunteer or regular army. |
| 28 May | From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Communicates that the Whigs will recommend Alexander Barrow, U.S. senator from Louisiana, for brigadier general. |

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| *28 May* | *From Louis McLane.* |
| 28 May | From James Ross Snowden. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Nathaniel B. Eldred for collector of customs at Philadelphia. |
| 28 May | From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires reinstatement as the naval officer for the port of Philadelphia. |
| 28 May | From Jesse Williams. ALS. DLC–JKP. Transmits a copy of the legislative acts enacted by the Iowa Territorial Assembly in its regular session of 1845-46. |
| *29 May* | *From Arthur P. Bagby.* |
| *29 May* | *To William G. Childress.* |
| 29 May | From George McFadden et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommend Nathaniel B. Eldred for customs collector at Philadelphia. |
| *29 May* | *From Louis McLane.* |
| [29 May 1846] | From Elias Nason. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph. |
| [29 May 1846] | From Thomas Ritchie. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to read the enclosed correspondence of Thomas H. Averett, a Republican and physician from Halifax County, Va. |
| 29 May | From John S. Sydnor. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for some provision be made for the former officers of the Texas Navy, especially for Captain John G. Tod. |
| *29 May* | *From Jonas E. Thomas.* |
| 29 May | From James Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the appointment of Gideon J. Pillow to a field command with the volunteers. |
| *29 May* | *To Samuel P. Walker.* |
| *30 May* | *To William L. Marcy.* |
| 30 May | From Samuel F.B. Morse. L, telegraph. DLC–JKP. Provides Polk with news from Britain and Europe that is being transmitted from the steamer Great Britain upon its arrival in the harbor of New York City. |
| 30 May | From James B. Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires an appointment in the navy. |
| 30 May | From William Selden. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a medical leave of absence on behalf of Alexander Hunter, U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia. |
| *30 May* | *To Zachary Taylor.* |
| 31 May | From James H. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for a letter of introduction to Silas Wright, Jr.; states that he has discussed the requirements of the Tennessee Militia with George W. Jones. |
| [June 1846] | From Anonymous. L. DLC–JKP. Urges Polk to appoint only American citizens to federal offices. |
| [June 1846] | From Thomas P. Kettell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests payment for a subscription to the *Democratic Review*. |
| [June 1846] | From Jacob S. Yost. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses testimoni- |

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| | als recommending John K. Kane as judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. |
| 1 June | From Chester Ashley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Endorses the enclosed correspondence recommending Josia Gregg for a position in the army. |
| 1 June | From Archibald Atkinson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Charles W. Heydon of Washington City. |
| 1 June | From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Opposes the reinstatement of Augustus McLaughlin of Maryland as a midshipman because of the "grave offenses" that led to his immediate dismissal; notes that Maryland has exceeded its quota of midshipmen allotted by Congress; encloses a report from the superintendent of the Naval Academy and a copy of his opinion as stated to Reverdy Johnson, a U.S. senator from Maryland. |
| 1 June | From Robert Butler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests that the corps of engineers confirm his solution to a mathematical problem called "The Square at the Circle." |
| 1 June | From Albert H. Hoyt. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph. |
| 1 June | From Isaac Hulse, Jr. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Requests an appointment as a pursuer in the navy. |
| 1 June | From Thomas E. White. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a position in the federal government. |
| 1 June | From William Wilkins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James May, a commission merchant of Pittsburg, Penn., who desires business with the quartermaster department concerning the transportation of cannons. |
| 2 June | From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his nephew, Aaron A. Fraser, a New Orleans attorney who wishes to recommend Robert Mott as district attorney for Louisiana. |
| *2 June* | *To John W. Childress.* |
| 2 June | From Henry La Reintrie. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Solicits an appointment as a purser in the navy. |
| *2 June* | *To John A. Mairs.* |
| *2 June* | *To William L. Marcy.* |
| *2 June* | *To Gideon J. Pillow.* |
| 2 June | From Frances H. Williamson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks that her son receive an appointment as a pursuer in the navy or some other position in the federal government. |
| *2 June* | *To Archibald Yell.* |
| 3 June | From George W. L. Bickley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for one hundred dollars toward publishing a book titled *Bickleys Adventures in the South*. |
| 3 June | From Elisa Hiester Hubley. ALS. DLC–MVB. Urges Polk to appoint her husband, Edward B. Hubley, to the collec- |

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| | torship of the Philadelphia Customs House. |
| *[3 June 1846]* | *From Louis McLane.* |
| *3 June* | *From Samuel F. B. Morse.* |
| *3 June* | *From Joseph H. Talbot.* |
| 4 June | To George Bancroft. ALS. MHi. Requests Bancroft's presence at a special meeting of the Cabinet scheduled for that afternoon. |
| 4 June | From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the appointment of Aristides Welch of Missouri as a purser in the navy. |
| 4 June | From Ralph I. Ingersoll. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends his son Colin M. Ingersoll as secretary of the legation to London. |
| 4 June | From Henry Simpson. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Reports that the Board of Commissioners of Spring Garden, Penn., is suing Samuel D. Patterson for defaulting on his accounts as former treasurer for that district. |
| 5 June | From Arunah S. Abell. L, telegraph. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of the arrival of the packet *Britannia* with news from Europe. |
| 5 June | From Arthur P. Bagby. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends John W. Moore, a physician from Mobile, Ala., as surgeon for a newly raised regiment of Alabama volunteers. |
| 5 June | From Sylvanus E. Benson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires a clerkship in Washington City. |
| 5 June | From Albert G. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges consideration of John A. Quitman of Mississippi for a brigadier general's commission in the war with Mexico. |
| 5 June | From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, Samuel Houpt of Montgomery County, Penn. |
| 5 June | From Benjamin F. Butler. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Recommends a former midshipman, Alfred Bailey, for reinstatement in the navy. |
| 5 June | From John R. Williams. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses printed resolutions from a mass meeting in Detroit supporting the war with Mexico. |
| 5 June | From David Levy Yulee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses correspondence relating to Benjamin K. Pierce. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 6 June | From Anonymous, signed "Unus pro privatus." L. DLC–JKP. Warns that the anti-slavery movement in Ohio and elsewhere in the north is strongly opposed to the administration's expansionist policies in Texas and Oregon; the movement also opposes the war with Mexico. |
| 6 June | From Robert Bronaugh. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that William H. Watson has appointed only Whigs as officers in the Maryland militia; requests the appointment of George |

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| | M. Dove, a District of Colombia physician, as a surgeon in the volunteer militia. |
| 6 June | From Lewis Cass. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes Polk to reappoint Augustus McLaughlin as a midshipman in the navy. |
| 6 June | From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Richard Vaux as secretary to the legation to Great Britain. |
| 6 June | From Thomas B. Eastland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits the appointment of W. J. Vason as U.S. attorney for Louisiana. |
| 6 June | From Henry Horn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Gives permission for Polk to show the enclosed letter to William H. Haywood, Jr. (Enclosure not found.) |
| *6 June* | *From Henry Horn.* |
| 6 June | From John D. Matthews. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that William L. Marcy has reneged on his promise to appoint him chaplain at West Point; asks Polk to secure his appointment. |
| 6 June | From William Matthews. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Joseph B. Edelin, formerly of Charles County, Md., as a justice of the peace for Washington City. |
| *7 June* | *From William G. Childress.* |
| 8 June | From Richard H. Allen. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Gideon J. Pillow for the command of Tennessee's volunteer troops. |
| 8 June | To William Allen. ALS DLC–WA. Requests a meeting for that evening. |
| [8 June] | From John Fairfield. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a Mr. Flagg of Boston who wishes to confer with Polk about the Isaac H. Wright case. |
| 8 June | From Henry Horn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Mentions the names of several candidates to replace Archibald Randall, the late U.S. district court judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; states that the Pennsylvania Democracy opposes the appointment of Richard Vaux as a secretary of legation. |
| 8 June | From Edward King. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits appointment as judge of the U.S. court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. |
| 8 June | From Andrew Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Endorses Edward King for appointment as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. |
| 8 June | From Thomas M. Pettit. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests consideration for appointment as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. |
| 8 June | From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Edward King or David Wilmot for appointment as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. |
| *8 June* | *From Archibald Yell.* |

9 June — From George Bancroft. L, copy. DNA–RG 45. Estimates that the navy expenditures for the prosecution of the war during the current and next fiscal year will total $10,320,823.65.

9 June — From Robert B. Campbell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces O. Warren from Havana, Cuba.

9 June — From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses correspondence concerning the judicial vacancy for the Eastern District of Pennyslvania; endorses Joel Jones, John K. Kane, Henry D. Gilpin, and Edward King for the position.

9 June — From Micajah Hawks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Blames John Fairfield for the Senate's rejection of his nomination as surveyor and inspector of the port of Eastport, Me.

9 June — From William J. Leiper. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that James Buchanan has no objections to the appointment of John K. Kane as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

9 June — From Y.C. Little. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks and interview with Polk.

9 June — From Jesse Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that John K. Kane be named U.S. judge for the Eastern district of Pennsylvania.

9 June — From Francis R. Shunk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Endorses the appointment of John K. Kane as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

9 June — From Daniel Sturgeon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that John K. Kane be named U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

9 June — From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits the appointments of Edward King as a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and David Wilmot as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; notes that the voters "sincerely wish to support your administration without wearing the livery of any of the candidates for the succession"; encloses from the *U.S. Gazette* an article concerning the vacancies. (Enclosure not found.)

9 June — From David Wilmot. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends John K. Kane for appointment as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

*10 June* — *From Aaron V. Brown.*

10 June — From Alfred Flournoy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests an officer's commission in the regular army for his son William, who is serving with the Louisiana volunteer militia stationed along the Rio Grande.

*10 June* — *From William J. Leiper.*

10 June — From Alexander R. McLaughlin. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Requests an appointment in the federal government.

