

Correspondence of James K. Polk

VOLUME III, 1835-1836

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JAMES K. POLK



Volume III
1835-1836

HERBERT WEAVER

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1975

Vanderbilt University Press

Nashville

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Polk, James Knox, Pres. U.S., 1795-1849.
Correspondence of James K. Polk

CONTENTS: v. 1. 1817-1832.—v. 2. 1833-1834.
v. 3. 1835-1836.

1. Polk, James Knox, Pres. U.S., 1795-1849.

I. Weaver, Herbert, ed. II. Title

E337.8.P63 973.6'10924 75-84005

ISBN 0-8265-1146-5 (v. I)

ISBN 0-8265-1176-7 (v. II)

ISBN 0-8265-1201-1 (v. III)

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Printed in the United States of America
by Kingsport Press, Inc., Kingsport, Tennessee

Sponsored by

Vanderbilt University
The National Historical Publications Commission
The Tennessee Historical Commission
The Polk Memorial Association

To
Nell Weaver Ogletree
and
Beulah Weaver Austin

PREFACE

During the two years bridged by this volume, James K. Polk began to receive rewards for his steady party regularity and complete loyalty to the Jackson administration. In the crucial election year when a successor to Andrew Jackson had to be chosen, Polk was cast in a political role of vastly greater importance than ever before, both nationally and in his own state. Ever since June 1834, when John Bell had attracted enough stray Whig votes to beat him for Speaker of the House, Polk had bent every effort to reverse that outcome in the next Congress. Never congenial, these two Tennesseans, who were nominally of the same party, became bitter enemies playing for high political stakes.

Taking advantage of Bell's drift away from Jacksonian ranks, Polk endeavored to capture votes by charging Bell with attempting to split the party. So successful were his efforts that when the Twenty-fourth Congress convened in December 1835, he triumphed with surprising ease, gaining victory on the first ballot, 132 to 84. While occupying the Speaker's chair, in addition to burdensome parliamentary duties Polk was called upon to act even more forcefully than he had in the past to preserve unity in the Democratic party.

Described by his most recent biographer, Charles Sellers, as the first truly partisan Speaker of the House, Polk presided at a time when the question of proper disposition of petitions for abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia became dangerously heated. Trying to preserve some semblance of harmony in the Democratic party between adamant southern supporters of slavery and northerners defiantly jealous of their right to peti-

tion Congress, Polk adopted a strict-construction attitude toward operation of the rules of the House.

On a more personal level the new Speaker faced a challenge of a different sort. John Bell, Balie Peyton, and Henry A. Wise, all of them residing in the same boarding house with Hugh L. White, made every effort to embarrass Polk and make life miserable for him. They charged him with partisan unfairness, challenged his interpretation of rules, and in abusive language accused him of acting as an iron-fisted tyrant. Bell was more circumspect than the two younger men, usually avoiding direct confrontation with the Speaker. Peyton and Wise challenged Polk's leadership by trying to cast doubt on his moral and physical courage. They hurled unqualified insults and showered him with so much abuse that it was widely believed that they were trying to goad him into a duel. With his usual sense of personal discipline, reinforced by constant reminders from his friends, he refused to be drawn into open conflict. Nevertheless he found it necessary on at least one occasion to yield the chair to make a dramatic and effective refutation of his detractors' charges.

Polk was also galled by attacks from another source that he found more difficult to parry. Established to further the presidential ambitions of White and to strike every possible blow at those who opposed his candidacy, the *Washington Sun* parroted so many of the most vicious attacks of Peyton and Wise that Polk came to believe that they were actually writing for the paper. Eventually the crudeness of these attacks began to nullify their effectiveness, but the caustic exchanges between factions posed a threat to the very existence of the old Jacksonian party.

Polk found little comfort in the obvious recognition of his increased political stature, and when Congress adjourned in July 1836 he wearily set out for Tennessee. Without taking time for rest he plunged headlong into the melee resulting from the White-Van Buren cleavage in the Democratic ranks. Of the Tennessee congressional delegation only Polk, Cave Johnson, and Felix Grundy were actively opposed to White's candidacy. Johnson had neither the national nor the state exposure of Polk, while Grundy, perhaps fearing for his re-election as senator by

an increasingly Whig-dominated legislature, kept as low a political profile as possible. Polk therefore shouldered the major burden in trying to check the rise of the Whig Party in Tennessee.

Although he was unopposed in his district, Polk was fully aware that his political future depended upon continued support from his immediate constituency, and he campaigned with as much determination as he had in 1833. In canvassing he avoided direct mention of Martin Van Buren and did not discuss the position that Tennessee should adopt toward the impending Democratic Convention at Baltimore. He did, however, urge his listeners not to be swayed by those who had deserted the Old Hero in the hour of crisis. The rigors of the campaign took their toll, forcing Polk to retreat in August to a remote health resort in Hickman County where he slowly recovered. In his weakened condition, he was unable to campaign with full vigor, in September and October, in support of candidates for state offices.

In an effort to strengthen his party in the state, Polk helped to promote the organization and funding of several newspaper ventures. The most successful were the *Nashville Union*, the *Columbia Democrat*, and the *Shelbyville Western Star*. Polk also hoped to buttress the party press outside of Middle Tennessee, but his efforts culminated in nearly total failure. In the crucial campaigns of 1835 and 1836, moreover, the effectiveness of the *Nashville Union* was diminished by its editor's frequent and extended periods of inebriation. Although Polk believed that Samuel H. Laughlin's talents partially compensated for his intemperate habits, it became necessary to fill the void caused by his absences, as well as to improve the quality of the *Columbia Democrat* by soliciting regular contributions to the pages of the newspapers from John Catron, a judge of the state supreme court, A. O. P. Nicholson, and James Walker.

Despite all the efforts of Polk and his allies the political storm in 1836 left the old Tennessee Jackson party hopelessly split. The White-Bell alliance won the presidential contest in Tennessee, but Polk was able to salvage his own district for Van Buren. His efforts were not in vain, however, for if Bell had emerged as the state leader of the Whigs, just as clearly Polk

had come forth as the leader of the Democrats. He was prepared for a statewide contest, and he was already being mentioned as a possible gubernatorial candidate, perhaps with Bell as his opponent.

Family and personal concerns intermittently broke through and temporarily diverted Polk's attention from politics. In August 1836, his sister Naomi Polk Harris died after a long illness. His youngest brother, Samuel W. Polk, a student at Yale, gave him little cause to worry, but additional bills from North Carolina frequently reminded him of William H. Polk's financial irresponsibility while he was a student there. Late in 1836 William bought Dr. Silas M. Caldwell's share of Polk's Mississippi plantation, thereafter showing evidence of increased maturity. Caldwell remained Polk's partner in Haywood County. Another brother-in-law, James Walker, kept Polk informed on business and political developments in Maury County. He was so persistent in his demands for assistance in the matter of mail contracts, however, that he finally frayed the patience of the usually self-possessed Polk. Adlai O. Harris of the firm of Caruthers and Harris of New Orleans handled Polk's business affairs at that port, sometimes advancing money to his creditors. Dr. William R. Rucker, a brother-in-law from Murfreesboro, became a good source of political news and often gave Polk sound political advice. With loyal members of his family circle looking after his interests for him, Polk had less reason for economic worries than for political ones.

This Volume

The growing bulk of the correspondence of James K. Polk during 1835 and 1836 has necessitated a more stringent selectivity for this volume. Almost a thousand letters have been examined, and of these, 690 were chosen for publication, 506 in full and 184 in summarized form. More than a hundred of those published are family letters, chiefly exchanges with five brothers-in-law. The complete absence of correspondence on the distaff side of the family was predictable. Sarah Polk accompanied her husband on most of his travels; his sisters depended upon their husbands to

sustain family communication. Seven letters from Polk's two surviving brothers have been included, but none from Polk to either of them has been found.

Political affairs, always a major ingredient in Polk's correspondence, pre-empt more space here than in the previous volumes. Colleagues in the House of Representatives, who by electing him their Speaker acknowledged his leadership in the administration party, reported to him on political trends in their states while he was at home in Tennessee. Faithful friends at home kept him abreast of state and local political developments when he was at Washington. Some 125 exchanges with Andrew Jackson, Felix Grundy, Cave Johnson, Andrew Jackson Donelson, John Catron, Samuel H. Laughlin, and A. O. P. Nicholson shed much light on events surrounding the presidential candidacy of Hugh L. White and the overthrow of the Jackson party in Tennessee.

Continuing under the assumption that their primary responsibility is to assemble and make available the significant correspondence of James K. Polk, the editors have made no important changes in the editorial procedures adopted for Volumes I and II. Selectivity has been necessary, but otherwise the editors have continued in their efforts to reproduce the correspondence in a form as faithful to the original text of each letter as possible; original spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar have been preserved except when slight alterations have been required for the sake of clarity. Lower-case letters at the beginning of sentences have been converted to capitals. When it has been impossible at other places to determine whether the writer intended a capital or a lower-case letter, current style has been followed. Commas and semicolons have been inserted sparingly in sentences that lack clarity or are deficient in punctuation. Superfluous dashes have generally been deleted, and those that appeared at the ends of sentences have been converted to appropriate punctuation marks. Words unintentionally repeated by the writers have been deleted. These minor changes have been made silently, without editorial indications of where they occur. Letters that were particularly difficult to decipher or those written by semiliterate persons have been given special attention, and that fact is indicated in the

footnotes. Reliance on the ever useful *sic* has been severely limited.

As all the letters printed are either to or from James K. Polk, his name will seldom be included in the headings that appear above them. Regardless of their position in the original manuscript, the salutation, provenance, and date will ordinarily appear on a single line just below the heading. Except in rare instances, complimentary closings have been omitted. An unnumbered note at the end of each letter gives the place to which the letter is addressed, place and date of previous publication, if any, and information as to significant markings such as "confidential" or "private." The present location of each letter is also given unless it is in the Polk Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. All items are presumed to be autograph letters signed unless otherwise noted.

Numbered annotations follow the unnumbered note. Ordinarily, a brief explanation or identification is given upon the first mention of a person, place, or special subject. Later appearances of such persons, places, or subjects are not usually accompanied by editorial comment. To identify everything is, of course, impossible; some items have been identified only tentatively. The editors thought, however, that as policy, giving the slightest information was desirable. The names of some persons are marked "unidentified" either because of unavailability of information or because of some uncertainty as to which of two or more persons by the same name was intended. Unusual cases have been explained briefly. The index will be helpful in seeking the location of the original explanation or identification.

The annotations often have been assembled from several sources. Frequently the sources are so obvious as to need no identification. These considerations, coupled with a desire to insure that the footnotes do not overwhelm the presentation of the textual material, have persuaded the editors to forego the citation of sources in footnotes.

Acknowledgments

In 1972, at the time editorial work on this volume was just beginning, Dr. Paul H. Bergeron left the project to accept an

attractive offer at the University of Tennessee. We have missed his editorial eye, his good judgment, and his companionship. In September 1972, Dr. Kermit L. Hall, recent graduate of the University of Minnesota, joined the Vanderbilt University Department of History as an assistant professor and became at the same time associate editor of the *Correspondence of James K. Polk*. He has moved quietly and easily into his new work and has already shown his ability to step into the big shoes of Dr. Bergeron, thus making this transition much easier than was anticipated. The production of this volume was also speeded when Ralph J. Christian, a doctoral candidate at Vanderbilt University, received a National Historical Publications Commission Fellowship and was assigned to the project for one year. He proved of great value during the final stages of work on this volume and in the early phase of work on the fourth volume.

Others to whom we are indebted for help in preparing this volume are too numerous to be mentioned individually, but we acknowledge to each of them our gratitude. We are especially indebted to Messrs. Roger Bruns, John D. Macoll, and Fred Shelley, who carried on the affairs of the National Historical Publications Commission during the months between the retirement of Dr. Oliver W. Holmes and the appointment of Dr. E. Berkeley Tompkins as the new Executive Director of the Commission. We are equally grateful for the unfailing encouragement and steadfast support by the Tennessee Historical Commission and its chairman, Mr. Robert A. McGaw. The sustained support of Miss Mary Elizabeth Cayce, Mrs. Harriet Quin, and Mrs. Barbara Finney of the Polk Memorial Association is most gratefully acknowledged.

The staffs of the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Joint University Libraries, the National Archives, and the Library of Congress have put us deeply in their debt by their generous and unselfish assistance. We are particularly appreciative of the unfailing kindness of Miss Kendall Cram and Mrs. Jean Waggener of the Tennessee State Library and Archives. We continue greatly in the debt of Mrs. Jill McKnight Garrett and the other Maury County ladies whose labor in the records of their county has been of inestimable value to us in our work. Our dependence upon Blanche Henry Weaver grows with the

publication of each volume of the series. Her efforts in co-ordinating the various activities of the project and making the index were invaluable.

Finally we wish to express our thanks to Mrs. Lillian C. Swingley who typed the manuscript, and to Mr. David Howell Jones for his willingness to take on the job of copy-editing, a task not ordinarily considered part of the job of the director of a university press. We wish also, to express our appreciation for the work of Mr. Gary G. Gore in designing and producing the volume.

Herbert Weaver

Nashville, Tennessee
September 1974

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Chronology of James K. Polk

1795	November 2	Born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
1806	Fall	Moved to Maury County, Tennessee
1812	Fall	Underwent major surgery by Dr. Ephraim McDowell in Danville, Kentucky
1813	July	Began study under Robert Henderson at Zion Church Academy
1816	January	Entered University of North Carolina as a sophomore
1818	June	Graduated from University of North Carolina
	Fall	Began reading law in office of Felix Grundy
1819	September	Elected clerk of the senate of Tennessee General Assembly
1820	June	Admitted to the bar
1823	August	Elected to the lower house of Tennessee General Assembly
1824	January 1	Married to Sarah Childress of Murfreesboro
1825	August	Elected to United States House of Representatives
1827	August	Re-elected to House of Representatives
	November 5	Death of his father, Samuel Polk
1829	August	Re-elected to House of Representatives
1831	January 21	Death of his brother Franklin, aged 28
	April 12	Death of his brother Marshall, aged 26
	August	Re-elected to House of Representatives
	September 28	Death of his brother John, aged 24
1833	August	Re-elected to House of Representatives
	December	Became chairman, Ways and Means Committee
1834	June	Defeated by John Bell for Speaker of the House

1835	August	Re-elected to House of Representatives
	December 7	Elected Speaker of the House over John Bell
1836	August 6	Death of his sister Naomi, wife of Adlai O. Harris
1837	August	Re-elected to House of Representatives
	September 4	Re-elected Speaker of the House
1839	August	Elected Governor of Tennessee over Newton Cannon
1841	August	Defeated in gubernatorial election by James C. Jones
1843	August	Defeated in gubernatorial election by James C. Jones
1844	May	Nominated for the presidency at Democratic National Convention
	November	Elected President of the United States over Henry Clay
1845	March 4	Inaugurated as President of the United States
1849	March 4	Yielded office to his successor, Zachary Taylor
	June 15	Died in Nashville

Correspondence of James K. Polk

VOLUME III, 1835–1836

1835

FROM ADAM HUNTSMAN¹

My Dear Sir Jackson [Tennessee] 1st of Jany 1835

I suppose you are all so tightly stuffed with Christmas pudding that you have but little time to write to any but your own constituents. Now as Davy of the River Country² does not honor me with a line I must either claim it of some of my old acquaintances or do without. In fact I should like to hear from you occassionally in relation to the actings and doings of your great folks at Washington and return for which I will give you some nonsense.