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| 10 June | From Jesse Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the appointment of John K. Kane as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. |
| [10 June 1846] | From Wyndham Robertson, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests and interview. |
| 10 June | From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Revises the recommendations he made on the previous date; recommends James Buchanan for the U.S. Supreme Court, Edward King as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and David Wilmot as a justice for the Court of Common Pleas for the city and county of Philadelphia. |
| 10 June | From William Winthrop. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that British infantry are receiving training with heavy artillery on Malta; suggests that the U.S. army conduct similar exercises. |
| 11 June | From Walter T. Colquitt. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires an appointment as paymaster in the army for his brother. |
| 11 June | From John Hartwell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires a position in the federal government. |
| *11 June* | *To John K. Kane.* |
| *11 June* | *To Thomas L. Kane.* |
| 11 June | From George M. Keim. ALS. DLC–JKP. Announces the death and burial of Judge Archibald Randall. |
| *11 June* | *To Jesse Miller.* |
| 11 June | From Thomas M. Patterson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires an appointment in the federal government. |
| 11 June | From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Promotes the appointment of Edward King as the best judicial candidate from Philadelphia. |
| *12 June* | *From Arthur P. Bagby.* |
| 12 June | From Leonard Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses his opposition to the war with Mexico. |
| 13 June | From Alexander Boyden. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to know if Polk received his invention proposal. |
| 13 June | From Daniel T. Jenks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that Polk suggest to John K. Kane the appointment of Joel B. Sutherland to a position at the U.S. Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. |
| 13 June | From Dixon H. Lewis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Levi Shackelford of Alabama. |
| *14 June* | *From Henry Horn.* |
| 14 June | From Edward D. Tippett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Denounces as an "odious principle" the spoils system of political patronage, arguing that capable men are replaced by party favorites; warns that the current policy of office rotation "will bring us to monarchy." |
| *14 June* | *From Archibald Yell.* |

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| 15 June | From Nathaniel Bosworth. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Offers his design for a projectile that he claims is accurate to four miles when fired from rifled artillery; claimes that his ordinance could demolish, from a safe distance, Mexican coastal forts in a matter of hours. |
| *15 June* | *From John W. Childress.* |
| 15 June | From Robert Latham. ALS. DLC–JKP. Declines a clerkship in the Postal Service to await a better position. |
| 15 June | From Marcus Morton. LS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Charles Thompson of Boston. |
| 15 June | From James G. Pickett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires to be named commissioner to adjudicate claims arising from a convention with Peru in 1841. |
| 15 June | From Robert Wallace. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encourages Polk to consider running for re-election, in order to maintain the newfound "concord and confidence" that exists in the Democratic Party. |
| 16 June | From George Bancroft. L, copy. DNA–RG 45. States that David L. Yulee has written on behalf of Matthias C. Marin, a lieutenant who has served two-thirds of a one-year suspension from the navy; indicates that the navy will not require the services of Martin during his suspension. |
| 16 June | From George Bancroft. L. DNA–RG 45. Encloses correspondence of Garrett J. Pendergrast in response to a House resolution. |
| *16 June* | *From Levin H. Coe.* |
| *16 June* | *From Henry Horn.* |
| 16 June | From Elijah J. Roberts. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Solicits a position as a brigade quartermaster. |
| *16 June* | *To John Addison Thomas.* |
| 17 June | From Walker Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his son, Cameron Anderson. |
| 17 June | From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Opposes the reinstatement of Charles H. Duryee to the navy; encloses a statement of charges concerning his dismissal. |
| 17 June | From John M. Brodhead. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests the appointment of James E. Young as a justice of the peace for the Fifth Ward of Washington City. |
| 17 June | From William H. Dietz. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes a personal interview to secure Thomas S. Bryant a position as a paymaster in the army. |
| [17 June 1846] | From John C. Fitzpatrick et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommend the appointment of James E. Young as justice of the peace for the Fifth Ward of Washington City. |
| 18 June | From Nathaniel P. Causin et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommend Joseph B. Edelin for appointment as a justice of the peace for Washington City. |

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| 18 June | From John G. Floyd. ALS. DLC–JKP. Refutes charges made against him as superintendent of lead mines in Galena, Illinois; requests reappointment to that position. |
| 18 June | From John G. Floyd. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests the favor of an interview. |
| *18 June* | *From Henry Horn.* |
| 18 June | From Sam Houston. ALS. TJ–SFJ. Recommends James M. Gouverneur for a clerkship in the federal government. |
| 18 June | From John McLean. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a midshipman's appointment for John T. Wood, grandson of Zachary Taylor. |
| 18 June | From James H. Piper. ALS. DLC–JKP. Relays a request from Robert C. Schenck to delay land sales in Ohio of islands in the Great Miami River. |
| [19 June 1846] | From Anonymous, signed "E.K.O." LI. PPAmP. Requests appointment as an assistant surgeon in the army. |
| 19 June | From Robert M. T. Hunter et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Object to the removal of Charles K. King as a clerk in the navy. |
| 19 June | From George H. Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to be transfered to a position in the State Department. |
| 19 June | From Henry Simpson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that he has not received an appointment despite his strong support of the Democratic ticket in 1844; warns "that if James Buchanan is my enemy, and caused you to refuse me office more than once, I am sure you never had a greater enemy on Earth." |
| *20 June* | *From Albert G. Brown.* |
| 20 June | From George Champion. ALS DLC–JKP. Asks for a pledge of confidentiality before communicating "something of importance." |
| *20 June* | *From Ezekiel P. McNeal.* |
| 20 June | From Lewis Warrington. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests that Charles K. King retain his position as a clerk in the navy. |
| 21 June | From Linn Boyd and John P. Martin. L. DNA–RG 92. Submit a list of recommendations for appointment as quartermasters, commissary officers, and surgeons in the Kentucky volunteer brigade. |
| 22 June | From Anonymous, signed "O.P.Q." LI. DLC–JKP. Warns Polk that newspaper reports exaggerate the strength of the fortress at San Juan de Ulúa; asserts that the navy's Gulf Squadron could capture it within twelve hours. |
| 22 June | From Robert Armstrong. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommends H. F. Jebb for a clerkship in the federal government. |
| 22 June | From Augustus Beardslee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Suggests that the peace treaty with Mexico emulate the recent treaty between Great Britain and the Indian tribes. |
| 22 June | From Benjamin B. French. LS. DLC–JKP. Invites Polk to |

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| | the funeral of Richard P. Herrick of New York. |
| *22 June* | *From Henry Horn.* |
| 22 June | From George S. Houston. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Nathaniel Terry for appointment as brigadier general of volunteers. |
| *22 June* | *To Louis McLane.* |
| 22 June | From William W. Steward. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests reappointment as a justice of the peace for Washington County. |
| 22 June | From William Wheatly. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for a reexamination of the charges he levied against William Minor, an inspector for the federal penitentiary of the District of Columbia; Polk's AS in part notes: "I have already consid[ered] this matter to be investigated and was satisfied on the subject." |
| 23 June | From Albert G. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends J. P. Bush, a Mississippi physician, for appointment as an army surgeon. |
| *23 June* | *From John A. Bryan.* |
| 23 June | From John H. Cutter. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James H. Reynolds of Louisville, Kentucky and his wife. |
| 23 June | From E. C. Darling. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Wishes to submit a design for rapid fire muskets and rifles. |
| *23 June* | *From John Addison. Thomas.* |
| *24 June* | *From William G. Childress.* |
| *24 June* | *From George M. Dallas.* |
| 24 June | From Joshua L. Martin. ALS, DLC–JKP. Introduces E. L. Andrews from Mobile, Alabama. |
| *24 June* | *From Jane L. Taggart.* |
| 24 June | From Archibald Wright. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes Polk's aid in securing a bond in Richmond, Virginia. |
| 25 June | From William S. Garvin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Nathaniel B. Eldred for appointment as collector of the customs at Philadelphia. |
| 25 June | From Thomas M. Wassell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks an appointment in the federal government. |
| *[26 June 1846]* | *From Alfred Balch.* |
| 26 June | From George Bancroft. L. DNA–RG 45. Gives explaination for denying a petition to place a church on the grounds of the navy yard at Pensacola, Fla. |
| 26 June | From Athaniel Ford et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Invite Polk to an Independence Day celebration in the Penn District of Pennsylvania. |
| *26 June* | *From Christopher E. McEwen.* |
| *26 June* | *From John A. Mairs.* |
| 26 June | From Jesse Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he and Francis R. Shunk are "highly gratified" with the nomina- |

tion of James Page as collector of customs for the port of Philadelphia.

26 June — From John M. Robertson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment in the federal government.

26 June — From James E. Saunders. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces E. L. Andrews of Mobile, Ala.

*27 June* — *From James W. Chalmers.*

*27 June* — *To John W. Childress.*

27 June — From Thomas B. Florence. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Thomas L. Horner as a journeyman printer.

27 June — From Christopher Hughes. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests an appointment in the diplomatic service.

27 June — From Humphrey Marshall. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Recommends John Field and Moses V. Grant for appointment in the Kentucky volunteers as assistant quartermaster and assistant commissary, respectively.

*27 June* — *To Robert Patterson.*

27 June — From Thomas J. Read. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, William H. Reding, Jr., of Louisville, Ky.

27 June — From J. B. Williamson et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Inform Polk of his election as an honorary member of the Philo Franklin Literary Society of Allegheny College.

*28 June* — *From James Buchanan.*

*29 June* — *From Mary B. Childress.*

29 June — From Tunis Craven. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains about his removal as naval storekeeper at the Brooklyn navy yard.

*29 June* — *To Thomas L. Hamer.*

29 June — From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a letter of introduction for David W. Stone, a branch mint coiner applicant who desires to visit the Philadelphia mint.

*29 June* — *To William H. Haywood, Jr.*

29 June — From Henry Horn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Maintains that the Philadelphia Democracy are opposed to the appointment of Richard Vaux as chargé d'affairs to Turin.

29 June — From George S. Houston. ALS. DLC–JKP. Withdraws Nathaniel Terry's name from consideration for appointment as a brigadier general of the volunteers.

*29 June* — *To Gideon J. Pillow.*

29 June — From John Y. Savage. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to present Polk with a watch.

29 June — From James M. Stevens. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to obtain Polk's autograph and an engraved gold ring.

30 June — From Alexander O. Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Offers his advice on military strategy in the war against Mexico.

30 June — From John C. Henshaw. ALS. DLC–JKP. Explains his ac-

tions in response to his court martial.

30 June — From John Addison Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses newspaper articles concerning the raising of volunteer troops from New York and New England. (Enclosures not found.)

30 June — From Dutee. J. Pearce and Edwin Wilbur. LS. DLC–JKP. Withdraw their recommendation of George T. Nichols as surveyor and inspector for the port of North Kingston, R.I.

[July 1846] — From Henry La Reintrie. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Solicits an appointment as pursuer in the navy.

1 July — From Archibald Atkinson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a Col. Moore of Portsmouth, Va.

1 July — From Benjamin Balch. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes Polk to endorse the National Life Insurance Company of the State of New York.

1 July — From George Bancroft. L, copy. DNA–RG 45. Reports that the store ship U.S.S. *Lexington* is being provisioned and will be ready for embarkement of troops and departure by July 14.

1 July — From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that Jefferson Davis "is very anxious to receive orders" for his volunteer regiment to join Taylor's forces in Mexico.

2 July — From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the appointment of Alfred Balch to any respectable commission including one for claims against Mexico.

2 July — From Edward A. Hannegan et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommend Alexander S. Burnet of Indiana for appointment as a major general of the Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois militia in place of nominee Robert Patterson of Pennsylvania; Polk's AE reads in part: "the request cannot be granted."

*2 July* — *To Gideon J. Pillow.*

2 July — From John Addison Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Eliakim Parker Scammon, a second lieutenant with the Corps of Topographical Engineers.

3 July — From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Robert W. Powell or Robert B. Reynolds of East Tennessee to replace the deceased William G. Childress as paymaster in the army.

*3 July* — *From John Henderson.*

3 July — From Joseph Vance et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Recommend the appointment of John G. Camp of Ohio for assistant quartermaster general.

4 July — From James A. Black. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses correspondence from John C. Henshaw and asks that clemency be exercised in the lieutenant's case.

4 July — From Leonidas Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a Mr. Paine of New Orleans.

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| *4 July* | *To John Y. Savage.* |
| 5 July | From Levin H. Coe. ALS. DLC–JKP. Declines appointment as a quartermaster in the army. |
| 6 July | From William E. Butler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces William Mariner, a professor at Jackson College. |
| *6 July* | *To Mary B. Childress.* |
| *6 July* | *From James H. Thomas.* |
| 6 July | From Jesse B. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits the position of commissioner of the General Land Office. |
| 6 July | From James D. Westcott, Jr. AL. DLC–JKP. Urges the appointment of John G. Camp to a position in the Quartermasters Department. |
| *7 July* | *To Aaron V. Brown.* |
| 7 July | From John Fairfield. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a position in the federal government for Amos Nourse. |
| 7 July | From John Hogan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires to have his account as agent to the Dominican Republic settled. |
| *7 July* | *To Gideon J. Pillow.* |
| 7 July | From Levi Woodbury. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Nathan Weston for attorney general. |
| 8 July | From George Bancroft. LS. DLC–JKP. Reports that the U.S.S. *Lexington* will be ready to leave for California within a week. |
| *8 July* | *From John A. Bryan.* |
| *8 July* | *From Robert Campbell, Jr.* |
| *8 July* | *From Spencer Jarnagin.* |
| 8 July | From George Peters and John Balch. LS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of his election as an honorary member of the Philosophian Society at Wittenberg College. |
| 8 July | From John M. Robertson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a position in the federal government. |
| 9 July | From Jesse E. Dow. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a position in the federal government. |
| 9 July | From George W. Foster. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Desires an appointment as a quartermaster in the Tennessee volunteer regiment. |
| 9 July | From C. Paist. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of his election as an honorary member of the Excelsior Society of Wittenberg College. |
| 10 July | From George Bancroft. L. DNA–RG 45. Desires to know whether to pay John Claiborne's draft for service as live oak agent. |
| 10 July | From William E. Butler. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Solicits the appointment of quartermaster for John McClanahan. |
| [11 July 1846] | From Robert Barnwell Rhett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses correspondence of James Polk Dickinson, the President's cousin, who desires an appointment in the army; says |

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| | Dickinson "appears as desperately bent on war, as Don Quixote ever was on adventuring." |
| 12 July | From Philip B. Glenn. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Recommends Nathan Adams for assistant quartermaster in one of the Tennessee volunteer regiments. |
| [12 July 1846] | From Jonas E. Thomas. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Notifies Polk that he has accepted the position of colonel in command of the Tennessee cavalry regiment and declines any regular army appointment; recommends Nathan Adams for assistant quartermaster. |
| *13 July* | *To Robert Armstrong.* |
| *13 July* | *To Louis McLane.* |
| 14 July | From Philip B. Glenn et al. LS. DNA–RG 92. Recommend Rufus Borderson for quartermaster in one of the Tennessee volunteer regiments. |
| *14 July* | *To William H. Polk.* |
| 14 July | From Wyndham Robertson, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to secure a position of better rank and pay than his former employment as a treasury clerk. |
| 14 July | To Nicholas P. Trist. AN. DLC–FP. Requests that the accompanying letters be placed with the State Department dispatches for overseas mailing. (Letters not found.) |
| 15 July | From Marcus Morton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Leonard M. Parker for a position in the government. |
| 15 July | From William D. Moseley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James T. Archer, Florida's secretary of state. |
| 15 July | From Asu Pipkin. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Requests appointment as assistant quartermaster in one of the Tennessee volunteer regiments. |
| 16 July | From Enoch G. Day. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment in the federal government. |
| 16 July | From John B. Hays. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Recommends John B. Hamilton for quartermaster or chaplain in the army. |
| 17 July | From John Dugan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires an appointment in the Philadelphia Customs House. |
| *17 July* | *From Louis McLane.* |
| 17 July | From John Wentworth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests postponement of the appointment of a collector of customs for Chicago. |
| 18 July | From George Bancroft. L, copy. DNA–RG 45. Encloses correspondence from John A. Russ concerning his court-martial; approves of the judgement against the lieutenant. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 18 July | From William S. Pilcher. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Jacob Walter, a mechanic and inventor from Louisville, Ky. |
| 18 July | From Thomas J. Wilson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests ap- |

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| | pointment as agent to the Texas Indian tribes. |
| 19 July | From John A. Bryan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports on the state of the Ohio Democracy. |
| 19 July | From Andrew Morrison. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a position in the New York City Customs House. |
| 20 July | From William B. Allen. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends George V. Hebb of Lincoln County, Tennessee for assistant quartermaster in the army. |
| *20 July* | *From Campbell P. White.* |
| 20 July | From William Wilkins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his son-in-law, John Saunders, a captain in the army. |
| 20 July | From Archibald Wright and Thomas Martin. LS. DNA–RG 92. Recommend Nathan Adams for appointment as assistant quartermaster in one of the Tennessee volunteer regiments. |
| 21 July | From George Bancroft. L. DLC–JKP. Transmits records relating to the court martial of Augustus McLaughlin. |
| *21 July* | *From Nathan Gaither.* |
| [21 July 1846] | From West H. Humphreys. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends his brother, Robert Humphreys, for appointment as assistant quartermaster. |
| 22 July | From George Cadwalader. L, copy. PHi. Offers the services of his volunteer artillery company. |
| *22 July* | *From John W. Childress.* |
| 22 July | From Owen Connelly. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a donation for the construction of a new Roman Catholic church in Washington City. |
| [22 July 1846] | From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Intends to see Polk later that day. |
| *22 July* | *From Samuel H. Laughlin.* |
| 22 July | From Ephraim W. McRady. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to purchase some land in Maury County, Tennessee. |
| 22 July | From Charles B. H. Norton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph. |
| 22 July | From Robert Patterson. L, copy. PHi. Requests that George Cadwalader's company of artillery be mustered into service as divisional artillery. |
| 22 July | From Joseph A. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph. |
| 23 July | From Sidney Breese. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Solicits the appointment of Edward D. Reynolds as a purser in the navy. |
| *23 July* | *From John A. Dix.* |
| [23 July 1846] | From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Promises to see Polk following the opening of debate in the Senate. |
| 23 July | From Marcus Morton. LS. DLC–JKP. Introduces William Winthrop, U.S. consul at Malta. |
| [23 July] | From Chester A. Vibbard. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a |

loan of money.

24 July — From Paul Dillingham, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a clerkship in the federal government for John C. Haswell.

24 July — From Jesse Speight. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests an interview concerning the removal of Hiram G. Runnels as collector of customs at Galveston, Texas.

*25 July* — *To Richard H. Allen.*

[25 July 1846] — From George Bancroft. ALI. DLC–JKP. States that "Senator Haywood of North Carolina resigned this morning to the great consternation of the Capitol."

25 July — From Edward Lucas, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces William D. North of Jefferson County, Virginia.

[27 July 1846] — From J. Curtis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Warns Polk that James Semple is dissatisfied with the administration.

27 July — From Thomas L. Horner. ALS. DLC–JKP. Claims that he has been unsuccessful seeking employment as a printer and begs Polk to loan him five dollars.

[27 July 1846] — From Jesse Speight. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment in the federal government for William Barksdale.

28 July — From J.W. Grier. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a position in the federal government.

28 July — From Thomas B. Horner. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests the returning of correspondence from Thomas B. Florence that accompanied his previous letter; notes that Polk did not reply to his loan request.

28 July — From Cornelius W. Lawrence. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Isaiah Townsend of Albany, N.Y.

*28 July* — *From John A. Thomas.*

29 July — From D. Stewart. ALS. DLC–JKP. Begs for traveling money to Boston.

29 July — From D. B. Taylor. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports dissatisfaction among New York Democrats regarding the California expedition.

29 July — From Hezekiah Williams et al. LS. DLC–GW. Recommend Joshua Veasey of Calais, Me,, for purser in the navy.

30 July — From Thomas L. Horner. ALS. DLC–JKP. Makes a second request for the return of the letter written on his behalf by Thomas B. Florence of Philadelphia.

31 July — From George W. Clinton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a diplomatic appointment for John Hogan of Utica, N.Y.

31 July — From F. H. Holland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to know upon what grounds Polk pardoned Jason L. Pendleton, a convicted slave trader.

31 July — From Robert J. Walker. LS. DLC–JKP. Reports on requested information concerning the Harbors and Rivers Bill.

[Aug 1846] — From William D. Moseley. ALI. DLC–JKP. Expresses dis-

appointment of the resignation of William H. Haywood, Jr., from the U.S. Senate.

*2 Aug* *From William S. Archer.*

*2 Aug* *From Samuel H. Laughlin.*

*2 Aug* *From Louis McLane.*

3 Aug From S. Aegerter. ALS. DLC–JKP. Sends Polk a Swiss military rifle kit.

3 Aug From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits the appointment of Patrick Duffy as "Sutler" for the Tennessee volunteers.

3 Aug From Elizabeth R. Drane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses concern about the army's dismissal of her husband, Anthony Drane.

*3 Aug* *To Robert C. Grier.*

3 Aug From C. W. Meyer. ANS. DLC–JKP. Announces the suspension of his series of letters on the condition of France.

3 Aug From Joel W. White. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires a position in the federal government.

*4 Aug* *From John Catron.*

4 Aug From James Maguire. ALS. DLC–JKP. Declines the appointment as justice of the peace for Washington City; recommends John Boyle for the position.

4 Aug From John B. Welles. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Recommends Daniel McCleary of Ohio for assistant quartermaster.