I begin to believe I can beat Davy and carry McMean's³ weight. I have been in all the Counties but one in this District and Crockett is evidently loosing ground or otherwise he never was as strong as I supposed him to be. Perhaps it is both. If my friends take anything of a lively interest in it I think my prospects are as good as usual. He is eternally sending Anti Jackson documents here and it has its effect. If he carries his land Bill⁴ it will give him strength. Otherwise the conflict will not be a difficult one.

A. HUNTSMAN

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Emma Inman Williams, editor, "Letters of Adam Huntsman to James K. Polk," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, VI (1947), 339.

1. A native of Virginia, Huntsman moved first to Knoxville, where he studied law, and then to Overton County, where he began practice. While in the latter place he served three terms in the upper house of the General Assembly. In 1821 he moved to Madison County, where he became a leading

criminal lawyer. He was a member of the state constitutional convention in 1834.

2. David Crockett, then a member of the United States House of Representatives.

3. Probably James R. McMeans, a lawyer and political figure then living in Henry County. McMeans had served in the upper house of the state legislature.

4. This bill would give priority to occupants' claims to lands in the Western District that had not been appropriated.

FROM FRANCIS SLAUGHTER¹

Columbia. January 1, 1835

A resident of Maury County asks Polk's assistance in obtaining appointment as consul, preferably at Brazoria, Texas, or at Galveston.

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Letters of Application and Recommendation, 1829-1837 (RG 59), National Archives.

1. Slaughter had lived in Maury County for many years and was apparently a kinsman of William K. Hill of Columbia. He received appointment as consul at San Jacinto in the Galveston Bay area.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL¹

Dr. Sir Beanlands [Fayette County] January 2nd 1835

I returned from Mississippi a few days since after a long laborious trip of four weeks. I met with James Brown² at Chocchuma.³ He had not Bot. a plantation nor did he know of any. I went below there fifty miles down the Yazoo River, a fine country of land but very high and very sickly, returned, followed Brown about a week, quit him and in a day or two found a tract of land in Yella Busha County near the River Yella Busha. Then had to go to Manchester to find the owner, the distance 220 miles from Chocchuma. I gave Ten Dollars pr. Acre. I Bot 880 Acres, payments one third down the Balance in two Equal anual payments. There is no improvement on it. The distance from the state line is about 100 Miles south. There is a fine spring on it. It is a splendid tract of land said to be among the best tracts in the county. Brown had been on the land and it could have been Bot at that time for \$5000 cash. Land is rising in that country very fast. Small steam Boats run

the Yella Busha River in the Winter within 10 Miles of where I will settle. By hauling 40 Miles we get to the Yazoo River which is large enough for large Steam Boats at the junction of the Yella Busha & Tallahatcha Rivers. I think where I will settle we can make from 12 to 15 Hundred pounds of cotton to the acre. The prospect of health is good. I selected a place where I thot the cotton crop would be a certain one and a prospect of health. Beanland⁴ has got your crop out. He made 39 Bales of cotton, 33 of them at Memphis, 3 at home, 3 at Col. Alexanders⁵ within 12 Miles of Memphis, all of which I have directed to [be] sent there as soon as practicable. The roads are very bad at this time. Your Corn Fodder Cattle Hogs and other articles we let Bookers⁶ Overseer have amounted to \$809-25/100. The hire of Bookers hands amounted to \$86, which left a Balance of \$723-25/100. We leave this in the morning for Mississippi with the following negros: Reuben, Ceasar, Phil, Addison, Abram, Giles, Elisabeth, Old Sarah, and the girl you Bot of Gregory, Molly, Gilbert, Harvy, Alfred, Jane, Patsy, Marino, John and a little Boy, Henry—in all Eighteen. Your Boy Hardy is not able to go. He has had a Breast complaint about five months, has a very violent cough. I will leave him at my place with Jones.⁷ I think his recovery very doubtful indeed. It will take the Balance to cultivate my farm. One of my Women *Judy* I will loose in a day or two I think. The smith tools have not come to Memphis yet. We will not be able to take them with us which will be a very serious disappointment. I will write to Lawrence & Davis⁸ of Memphis to send them to some point on the Yella Busha River when he receives them. My corn cost me 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ cents pr. Bushel, the 150 Barrels, \$500. We have a desperate time to move, mud & high waters, now raining. The first payment for the Land and corn cost near \$3500 cash, which has took all my money. Write to me who you Bot the smith tools of in Nashville. Perhaps they have not shipped them to Memphis yet. Beanland only collected the sixty two Dollar note from Silliman.⁹ Could not get the other discounted. I shall make 39 or 40 Bales of cotton and about 400 Barrels of corn. Bookers Overseer took all the Ploughs Harrows Hogs &c in payment for the price of the hands. I have reed no letter from you yet. I expect to return to the District about the first of February.

After you receive this write to me at Columbia. I will write to you after I get to Mississippi. I procured some cotton seed when I was down. I shall put in what corn I think will do us and plant as much cotton as I can. Cotton does tolerable well the first year. 12 Oclock and I am sleepy.

S M CALDWELL

Beanland is Married¹⁰

Addressed to Washington.

1. Physician and planter, Caldwell had married Polk's sister, Lydia Eliza. He was closely associated with Polk in his cotton-planting projects.

2. James Brown was a son of Col. Joseph Brown of Maury County. He had been a land locator and surveyor, but at this time he was a partner of James Walker in the stagecoach and mail-contracting business. He resided in Jackson.

3. Chocchuma was the site of a federal land office in north central Mississippi where large amounts of Indian lands were sold in 1833-34. There were widespread rumors of frauds perpetrated at the sales.

4. Ephraim Beanland, originally from Maury County, was Polk's overseer on his Fayette County plantation. He moved to Mississippi in that capacity when Polk transferred his cotton-planting activities to that state.

5. Adam R. Alexander had represented both Maury County and Shelby County in the state legislature and had served in the United States House of Representatives 1823-27. He had recently been a delegate to the state constitutional convention.

6. Peter R. Booker, a businessman from Columbia, had bought Polk's Fayette County plantation. The name of Booker's overseer has not been ascertained.

7. Claudius C. Jones at this time was overseer on the Caldwell plantation in Haywood County. Later Polk tried to hire him for his Mississippi plantation.

8. This was a grocery firm at Randolph, just north of Memphis. The firm seems to have acted as an agent for Polk and Caldwell in forwarding supplies to their plantation in Mississippi.

9. Thomas N. Silliman had bought some land from Polk in 1832.

10. Beanland had married Sally McDonald but nothing further was learned about her.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM¹

Dear Sir, Near Murfreesboro. Tenn. 2d. Jany 1835

About the time when you left here for the City I was prostrate with the only attack of fever I ever had, and I was kept

down so long that I got behind the age in every thing. More especially did I retrograde in Newspaper politics as I did not read nor hear reading for four or five weeks.

The idea of running White² for President was seriously introduced at Nashville amongst some of Jacksons best friends as I came through from the Columbia rail road. The result of the New York election seemed to stagger them, and I now learn that letters are received from Washington holding the idea that the opposition have intimated for the sake of peace that should Jacksons friends present White to the Nation, discarding all others, the opposition will retire from the conflict & present no candidate at all.

This matter is stirred here by some that I know to be deep blue, by some who have their own views alone to serve, and by some who are not the friends of the administration in any way, and contains in itself so many elements of mischief that we ought to be relieved from it. For myself, and in the abstract, I am for Judge White against any man yet brought forward, or likely to be brought forward, but my first impression was that most of the movers in the matter here intended it to answer their own views, and that they would shape their own future course by further developments. Will the party be able to know whats what before you adjourn, or will a National Convention or what else be resorted to?

I was in Nashville four weeks ago. Carroll³ is still afflicted with Rheumatism and his infirmities seem to have subdued his energies. He is evidently much perplexed with his own position. An immense press has been made upon him by Bells⁴ friends to keep him off the field, and important considerations present themselves to him on each side of the question. He is a standing applicant for favour at headquarters as you know. He is aware of the feelings entertained towards the Speaker, and as a gratification to those feelings he permitted an opinion to be entertained, on the last summers visit, that he would put himself on the district at the coming election. He must be aware that to disappoint that opinion would operate to his prejudice, perhaps to the utter defeat of all his hopes, at least for a season. He knows that [. . .] have no sensible motive to wish simply to have a seat in the lower house of Congress, and being more

timid than formerly, he may apprehend possible defeat, and prefer the quiet of retaining his present post under the new Constitution.

The first intimation which I had of Bells injudicious speech made at our Court House was from an abstract of it in our Murfreesboro paper.⁵ Upon inquiring amongst his friends why he permitted himself to run into such a tirade, contrary to his usual discretion they did not deny the substance of the speech to be correctly reported, but that he was determined to make front boldly against his Calumniators & silence those who were babbling about him. I then thought that Brady⁶ had reported the first sketch of the speech but I since learn that it was by Keeble⁷ himself and that the fuller version by a "By Stander," given afterwards, was by Brady. If the Monitor had not expired about that time Keeble would have followed up the matter with more effect. The speech furnished material by which to injure the Speaker more than any other act of his life and Brady has every disposition to avail himself of it, but he cannot make his facts bear upon the public mind. Those who take the general denials of the Nashville papers against the reiterated asseverations of thos present, have no willingness to be informed, and I shall not take the Globe⁸ mans paper, as I had intended to do, if he does not notice the matter before the election of printer is over. What part of the speech does he deny? Did he not put forth the ideas there embodied, if not, which of them did he not? Did he not say Humbug of Jacksons metallic experiment? If not what idea did he apply Humbug to? If to the Presidents scheme, who can excuse the insolence?

[DANIEL GRAHAM]

Addressed to Washington. This letter is unsigned and appears to be incomplete. The identity of the writer was learned from Polk's endorsement on the envelope.

1. Daniel Graham was an influential political figure in Murfreesboro who served as secretary of state for Tennessee, 1818-30, and as state comptroller, 1836-42. At this time he was being mentioned as a possible candidate for governor.

2. Hugh Lawson White of Knoxville was at this time a member of the United States Senate. He had been a Jacksonian but was in the process of breaking with the Jackson party by becoming a candidate for the presidency without being nominated by a national convention.

3. William Carroll had been governor of the state for six terms, 1821-27, 1829-35. He was politically handicapped by his bad health, and in the 1835 gubernatorial election he was defeated by Newton Cannon.

4. In June 1834, John Bell had defeated Polk for Speaker of the House, and at this time he was a leader in pushing the presidential candidacy of White.

5. The Murfreesboro *Central Monitor* was edited by Edwin A. Keeble, a young Murfreesboro lawyer. See William Brady to Polk, November 29, 1834, and John W. Childress to Polk, December 20, 1834.

6. William Brady of Murfreesboro had served ten years in the General Assembly and was planning to make the race for Congress.

7. Edwin A. Keeble was Brady's brother-in-law.

8. The *Washington Globe*, edited by Francis P. Blair.

FROM GEORGE W. TERRELL¹

Dear Col.

Paris West Dist Ten Jan'y 2nd 1835

If I recollect aright I informed you during the last session of Congress, that the president had promised, the first good opportunity to give me a good appointment under the general government, and I think he said to Mr Johnson² at the last session that he intended to send me to South America, as Charge de Affaires, if an opportunity offered. I discover from his late message that it is his intention to make a proposition to Congress, to send a representative to Venezuela, to adjust some claims our citizens have against that state, together with other diplomatic matters with that government. Now Sir, I think this the very office for which I am qualified. All my acquaintances, I believe, would say I would stand up to our country, and her citizens, in a tight place. If you think me competent to discharge the duties of this mission, I would take it as a great kindness if you would see the president on the subject. If he has any person in view for this appointment, one to Europe would be equally acceptable. He says he intends to send an agent to Morocco also, perhaps there might be a chance for me.

I am more anxious about this matter than formerly, on account of the death of my worthy old father³ (an account of which you have perhaps seen in the paper) who died leaving my mother and six children to provide for, and no person to labour for them, except the two youngest, who are boys, the oldest

about thirteen. My mother has written to me to come there and do something for them. This under present circumstances, I am unable to do to any beneficial extent, yet sir, who that has the feelings of a son, can resist such an appeal, coming from such a mother? This makes me very anxious to have it in my power to do something for them. I have since I have been at the bar, purchased and sent to my father two negroes (to pay for which embarrassed me considerably) notwithstanding which, he died leaving his family without any help, other than that above mentioned. Under these circumstances, it would afford me a gratification to the latest hour of my existence to be able to extend to them some efficient assistance, and your friendly offices, in procuring me any good appointment, (for which you should think me qualified) would confer an obligation lasting as life itself.

That you may be the better enabled to give an opinion as to my qualifications for such an office, I send you a speech made some time since, which I request that you will read carefully, and then if you think it would be of any service, that you would also recommend its perusal to the President himself.⁴

I will be very glad to hear from you after you shall have conversed with the President on these matters.

G. W. TERRELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. Terrell was a prominent lawyer in Paris, Tennessee. He did not get the appointment he sought in this letter and soon moved to Texas where he had a distinguished career.

2. Cave Johnson of Clarksville was a member of the House of Representatives and one of Polk's closest friends.

3. Terrell's father has not been identified.

4. This enclosure has not been found.

FROM LEVI WOODBURY¹

Washington. January 2, 1835

In reply to Polk's request Woodbury encloses a statement showing rates of domestic exchange charged by state banks and those charged by the Bank of the United States and its branches in 1834. He promises to forward a statement showing rates charged by the Bank of the United States during three other periods.

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Letters and Reports to Congress by Secretaries McLane, Taney, Woodbury (RG 56), National Archives.

1. New Hampshire political figure who had a long and varied career. Having served as Secretary of the Navy since 1831, he became Secretary of the Treasury in June 1834.

FROM VINCENT L. BRADFORD ET AL.

Philadelphia. January 3, 1835

A committee of Democrats invite Polk to join them in celebrating the victory at the Battle of New Orleans.¹ In case he cannot be present they ask that he send a toast.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Polk to Vincent L. Bradford et al., January 6, 1835.

FROM WILLIAM K. BRADSHAW ET AL.