*5 Aug* *From George W. Bowman and Chambers McKibbin.*

*5 Aug* *From Peter V. Daniel.*

5 Aug From Henry R. Schoolcraft. ALI. DLC–FP. Opposes the Senate's proposed boundaries for the state of Wisconsin.

5 Aug From James Thompson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Congratulates Polk on the appointment of Robert C. Grier as an associate justice.

5 Aug From William J. Witthorne. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits on behalf of Ellen M. Robertson an assistant surgeon's appointment for her son, F. Josephus Robertson, in one of the Tennessee regiments; shares local news.

6 Aug From Pierce B. Anderson et al. LS. DNA–RG 192. Recommend George W. Mayo of Athens, Tn., for commissary fo the Tennessee militia.

6 Aug From John W. Ford. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wants to secure printing patronage for the McMinnville *Central Gazette*.

6 Aug From John H. Lumpkin and Howell Cobb. L, copy. DLC–JKP. Recommends Silas H. Hill, a treasury clerk, for promotion.

7 Aug From George Bancroft. L. DNA–RG 45. Responds to the Senate's request for information regarding the recent meeting of the Board of Naval Officers.

7 Aug From Thomas H. Bayly. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reiterates his

recommendation of Henry P. C. Wilson for a clerkship; complains about the lack of patronage for his Virginia congressional district.

*7 Aug* *From John Fairfield.*

7 Aug From Frederick S. Heiskell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment in the federal government.

7 Aug To William Medill. ALS. DLC–WM. Requests a copy of the Cherokee Treaty should Polk complete it and transmit it to the Senate.

8 Aug From Anonymous, signed "A friend of justice." L. DLC–JKP. Warns Polk not to veto the French Spoliations Bill.

8 Aug From Robert C. Grier. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses gratitude for being nominated as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

*8 Aug* *From James D. Westcott, Jr.*

*9 Aug* *To Ralph I. Ingersoll.*

*9 Aug* *From Brigham Young et al.*

10 Aug From William R. Gracie. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment in the federal government.

10 Aug From Francis C. Lawrence. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph.

10 Aug From James H. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends James H. Stephens for a clerkship in Washington City; reports on the medical condition of the slave Matilda.

11 Aug From Daniel T. Jenks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Joel B. Sutherland to be appointed clerk of the district court of eastern Pennsylvania.

12 Aug From William G. Angel. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Thomas Maxwell, a former New York congressman, for a position in the federal government.

12 Aug From Robert P. Flenniken. ALS. DLC–JKP. Desires to know if Polk intends to appoint him chargé d'affaires to Denmark.

*12 Aug* *From Thomas Herring.*

12 Aug From Amos Lane. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he will accept an appointment as a French spoliation claims commissioner if offered the position.

12 Aug From Leland, McKay, & Toulmin of Philipston, Mass. L. DLC–JKP. Present Polk with a specially patterned saddle and harness cloth covers.

12 Aug From William H. Stickney. ALS. T–JKP. Informs Polk that officers of the federal government in Shawneetown, Ill., opppose his administration.

12 Aug From James H. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges his appointment as assistant quartermaster in the army.

12 Aug From Isaac S. Pennybacker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Believes a peace treaty with Mexico can be quickly achieved; solic-

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| | its an appointment in the Treasury Department for his brother, Joel Pennybacker. |
| *13 Aug* | *From Thomas B. Childress.* |
| *13 Aug* | *To Louis McLane.* |
| 14 Aug | From Theodore W. Custis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes to be reinstated as a customs inspector at Philadelphia. |
| 14 Aug | From John M. Hepburn. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Solicits an appointment for his son, Samuel C. Hepburn, as an assistant quartermaster, commissary, or paymaster in the army. |
| [14 Aug 1846] | From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that two Whig clerks in the General Land Office have received promotions; accuses William Garrett, another clerk, of being a drunkard and requests his removal; recommends John D. Matthews as Garrett's replacement. |
| 14 Aug | From Pitser Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk about mercantile reactions in Philadelphia to the new tariff. |
| *15 Aug* | *To Robert Campbell, Jr.* |
| *15 Aug* | *To John W. Childress.* |
| 15 Aug | From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that Edward A. Cabell, a Whig, will resign his clerkship in the General Land Office; recommends that John D. Matthews be appointed to the position. |
| *16 Aug* | *To Joseph Knox Walker.* |
| 16 Aug | From William B. Williamson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of the popularity in Kentucky of the recent tariff revision. |
| 17 Aug | From Anonymous, signed "A Lady." L. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to end the war with Mexico. |
| 17 Aug | From A. J. Cloud. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a copy of John C. Fremont's report from his expedition to the Rocky Mountains. |
| 17 Aug | From Olis B. Gordon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Claims to have spent eight hundred dollars of his personal money campaigning in eastern Pennsylvania for Polk in 1844; begs for financial assistance. |
| 17 Aug | From Garry Green. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes aid with his father's request for a military pension. |
| 17 Aug | From John Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. Announces that he has named his son James Knox Poke Jones; states that his Whig landlord will deport him as a consequence; asks Polk for money to enable him to move to Knoxville, Tenn. |
| 17 Aug | From Martha L. Longhead. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains about inadequate compensation given to American consuls; asks Polk to reappoint her husband, Robert, to a consulship "more advantageous" than the one at Londonderry, Ireland. |

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| [17 Aug 1846] | From Henry R. Schoolcraft. AL. DLC–JKP. Recounts his service as an Indian agent; desires a position in the federal government. |
| 17 Aug | From Henry Welsh. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a military position for Victor E. Piollet; notes the importance of the new tariff for upcoming state elections. |
| *17 Aug* | *From John H. Wheeler.* |
| [18 Aug 1846] | From Robert Bronaugh et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Ask Polk and the secretary of war to make recommendations for the appointment of lieutenant colonel and adjutant of the Baltimore and District of Columbia volunteers. |
| *18 Aug* | *To McDonough J. Bunch.* |
| 19 Aug | From George Bancroft. L, copy. DNA–RG 45. Encloses a copy of a letter from the Bureau of Construction Equipment and Repair; concurs with the Bureau's proposal to sell the Texas naval vessels acquired upon annexation. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 19 Aug | From Jacob Fry, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk fo popular support in Pennsylvania for a moderate tariff. |
| [19 Aug 1846] | From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that the Polks take leave of Washington for a few weeks due to illness throughout the city. |
| *20 Aug* | *From Simon Cameron.* |
| 20 Aug | From Joseph Coblentz et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Solicit a donation for the building fund Diagnothian Literary society of Marshall College. |
| 20 Aug | From Isaac Harris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a copy of the Pittsburg *Iron City* illustrating the city's growth. (Enclosure not found.) |
| *20 Aug* | *From George S. Houston.* |
| 20 Aug | From James L. Pope. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment in the federal government. |
| 20 Aug | From George Sykes. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reiterates his solicitation of an appointment for Wesley H. Slack as a revenue marine officer. |
| 21 Aug | From Joseph Mary. LS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk for money. |
| 22 Aug | From George A. Buchanan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Explains his claim to compensation from French spoliations. |
| *22 Aug* | *From Alexander Walker.* |
| 23 Aug | From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the appointment of Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte of Maryland as a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy. |
| [24 Aug 1846] | From Nathan Gaither. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses disappointment at not receiving a diplomatic post. |
| 24 Aug | From Simeon Hubbard. ALS. DLC–JKP. Applauds Polk's vetoes of the Harbors and Rivers Bill and the French Spoliations Bill. |

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| 24 Aug | From Robert H. McKee. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Explains why his delivery of wagons for military purposes has been delayed; discusses feelings about the tariff in Pennsylvania. |
| *25 Aug* | *From John H. Bills.* |
| 25 Aug | From E. L. Rousseau. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph. |
| 25 Aug | From E. Smith. ALI. DLC–JKP. Solicits a position in the federal government for her husband, C. J. W. Smith. |
| *25 Aug* | *From Frederick P. Stanton.* |
| 26 Aug | From Samuel Abbott. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits financial assistance and an appointment as customs inspector at Mobile, Ala. |
| 26 Aug | From Frederick A. Churchill. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that Ohio's governor, Thomas W. Bartley, has rejected the services of his Cincinnati Greys and that he had made a great sacrifice when he sold his business to volunteer; wishes to obtain a civil or military appointment. |
| [26 Aug 1846] | From Mary Dashiell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks that her husband, Thomas B. Dashiell, be reinstated as a clerk in the office of the treasurer or to some other position in the federal government. |
| 26 Aug | From Andrew J. Donelson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that a request for an extension of John R. B. Gardenier's furlough has been sent to William L. Marcy. |
| 26 Aug | From D. C. Glenn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses resolutions adopted at a public meeting in Jackson, Miss., which approve of the course of the Polk administration. (Enclosure not found.) |
| *26 Aug* | *From J. George Harris.* |
| *26 Aug* | *From Cornelius W. Lawrence.* |
| [26 Aug 1846] | From A. Millibin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a position in the federal government. |
| 26 Aug | From William Selden. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses correspondence from Wellington Goddin, an auctioneer from Richmond, Va., that supports his request for a three-day leave of absence; requests the approval of William B. Randolf as acting treasurer during his absence. (Enclosure not found.) |
| *26 Aug* | *From Robert F. Stockton.* |
| *27 Aug* | *From Robert Campbell, Jr.* |
| *27 Aug* | *To Franklin Pierce.* |
| [27 Aug 1846] | From Catherine W. Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that John F. Mullowny be reinstated as U.S. consul at Morocco; mentions that Gideon Pearce, an auditor's clerk and a staunch Democrat, has been passed over for promotion. |
| 28 Aug | From Anonymous, signed "An American." L. DLC–JKP. |

Warns Polk of the possibility of a Spanish-backed military force landing in Mexico for the purpose of "proclaiming the monarchical form of government and calling Spanish prince to the throne."

28 Aug — From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges the removal of two clerks in the Treasury Department.

29 Aug — From Thomas W. Bartley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses regret that some Ohio Democratic congressmen and the Ohio *Statesman* vehemently opposed the veto of the Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill.

29 Aug — From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Believes that Thomas M. Pettit, U.S. attorney for the eastern district of Pennsylvania, will be appointed to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court; recommends Henry M. Phillips as U.S. attorney.

29 Aug — From Southey Grinalds. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he has learned of the death of Charles G. Hubbard, consul at St. Johns, Puerto Rico; wishes to be considered for the vacant position.

29 Aug — From Daniel T. Jenks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits an appointment as inspector of customs at Philadelphia.

29 Aug — To A. H. Lewis. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Requests that Lewis pay the taxes on two parcels of land, one located near Johnson C.H., Ark., and a second, near Frog Bayou, Ark.; explains that Archiball Yell, who entered the lands for him and his brother, could no longer assist in this matter; directs that Lewis draw on him for any sum advanced.

29 Aug — From Reuel Williams. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that Maine has not received its fair share of patronage; recommends Nathan Weston, a former chief justice of the Maine Supreme Court, for the position of U.S. attorney general.

30 Aug — From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Denies a report, published in the Washington *Union*, that he has appointed land office examiners.

30 Aug — From Robert Wallace. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his relative John Delafield, Jr., a Memphis attorney.

31 Aug — From Maria Hester Monroe Gouverneur. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits on behalf of her son, James Monroe Gouverneur, a position in the federal government.

31 Aug — To John A. Mairs. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Reviews plantation management plans and financial arrangements through the agency of Robert Campbell, Jr.

31 Aug — From Leonard Maison. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses disappointment at not receiving appointment as postmaster at Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

31 Aug — From James W. Morgan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Presents Polk with a third box of tobacco.

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| 31 Aug | To Leland McKay and Toulmin. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Expresses gratitude for the gift of saddle cloth. |
| 31 Aug | From John H. Wheeler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses proceedings from a mass meeting in Mecklenburg County, N.C.; solicits appointment as commissioner under the Cherokee Treaty. (Enclosure not found.) |
| [September 1846] | From Linn Boyd. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from James H. Willis asking him for a recommendation for the post of assistant surgeon in the Kentucky volunteers; states that although he does not know Willis, he believes him to be well suited for the job. |
| 1 Sept | From John Appleton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that Thomas B. Childress has been ordered to the Naval Academy; Expects to procure enough ships to ship coal to the squadron in the Gulf of Mexico. |
| *1 Sept* | *To Thomas H. Benton.* |
| 1 Sept | From William J. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his friend, Samuel Edsall of Fort Wayne, Ind. |
| *1 Sept* | *To Thomas B. Childress.* |
| 1 Sept | From Samuel H. Laughlin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that the General Land Office has a growing backlog of land patents awaiting signatures from the president or the treasury secretary; notes that his predecessors left the office's records in disarray. |
| 1 Sept | To John Ritter. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Announces the appointment of Ritter's friend, Conrad Jackson, to a lieutenancy in the Revenue Service. |
| *1 Sept* | *To Archibald Wright.l* |
| 2 Sept | From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses Sandy Harris' service as customs inspector at Philadelphia; urges that John H. Frick be restored to his former position. |
| 2 Sept | From Charles Gauntt. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Encloses copies of letters from Lawrence Kearney, James C. Pickett, and Philo White. (Enclosures not found.) |
| 2 Sept | From John Hogan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses weather, agricultural production, and New York politics; inquires about a position in the federal government that he claims Polk had promised him. |
| 2 Sept | From Alonzo Potters. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends a Dr. Webb for the position of librarian at the Smithsonian Institution. |
| 2 Sept | To James H. Thomas. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. States that James H. Stephens, at Thomas' suggestion, will be appointed to a clerkship in the Treasury Department in December. |
| *2 Sept* | *From Leveritt Treadwell.* |

2 Sept — From Thomas Willing. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends John Y. Mason for navy secretary if George Bancroft resigns.

3 Sept — From Anonymous, signed "Publicola." L. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to expedite the claims of U.S. citizens against the Brazilian government.

3 Sept — From David Wilmot. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that Andrew Beaumont of Pennsylvania be appointed commissioner of public buildings for Washington City.

4 Sept — To Andrew Beaumont. ALS. DLC–JKP. Offers Beaumont an appointment as commissioner of public buildings for Washington City.

4 Sept — From Joseph Hall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Marcus Morton, collector of customs at Boston, is dismissing employees who favored sending an uncommitted delegation to the 1844 Baltimore Convention of 1844; asks Polk to find a position for George F. Emery, one of those dismissed.

4 Sept — From Edward B. Neely et al. LS, DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of his election to an honorary membership in the Union Literary Society at Washington College, Penn.

4 Sept — From William Noland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Announces his intention to resign as commissioner of public buildings, effective November 1.

*4 Sept* — *From J. Knox Walker.*

*5 Sept* — *From James Buchanan.*

*5 Sept* — *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*

5 Sept — From Robert E. H. Levering. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a position as an antiquarian to follow the army and document American antiquities.

5 Sept — From John C. Mullay. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Samuel Edsall, a prominent businessman from Fort Wayne, Ind.

6 Sept — From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a meeting to discuss patronage issues in the Philadelphia customs house.

7 Sept — From James W. Breedlove. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces O. B. Hill of New Orleans.

*7 Sept* — *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*

*7 Sept* — *From James H. Causten.*

*7 Sept* — *From John Fairfield.*

7 Sept — From Ranson H. Gillet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Announces his return from business in New York.

*7 Sept* — *To Louis McLane.*

7 Sept — To Franklin Pierce. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Renews the offer of an appointment to the position of attorney general.

7 Sept — From W. B. Sprague. ALS. DLC–JKP. Apologizes for James D. Watson, his parishioner, for soliciting an auto-

graph on his behalf.

*7 Sept* *From Brigham Young et al.*

8 Sept From Thomas Brownell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Aknowledges his appointment to inspect mail steamers in New York.

8 Sept From George W. Hopkins. ALS. DLC–JKP. seeks a diplomatic appointment; reminds Polk of Virginia's strong Democratic support.

8 Sept From Thomas Hart Hyatt. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a position as collector of customs at Genesee, N.Y., which he expects will soon be vacated.

8 Sept From Thomas P. Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that the Philadelphia postmaster, George F. Lehman, has not replaced Whig employees with Democrats.

8 Sept From Owen D. Leib. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits a federal appointment for Andrew Beaumont; contends that the Democrats of northern Pennsylvania have not received their share of patronage.

8 Sept From Evan H. Lewis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph.

8 Sept From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Levin H. Coe.

8 Sept From F. S. Myer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses his new safety device, designed to prevent the escape of sparks from the smoke stacks of steamboats and locomotives.

*8 Sept* *From Franklin Pierce.*

*9 Sept* *From George Bancroft.*

*9 Sept* *From John Y. Mason.*

9 Sept From David W. Stone. ALS. DLC–JKP. Claims that he has been unfairly dismissed from the Treasury Department and requests a new office in the government; Polk's AE states that he will be pleased to help his old acquaintance if possible.

10 Sept From Anonymous. L. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter originally intended for submission to Thomas Ritchie of the Washington *Union*; E in unidentified hand, states that the enclosure, which accuses the administration of giving important government offices to Whigs, was written in "bad temper." (Enclosure not found.)

*10 Sept* *To George Bancroft.*

10 Sept From Andrew Beaumont. ALS. DLC–JKP. Accepts his appointment as commissioner of public buildings for Washington City.

*10 Sept* *From James Buchanan.*

10 Sept From Seth A. Elliot. ALS. DLC–JKP. Suggests several improvements to the mall in Washington City.

10 Sept From Benjamin B. French. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports the death of Felix G. McConnell, an Alabama congressman,

and discusses the funeral arrangements.

*10 Sept* *From John A. Mairs.*

10 Sept From J. E. Paine. ALS. DLC–JKP Deplores the appointment of Marcus Morton as the new customs collector for the port of Boston; explains that Morton has dismissed Democrats and retained Whigs in the customs house; warns that Massachusetts Democrats "will not quietly see their friends deprived of office."

10 Sept From John W. Smith. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that he is ready to serve and will remain in New York until needed.

*10 Sept* *To David Wilmot.*

11 Sept To George Bancroft. ALS. MHi. Requests a meeting that morning.

11 Sept From Silas Wright, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends George S. Mann for the office of appraiser of merchandise for the port of New York City.

12 Sept From James W. Bradbury. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Nathan Clifford of Maine for U.S. attorney general.

12 Sept From John Norvell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces two clergymen from Scotland, Alexander Fraser and a Mr. McLaughlin.

12 Sept From Gilbert D. Taylor. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that the northern branch of the Methodist church is witholding funds from the Methodist Episcopal Church South; solicits a contribution from Polk to aid missionary work.

13 Sept From Daniel Sheffer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Updates Polk on the opinions of Pennsylvania Democrats about possible congressional candidates.

*14 Sept* *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*

14 Sept From Owen Connelly and John Kettlewell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests the return of all of their correspondence.

14 Sept From Augustine Haines. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Nathan Clifford, a Maine Democrat, to replace John Y. Mason as attorney general.

*14 Sept* *From Laura Wilson Polk Tate.*

14 Sept From Wyndham Robertson, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks replacement letters of introduction from Polk to prominent citizens of Mephis, Tenn., because he has misplaced the originals.

14 Sept From David W. Stone. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks the office of postmaster of Raleigh, N.C.

16 Sept From William H. Bowers. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks permission to use the president's name in advertising his real estate business; acknowledges that they have never met.

*16 Sept* *To J. George Harris.*

16 Sept To Edward B. Neely et al. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Ac-

knowledges honorary membership in the Union Literary Society of Washington College in Pennsylvania.

*16 Sept* *To Frederick P. Stanton.*

17 Sept From Emanuel Fisher. ALS. DLC–JKP. Claims that many Democratic office holders in Ohio are working against the president's re-nomination; Polk's AE states that "this is a fellow that insulted me in my office and I ordered him out."

17 Sept From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks the return of an 1845 letter he had written to Polk.

17 Sept From Seaborn Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Joseph Sturgis of Georgia for a position in the federal government that pays at least two-thousand dollars per year.

17 Sept To James Buchannan. ANS. DLC–FP. Orders a consular commission for George Latimer to replace the deceased Charles G. Hubbard at St. John's, Puerto Rico.

*17 Sept* *From John T. Leigh.*

18 Sept From Arthur P. Bagby. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from Robert D. Fenner praising the merits of the physician, David McKnight; Polk's AE states that he returned the enclosure to Bagby.

18 Sept From Henry Simpson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains about not having received a job at the appraiser's office of the Treasury Department; claims that C. F. Brevil and Benjamin E. Carpenter, both of whom work there, are incompetent.

18 Sept From Robert F. Stockton. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Requests a purser's appointment in the navy for his secretary, a Mr. Norris.

18 Sept From Francis Vespre. ALS. DLC–JKP. Presents a bill for semi-annual expenses at Georgetown College charged to the account of Marshall T. Polk, Jr.

19 Sept From James M. Cannon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for help in collecting an eighty-dollar debt owed to him by Polk's brother, William H. Polk.

19 Sept From William Collins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a leave of absence on Monday, September 21.

19 Sept From John Y. Mason. L. DNA–RG 45. Encloses a letter from the chief of the Bureau of Naval Construction suggesting that the U.S.S. *Lawrence* be sold.