Philadelphia. January 3, 1835

A committee of Democrats from Pine Ward invite Polk to a celebration of the victory at the Battle of New Orleans.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Polk to Bradshaw et al., January 6, 1835.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL¹

Fayetteville [Arkansas]

January the 4th 1835

My Dear Sir

Enclosed I send you L. Evins² statement of the facts & the points upon which he expects to review a decision made against a suit which he had before the Agent F. W. Armstrong³ amounting to about \$2500. That the agent has mistaken the law in relation to his claims I have no doubt. As my friend the complain[an]t L. Evins has appealed from his decision to the Com[missione]r of Indian Affairs, it may be their review or suit calls for re-examination. Maj Armstrong has not yet forwarded his decision with the testimony but will in a few days and as my friend lives at such a distance from Hot Springs he has retained me to arrange his papers and forward them to the proper department, so that they will be taken into view in the examina-

tion. And I am not certain whether the report will be sent to the Comr. of Indian Affairs or direct to the War Department I will again trouble you with some unprofitable drudgery which I hope you will attend to immediately on its arrival as its a matter of importance to my client.

I am not sufficiently acquainted with the duties & business of the Indian Department to know certainly to whom Armstrong will make his report. You will know or can ascertain and will please hand him the enclosed papers which will be a part of the case laid before him for his decision. I have told Colo Evins he might rest assured that you would attend to their delivery and at the proper Department.

A. YELL

PS. Tomorrow we look for the Message. I shall also expect to hear either from you or Col. Sevier.⁴ You may both anticipate my situation in anxious suspense without knowing [. . .] make my arrangements until further orders. On the receipt of this write me to Fayetteville, Tennessee, where I shall then be after my family. Present me to my friend Col Sevier. . . .

A. YELL

Addressed to Washington. This letter is badly blotted and quite difficult to decipher. For this reason greater editorial license has been exercised than would normally be the case. In particular, Yell's haphazard spelling and capitalization have probably been corrected in many doubtful places.

1. A close friend of Polk, Yell had recently moved from Fayetteville, Tennessee, to Fayetteville, Arkansas.

2. Unidentified.

3. Francis W. Armstrong, a brother of Robert Armstrong of Nashville, was an agent with the Choctaw Indians.

4. The message referred to was the recent Message of the President. Ambrose H. Sevier was the Congressional Delegate from Arkansas Territory.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER¹

Dear Colo.

Murfreesboro. 5th January 1835

I have been looking for some communication from you for some time. I want to know how the newspaper organ of the Administration can be so silent about the course of Speaker Bell & how it is that his violent and abusive speech which he made

here (the substance of which was truly given in our paper) has created so little sensation in the Jackson ranks. No one here doubts that he is a thorough Bank man and at heart (though a dissembling hypocrite) one of Genl Jackson's bitterest enemies. In fact all his kin here are his enemies and that of itself would convince me that Bell was no friend. He knows that he ruined himself in the estimation of his former friends in Congress in his intrigues with the Oposition to be elected Speaker & now he means to make himself conspicuous in the next administration by defeating the election of Van Burin by proposing & advocating the claims of Judge White. It is at his instance that all this ado is made through the Southern papers about the claims of Judge White. He thinks that if he can get the oposition to run White together with a few administration men that he can have White elected President in the same way that he was elected Speaker of the house of Representatives. Bell & his friends about Nashville form a *junto* and are laying their plans to settle the succession to all the offices not only of the State but also of the United States Government. Hugh L White is to be President & John Bell his Premier, Catron Chief Justice.² Carroll is to be Governor again under the new constitution & a minister prospectively. (Carroll you may rely upon it is with them). Eaton, Foster & Fletcher³ are likewise to be well provided for. They have the banks all with them and the influence of all their friends. But of one thing I am doubtful & I desire very much to be informed whether Judge White will be willing to lend his countenance to the intrigues that are now in operation to destroy the unity of the administration ranks.

I have just returned from a visit to Mississippi. I had some idea if sufficiently pleased with the country after seeing it to move there. But I believe that I shall remain here. It is a great country to make money in & in many respects has the advantage over this country. But Tennessee is healthy "and what would a man give in exchange for" health?

Genl [William] Brady will get certificates of the faithfulness of the synopsis of Bells speech which was published in the paper here. The Genl has been quite unwell with Erysipelas his old complaint but is about again. John R Laughlin⁴ told me a few days ago confidentially that Saml H Laughlin⁵ had just started to Washington City on the business of procuring Type & means

to commence the publication of a Political paper in Nashville against Bell & the Bank. Perhaps you may have heard of it before. Capt G A Sublette⁸ got a letter from the Hon Mr. Payton⁷ in which he gave positive assurances of the brightening & flattering prospects of Judge White for the next President. This shows how the wind blows. He writes to Davy's⁸ people & Davy to Payton's.

Dont misunderstand me. I like White as well as any of these people, but I don't like these intriguing friends of his. I expect he would make as good a president as Van Burin. But this party wish to get to themselves consequence at the hazard of an administration defeat. We are all well.

W R RUCKER.

If you have a suitable opportunity you ought to apprise the President of the movements here. Give my respects to the Genl and likewise to Mr Grundy.⁹ Tell Mr Grundy that I should like to hear from him.

W R R

PS I stop the *Press* to announce that Susan has an hour since brought us *another Daughter* and that she & the child are doing well. The *Cards have been stacked* and our luck seems to always run one way. When you learn to play a good game be sure when you have much at stake to have the cards well shuffled.

W R R

Addressed to Washington.

1. Murfreesboro doctor who was married to Susan Childress, a sister of Polk's wife.

2. John Catron had served on the supreme court of Tennessee and was chief justice at the time the new constitution was adopted. Rucker's estimate of Catron's political inclinations proved wrong. It was perhaps based upon the fact that Catron was married to a sister of George C. Childress, editor of a Nashville newspaper that supported Bell.

3. John H. Eaton, Ephraim H. Foster, and Thomas H. Fletcher were prominent political figures who were thought to be in favor of the Bell-White arrangements. Foster and Fletcher were prominent Nashville lawyers.

4. John R. Laughlin had served for some years as court clerk in Murfreesboro. He was a brother of Samuel H. Laughlin.

5. Samuel H. Laughlin, a staunch supporter of Jackson and Polk, was a capable newspaper editor whose propensity for strong drink made him something less than dependable.

6. George A. Sublett with his brother A. C. Sublett had published a newspaper in Murfreesboro in the 1820's and had been a strong supporter of Jackson in the election of 1828.

7. Balie Peyton, a Sumner County lawyer, was a member of the House of Representatives and a close ally of John Bell.

8. David W. Dickinson, also a member of the House of Representatives, was a lawyer in Murfreesboro. He was Bell's brother-in-law and strong supporter.

9. Felix Grundy, a resident of Nashville, had been a member of the United States Senate since 1829.

FROM WILLIAM P. BRADBURN

Pensacola, Florida. January 6, 1835

A young seaman from Tennessee who has received other favors from Polk requests assistance in gaining a leave of absence that will permit him to visit Nashville.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Polk to Levi Woodbury, May 6, 1832; Bradburn to Polk, January 13, December 5, 1833; and August 20, December 3, 1834.

TO VINCENT BRADFORD ET AL.¹

Gentlemen, Washington City Jany. [6th] 1835²

I am honoured with your invitation of the 3rd Inst. to unite with the "Democracy of the City of Philadelphia" in celebrating the approaching anniversary of the glorious victory of New Orleans. I regret that public duties here as well as a previous engagement to participate with our Democratic friends now assembled in this City in a public celebration on the day will deprive me of the pleasure I should otherwise take in accepting your kind invitation. Though not present I participate with you in feelings which the occasion is so well calculated to inspire, and beg leave through you to tender to the company on that day the enclosed sentiment.³

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Philadelphia. This is a copy in the handwriting of an unknown person, including the signature.

1. Other names appearing below the signature are: Friederick Stover, C. Kneass, J. H. Hutchinson, and John Napier.

2. The month and year of this date are clear but the day is obscure. Obviously it was between the first of the year and January 8, the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans.

3. The sentiment appeared at the bottom of the page. It read: "The recent triumph of Democracy over an organized monied aristocracy, adds new lustre to the fame of the Hero who is identified with the day we celebrate."

TO WILLIAM K. BRADSHAW ET AL.¹

Gentlemen:

Washington City Jany 6th 1835

I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 3rd Inst. inviting me in behalf of "a number of the Democratic citizens of Pine Ward" to be present with them in celebrating the "Memorable 8th of January." It would afford me much pleasure to visit the Democratic Citizens of your City, in whose behalf you act, but public business and an engagement previously made, will prevent me from having that pleasure. I pray you to convey to the company assembled on that occasion, my acknowledgments for the honour conferred, and ask that you will tender to them the accompanying sentiment.²

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Philadelphia and marked "Copy."

1. Other names appearing below Polk's signature are James Porter and T. S. Carver.

2. This "accompanying sentiment" was omitted from this copy. It is clear that this letter was used as a model for other letters sent to Philadelphia committees at this time. See the letter immediately following.

TO JAMES GOODMAN ET AL.¹

Gentlemen,

Washington City Jany. [6th] 1835²

I have to tender to you my acknowledgement for the flattering invitation given me in behalf of the Democratic citizens of the Northern Liberties³ to attend their festival commemorative of the glorious "victory achieved by the American forces under command of our illustrious Chief Magistrate." Did a previous engagement and the obligations of public duty permit, it would give me great pleasure to unite with you upon that interesting

occasion. I beg you gentlemen to be assured that though not with you I cordially unite in the patriotic feelings which have prompted your meeting and ask that you will convey to the company the enclosed sentiment.⁴

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Philadelphia. This is a copy in the handwriting of an unknown person, including the signature.

1. Other names appearing below the signature are: B. L. Carpenter, Peter Snyder, William Hall, and James McCormack.

2. The month and year of this date are clear but the day is obscure. Obviously it was between the first of the year and January 8, the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans.

3. This was a suburb of Philadelphia.

4. The sentiment appeared at the bottom of the page. It read: "The Democracy of Pennsylvania! Slow to resistance, resisting when aroused. They have met and vanquished the *monster* in his stronghold."

FROM JAMES P. GRUNDY¹

Hon James K Polk

Nashville Jany 6th 1835

Mr Collingsworth has just informed me that he will resign the office of District Attorney on the fifteenth of this month.² I desire the office and will be thankful if you will immediately see my father and aid him in my behalf.

Your prompt attention will confer a lasting favor. . . .

JAMES P GRUNDY

Addressed to Washington. This letter is marked "Private."

1. He was a son of Felix Grundy and was practicing law in Nashville at this time.

2. James Collinsworth, a Nashville lawyer, had served since 1829 as district attorney for West Tennessee. See the exchange of Polk and Cave Johnson with Hugh L. White during the last week of February 1835.

FROM SAMUEL G. SMITH¹

Dr Sir

Nashville Jny 6 1835

Yours of the 14 Dec came safe to hand and I fully concur with you on all your views. The people of Tennessee are too

firmly fixed on sound political doctrines to be shaken by any effort to lead them off. The opposition is to be found where it is most imposing to strangers and superficial observers. All the monied institutions may be said to entertain similar feelings here but there is no open and bold effort in political movement.

This evening I recd a letter of the 30th from Col L² at Cincinnati and I see he is in fine spirit with his undertaking.

I feel confident that if he should come up to his determination that there will be a strong feeling almost every where to sustain him. He has reputation for qualification and if he can be inspired with confidence much may be done. A bright prospect of success will have a very happy effect upon his habits and I have no doubt public sentiment in the country will take a strong current for any orthodox organ of the democratic party. I should be very much pleased to see our old friend Haskell³ of Knoxville taking a stand for himself. He is of the true stamp but I fear he is in some degree blinded by his friendly disposition toward certain individuals who do not entertain the same politics.

I have no alusions to the succession.⁴ You will see from the directory of the Union Bank that the ticket is the work of a Banking association in this place. You will have heard that there is some excitement between the people and Cherokee Indians within the chartered limits of our state and I have promised the Governor to set out on the 11th to that section of country to ascertain the true state of things and if possible to conciliate and reconcile them.⁵

I may be about Calhoun or Athens⁶ for a week and if you think a letter would reach me at Athens I should like to hear and have any suggestions.

The object is to have no parade but to learn if there is any difficulty and to quiet the minds of the people or prevail upon all parties to avoid any unpleasant colisions. In this matter I should if entirely consistent with propriety be willing for you to communicate to our venerable Chief Magistrate and you can make any suggestion to me by way of advice which will be strictly confidential.

Should a letter to Athens be too late it will be forwarded to me.

SAM G SMITH

The north west quarter of Section thirty five and the west half of the north east quarter of said Section thirty five, Township Fifteen Range Eleven in the district of land offered for sale at Cahaba in the County of Dallas and State of Alabama. I must ask the favour of you to inquire at the land office for a patent for above land or the true situation of it in the records. Early information will be thankful. Application is made to me to purchase if sale can be made shortly & I cannot find my papers relating to it. The land was secured for me at an early day.

SAM G SMITH

Addressed to Washington. This letter is marked "Confidential."

1. Formerly a member of the state legislature, Smith was at this time secretary of state for Tennessee.

2. Samuel H. Laughlin.

3. Frederick S. Heiskell moved to Knoxville from Virginia in 1814, and in 1816 he was associated with his brother-in-law Hugh Brown in publishing the *Knoxville Register*. Brown retired from the paper in 1829 but Heiskell continued to publish it until 1837. He had supported Jackson but in 1836 he supported White.

4. Smith was being prominently mentioned as a possible candidate for governor.

5. See Smith to Polk, January 24, 27, 30, and February 3, 1835.

6. Both Athens and Calhoun were towns in McMinn County.

FROM LEVI WOODBURY

Washington. January 6, 1835

In reply to Polk's request he sends a statement showing the rates charged for collecting by the Bank of the United States and its branches during three different periods.

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Letters and Reports to Congress by Secretaries McLane, Taney, Woodbury (RG 56), National Archives.

FROM JAMES C. ALDERSON¹

Waynesboro, Tennessee. January 7, 1835

By direction of the Post Office Department, Alderson has employed special carriers for which he has paid personally, anticipating reimbursement. His letters on the subject have evoked no reply and he asks Polk to intercede in his behalf.

Addressed to Washington.

1. In addition to having served as postmaster at Waynesboro since 1826, Alderson was clerk of the circuit court. This is another instance of persons living outside Polk's district appealing to him rather than to their own district representative.

FROM MAHLON DICKERSON¹

Washington. January 7, 1835

The Secretary of the Navy lists balances of unspent naval appropriations and explains the existence of the balances. He asks that these sums be re-appropriated since they are still needed for the purpose for which they were originally appropriated.

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Letters Sent to Congress and Its Members, Naval Records Collection (RG 45), National Archives.

1. Born in New Jersey, Dickerson had served as governor of that state and as United States senator. He was Secretary of the Navy 1834-38.