19 Sept To William Medill. ALS. DLC–WM. Introduces Andrew Kincannon.

19 Sept From Dewitt C. Yell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk for information on the whereabouts of his father, Archibald.

*20 Sept* *From John W. Childress.*

20 Sept From Hannibal Hamlin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Nathan Clifford for appointment as attorney general.

20 Sept — From Jonas Humbert, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that another man received a patent for his invention.

21 Sept — From Anonymous, signed "WP". L. DLC–JKP. Recommends relaxing child labor laws to alleviate the shortage of sailors in the navy.

21 Sept — From Edmund F. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends William French for a clerkship.

21 Sept — From Henry Haw. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for a position at the penitentiary in Alexandria, Va.

*21 Sept* — *To William H. Haywood, Jr.*

21 Sept — From James H. Piper. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses land patents issued to William H. Bowers of Little Rock, Ark.

22 Sept — From Robert Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. Notifies Polk of the military discharge of a Mr. Drewry.

22 Sept — From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. Refers to a disagreement that he is having with former senator, Robert Wickliffe.

22 Sept — From John F. O'Bryon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to loan him twenty dollars; Polk's AE reads, "I do not know him and have none to give him."

*22 Sept* — *To Gideon J. Pillow.*

23 Sept — From Edward A. Duscomb. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to loan him ten dollars.

23 Sept — From John Keyes Paige. ALS. DLC–JKP. Vouches for the character of an army colonel, William Whistler, who is facing court martial.

23 Sept — To Robert Armstrong. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter to be delivered to Cornelius W. Lawrence; states that Sarah Polk is indisposed, but not seriously so. (Enclosure not found.)

24 Sept — From F. E. Bramhall, ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to loan him twenty dollars; Polk's AE states that he does not know him and has no money to give.

24 Sept — From Daniel Hodge. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains of a bill introduced in congress by Daniel Webster that concerns federal court decisions.

24 Sept — To Cornelius W. Lawrence. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Refers Lawrence to Robert Armstrong concerning matters of employment with the New York City customs house.

*24 Sept* — *From Richard Rush.*

*24 Sept* — *To Laura Wilson Polk Tate.*

24 Sept — To Archibald Wright. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Discusses Wright's involvement with a Richmond bank.

24 Sept — From John S. Young. ALS. DNA–RG 99. Asks Polk to resolve an issue regarding pay for the second regiment of Tennessee volunteers.

25 Sept — From Anonymous. L. DLC–JKP. Charges that Polk's ap-

pointments brought about the defeat of the Democracy in Maine.

25 Sept — From F. E. Bramhall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Apologizes for having earlier asked for money.

26 Sept — From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces George Welsh of Pennsylvania.

26 Sept — From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Francis Shoemaker of Pennsylvania.

26 Sept — From Henry H. Sylvester. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he rejected the patent application of Jonas Humbert, Jr., for lack of merit; states that Humbert may re-apply.

27 Sept — From James Hamilton, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that he intends to visit Polk later that day.

28 Sept — From David K. Hitchcock. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for an autographed book or government document for a library.

28 Sept — From Levi D. Slamm. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter claiming that the difficulty with Thomas N. Carr, consul to Morocco, was a misunderstanding.

30 Sept — From Richard Chambers. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that three volunteers were humilitated after accepting their colonel's offer to leave their regiment.

*30 Sept* — *To Nathan Clifford.*

*30 Sept* — *To John Fairfield.*

*1 Oct* — *To George M. Dallas.*

1 Oct — From William Schley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his brother, George Schley.

*1 Oct* — *From Frederick P. Stanton.*

*1 Oct* — *To Daniel Sturgeon.*

2 Oct — From Catherine M. Dix. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends William H. Vesey for the consulship at Antwerp.

*2 Oct* — *From John Fairfield.*

2 Oct — From Selah R. Hobbie. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a Major Paine and recommends him for postmaster of Rochester, N.Y.

*2 Oct* — *To William H. Polk.*

*2 Oct* — *To Archibald Yell.*

3 Oct — From Anonymous, signed by "A Friend of Wise Public Measures." L. DLC–JKP. Criticizes the 1846 tariff, Texas Annexation, and the war with Mexico.

*3 Oct* — *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*

3 Oct — From Nathan Towson. LS. DNA–RG 99. Acknowledges recieving a letter from the Tennessee secretary of state regarding the non-payment of Tennessee volunteers; encloses papers concerning the matter. (Enclosures not found.)

*4 Oct* — *From George Bancroft.*

4 Oct — From Leonard P. Cheatham. ALS. DNA–RG 99. Asks

Polk to rectify a situation in which discharged Mexican-American War volunteers were not paid properly.

6 Oct — From John Addison Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Henry Anthon and recommends his son, Henry Jr., for a position in the navy.

*7 Oct* — *To John Catron.*

7 Oct — From James Hamilton, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses the possible recall of Henry A. Wise as the consul to Rio de Janeiro and the appointment of Andrew Stevenson to that post.

7 Oct — From Julius Meiere. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for his help in obtaining a position in the navy.

8 Oct — From John Y. Mason. L. DLC–JKP. Recommends the sale of all vessels formerly in the navy of the Republic of Texas with the exception of the sloop-of-war *Austin.*

8 Oct — From Campbell P. White. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses the vote tally for the question of Negro suffrage presented at the New York constitutional convention. (Enclosure not found.)

*9 Oct* — *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*

9 Oct — From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a copy of a letter he sent on August 25, 1845, that discusses the issue of Texas annexation.

*10 Oct* — *To John W. Childress.*

*10 Oct* — *To James Hamilton, Jr.*

*10 Oct* — *To William H. Haywood, Jr.*

*10 Oct* — *To John T. Leigh.*

10 Oct — From A.O.P. Nicholson. ALS. DNA–RG 99. Asks Polk to remedy a payment misunderstanding for four Tennessee volunteers.

10 Oct — To William S. Pickett and Co. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Orders the company to insure his cotton for its transport to New Orleans and to inform him when it arrives.

*10 Oct* — *To Samuel P. Walker.*

11 Oct — From Anonymous, signed "'Liberty' and Friendship." L. DLC–JKP. Claims that several friends of an officer killed in the war with Mexico intend to kill Polk if he does not resign.

11 Oct — From Anonymous, signed "Kindness." L. DLC–JKP. Complains that the United States improperly borrowed money from a New York bank.

11 Oct — From Hugh J. Anderson. ALI. MeHi. Recommends Nathan Clifford for attorney general.

11 Oct — From John Bates. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses Congressman John Wentworth's criticism of the 1846 Harbor and River Bill.

*12 Oct* — *From William J. Childress.*

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| *12 Oct* | *From Nathan Clifford.* |
| 12 Oct | To John Fairfield. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses concern that he has not received Nathan Clifford's reply to his offer of the U.S. attorney general's post; states that John Y. Mason needs to devote his energies exclusively to the Navy Department. |
| *12 Oct* | *To Adlai O. Harris.* |
| [12 Oct 1846] | From Henry Willis Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to take action on behalf of the agricultural interests of the nation. |
| 12 Oct | From J.P. Moyers. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for a loan of eleven hundred dollars to complete his education. |
| 12 Oct | From A.O.P. Nicholson. ALS. DNA–RG 99. Asks Polk to order the payment of two Tennessee volunteers. |
| 12 Oct | From Isaac S. Pennybacker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends John J. Dyer for district court judge of Iowa. |
| 13 Oct | From Joseph R. Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Invites Polk and his cabinet to attend the launching of the iron revenue steamer, the U.S.S. *Polk,* on October 19th at the shipyard in Richmond, Va. |
| 13 Oct | From Ransom H. Gillet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses copies of state laws that are not among the holdings in the libraries of the State Department or attorney general's office. (Enclosures not found.) |
| 13 Oct | From Samuel P. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Forwards money owed Polk by J. W. Bledsoe; also discusses the sale of cotton. |
| 15 Oct | From John F. Helfenstein. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses a meeting among "western men," held in New York, concerning the Harbor and Rivers Bill that he declined to attend. |
| [15 Oct 1846] | From Thomas L. Ragsdale. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a Mrs. Foreman and a Mr. Dancy. |
| 15 Oct | From Ambrose H. Sevier. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that ninety dollars will be required to purchase land in Arkansas that had earlier belonged jointly to Polk and his brother, William H. Polk, but had been solid in 1845 to pay delinquent taxes. |
| *16 Oct* | *To George M. Dallas.* |
| 16 Oct | From John A. Hamilton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk for money. |
| 16 Oct | From Abijah Mann Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that Van Brugh Livingston be retained as New York port appraiser. |
| *17 Oct* | *To Nathan Clifford.* |
| *17 Oct* | *From Nathan Clifford.* |
| 17 Oct | From John Fairfield. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses the appointment of Nathan Clifford as attorney general and |

Whig opinions of the Mexican War.

17 Oct — From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses letters from Roberty Wickliffe and John Rowan, Jr., concerning the recall of the chargé d'affaires at Turin. (Enclosures not found.)

17 Oct — From Winfield Scott. ALS. DLC–JKP. Forwards a letter from an anonymous citizen.

18 Oct — From Daniel T. Jenks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses judicial appointments in Pennsylvania and makes several recommendations.

18 Oct — To Samuel Mulladay. ALS. DGU. Asks permission for Marshall T. Polk, Jr., and Dewitt C. Yell to absent themselves from Georgetown College for a day.

*18 Oct* — *From Silas Wright, Jr.*

19 Oct — From Anonymous. L. DLC–JKP. Questions America's ability to win the war against Mexico and recommends sending forty to fifty thousand more troops; questions the effectiveness of militia volunteers.

19 Oct — From J.J. Gunnell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks appointment as Washington building commissioner.

19 Oct — From William C. B. S. Porter. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks to participate in a proposed naval assault on a fortification in Vera Cruz Harbor.

*19 Oct* — *From James E. Saunders.*

20 Oct — From Samuel D. Adams. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that support for the war with Mexico as well as for Polk's veto of the River and Harbor Bill is strong in Mississippi.

20 Oct — From Anonymous. L. DLC–JKP. Asserts that the war with Mexico will end quickly if the U.S. Army treats civilians kindly; advises Polk to order the occupation of only port cities.

20 Oct — From Owen Connelly. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a position with the capitol police in Washington City.

20 Oct — From Ransom H. Gillet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Would like to meet with Polk to discuss laws related to public piers.

*20 Oct* — *To Robert M. McLane.*

*20 Oct* — *From James H. Thomas.*

22 Oct — From Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses Polk's personal land transactions in Mississippi.

*22 Oct* — *To Gideon J. Pillow.*

22 Oct — From Aaron Vanderpoel. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the retention of Van Brugh Livingston as an appraiser for the port of New York City.

*23 Oct* — *To James Buchanan.*

*23 Oct* — *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*

23 Oct — From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses information on a courts martial at the United States Military

Academy at West Point. (Enclosure not found.)

24 Oct — From Anonymous. L. DLC–JKP. Claims that the interests of Pennsylvania have been overlooked, notably by the recent tariff legislation; states that this is the reason that the Democrats have lost popularity in the state.

*24 Oct* — *From William C. Bouck.*

24 Oct — From Robert C. Davis. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests that Polk send him his autograph.

24 Oct — From Herschel V. Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a naval appointment for his nephew, James B. Polk.

24 Oct — From S. W. Jouett. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Recommends his brother, Samuel Jouett, for an appointment in Mexico.

24 Oct — From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to correct an error regarding a payment to the Miami Indians.

24 Oct — From Joel Turrill. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses conditions in Hawaii.

25 Oct — From Thomas Patrick Moore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks that he not be sent to a military post for the Indian Bureau.

25 Oct — From Pickett, Perkins, and Co. L. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that his cotton has not arrived in New Orleans.

26 Oct — From John C. Watrous. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Recommends Joseph C. Eldridge for navy purser.

*26 Oct* — *To Silas Wright, Jr.*

27 Oct — From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that Alexandre Bodisco, the Russian ambassador, intends to present him with a letter from the tsar announcing the engagement of Princess Olga of Russia to the prince royal of Wurttemberg.

27 Oct — To John A. Dix. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Informs Dix that he has nominated William H. Vesey of Pennsylvania for the position of U.S. consul to Antwerp.

*27 Oct* — *From John Y. Mason.*

27 Oct — From W.B. Robinson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that Addison Hill wishes to lease a portion of his Tennessee plantation.

27 Oct — From Joel B. Sutherland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends running telegraph wires to New Orleans.

28 Oct — From Joshua N. Danforth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a sermon from the minister of the Second Presbyterian Church in Washington City. Enclosure not found.)

28 Oct — From J. B. Guthrie. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains of patronage given to Whigs and other opponents of the Democrats.

28 Oct — From Thomas L. Kane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Whises to discuss his recently completed trip to the western territories.

28 Oct — From Jacob Latting. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that the military adopt a wagon of his design that he claims is superior to those currently in use.

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| *29 Oct* | *To James H. Thomas.* |
| 30 Oct | From Henry Colton, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a check for five million dollars that he claims is from John Jacob Astor. E in unidentified hand reads, "supposed hoax." |
| 30 Oct | From Robert M. McLane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that he is en route to Mexico and expects to commence his liason duties between General Zachary Taylor and Polk within a matter of days. |
| 30 Oct | From Abijah Mann, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his son-in-law, Charles Fink. |
| 30 Oct | From Samuel P. Walker. ALS. Polk Memorial Association. Discusses the cotton market in Mississippi and asks about the dispensation of several leased properties. |
| *30 Oct* | *From Silas Wright, Jr.* |
| *31 Oct* | *From George W. Bowman.* |
| *31 Oct* | *To George M. Dallas.* |
| 31 Oct | From James Lee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses New York politics. |
| 31 Oct | From Levi D. Slamm. N. DLC–JKP. Accepts a position as navy purser for the port of Boston. |
| *31 Oct* | *To Roger B. Taney.* |
| *1 Nov* | *From Daniel Graham.* |
| [Nov 1846] | From Eli M. Gregg et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seek the removal of a quartermaster officer in the Pennsylvania volunteers on moral grounds. |
| 1 Nov | From George P. Morris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to review a literary work. |
| 2 Nov | From Maria P. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Wishes Polk a happy birthday. |
| *3 Nov* | *From George Bancroft.* |
| *3 Nov* | *From Robert Campbell, Jr.* |
| 3 Nov | From Charles W. Dabney. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for appointing him U.S. consul to the Azores. |
| 3 Nov | From Eneas McFaul, Jr. ALS. DNA–RG 76. Informs Polk that Mexican authorities in Tabasco falsely imprisoned an American businessman. |
| *4 Nov* | *From Robert Armstrong.* |
| 4 Nov | From John W. Childress. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses the future delivery of a slave that he purchased for Polk; notes that the cotton crop is very good but that sickness has hindered the picking of it. |
| 4 Nov | From James G. Harris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Jesse Leigh who edits the Hickman (Ky.) *Commercial Standard*. |
| 4 Nov | From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Suggests that the son of William Crawford, a federal judge in Alabama, receive the vacant position of naval purser for Boston. |
| *4 Nov* | *From John Slidell.* |

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| *4 Nov* | *From Campbell P. White.* |
| 5 Nov | From Josephus C. Guild. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses the war with Mexico and asserts that fifteen to twenty thousand more troops are necessary to achieve victory. |
| 5 Nov | From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–PHi. Conveys a message from the mayor of Georgetown requesting that steps be taken to repair a damaged bridge over the Potomac River. |
| 5 Nov | From Woodson Wren. ALS. DLC–FP. Asks for a federal job in New Orleans; discusses his involvement in the Louisiana Purchase. |
| *5 Nov* | *From Archibald Yell.* |
| 6 Nov | From Thomas Ford. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Almon W. Babbitt, a Mormon elder. |
| 6 Nov | From Ransom H. Gillet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that the Democrats suffered a serious defeat in the New York elections. |
| *6 Nov* | *From Jacob Gould.* |
| 6 Nov | From Ezekeil P. McNeal. ALS. DLC–JKP. Relays an offer by Simeon Marsh to purchase 244 acres of land near Denmark, Tenn. |
| *6 Nov* | *From William H. Polk.* |
| 7 Nov | From John A. Dix. ALS. DLC–JKP. Sends his wife's thanks for the appointment of William H. Vesey as U.S. consul to Antwerp; suggests that Polk would carry New York if he ran for president in 1848. |
| 7 Nov | From A. I. Hill. ALS. DLC–GW. Requests that his son, John S. Hill, be appointed to the Naval Academy. |
| 7 Nov | From John Hogan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses his discontent with the distribution of federal offices in New York. |
| 7 Nov | From Jacob Lattin. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Suggests that the army develop an armored wagon for use in pacifying Mexican urban centers; the design calls for a small wagon covered in oak planks and armed with a small field piece. |
| 7 Nov | From David R. Mitchell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks that the federal government negotiate an end to the Comanche uprising in Texas; suggests that victory in the war with Mexico will be difficult to achieve. |
| *8 Nov* | *To Aaron V. Brown.* |
| *8 Nov* | *To Ezekiel P. McNeal.* |
| *8 Nov* | *From Vernon K. Stevenson.* |
| 8 Nov | From James Thompson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses the failure of the Democratic Party in the 1846 elections in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Maine; advises on tariff policy. |
| 9 Nov | From R. Bates. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asserts that Robert Desilver should replace Paul S. Forbes as the consul to |

Canton, China; claims that Edward Barnett, a navy lieutenant station at Hong Kong, can prove that Forbes was involved in the opium trade.

9 Nov — To Aaron V. Brown. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Forwards a full power of attorney "confirming and ratifying the purchase of Grundy place," the legal transaction for which Brown had previously completed.

*9 Nov* — *To Louis McLane.*

9 Nov — From Elisha A. Maynard. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses the Democracy's defeat in the New York elections and comments on national politics.

10 Nov — From Joseph C. Eldridge. ALS. DLC–RG 45. Wishes to be appointed a pursership in the navy.

10 Nov — From Alexander McCulloch, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks to borrow money.

10 Nov — From George Petrie. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses the potential removal of several Democratic postmasters in New York.

*10 Nov* — *From James H. Thomas.*

11 Nov — From Washington Greenhow. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests appointment to a government post.

11 Nov — From James H. Tate. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a federal job.

12 Nov — From Robert B. Alexander et al. ALS. DLC–GW. Suggests that Alex C. Morton be appointed to the position of navy purser.

12 Nov — From Robert H. Campbell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Sends a gift of one thousand Cuban cigars.

12 Nov — From Joseph Hall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asserts that the Whigs carried the Massachusetts elections because of factionalism in the Democratic Party.

12 Nov — From Albert H. Hoyt. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph.

13 Nov — From Burrell B. Taylor. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for appointing him U.S. consul to Buenos Aires.

*14 Nov* — *From Robert Armstrong.*

*14 Nov* — *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*

14 Nov — To John A. Mairs. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. States that he is very satisfied with Mairs' management of his Mississippi plantation and expresses pleasure that Mairs will serve another year as overseer.

14 Nov — To Pickett, Perkins, and Co. ALS. DLC–JKP. Instructs his agents to sell his cotton.

*14 Nov* — *To Samuel P. Walker.*

14 Nov — From Campbell P. White. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses the New York and Pennsylvania state elections of 1846.

*14 Nov* — *From Thomas T. Whittlesey.*

16 Nov — From John H. Bills. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Henry

Lake, a Memphis lawyer, for a federal position.

16 Nov — To John W. Childress. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for the return of a slave on loan.

*16 Nov* — *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*

*16 Nov* — *From Charles W. Woodbury.*

17 Nov — To Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS. DLC–JKP. Issues instructions to accept an offer of one thousand dollars for 244 acres of his land near Denmark, Tenn.

17 Nov — From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Returns a letter from John D. Matthews to Polk.

17 Nov — From Charles B. Moss. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses the defeat of the Democratic Party in the New York state elections of 1846; suggests John A. Dix as a replacement for William Marcy as secretary of war.

*17 Nov* — *To Zachary Taylor.*

*18 Nov* — *From Aaron Vanderpoel.*

19 Nov — From Benjamin F. Butler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces two Methodist missionaries, Charles Pitman and W. M. Roberts, en route to Oregon.

19 Nov — From Wilson McCandless. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks to be appointed U.S. consul to Brazil.

20 Nov — From James M. Goodwin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks Polk's autograph.

*20 Nov* — *From William H. Polk.*

21 Nov — From George M. Bibb et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Insist that James W. Schaumburg be reinstated as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

21 Nov — From B.H. Boynton. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Discusses experiments in gun ammunition.

*21 Nov* — *To Aaron V. Brown.*

21 Nov — From John W. Campbell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to petition Congress to pay the expenses of federal pension agents.

21 Nov — From John W. Forney. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James F. Howe, Washington correspondent for the Philadephia *Pennsylvanian*.

21 Nov — To Pickett, Perkins, and Co. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests that one hundred dollars be paid from his personal account to Richard Valentine.