FROM JESSE D. ELLIOTT¹

Boston. January 7, 1835

Elliott writes a strong letter supporting a proposal that a Navy Yard be established at Charleston, South Carolina. He gives several reasons why such an establishment would be advantageous to the Navy.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A career naval officer, he was involved in a long controversy when, as commander of the *Niagara*, he failed to go to the aid of Perry's flagship at the Battle of Lake Erie. At this time he was in command of the Boston Navy Yard.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir

Washington City Jany. 7th 1835

At your request I give you a statement of what I have understood your views to be upon the subject of Judge White's being run as a candidate for the Presidency. In a casual conversation with you at Nashville last summer, where we met at the time the dinner was given to the President, some remark was made about the notice taken in some of the newspapers, in favour of the Judge for the Presidency. One of us remarked, I do not remember which, that if he was properly brought out, and was run by our political friends, that it would give us

pleasure to support him, in which we both concurred. The conversation was casual and but little was said upon the subject. For myself I did not at that time think it probable he would be a candidate. Since the commencement of the present Session of Congress the subject of the next election for President has been much spoken of and in frequent conversations with you as well before as since the meeting was held by a part of the Tennessee delegation (at which I was not present) to consult on the subject. I have always understood you as being personally friendly towards Judge White and favourable to his election, if he was run by our own political party. With this qualification I always understood you to speak. You were of opinion and often so expressed yourself to me, that our political friends who supported the present administration ought not to be divided or distracted about the succession, but ought to unite, and run but one candidate, and that if Judge White should be the man selected by our political friends, as the party candidate it would give you pleasure to support him. I understood you as entertaining the opinion that it would be unwise and improper to have him or any one else run, who was not supported by the great body of the political party with whom we act. I know these were the opinions you always expressed to me, and at your request I give you this statement.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This is a copy, not in Polk's handwriting, of the letter actually sent. The original letter has been published in St. George L. Sioussat, editor, "Letters of James K. Polk to Cave Johnson, 1833-1848," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I (1915), 219. The two versions are identical except for minor variance in punctuation. The Polk-Johnson letters which Sioussat edited have since disappeared, presumably destroyed by a Clarksville fire many years ago. The editors have been forced to rely upon Sioussat's scholarship and have made only minor editorial modifications for the sake of uniformity, but they have supplied their own annotations.

FROM HUGH WADDELL¹

Hillsborough [North Carolina]

My dear Polk!

Jan. 7 1835

Since the revival of our former friendship by my visit to

Washington in May last I have felt as if many years were rolled back & have been repeatedly on the point of writing you a long letter filled with pleasing reminiscences. It was gratifying beyond expression to me, to find on meeting you that the fountain of former feeling was opened so readily & flowed forth so freely. My brother assured me, after my departure from Washington that you were indeed a friend & that you exhibited in behalf of the claim of our Mother, *all* that I anticipated. Be so good as to accept through me, the gratitude of a venerable lady, whom if you knew, I am satisfied you would esteem greatly.

I have sent on a memorial in her name, asking what you & many other gentlemen seemed to think was already her *right*, viz. interest on the amount allowed her. I must beg of you to look to it for her; it will be introduced into the Senate & I think it places her claim to interest on a different & a stronger ground than others which have heretofore been presented. The memorial explains why she has not heretofore made a demand. She was a tender infant at the death of her father, was married during minority & remained a feme covert² until 2 or 3 years prior to my visit to Washington in May, so that if any reservation is made in the Statutes for infants & feme coverts, as is usual in acts of limitations she is saved by them from their operation. But there should be no such statutes barring her claim because there was *no law*, under which she could have claimed, until that of last Session. I greatly fear, the Revo. Committee of the Senate may report unfavourably simply because they have done so on some other cases, though *not of a like kind*. I content myself, by merely naming the subject to you, knowing that if any thing can be done, you will do it.³

I wrote to Mr. Bright⁴ of Tennessee as you requested & have recd. a flattering & kind reply. John is a fine boy & will be an honor to his parents.

Pray present me most kindly to Mrs. Polk. I should be very happy to see her again & tell her I should be flattered to believe that she recollected me. May I beg that you will let me know what is going on at Washington & what is ahead for I know you will tell me *the truth* & it shall be in safe keeping. It is gratifying to have one at headquarters who will communicate

confidentially. I desire to know if you have no objection, what are your wishes in regard to the *succession*, for on this subject it is pretty certain *we shall agree* & I am disposed to take a hand in these matters, if prospects justify it, though heretofore I have not gone much into them. In 1824 & 1828, I was actively engaged making speeches & writing addresses in behalf of the Present Chief Magistrate, but have for 3 years been out of public life but was a member of assembly of our State. If you think the cause may be advanced by any hints to one so obscure as myself, you may give me your views unhesitatingly, for they can never be used except to your honor & benefit. My own opinion in regard to N. C. is that, at present she is *undecided*, that is, nearly balanced in opinion between Mr. V. B. & Judge *White*. I know something of the springs that are about to be set in motion & if those who may favour Judge W. are *prudent* the State may be obtained for him, but every thing depends on "taking time by the forelock." You did not tell me that your preference ran this way, but I have suspected it. Many of our people are disposed to go for Judge *McLean*,⁵ but they have no such decided preference at present, as to be in the way of Judge W.

The questions now before Congress of peace or war with France are very exciting & I should be much pleased to hear what you think will be the ultimatum.⁶ Indeed whether it may be the true *policy* of Govt. to order reprisals is the only question, for it is perfectly certain that France has behaved with such bad faith as to make it only a question of *policy*; the national honor of America has & can have but one *course*. Her policy, may, though I do not feel certain that it does, point to a different one.

But I forget that I am making suggestions, without the necessary information. The truth is that I have been *betrayed* into a *long letter*, when I only intended to drop you a hasty line on business. Excuse me, for I feel as if I am talking with you familiarly & had quite forgotten to what a length I was trespassing on yr. patience. Write me soon, an old fashioned, long letter. . . .

H. WADDELL

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Elizabeth Gregory McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters from North Carolinians to Polk," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI (1939), 188-189.

1. Waddell was a classmate of Polk at the University of North Carolina. He studied medicine but soon turned to law. He had some success in local politics, serving several terms in the North Carolina legislature.

2. A married woman, as opposed to *feme sole*, a single woman. Coverture at common law carries certain disabilities.

3. The outcome of this claim has not been ascertained.

4. James Bright of Fayetteville, Tennessee, whose son, John M. Bright, was a student at Bingham Academy at Hillsborough, North Carolina. John M. Bright later served for ten years in the House of Representatives from Tennessee.

5. John McLean of Ohio, formerly Postmaster General and currently a member of the United States Supreme Court, was a perennial candidate for the presidency.

6. Ultimatum here is used in the sense of the final outcome. The crisis with France arose over Jackson's forthright demands that France pay the Spoliation Claims. These claims grew out of illegal seizures of American ships and goods by the French during the Napoleonic wars. France had acknowledged the validity of the claims and promised to pay but had been quite dilatory in carrying out her promise.

FROM JAMES WALKER¹

Dear Sir

Nashville January 7th 1835

Altho I trouble you about our mail affairs there is nothing I wish to do in relation to it. I am tired of troubling our friends on this subject. I merely want you to know the facts. There has been a very long and unusual spell of rain in Miss. & La. and *our Mail has failed* to an extent that I did not believe possible under any circumstances. There is yet 3 mails due from N.O. altho all is all right from Natchez. The greatest and almost only difficulty with us has been between Madisonville & Jackson (the Lake Route).² The contractors from N.O. to Natchez have been equally unfortunate, which proves that there has been a very high state of waters on both routes near N.O. No human power could have prevented what has happened and we must abide the consequences whatever they may be. I am determined to continue to use all possible exertions to secure as much regularity as practicable so long as we have the control of it. But when

the Almighty interferes we are obliged to surrender. Mr Hill^a caused the Nashville papers to make complaint and has used great exertions to excite prejudices against us. He is now compelled to admit it is probable that failures have been unavoidable and that we are not to blame. Still he says something ought to be done to secure the regularity of this most important mail. This we all admit and we are sure that there is no effectual remedy, but for Congress to make appropriation to bridge the water courses & swamps on the route. The P.M.G. may fine contractors, or he may *charge them* but regular arrivals in times of high water can never be had until Congress does this. The real remedy is beyond the power of the P O Dept. So much for the old subject *mail business*.

Information has been received here that Mr. Bell and others of the Ten delegation have determined to run Judge White for the Presidency, whether he is nominated by the national convention or not, and that the *opposition* join in with it. This is an awkward business for the *real Jackson* men of Tennessee. The opposition *here* are all except [Thomas H.] Fletcher for White, and expect to ride over us by this maneuver. I believe judge White is the most popular man in Tennessee except Gen. Jackson, but I do not think it is certain that even he can get the vote of Tennessee in opposition to the regular nomination of the Republican party. It looks too much like suicide. And how can we mix with such men as Poindexter⁴ and others of the same stamp. I hope judge White will not suffer his name to be run unless he is taken up by his *own party*. At all events I feel very much like sustaining the nomination of the Jackson party, and to sink or swim with the result, but, I am sensible that circumstanced as we are there is necessity for *great control*.

JAMES WALKER

P.S. All well at home. I hope Dr. C[aldwell] has made a good purchase. [James] Brown has yet done nothing in the land way,⁵ and I suppose Caldwell has done as well as can be done tho I do not know the particulars of his tract.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Husband of Polk's oldest sister, Walker was a friend and trusted adviser to Polk when he was out of the state. At this time Walker was greatly

disturbed over his mail contracts, fearing that they might be transferred.

2. Part of the New Orleans mail was sent up the river to Natchez, thence overland to Nashville. The remainder was sent from New Orleans across Lake Pontchartrain to Madisonville, Louisiana, on the north shore, thence to Jackson, Mississippi, and on to Nashville.

3. Harry R. W. Hill, a wealthy commission merchant, operated principally in Nashville and New Orleans. He was a friend of John Donly, Walker's rival in bidding for lucrative mail contracts.

4. George Poindexter of Mississippi was a violently anti-Jackson political leader. At this time he was about to end his term in the United States Senate, having been defeated in his attempt at re-election.

5. See Silas M. Caldwell to Polk, January 2, 1835.

FROM JAMES FORGEY¹

La Grange, Tennessee. January 9, 1835

Forgey asks Polk to use his influence to obtain better mail service for La Grange² by establishing a stage route to take the place of the horseback delivery.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Forgey had been a farmer in Maury County for many years. He owned land in West Tennessee and seems recently to have moved there.

2. La Grange was a small town in the southeast corner of Fayette County.

TO JAMES L. EDWARDS¹

Sir

Washington City Jany 11th 1835

By your letter of the 10th Inst I am informed that Richard Long² a pensioner under the act of June 7th 1832, is entitled to have his annual pension increased from \$80 to \$84 per annum. Will you give the necessary directions to the agency at Nashville Tenn. to have the increased payment made to him.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Revolutionary War Pension File S4565 (RG 15), National Archives.

1. A native of Virginia, Edwards was Commissioner of Pensions in the War Department.

2. A resident of Bedford County, Long had served in the Virginia line during the Revolution. See Long to Polk, December 4, 1833.

TO RICHARD LONG

Dear Sir

Washington City Jany 11th 1835

I have made the examination you requested at the Pension office. By the enclosed letter you will learn that the best I have been enabled to effect is a small increase of your pension from \$80 to \$84 per annum. This increase I have requested shall be made. I am sorry that I have been enabled to do no more for you.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Farmington, Tennessee. This letter is in Revolutionary War Pension File S4565 (RG 15), National Archives.

FROM HUGH SMITH

Alexandria, D.C. January 12, 1835

A wealthy china merchant of Alexandria seeks Polk's aid in passing legislation favoring the Alexandria Canal Company in which he has invested. The company was attempting to construct a canal that would connect Alexandria with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal above Georgetown. This would enable Alexandria to compete with Georgetown for trade with northern Virginia.

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia January 12th 1835

I have received yours of the 24th & 25th ult. My letter from Nashville of the 7th will satisfy you that our feelings & views on the subject mentioned in your letters, are the same. I can see but one course that we can consistently take. I would personally prefer that Judge White should be taken up and run as the Candidate of our party, but if he is not so united on, we certainly ought not to *divide*, and run an eminent risque of being beaten by our political opponents. There is no doubt of Judge Whites popularity in Tennessee, and he may get the vote of it under *any* circumstances. But I think it likely that the leading

Jackson men here will adhere to the nomination of the National convention, and yield all personal predilections, rather than countenance any division of the party. There is not many persons here who know what is going on; the thing is not yet talked of among *the people*, and there is some difficulty in telling what the popular feeling will be. Judge White has never mixed much with the common people, and altho he is highly appreciated there has been nothing in his career calculated to attach the bulk of people to his interests.

I regret this movement. It is calculated to give us trouble in Tennessee and is no doubt intended to be the rallying point of a certain party who have long endeavored to controul the state. What the result may be, time alone will develope. If the opposition can succeed in producing a split in our ranks, and throw the election into the house, I fear the result to *the country* is not doubtful.

I have not yet conversed with the Editors here; shall do so as soon as a good opportunity offers. Lewis¹ has been absent in Miss. for 2 months. I think they can be prevailed on to take the ground we wish, that is to sustain Judge White for the nomination of our party but if he is not decided in favor of *by the party*, then to go for the man that is agreed on. I will write you further on this subject as soon as I have something worth communicating.

I believe our mails are now all regular. That to Natchez certainly has been for the last 4 or 5 trips, and I do not think the Lake mail has failed in all more than three trips (from the 22d to 29th Dec.). The Nashville people (Mr. Hill and a few others) are disposed to put too much responsibility on us. I am satisfied that at some of the post offices, and particularly at Jackson Mi., the mails are not always properly forwarded by the P M. We seem to be held responsible for every thing, and perhaps some times censured because letters are not written.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Micajah G. Lewis and Felix K. Zollicoffer were associated in publishing the *Columbia Observer*. This partnership was dissolved in less than a month after this letter was written.

TO LEVI WOODBURY

Sir

Washington City. Jan'y 12th 1835

I herewith hand you a copy of the General Appropriation Bill reported by the committee of Ways and Means, with marginal memoranda within opposite to several of the items contained in it, upon which explanations are desired. If the committee have omitted to insert any items proper to be inserted or if the bill contains any inaccuracies, I will thank you to suggest them.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Communications from Committees, Senate and House of Representatives, 1833-37 (RG 56), National Archives.

FROM JOHN FORSYTH¹

Washington. January 13, 1835

Forsyth asks for continuation of financial assistance to the Department of State for the purpose of arranging and indexing the archives of the department. He also suggests repeal of an old law requiring the Secretary of State to record the acts of Congress, since the original acts are preserved in the Department.

Addressed to Washington. The letter is in Report Books from the Secretary of State (RG 59), National Archives.

1. Forsyth had served in both houses of Congress from Georgia, resigning from the Senate in June 1834 to become Secretary of State. He served in that capacity until 1841.

FROM JOHN McCRORY¹

Maury County. January 13, 1835

McCrory gives Polk an account of his service against the Indians in 1795, during which he was wounded and made an invalid, and asks Polk to consider the case. If government relief seems possible he asks Polk to present the case to Congress.

Addressed to Washington.

1. McCrory was an early settler and had served in the Revolution. In 1833 Polk had helped him to obtain a pension for this service.

FROM HEZEKIAH WARD

Columbia. January 13, 1835

A prosperous Columbia carpenter, Ward has decided to begin farming. He asks Polk to investigate the price of slaves in Virginia and Maryland.

Addressed to Washington.

TO LEWIS CASS¹

Sir

Washington City Jany 14th 1835

Enclosed are the original papers, furnished me on yesterday, relating to the claim of Genl. Maccomb.² I send also the bound volume which I obtained from you.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Letters Received by Secretary of War (RG 107), National Archives.

1. After serving in the War of 1812 Cass became governor of Michigan Territory, a post that he held until appointed by Jackson as Secretary of War in 1831.

2. A native of Michigan, Alexander Maccomb was the ranking officer of the United States Army. He was one of the first men trained at West Point and had distinguished himself in the campaign around Lake Champlain in the War of 1812. In his later years he became head of the Corps of Engineers.

FROM SIMPSON SHAW

Gibson County, Tennessee. January 14, 1835

A former resident of Maury County, Shaw has heard rumors that Congress is considering legislation that will dislodge squatters from certain lands in west Tennessee. He asks Polk to help David Crockett to prevent such action.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM AARON V. BROWN¹

Dear Sir

Pulaski [Tennessee] January 15th 1835

I write you from my new residence in this Town, having purchased out George H. [. . .]² & removed since the Christmas holidays. The advantages of society, of educating my children, practising my profession & probably more than all, that restlessness & "desire of change" to which most men are subject, have prompted me to this measure. This purchase however suggests to me the propriety of my reminding you of my Maryland business with Thomas Wright³ the 3rd of Centreville. I transcribed you last Winter my papers which I presume you still have as the chairman of Ways & means is presumed to be very careful of his papers. Now look for them & have them in place as I have written to Mr. Wright to let you know immediately the state of the business & make forthwith suitable arrangements for paying whatever may be coming, to you. If so, please attend to it & effect in some way or other a close of the concern. A few hundred dollars may be coming & that might defray *some* of a man's necessary expences. At all events by a poor man like me had better be saved than lost. If you can hear of any one in the City from Centreville, be good enough to make some enquiries about the business & about the said Thomas Wright the 3rd & so find out what manner of man he is &c. ([. . .]⁴ Jno Beard decd.) Now if you will do this much for me, when I go to Congress & you stay at home as Governor, I will try to render you any similar favor.⁵

I am requested by Maj Wm. Harwell to say to you that an application will be made to procure the pay of Richd. D. Cook a captain in the N.C. line,⁶ through Mr. Hawkins of N.C. He spoke to Senator Mangum⁷ to help who promised to do so & recommended him also to get your assistance, for *as you were on the right side* you could do more than he. Examine Hawkins papers & help. Hawkins represents only *one* of the heirs or rather *one half* of the claim only. The other half belongs to Harwell in right of his wife & several brothers & sisters in law. He wants the claim got through, but not to go into the hands of the Ex[ecuto]r in N.C. who is insolvent except one half to which he is entitled as one of the heirs and of said Cook. So much for business.

What is the state of the question in regard to our good friend Judge White? Do the Whigs really mean to do something finally for him, or is it a part of their policy to make *a present shew* in his favor to effect division in the Jackson ranks & so weaken Mr. Van Buren & then finally press some favorite of their own & so throw the Election in the house. I place Judge White on high grounds as a public man & if he can be elected I should prefer him to any other candidate spoken of, but I desire *no unsuccessful* effort to be made which those desperate men now composing the opposition could be profited. His friends have therefore two extreme points between which to steer: Timidity, by which prospects really good might be blasted & personal devotion to the man, which might prostrate the hopes of the party. You who are at the head of affairs must look to these points & be regulated in your nominations accordingly. I expect to have not other part or lot in the matter, than as a private citizen of the country, but in that station I am willing to unite in making every honorable & prudent effort to secure his election. At the present moment solicitations are very pressing on me to take part in public concerns by offering for Congress & appearances render it probable, that by *immediately* offering I should *probably* have no competition. I have looked at the question even under such probability & am still inclined to have nothing to do in that way, *not determined but strongly inclined*, to stay at home & by diligence & industry "lay up a little 'gainst a rainy day." The worst that can be said of it will be that I worshiped mammon more than the god of ambition. Both Deities are *hethenish*, but one *pays* its votaries a little better than the other.⁸

[AARON V. BROWN]

Addressed to Washington. This letter is unsigned, but Polk revealed the identity of the writer in an endorsement.

1. Aaron V. Brown of Pulaski, a graduate of the University of North Carolina, was a former law partner of Polk.

2. This name has not been definitely deciphered and the person remains unidentified.

3. Wright was a lawyer who was handling Brown's business relating to the estate of John Beard, the father of Brown's stepmother, Susan Beard Stockell Brown. The claim on the estate had been assigned to Brown for

collection. See Brown to Polk, November 23, 1832, and December 22, 1833.

4. At this point the manuscript is so smeared as to make two or three words illegible.

5. Brown was one of the few persons who ever injected levity into their correspondence with Polk. In jest here, he proved to be a good prophet: In 1839 he was elected to the House of Representatives and Polk was elected governor.

6. Little has been learned about Harwell except that he was a young man who had recently moved from North Carolina. In the papers of Senator Mangum the name of the veteran was spelled Cooke, and the rank was mentioned as major. It is not known how this application came out.

7. Micajah T. Hawkins of Warrenton was a member of the House of Representatives and Willie P. Mangum was a member of the Senate.

8. The letter ends abruptly at this point, in the middle of a page.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia Jany 15th 1835

I have had a free conversation with Zolicofer,¹ on the subject of National politics. Lewis is not expected at home before the 1st of Feb. I think however that what Zolicofer says as to the course the Observer will take is to be relied on. He is sincerely attached to the interests of Judge White, and will sustain him so long as there is any fair prospect of success—esteems him one of the purest and most talented of all the aspirants to the Presidency. Van Buren is his second choice, and he says, he is determined ultimately to go for the *strong man* of the administration party, be him who he may, and will yield his personal predelections for Judge White, unless he is united on by our party. I suggested to him the propriety of giving some indication to this effect, so as to let the opposition understand that we were determined not to divide on the question, and hope he will do so, but he did not positively promise to do this, and seemed to fear that it would be considered as giving up White. I think there can be no doubt, but that the Observer may be relied on to take the course we wish viz to sustain White, and endeavor to have him united on by the Republican party, but when this fails to sustain Mr. Van Buren, or whoever may be agreed on as the candidate of the Jackson party. I will take some pains to have this matter go right, and as our Editors

have gone in so strongly and decidedly for Judge White, it will require some caution to manage the matter, preserve their *consistency* and make them useful.

I see no use in disguising the matter—Mr. Van Buren will be the candidate of our party. He is the strongest of our men, and if we cannot elect him we are to be beaten. We may as well therefore look at things as they really are, and prepare for the coming contest. If Whites name cannot be got clear of, it will give us a great deal of trouble and difficulty, but I cannot believe that Tennessee will separate from the Republican family, or suffer herself to be deluded by the allurements held out by the opposition to her state pride. We justly esteem and appreciate Judge White, but cannot consent to become the tools of the opposition, or to be associated in political feeling with such men as Poindexter & others.

My mail concerns being now all right, I can think and attend to something else. New Orleans letters are up to the 7th and there has been no irregularity on any of our Routes except those occasioned by the high waters the last week in Dec. From the 22d to the 29th of Dec. there was failures on all our Routes below Florence. I hope we shall not soon have a repetition of the difficulties. You will see that the Banner is making every exertion to create a prejudice against us & are misrepresenting the facts—for instance the Banner of Saturday last says the latest dates from N O are to the 27th Dec., & yesterday they say their latest dates are to the 3d of January. Now the fact is that New Orleans letters were recd here on *Thursday* last to the 29th of Dec. & on Tuesday to the 5th of Jany., and today to the 7th. But Mr. [Harry R. W.] Hill's prejudices are to be gratified & Hunt² has a spite at us & has not forgiven Maj Barry³ for his removal from Pensacola. We are strictly doing our duty and performing as well as any contractors in America. We are not however possessed of divine power, and must surrender to circumstances which none but the Almighty can controul.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. A native of Maury County, Felix K. Zollicoffer was at this time editor of the *Columbia Observer*, which soon became an antiadministration news-

paper. Micajah G. Lewis was Zollicoffer's partner but he soon left the *Observer*.

2. W. Hasell Hunt was publisher of the Nashville *National Banner*.

3. William T. Barry, Kentucky political figure, was at this time finishing his incumbency as Postmaster General. He was appointed to a diplomatic post in Spain but died on August 30, 1835, while en route to that country.

FROM GEORGE W. HAYWOOD

Bedford County, Tennessee. January 16, 1835

A practicing physician and a son of the noted historian and judge, John Haywood, seeks information on the application of Benjamin Copeland¹ for a military pension. He also requests a report on a claim he has against Thomas G. Bradford.²

Addressed to Washington.

1. Copeland had recently moved from Bedford County to Maury. Less than a month after the date of this letter he was placed on the pension rolls.

2. Bradford, a former editor of the Nashville *Clarion*, was a clerk in the office of the Secretary of the Treasury. He later became a partner in the Washington *Sun*. The nature of the claim mentioned here has not been learned. See Charles Cassedy to Polk, September 26, 1834.

FROM KENDERTON SMITH¹

Philadelphia. January 16, 1835

Having heard that the House of Representatives will discuss the question of indemnity for property seized by the French prior to 1800, Smith asks Polk's support for a long-standing claim by Smith's deceased father, then a merchant in Baltimore.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Smith was a resident of Philadelphia, where he practiced law.

FROM THOMAS McCLELAND¹

Sir

Nashville January 17th 1835

From the capacity in which you officiate as chairman of the committee of Ways and Means I am induced to write to you and more particularly from knowing you to be a friend to the

Administration and a personal friend of the President. I have it in contemplation to fill the four remaining pannels of the Rotunda with appropriate National Historic paintings. The first of which I intend shall be an Allegorically Historic picture representing the President supporting the Union and indeed is significant of the principle acts of his life and comprising his Veto message which has laid the monster low, as well as being significant of his Military achievements, and containing the likeness of Washington, the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and the portraits of the Heads of Departments as supporters to Goddess of Liberty. The second I propose to make the Disbanding of the army by Washington, and the third the battle of Lexington, as being two of the most prominent points in the History of our glorious Revolution. The third I have not yet fixed upon but it will likewise be something historically appropriate. It was my intention to have been in Washington previous to this, but unavoidable circumstances have occurred to prevent my coming on, and I therefore, knowing you to be one of the most active and efficient members among the supporters of the Administration of our worthy Chief Magistrate write to you for the purpose of aiding me in laudible object of transmitting to posterity his Patriotic acts represented symbolically, to be placed in the Capitol of our Country, that it may perpetuate and bring to mind his Administration, which hereafter will be referred to as the golden era of our republic. I regret extremely that it is out of my power to communicate with you verbally, and likewise to show you the Picture I have almost completed (of the President supporting the Union) and which I flatter myself may stand as a Monument of his Administration. To one who is so well accustomed to, and so well qualified to Legislate upon the most important subjects brought before Congress, it is entirely unnecessary for me to attempt to point out the most efficient means available by which the success of the measure may be insured and carried through both houses. I shall therefore Sir for the while rest assured, and trust to your goodness and exertions and those with whom you may think proper to communicate upon the subject as being united in one common cause.

THOMAS McCLELAND

P S A friend of mine has written to the Hon. John Blair² of Tennessee upon the business, who I presume to say will render you all the assistance in his power.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Thomas McClelland, a New York-born portrait painter, apparently learning that there was a possibility that Congress would make provision for paintings in the rotunda of the Capitol in Washington, seems to have believed that he had a good chance of being commissioned to do them. Congress did make provisions for having paintings done in four panels of the rotunda but McClelland was not chosen to do any of them.

2. A resident of Jonesboro, Blair was a member of the House of Representatives, 1823-35. He had been defeated for re-election but was still a member of that body when this letter was written.

FROM DANIEL McKISSICK

Clinton County, Missouri. January 17, 1835

A former resident of Bedford County, McKissick has bought lands north of the Missouri River and west of the current Missouri border. He asks Polk's opinion as to whether this land will become a part of Missouri or will be given to the Indians.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. In 1836 this region was annexed to the state of Missouri.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia Jany 17th 1835

You will see by the last Observer, that the intimation is given that they will in the final contest give *strength to the strongest*. I do not exactly like the Editorial articles on the subject. It is however the best which can be done at present. They honestly wish to see Judge White succeed (and if there was any prospect of his success I should say they were right) and fearful of saying any thing which may be construed into a giving of him up. Zolicofer says him and Heiskell¹ entertains precisely the same views & feelings, and both are determined to act with the Republican party, but hope to succeed in having White fixed on as the Candidate of the party, and at all events will keep up the fire for him for a while longer. I do not like what he says

about the Baltimore convention, nor do I see any necessity of throwing out the doubt about Van Burens integrity of character. If Van Buren is his second choice, he should leave himself in a situation to aid in his election, if circumstances throws his first choice in the back ground. A convention of the party, or something of the sort, is the only way of ascertaining who a majority prefer.

In a presidential contest you are aware of the importance of the Press, and I am sanguine in the opinion that the Observer will finally go right. I will take much pains to have it so. The Alabama resolutions are sufficiently explicit as to division of the Party and as I understand pledge themselves to support the Jackson candidate, and express a preference for White as that candidate.² Tennessee feels probably in the same way. I was satisfied when in Miss. that that state would sustain Van Buren at all events. What states can be calculated on for White except Tennessee & Alabama. If these vote for him at all events, it amounts to throwing away their votes, and endangers the Republican party. I hope all will yet go right, and that we shall have no splitting up. If the contest was singly between White & Van Buren, I should not hesitate to vote for White, unless circumstances inclined me to believe that he had been tempted to lend himself to the opposition.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Frederick S. Heiskell and Felix K. Zollicoffer had been associated at one time in the publication of a newspaper in Knoxville, where Heiskell was continuing to publish the *Register*. See Samuel G. Smith to Polk, January 6, 1835.

2. On January 5, 1835, the Alabama legislature passed a resolution naming Hugh L. White as their choice for the presidency. On the same day the legislature considered a resolution favoring a national nominating convention and pledging support of the nominee of that convention. This resolution was decisively defeated.