21 Nov — From John A. Ragan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to accept a gift of twenty-two oranges or apples.

*21 Nov* — *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*

21 Nov — From James H. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks information about William Davidson's deed to some 5,000 acres of land near Cornersville, N.C.; states that the document was thought to have been in the hands of the late Marshall T. Polk.

21 Nov — To Richard Valentine. ALS. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges receipt of a $90 draft drawn on him by A. H. Lewis of Arkansas and also receipt of a $10 bank note "to make the convenient sum of one hundred dollars"; will direct Pickett, Perkins, and Co., his commission merchants in New Orleans, to pay Valentine the sum of $100.

22 Nov — From Alexander H. Everett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Defends the character of Paul S. Forbes, U.S. consul in Canton.

*23 Nov* — *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*

23 Nov — From Edwin Dibrell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a government job.

23 Nov — From Isaac Pennybacker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that Harrison Holt be appointed surgeon in the Virginia volunteers and George W. Hopkins be given a federal post.

25 Nov — From Henry Brewerton ALS. DNA–RG 404. Makes a recommendation for the chaplaincy at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

25 Nov — From W.W. Carothers et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for a donation for Washington College in East Tennessee.

25 Nov — From Charles Serruys. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Oscar Parrish.

26 Nov — From Joseph C. Eldridge. ALS. DLC–JKP. Answers Polk's questions regarding the 1844-45 session of the Congress of the Republic of Texas.

*26 Nov* — *From Daniel Graham.*

27 Nov — From Thomas M. Acton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Sends Polk a due bill for a subscription to his newspaper, the Jackson *Republican*.

27 Nov — From William L. Helfenstein. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses John Wentworth's opposition to the Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1846; comments on the defeat of the Democratic party in the New York and Pennsylvania state elections; suggests that the continued assignment of Charles Stewart, a navy captain and hero of the War of 1812, to the Mexican Squadron would be beneficial to navy recruitment.

27 Nov — From Eliakim Littell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends that the United States annex northern Mexico.

*30 Nov* — *From John W. Childress.*

30 Nov — From Jacob L. Martin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asserts that France and Britain are no longer concerned with the U.S. invasion of Mexico; contends that the Battle of Monterey demonstrated the fighting acumen of the volunteer troops.

30 Nov — From John Y. Mason. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that he has commissioned Levi Slamm as navy purser.

30 Nov — From Isaac D. Pasco. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Claims to have invented an improved artillery design that would fire

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| | simultaneously two cannon balls attached by chain. |
| *30 Nov* | *From Francis W. Pickens.* |
| *30 Nov* | *From Vernon K. Stevenson.* |
| 1 Dec | From George Bancroft. ALS. DLC–JKP. Forwards Polk a newspaper article. (Enclosure not found.) |
| 1 Dec | From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Sends a letter concerning John K. Kane. |
| 1 Dec | From John K. Kane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests permisssion to hand deliver a letter from Francis R. Shunk, governor of Pennsylvania. |
| 1 Dec | From Aaron Vanderpoel. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a newly-elected New York state representative, Edward R. Carpentier,. |
| *3 Dec* | *From George Bancroft.* |
| 3 Dec | From Benjamin F. Butler . ALS DLC–JKP. Introduces Edward R. Carpenter, a newly-elected New York state representative. |
| 3 Dec | From John McKeon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces newly-elected member of the New York legislature, Edward R. Carpentier. |
| 3 Dec | From Robert H. Morris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Edward R. Carpentier, a newly elected New York state representative. |
| 3 Dec | From William Fitzgerald. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Jesse Leigh, editor of the Hickman (Ky.) *Commercial Standard*. |
| 4 Dec | From Alexander Hamilton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses support for an independent treasury system; advises on the best methods for financing the Mexican War. |
| 4 Dec | To Richard Rush. N. NHi. Requests a meeting. |
| 5 Dec | From Fr. Ganahl. ALS. DLC–JKP. Sends a collection of aquatic plants. |
| *5 Dec* | *From Ezekiel P. McNeal.* |
| 7 Dec | From Charles C. Cargill. ALS. DLc–JKP. Asks to be given the task of finding a suitable location for a federal cannon foundry. |
| 7 Dec | From Edmund Laffan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Sends two boxes from Robert Campbell, Jr. |
| 8 Dec | From Gideon J. Pillow. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces John B. Wells. |
| 9 Dec | From Cornelius W. Lawrence. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Effingham L. Townsend. |
| 9 Dec | From Samuel Mitchell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Resigns as army paymaster. |
| 9 Dec | From Eliza W. Rainey. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for kindnesses extended her son while at the Naval Academy. |
| 10 Dec | From Isaac F. Blears. ALS. DLC–JKP. Criticizes Polk's |

message to Congress.

10 Dec — From Seth A. Elliot. ALS. DLC–JKP. Criticizes public comments made by Daniel Webster.

10 Dec — From Cornelius W. Lawrence. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces John C. Cheesman.

10 Dec — From Edward J. Mallett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks federal employment.

10 Dec — From John D. Matthews. ALS. DLC–JKP. Forwards a letter from several citizens from Lexington, Ky., who disapprove of the violent behavior by local Whigs toward him. (Enclosure not found.)

11 Dec — From Samuel Cushman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses Polk's recent message to Congress and expresses support for the war with Mexico.

11 Dec — From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Arranges for Polk to meet with a friend, a Mr. Grimes.

*12 Dec* — *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*

12 Dec — To Robert Campbell, Jr. AL, fragment. DLC–JKP. Instructs Campbell to purchase additional slaves for his Mississippi plantation, and to see that his current crop of cotton is sold as soon as possible.

12 Dec — From Ichabod Lindsey et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Assert that the Democratic citizens of Charlestown, Mass., oppose the retention of Democrats who obtained federal positions during the Tyler administration.

*12 Dec* — *From Robert M. McLane.*

12 Dec — To John A. Mairs. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter for Robert Campbell, Jr.; instructs Mairs to send information on the sale of his cotton. (Enclosure not found.)

*12 Dec* — *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*

12 Dec — From William W. Tompkins et al. LS. MB. Recommends Aaron Ward to be a major general of New York volunteers.

*13 Dec* — *From Louis McLane.*

*13 Dec* — *From Richard Rush.*

*14 Dec* — *From Hugh J. Anderson.*

14 Dec — From George R. McFarlane. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Informs Polk of the status of the Pennsylvania volunteer regiment mustering for duty in Mexico and recommends Edward C. Lewis as the regiment's paymaster; also states that Polk's recent message to Congress was met with "general approbation" in the region; incudes the endorsement of eight Pennsylvania militia officers.

14 Dec — From John McKeon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces John C. Cheesman.

*14 Dec* — *From James K. Paulding.*

14 Dec — From R. P. Raney. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asserts that Jesse Leigh, who is seeking aid from Polk, is a Whig.

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| *14 Dec* | *From James Walker.* |
| *15 Dec* | *From Aaron V. Brown.* |
| 15 Dec | From James H.G. Langley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Offers to sell Polk the original of this portrait previously printed in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review.* |
| 15 Dec | From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests the return of a letter of recommendation from John B. Manchester. |
| 15 Dec | From Elijah F. Purdy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces James Connor. |
| 16 Dec | From Benjamin F. Butler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asserts that Polk made a strong case supporting war with Mexico in his annual address to Congress. |
| 16 Dec | From William J. Hough. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk that the Washington City Council wants to build the Smithsonian Institution between seventh and twelfth streets. |
| *16 Dec* | *From Daniel T. Jenks.* |
| 16 Dec | From George Royall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Accuses Daniel Webster of "turpitude, duplicity, falsehood, and meanness" for criticizing Polk in a speech given in Philadelphia. |
| *16 Dec* | *From Samuel P. Walker.* |
| 17 Dec | From George Cadwalader. ALS. PHi. Suggests Thomas L. Kane for the position of paymaster for a brigade organizing for duty in Mexico. |
| *17 Dec* | *From Charles J. Ingersoll.* |
| 17 Dec | From Ellen Balfour Lockley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a personal loan. |
| 17 Dec | From John McKeon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses Whig opposition to the Mexican War. |
| *17 Dec* | *From John A. Mairs.* |
| 17 Dec | From Thomas M. Pettit. ALS. PPAmP. Recommends Thomas L. Kane as army paymaster. |
| *18 Dec* | *From Alfred Balch.* |
| 18 Dec | From John Pickell et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Invite Polk to the funeral of Samuel Ringgold, late army major from Baltimore. |
| 21 Dec | From John Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks to be retained as collector of customs. |
| 21 Dec | From George W. Sampson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests an interview for several Chinese missionaries. |
| *21 Dec* | *From Frederick P. Stanton.* |
| *21 Dec* | *From Joel Turrill.* |
| *22 Dec* | *To Ezekiel P. McNeal.* |
| 22 Dec | From John N. Pumroy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Expresses support for the Mexican War. |
| *23 Dec* | *To James Walker.* |

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| 24 Dec | From Benjamin F. Butler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces John E. Devlin of New York. |
| 24 Dec | From John M. McCalla. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Robert McCarty who has developed improvements in gunnery design. |
| 25 Dec | From Thomas J. Green. ALS. NcU. Gives strategic advice for conducting the Mexican War. |
| *25 Dec* | *From Henry Horn.* |
| *25 Dec* | *To Jane Knox Polk.* |
| 26 Dec | From Jonas P. Levy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Forwards a letter from Samuel Newell, the former U.S. consul to Texas. (Enclosure not found.) |
| *26 Dec* | *From Richard Rush.* |
| *28 Dec* | *To George M. Dallas.* |
| 28 Dec | From J. George Harris. ALS. DLC–JKP. States that a Mexican vessel flying the British ensign entered Havana Harbor and that only later did the officers of the U.S. naval vessel standing off shore discover the deception; complains that his full salary at the Memphis Naval Yard should not have been disallowed by the auditors. |
| 28 Dec | From Jesse Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses federal appointments. |
| 28 Dec | To Nicholas P. Trist. ALS. DLC–FP. Requests that the papers relating to the Keller pardon be processed for signature. |
| 29 Dec | From Chester Ashley. ALS. DLC–JKP. Makes appointment recommendations. |
| *29 Dec* | *To Andrew J. Donelson.* |
| 29 Dec | From George D. Lynn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Solicits Polk's autograph. |
| 30 Dec | From John Miller et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Invite Polk to a celebration of the Battle of New Orleans. |
| 31 Dec | From W. Vanbenthuysen. ALS. DLC–JKP. Forwards a New Orleans *Delta* article critical of the administration's war policies. (Enclosure not found.) |

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