TO JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Washington City Jany 18. 1835

I send you the enclosed letter from Mr Olsted¹ that you may see how the boys are progressing in their studies. I think it

would be well for you when you have leisure to write to them and impress upon them the necessity of application so as to maintain a reputable standing in their class.

I saw Col. Gardner² on yesterday, and had a conversation with him, about the complaints I had seen in the Nashville newspapers, about the failure of the mails from New Orleans. He told me he had received a letter from you upon the subject, and that he hoped and believed that the reason of it would be satisfactorily explained as soon as you could hear from your agent below. He said nothing would be done in the matter, and no order taken, until the cause was known at the Dept. and that he had no doubt you were making great exertions to execute your contract well, and that he expected the worst failures must have been occasioned by high waters, or other causes beyond your control. He seemed to be fully sensible too of the hostile feeling among a few at Nashville against you, and seemed to understand the influence that controlled the press at that place. The Dept. I think will do you justice. Gardner spoke in terms of much regret of the dishonour of your bill in the Department, and said it must be presented for the future. When your letter in relation to the protested bill reached me, Caruthers³ was here. I saw him and he told me he had attended to it, and would write to you, and that it would be unnecessary for me to do so. On that account & being very busy I did not write to you.

I hope you will make arrangements to have the mail, (the letter mail at all events) carried on horseback or in some other way regularly during the winter so as to stop the clamour of our enemies at Nashville. I have received no answer to my letter on the subject of the Presidency. Rumour says the President is much excited and speaks in strong terms of condemnation against the movements here to distract and divide the party. I do not know a single Jackson member of Congress residing out of Tennessee who is favouring the movement about which I wrote. They all seem to be resolved to unite & run but one man. The rumour to day is, and I have no doubt it is well-founded, that *Webster* will in a very few days be nominated by the Massachusetts Legislature.⁴ Should this be so it will demonstrate (if demonstration be required) the necessity of continued union in

order to preserve and perpetuate our principles. Bell is deeply engaged in the intrigues here, and is coming into worse odour with the administration and its friends than he has ever been. Write me and let me know precisely how the land lies at home. Preserve my former letter as I may some day have use for it.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Denison Olmsted, professor of mathematics and natural philosophy, was acting as guardian to Samuel W. Polk and the two Walker brothers at Yale, James H. and Joseph Knox.

2. Charles K. Gardner, Assistant Postmaster General.

3. A resident of Huntsville, W. T. Caruthers had become Walker's partner in the mail-contracting firm of Walker and Caruthers. Formerly he was a partner of John Kinkle in the Alabama mail-contracting firm of Caruthers and Kinkle.

4. The Massachusetts legislature did, indeed, nominate Webster within a few days after this letter was written.

TO JOHN BLAIR

Dear Sir

Washington City Jany. 19th 1835

A few days after the meeting of the present Session of Congress, you and myself had a conversation upon the subject of the next Presidency. Circumstances may make it necessary, that the opinions expressed to you at that time, should be preserved, and I ask the favour of you to state, what my opinions and course as expressed to you at that time were. I request that you will state further, whether the opinions expressed to you at that time were not repeated substantially in a conversation with you at your room on Sunday the 4th Instant.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOSEPH B. BOYD¹

Jackson College Maury Cty Tenn

Hon Sir

January 19th 1835

I enclose to you my application for admission in the West Point Academy and also certificates from the President and

professors of Jackson College which I wish you to present to the Secretary of War, as you promised you would do so in your letter, which I had the honor of receiving. I trust sir that the certificates, which I send, will satisfy the appointing power as to my character and general deportment, and as to my standing and respectability. I confide alone on your testimonial. I know without your aid it will be imposible for me to get an appointment. I am fully aware you carry most of your points which you undertake. I hope though that it will not be so arduous a task for you to get me an appointment as it was to gain the deposit question. I noticed some time past of a committee in Congress appointed for the purpose of enquiring into the expedience of amending the laws of the West Point Academy or whether it would comport with interest to abolish said institution. I wish you would write sir if you please what Congress has done concerning it and your expectations about it. I understand from particular inquiries that it is very uncertain, whether J. Guess² the one whom you wrote had an appointment will repair to the West Point, as he is keeping store in Nashville, and not preparing himself for admission. I have not heard of any one else from this district that expects to apply this year. In conclusion I wish to remark that it would gratify me very much, if you would send a student from the most populous county in your state, and a county that has sustained you well, and I expect always will.

JOSEPH B BOYD

Addressed to Washington.

1. He was the son of Aaron Boyd of Chapel Hill, Bedford County. He received an appointment to West Point, where he was graduated in 1839.

2. James L. Guest, formerly of Columbia, received an appointment to the Military Academy only to find that he was too young to enter. He resigned the appointment and apparently never reapplied.

TO JOHN BLAIR ET AL.¹

To J. B. &c.

Washington City Jany. 20th 1835

Mr Cave Johnson has shewed to me the extract of a letter, purporting to have been signed by you and dated 1st of Janu-

ary, addressed to him, and which extract he informs me was handed to him on the night of the 15th Inst. In that extract you have deemed it necessary to introduce my name, and opinions and aims are attributed to me which I do not entertain. My opinions and course in regard to the next Presidential election had been so repeatedly expressed to various members of Congress and others since the commencement of the present session, and were as I supposed, so well understood, that I do not know that I should now think it necessary to notice what is said in your extract, but that I was informed on yesterday by a member of Congress from New York that Mr Bell had shewed him a paper signed by eight of the members from Tennessee in which my name was used. I suppose the paper thus shewn to be a copy of the extract sent to Johnson. To how many others it has been shewn under a similar injunction of secrecy I have no means of knowing. This circumstance induces me now to address you, for the purpose of putting beyond all question, both now and hereafter what my opinions are.

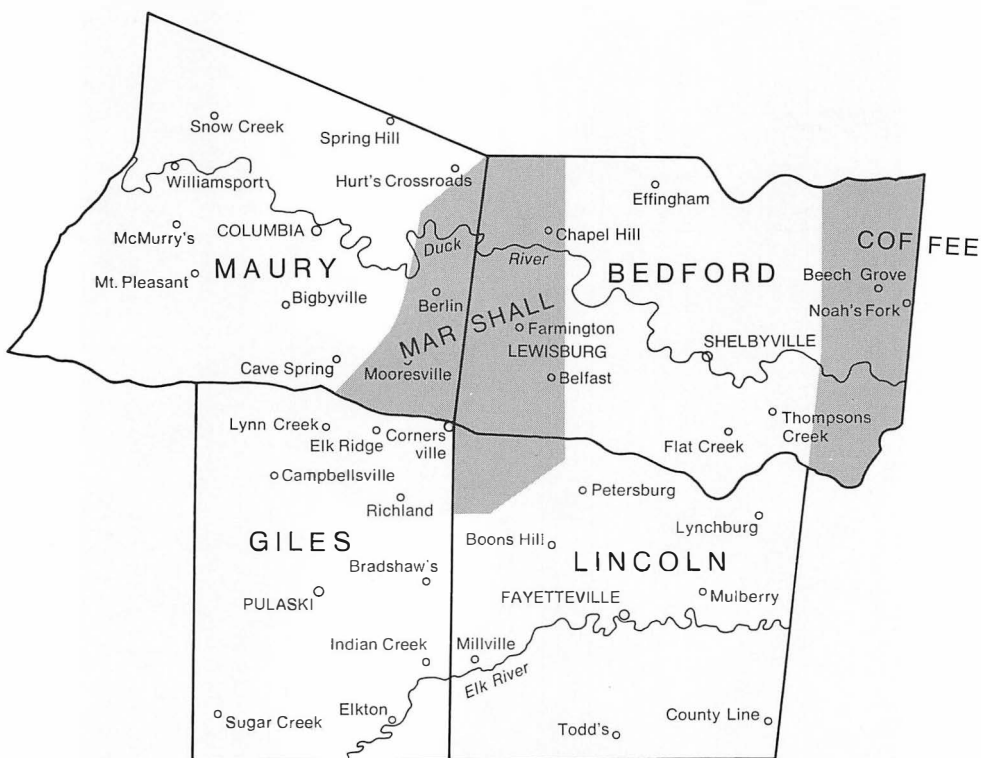
On my way to Washington in November last I heard occasionally conversations about the next Presidency and Judge White's name was sometimes introduced. Among such of the friends of the administration as I heard speak on the subject there seemed to be but one sentiment and that was that the Republican party should not be broken up but continue united and if possible agree upon some one man and run but one candidate. From all I could learn in occasional conversations with such gentlemen as I happened to meet on the way, I could have no doubt that the opposition, were looking to find some prominent man in our ranks, as a candidate, whom they professed a willingness to support against the candidate who might be run by the administration party. This I naturally concluded at the time was the effect of the discomfiture and total defeat with which they have met in the result of the late election in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York, which had probably satisfied them that they could not run one of their own party with success, if there was but one administration candidate in the field. I know not what Judge White wishes upon the subject were, but felt satisfied he would not permit himself to be run by the opposition or to be the means of dividing his party. I was

perfectly friendly with Judge White, but thought the party ought to unite their whole strength upon one man. When I reached Washington I found that there the subject had been and was a matter of conversation and speculation. An evening or two before the meeting of Congress, I think it was on the Sunday night before, I was called to see Mr. Grundy and whilst sitting in his room a leading opposition man came in.² He was scarcely seated when he introduced the subject by stating that we were two of the men he wanted to see, and said you Tennessee men must or ought to bring out Judge White for the Presidency and we will support him. I was silent. Mr Grundy evaded the conversation by saying that he did not know anything about it. He [Green] insisted he ought to be brought out and the trend of his conversation was to get the Tennessee delegation to move in the matter. Mr Grundy still parried and evaded the conversation, saying that he was not prepared to act on that subject. He [Green] then said Judge White's vote for the force bill was his greatest objection to him, and that that bill must be repealed and that *his* friends would support the Judge.

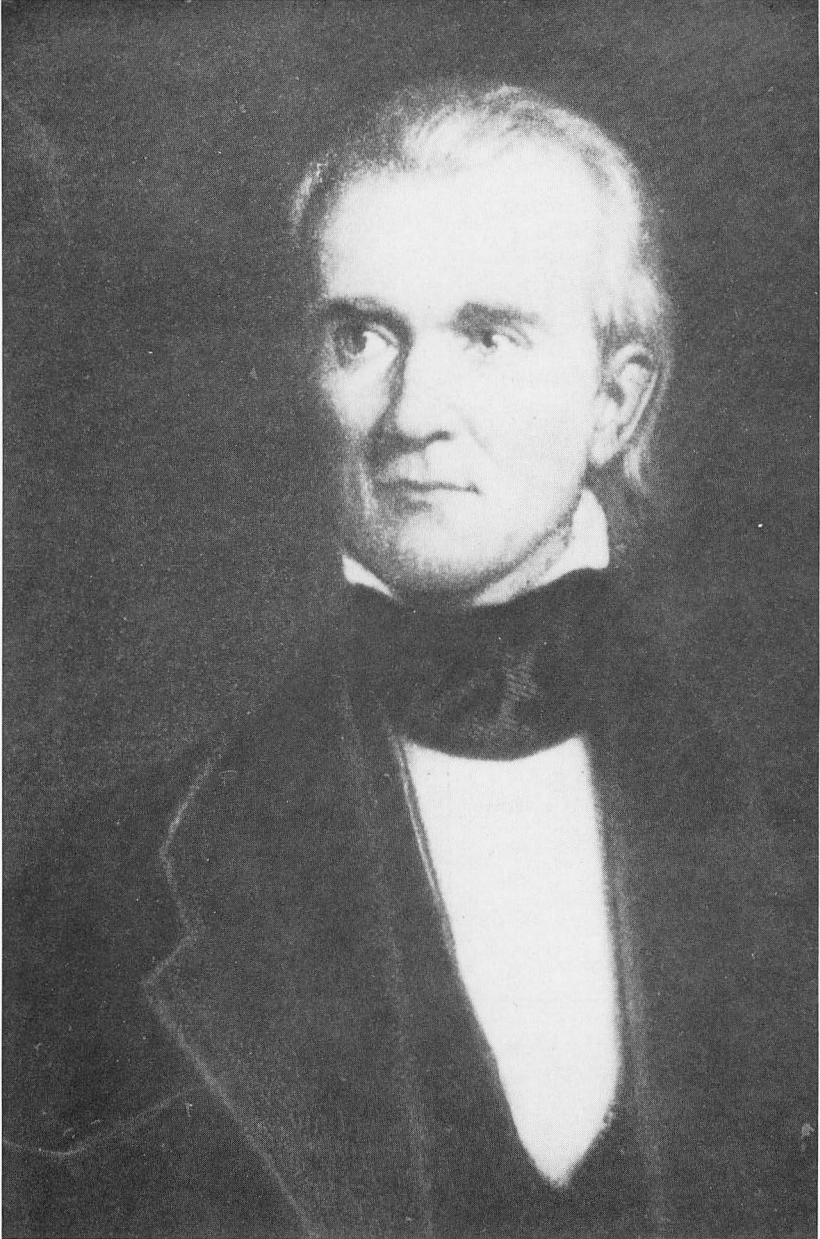
After that I frequently heard that different persons of the opposition were talking in favour of Judge White and urging that he should be brought out. I heard of none of the friends of the administration out of Tennessee speaking in favour of the movement. I determined to have nothing to do with it, being unwilling myself to have any agency in [. . .] producing distraction and division in the party, and I thought there was great danger in producing that effect if such a movement was made, and had some conversations with some of my colleagues on the subject in which I expressed myself. I had a conversation with Col Blair³ a few days after Congress met, at his room at Brown's Hotel, in which I expressed to him my friendly feelings towards Judge White, but expressed my opinion that our political party should unite upon some one man and run but one candidate, that we ought not to permit the enemy to divide and conquer us, and if Judge White should be the candidate selected by our friends it would give me pleasure to support him.

I had conversations of similar import with Messrs Grundy, yourself and some other members of Congress who mentioned

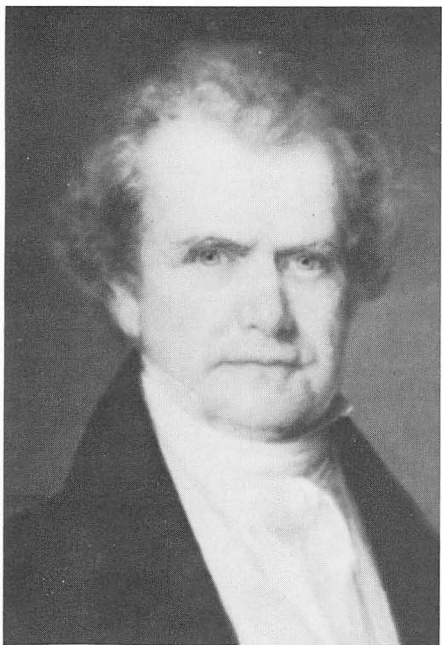
the subject to me, who generally concurred in opinion that it was the only course the friends of the administration could safely pursue so as to preserve the integrity of the party, and prevent division among ourselves which might result in the election of an opposition man. I determined to have no agency in bringing about such a division, and resolved to attend to my public duty, and to have nothing to do with the matter in any form or shape. A few days before the Christmas Holidays, I cannot remember the precise date, but think it was about the 21st or 22nd Dec., I was engaged in the committee room of Ways and Means, with Col McKinley⁴ a member of that committee examining and preparing the Army appropriation Bill. Mr Hubbard⁵ who was also a member of that committee came in & introduced Dr Moore⁶ of Philadelphia, the Director of the Mint, who wished to confer with me on the subject of a proposition to [. . .] which had been referred to the committee. Whilst there my colleague Col Standifer⁷ came into the committee room, and remained until the business about which we had been conversing was finished and Messrs McKinley, Hubbard & Dr. Moore retired. He then told me there was to be a meeting of the Tennessee delegation the next evening to consult about Judge White's being a candidate, or in relation to the measures proper to be taken by the delegation to bring him forward. It was the first that I had heard of this meeting or that one was [. . .]. I promptly told him I would not attend the meeting and assigned to him my reasons for declining. I told him that my personal feelings towards Judge were as friendly as to any man living; that he knew the time had been when I had defended him on the floor of the House of Representatives, when he had been unjustly assailed by Arnold,⁸ when others of the delegation (who are now most anxious to move in this matter) found it convenient to be silent; that he knew I had been grossly abused in the newspapers in consequence of my vindication of him. I told him my personal feelings towards Judge White had not been changed and that if he was taken up and run by our own political party as the candidate of the party it would give me pleasure to support him; but that I thought the party ought to be consulted and not divide but unite upon some one man. I told him that the great political party to which we belonged



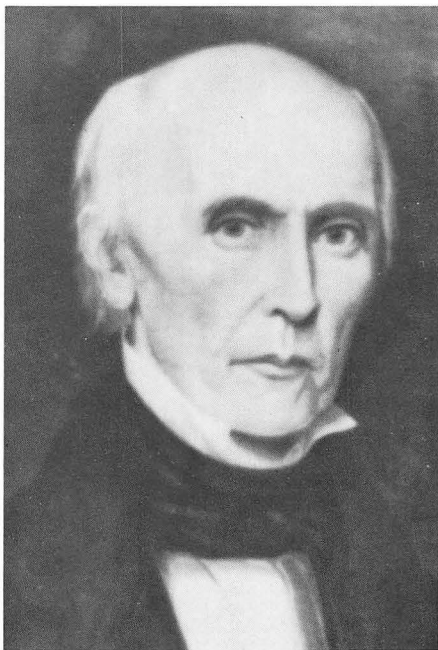
Polk's congressional district (Maury and Bedford counties) as affected by the creation of new counties. Marshall and Coffee counties were both created in 1836.



JAMES KNOX POLK
*From a painting by
George P. A. Healy*



FELIX GRUNDY
*From a painting by
Washington B. Cooper*



CAVE JOHNSON
From a Daguerreotype

had fought the [. . .] battle to little purpose if in the moment of this triumph they permitted themselves to be distracted and divided about men, and thereby possibly put it in the power of the opposition to the present administration, (as they certainly would if we divided and ran more than one candidate) to put up a candidate of their own, perhaps but a few months before the election, when it would be too late for us to unite upon any one of our men, and thus defeat an election before the people, throw the election into the House, where the money of the Bank and the patronage of the Government might be used to purchase and corrupt votes, and perhaps be enabled to elect the opposition candidate against the popular will. I repeated to him that to avoid such a state of things our political friends ought to be consulted and ought not to divide and by division put such an advantage into the hands of our political enemies. I told him these were my opinions and that I should not attend the proposed meeting of the delegation. He said that he did not know that the meeting was intended to bring Judge White out as a candidate, and made some remark about the propriety of establishing a paper in this city to advocate the Judge's claims & insisted upon me to go to the meeting. I still declined and added, that it was no part of my public duty to do so; that I was not commissioned here by my constituents to express their opinions or pledge their votes; that, that was a matter they would attend to for themselves when the proper time came; that as a member of Congress I had no authority to act; that as an individual citizen I would be entitled to my opinion, and when the time came to exercise it, would fearlessly do so; that I was not sent here to make Presidents, but to attend to my public duty as a member of the House; that I was laboriously engaged as he saw in attending to that duty. I added further that if these reasons were not sufficient to prevent my attendance, that there were others connected with the personal relations existing between some of the delegation and myself, that were conclusive against my going into a voluntary consultation with them about any matter, where public duty did not require it. We separated with the full understanding that I would not attend the meeting. On my return to my boarding house that day after the adjournment of the House I in-

formed Col McKinley of what had occurred, who has a perfect recollection of it. On the next day, immediately after the adjournment of the House my colleague Mr Lea⁹ who occupied a seat immediately behind mine, spoke to me whilst I was in the act of taking up some papers and documents off my desk, as I was about to start to my boarding House, and asked me to attend the meeting of the delegation that night. I declined it. We walked out of the Hall together and down the street as far as his boarding house, conversing most of the way on the subject. He insisted that I ought to attend the meeting. I continued to decline and assigned to him in general terms my reasons. Our conversation was not as full as that with Col Standifer. I supposed he had conversed with Col Standifer & understood my feelings and opinions, and probably did not consider it necessary to repeat the whole ground of my objection to attending as fully as I had to Col. Standifer. I remember I expressed my friendly personal feelings towards Judge White and conceded that if he was run by our political friends it would give me pleasure to support him. I remember to have said that I must change my opinion of Judge White if he would ever permit his name to be run by the opposition to the administration; that if he permitted his name to be run by our political friends and was taken up by them I would support him. I did not intend to be understood in this, or any other conversation which I have had with others, as saying that I would support Judge White or any other man at all events or in any way he would permit his name to be run. My determination was to act with our political friends if it were possible to keep them united and to do no act to distract or divide our party. Immediately after Mr Lea spoke to me at my seat before we left the Hall & after telling him I would not attend, I told him that I did not wish to be perplexed about any such matter, and that I was not sent here by my constituents to engage in President making, or in any such business; that I had been attending laboriously to the duties of the committee to which I belong. Mr Lea seemed I thought to be a little excited & said that would not satisfy his people; I told him I could not help it, that I would have nothing to do with it; I added that I had no doubt my constituents thought as I did upon the subject, but that whether they did or not they would act and decide for themselves when

the time came for them to act. I told Mr Lea I regretted the present state of things and that I thought some of the delegation whom I knew to be unfriendly to me, had their own selfish purposes to effect by this movement, more than any desire they really had to see Judge W. made President, but that others with whom I had always been friendly and himself among the number were no doubt sincere in desiring to bring Judge White out; and that if I had no other reason to decline attending the meeting, that there was one that would be conclusive with me, and that was that I could not without losing all self-respect agree to go into a voluntary consultation about anything when public duty did not require it, with a part of the delegation who I had good reason to believe had during the past summer through their tools and instruments, and a pensioned press, wantonly and without provocation on my part, assailed and misrepresented me, but not only had they done this, but had by the control they held over the Nashville press, refused to give publication to the vindication of my friends through their columns. I told him I would hold consultation with no man under such circumstances; that under all the circumstances which had occurred last summer, and which I would not detail to him, were I to go into a voluntary consultation, with the man who had controlled & directed the press at Nashville, my friends at home would look upon me as having lost all respect for myself. Mr Lea still insisted that I should attend & I refused absolutely. I had no idea that what was said between us was to be reported to the meeting. The conversation that occurred between Mr Lea & myself was a general one, in which I did not deem it necessary to go into the whole ground of my objections to attend the meeting as fully as I had to Col Standifer on the day before, for I supposed he fully understood the ground I had taken. And much less did I suppose that I was misunderstood, and that if any part of my conversation was repeated that the whole of it would not have been given.

I authorized nobody to speak for me at the meeting, and had I supposed that my opinions were to be the subject of inquiry or discussion at the meeting, I should certainly have conveyed them in writing to the meeting, that there might be no possibility of misunderstanding them.

The meeting was held as I was afterwards informed at Mr

[Balie] Peyton's room. In a day or two afterwards I learned that Mr Cave Johnson who attended it had addressed a letter to one of the delegation who had also attended, stating his opinions and [. . .] upon the subject of the deliberations had at the meeting. In the course of a few days afterwards, I think not more than three or four, whilst sitting in my seat in the House Mr Lea handed to me, a letter prepared for the signature of the delegation, addressed to Judge White upon the subject of his being a candidate for the Presidency. I declined signing it and handed it back to Mr Lea. When I saw it, none of the delegation had signed it; it seemed it was to be handed to me for my signature first. The House being in session and there being no opportunity for much conversation in our seats, I told Mr Lea I must decline signing it, and that I would see him that evening. I called at his boarding House and he was out. I saw him next day, and explained to him fully as I had done to Col. Standifer my reasons for not attending the meeting; and that the same reasons would prevent me from signing the letter; that I would not be instrumental in doing any act, the effect of which I apprehended would be to distract and divide the party, or put it in the power of the opposition to elect the President. I told him my personal feelings towards Judge White were not changed, but that I would constitute a part of no minority of our party, who were to go off and might form a nucleus around which the opposition were to rally; that I would not permit myself to be used by Messrs Adams, Burgess &c.,¹⁰ and that if I were in Judge White's place I would not permit myself to be supported by the opposition. Mr Lea said he did not see how he could prevent any body from acting for him that chose to do so. I repeated to Mr Lea, that what the opposition most desired was to divide and conquer us, and expressed to him my firm resolution to do nothing to separate from the party; that I thought in a matter so important our political friends in other states who had stood by us for eight years in supporting a Tennessee man & his measures, ought to be consulted before a step so important was taken; that with my views I was compelled to decline signing the letter or having anything to do with the matter. I told him I thought the only hope of pursuing the great principles we support, was to act with the great body of our party, and

as an individual citizen I was resolved to do so. I repeated that I had no right to speak or act for my constituents; that they would doubtless act for themselves. I told him in the conclusion of our conversation that I had always told him, that if Judge White should be the candidate of the great body of our party I would support him; and that with this qualification I had always so expressed myself.

A day or two after this Cave Johnson told me that a letter to Judge White had been presented to him for his signature; and that it was signed by all the delegation, including Crockett, except himself, Grundy & myself. I understand the letter has been handed to Judge White, but have heard of no answer from him.

After all this had occurred I heard that a letter or paper, purporting to detail the proceedings of the meeting held by the delegation, had been prepared & signed by several of the delegation; and that this paper was intended as an answer to Cave Johnson's letter. On the evening of the 4th of Jany Inst. I saw Col Standifer at Mr Grundy's room where the conversation, which has been already reduced to writing took place on the subject of that letter or paper. On the 5th Jany I saw Mr Lea and told him I had heard such a letter or paper had been prepared and signed, in which if I had been correctly informed, erroneous sentiments had been attributed to me, and repeated to him what I understood they were, in substance the same as I had the night before in presence of Col. Standifer. He said he had reported me at the meeting as he understood me, as we walked from the capitol to his boarding house the day he asked me to attend the meeting, and asked me if I supposed that *he* (Lea) would be willing to run Judge White if he *was not* supported by his political friends. I told him then it ought to be so expressed in the paper which had been drawn up, and which I had had no opportunity of seeing. He said that was what it meant unless I supposed *he* was willing to support him if he was not run by our party. I told him it might be subject to a different construction if what I had heard of it was correct, and that whatever the effect might be upon myself personally I desired to have my opinions presented as they really were. I told him further that I had authorized no person to speak for me

at the meeting, but had declined attending for reasons assigned at the time & because I wished to have nothing to do with it. I told him I did not see why or for what purpose my name had been introduced into the paper; that he knew I had resisted his pressing importunity to attend & had expressly refused; that I had no idea at the time he talked to me that my name was to be in any way used at the meeting, or my opinions or views canvassed or discussed, and that if I had thought for a moment my opinions were to be the subject of deliberation, I should certainly have reduced them to writing & communicated them to the delegation, that there might be no mistake or misapprehension about them; that the conversation I had with him was free and unreserved as I knew I was talking with a friend and supposing he knew my opinions & feelings perfectly well, had not been as full as I had been to Col. Standifer. I told him too that the worst part of the matter was, that the letter or paper which had been signed was kept back and was not sent to Johnson, so that I might have an opportunity of seeing it, & correcting any misapprehension in regard to myself which it might contain.

Cave Johnson tells me that Col. Standifer has repeated to him the substance of the same conversation, held with Grundy & myself at Grundy's room, in regard to my opinions and course. On the evening of the 5th or 6th Jany The Hon. Henry Hubbard of New Hampshire came to my boarding House and informed me that on that morning a man had delivered a letter to the Hon. Mr Lea¹¹ of New Jersey from Duff Green, urging the immediate establishment of a paper in this City to support Judge White and stating that the bearer of the letter was a competent man to undertake it, and would converse with him freely and confidentially on the subject; & that Mr Lea of New Jersey after reading Green's letter told the bearer that it must be a mistake, that he knew nothing about the matter; whereupon the bearer asked if he was not Mr Lea of Tennessee; and he answered in the negative. took the letter back, said it was a mistake, & hoped what has passed would be considered as confidential.

A few days after this Mr Hubbard of New Hampshire whilst sitting in our committee room informed me that at a party in

the City when Mr Bell and himself happened to meet, they happened to fall into conversation in regard to the succession. Mr Bell mentioned that it was the interest of New Hampshire to join with the South and West in forming a new party; that if New Hampshire following New York and the other great states, her might would be lost in the Union, but that by uniting with the South and West her might would be felt in the Union; Mr Hubbard told me that he told him, that, that was a strange course; that our party was united now upon certain great principles and he did not see why we should be for breaking it up, and forming a new one. On Friday the 16th Jany. Col. May¹² of Illinois told me he wished to have some conversation with me. We stepped to ourselves, in one of the recesses in the promenade of the Hall of the House. He told me that on Wednesday night the 14th Inst. he had gone with Gen. Reynolds & Mr Kinnard¹³ to Hungerford's boarding House to see some ladies and that he suspected he had stumbled on a caucus. He said when they got there he found there Hayward¹⁴ the commissioner of the Land Office, Bell, Peyton, Blair & Fulton¹⁵ of Va. (the two latter board at Hungerford's), and that very soon the subject of the next President was mentioned, and that he, May, had expressed himself in strong terms to Bell against dividing the party and that no man of our party ought to be supported who was taken up by the opposition. Bell said he did not know that the leaders of the opposition would support Judge White, and that there was no [. . .] of principle in receiving opposition votes. Hayward agreed with Bell and said he remembered the time when there were but fifteen Jackson men in Hamilton County in Ohio, and that he and they had turned out and revolutionized the state in favour of Genl. Jackson. Some of the company (Mr Peyton he mentioned) seemed to be uneasy, walked about, and out of the room and back again. After a short time Col. Standifer, Mr Lea & Judge White came in & the conversation ceased. He then became satisfied he had stumbled upon a caucus or political consultation, and supposing that he was in the way, he, Reynolds & Kinnard retired. About the time he came away Bell put on his coat and started, but he said he had no doubt he returned. *May's* principle object in conversing with me seemed to be, to communicate what had occurred &

to inquire if it was possible whether Hayward could be engaged in the intrigue to divide the party. I could not give him the information.

On the night of Thursday 15th Jany, an extract from the letter of a part of the delegation in answer to Cave Johnson, was handed to Johnson by Col. Standifer as Johnson tells me. I had [no] knowledge that the answer or extract had been sent to Johnson until Friday night the 16th of Jany. when I was informed it had been sent by Mr Inge¹⁸ whom I happened to meet on the pavement opposite to Brown's Hotel. When I seperated from Inge I went immediately to Johnson's room and there read it.

Johnson answered this letter a few days afterwards. On the morning of the 5th of March Johnson informed me that he had just received a long letter in reply from the delegation. On the 24th March I received at Columbia a copy of the correspondence forwarded to me from Washington by Johnson. On the 26th I commenced writing an answer to Johnson's letter.

[JAMES K. POLK]

No address is available. This is an unsigned draft in Polk's handwriting, and if such a letter were actually sent it has not been found.

1. It is believed that the J.B. at the top of this letter indicated John Blair, but it seems that it was written to record Polk's own memory of events and could have been intended for any of the Tennessee delegation who participated in the caucus at the room of Balie Peyton. This draft has been revised, and in many places words and phrases are struck through, while interlineations are frequent. Some of the interlinear additions, apparently made in pencil, are illegible.

2. At this point "General Duff Green" was struck out and "a leading opposition man" substituted. Green, an influential newspaperman, had first supported Jackson but followed Calhoun when he broke with the President. He supported Clay in 1832 and remained in the Whig ranks.

3. Francis P. Blair was editor of the influential *Washington Globe*, which supported the administration.

4. John McKinley, a former Senator from Alabama, was serving a single term in the House of Representatives. He was again elected to the Senate but chose instead to accept appointment to the United States Supreme Court.

5. Henry Hubbard of New Hampshire was in the House of Representatives from 1829 until 1835 and then served one term in the Senate.

6. Dr. Samuel Moore was Director of the Mint at Philadelphia, 1824-35.

7. James Standifer of East Tennessee was one of the members of the

Tennessee delegation supporting the candidacy of Judge White. He was in the House of Representatives 1823-25 and 1829-37.

8. Thomas D. Arnold, an East Tennessee lawyer, was a vocal and vitriolic anti-Jackson man. He served in the House of Representatives 1831-33 and 1841-43.

9. Luke Lea of Knox County was serving the first of two terms in the House of Representatives, 1833-35. He had served twice under Jackson in Indian campaigns.

10. John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts and Tristram Burges of Rhode Island, both members of the House of Representatives, were Whigs and bitter opponents of Jackson.

11. A Democrat, Thomas Lee of New Jersey probably enjoyed the incident, which proved quite embarrassing to the supporters of Judge White.

12. William L. May, a Democrat, was in the House of Representatives 1834-39. He did not run for re-election and later moved to California.

13. John Reynolds of Illinois and George L. Kinnard of Indiana were Democratic members of the House. Reynolds was a former governor of his state and had commanded the state militia in the Black Hawk War. He was in the House 1834-37 and again 1839-43. Kinnard served from 1833 until 1836, when he was killed by an explosion on an Ohio River steamboat. Kinnard had lived for some years in Tennessee before moving to Indiana in 1823.

14. Elijah Hayward, as a newspaper editor in Cincinnati, had supported Jackson in 1828. Subsequently he was appointed as Commissioner of the General Land Office. Without sufficient clerical help, he found his office too vexatious and taxing, and he began drinking heavily. He resigned under a cloud in August 1835.

15. John H. Fulton was a Whig from Abingdon. He served only one term, being defeated in his attempt at re-election. He died in 1836.

16. William M. Inge of Lincoln County, Tennessee, was about to end his single term in the House of Representatives. He moved to Alabama shortly afterwards.

FROM AARON BOYD¹

[Chapel Hill, Tennessee]

Dear Sir,

January the 20th 1835

On yesterday my son arrived at home from Jackson College and brought with him the certificates of the Rev. Doctor Hardin president of the board of trustees and former president of the College, also president Laberees William L Willefords and Joseph Shermans² certificates which will be enclosed in the application directed to the Hon. Secretary of War which ap-

plication my son wrote himself. Whether every thing that is necessary or not is contained therein I do not know but perhaps his wishes are fully enough explained. He is verry desirous to get admitted as a cadet at West Point and solely relies on the documents which will accompany this letter and your Influence as a paticular friend for success in the undertakeing. I have no doubt but he possesses all the qualifications requisite to enter if he can get a birth there. I am intimately acquainted with the Hon. Wm M Inge and have an idea of addressing a few lines by this mail to him requesting of him to lend some assistance on behalf of my son. If there should be any further enquiries made relative to the charracter and standing of the parrents of the applicant he can testify something on my part but I hope you will not be any ways diffculted in accomplishing what I request of you. The populous County of Bedford I have been informed has never presented a petition to the Secretary of War for a simular favour yet which is the county my son was born and has been reared up in. Whether Guess of Columbia will go on or not is verry uncertain. From what I can learn I think most probable that he will not as he is not trying to quallify himself. I add nothing more at present. . . .

AARON BOYD

Addressed to Washington.

1. Boyd was of some political prominence at Chapel Hill in Bedford County. He was an unsuccessful candidate for delegate to the state constitutional convention of 1834. See Joseph B. Boyd to Polk, January 19, 1835.

2. Robert Hardin also seems to have become president of the Union Seminary which took over the site vacated when Jackson College moved from Spring Hill to Columbia. Benjamin Labaree was the first president of the institution under the name Jackson College. Williford taught in several schools in Middle Tennessee and on several occasions sought appointment as a surveyor. Joseph Sherman, a minister, was teaching in the school at this time but later became its president.

FROM DAVID JARRETT¹

Dear Sir,

Denmark² Tennessee January 20 1835

I saw this evening in the Republican that Mr [Ambrose H.] Sevier introduced a bill requiring the president (if not deemed incompatible with the public interest) to negotiate with Spain

for her right and title to the Country lying between the Sabine and Red River in Arkansas Territory.³ You and others made remarks upon the subject of this bill. This is a matter that myselfe and many of my friends feelee much interest in. I wish to know of you, your opinion upon this subject, as well as the opinion of your friends in Congress. I feelee like going to Texas, and I should like to be informed upon this subject. If I have beene correctly informed about Texas I certainly could benefit my Ragged Dirty and Starving Childring. You may think it strange for me who is so fond of Democracy to leave the Star-Spangled banner, and one who has (in a small way) taken such interest in the affairs of our Government. But at the same time I have seene Sluggish Dogs who never was capable of a wish for the prospects of the Republican cause of our country enjoying some of the fattest appointments of the Government and with ordinary capacities. It is a true old saying that Kisses goes by [. . .]. I have come to a conclusion that it is right for those who are fed and cloathed and wear the laurels ought to do all the labour, and for the future, even if I should remain in the U S States I will never suffer my feelings to be interested in political matters as they have beene, and exclusiveley for the reasons given. Excuse me for a departure from the subject of Texas. Do you believe that any part of that country will be purchased by the U.S. and at what time. The Eastern part of that country is settled with the inhabitants from the United States, and it will be their wish to come into the union. It certainly is one of the finest countries upon this continant and I believe the greatest opening for a large speculation. That Government will open offices to enter land at a very small price, probably 4000 acres for \$100 dollars. Please to answer my enquires for old acquaintance sake, if there should be no other inducement. I am unacquainted with any thing of a political colour consequently you will excuse me upon that subject. All is well. McCrosky⁴ has sold his land and will go to Texas next fall.

DAVID JARRETT

Addressed to Washington.

1. A long-time resident of Madison County, Jarrett had been involved with Samuel Polk in surveying and locating land in the Western District.

2. Denmark is a small town in Madison County, a few miles southwest of Jackson.

3. Sevier's intention was to bring about a conference between the United States and Spain to clarify the boundary determined in the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819. The discussion was brought about when Mexico attempted to exercise right of proprietorship of the region.

4. Unidentified.

TO LEWIS CASS

Sir,

Washington City January 21, 1835

The Committee of Ways and Means have under consideration a resolution of the House of Representatives, of which I enclose to you a copy. With a view to obtain the necessary information to enable the Committee to act upon the subject to which it relates, I am instructed to ask, that you will inform them whether any of the Clerks now employed in any of the offices connected with your department, can be dispensed with, or transferred to some other bureau or office in your department, other than that in which they are now employed, where their services may be required; and that you will further communicate to the Committee what additional number of clerks will be required, in any of the bureaus or offices connected with your department, to discharge the current duties of the office, so as to prevent the necessity of making annual appropriations for extra clerk hire, or arrears of clerk hire. Should any additional number of clerks be in your opinion necessary, the Committee request that you will suggest the number required, and the salaries which in your judgment, it would be proper to allow them.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy, signed by Polk, in Letters Received by the Secretary of War for 1835-1836 (RG 107), National Archives. A clerk's copy, not signed by Polk, is in Letters Received by Office of the Adjutant General (RG 94), National Archives.

TO LEWIS CASS

Sir

Washington City, January 21st, 1835

The Committee of Ways & Means have under consideration a proposition to prohibit by law, all commissions, per diem al-

lowances to officers engaged in particular kinds of service, and all extra allowances of every kind, which may be founded on Executive regulations, in cases in which such regulations have not been made in pursuance of any existing law. With a view to obtain the necessary information to enable the Committee to act upon the subject, I am instructed to ask that you will communicate to them a list of all the cases, and the amounts paid to each person, during the past year, if any in your office in which such commissions, per diem or other extra allowances are now made, together with a copy of the Executive order or regulation under which the same is granted.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. A clerk's copy, signed by Polk, this letter is in Letters Received by the Secretary of War, 1835-1836 (RG 107), National Archives. Identical letters apparently were sent to all members of the cabinet.

TO MAHLON DICKERSON

Washington. January 21, 1835

Acting in his capacity as chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, Polk requests the same information about clerk hire that he asked of Lewis Cass in the second letter above this.

Addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy, signed by Polk, in Naval Records Collection, Miscellaneous Letters (RG 45), National Archives.

TO MAHLON DICKERSON

Washington. January 21, 1835

Saying that the Committee of Ways and Means has under consideration a proposal to prohibit by law certain special commissions and per diem allowances, Polk asks for the same information that he requested of Lewis Cass in the second letter above.

Addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy, signed by Polk, in Naval Records Collection, Miscellaneous Letters (RG 45), National Archives.

TO JOHN FORSYTH

Washington. January 21, 1835

Polk duplicates the letters to Cass and Dickerson immediately above which request information regarding clerk hire in the various departments.

Addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy, signed by Polk, in Records of the Department of State, Miscellaneous Letters Received (RG 59), National Archives. Enclosed was a copy of the House resolution instructing the Committee of Ways and Means to investigate clerk-hire policies.

TO LEVI WOODBURY

Washington. January 21, 1835

Polk asks for the same information required of Cass, Dickerson, and Forsyth regarding clerk hire in the various departments.

Addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy, signed by Polk, in Communications from Committees, Senate and House of Representatives, 1833-1837 (RG 56), National Archives. Another clerk's copy, not signed by Polk, is in the Papers of Franklin Pierce, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

TO LEVI WOODBURY

Washington. January 21, 1835

In identical language Polk asks the same information concerning special commissions and per diem allowances that he required of Cass and Dickerson.

Addressed to Washington. A clerk's copy, signed by Polk, this letter is in Communications from Committees, Senate and House of Representatives, 1833-1837 (RG 56), National Archives.

FROM WILLIAM F. COPLAN¹

Brownsville, Pennsylvania. January 22, 1835

Stating that he is unknown to Polk, Coplan asks that Polk give support to the claims of Captain Valentine Giesey² against the government for services, as well as expenses incurred while he was involved in the work on the Cumberland Road.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Unidentified.
2. Giesey was a former superintendent of the Cumberland Road. He was in poor health when the letter was written and died before the year was out.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS¹

Dear Sir

Murfreesboro January 23rd 1835

In my last I informed you that certificates would be procured by Genl. Brady of the accuracy of Mr Bells speech as reported in the paper at this place.² I then had assurances from Brady that he would use some exertions to procure them, and I was satisfied and am yet satisfied, that [there] are many persons of the highest respectability who would vouch for the report of the speech. I have heard many, and among them Mr Bells friends so express themselves. I have conversed with Brady several times of late upon the subject and have ascertained that he is somewhat indifferent about it, and today said to me that it was useless for a few here to be fighting the battle, without assistance from other quarters. From this I infer that it is probable he will do nothing in it. However time will show. Perhaps he entertains the idea that many others here and in Nashville have, that Mr Bell and Judge White are to overwhelm all opposition to Bell when White is in the field for the Presidency. It is understood that the whole of the business is in Bells hands and that he is Judge Whites Premier. It is said too that it will be made a test at the polls next August and thereby Mr Bell hopes to turn out some who are now in Congress. I have no doubt a large majority of the people of Tennessee will support White for the Presidency if he is a candidate, unless the fact is proved, that he is the Candidate of the opposition and a portion of the Jackson party, used for the purpose of defeating the wishes of a majority of the Jackson party. Mr Bells friends throughout the State will endeavor to justify a resort to such means to elect him, for it will in effect justify himself for seeking his election to the Speakers chair at the hands of the opposition.

I have not learned from any authentic source what are the Presidents feelings upon the subject. It is said here that Judge Whites party will soon have a majority in both houses of Congress. I would be glad if you can spare the time you would give me some intimations of what is doing and likely to be done in the President making business. I am altogether in the dark, and have some solicitude to be informed.

Maj. [Daniel] Graham is just from Nashville and tells me the calculation there is that [David W.] Dickinson is to be elected here upon Whites strength and that you and Cave Johnson are to be beaten by the same means in your districts. They say the question will be put upon the ground that the election will devolve upon the house of representatives. In that case a member will be an Elector, and the people will require candidates to say for whom they will vote. I would be greatly obliged if you will give me some information upon these subjects.

JOHN W CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington

1. John W. Childress was a younger brother of Sarah Childress Polk.

2. John Bell's speech at Murfreesboro was made on October 6, 1834. See Childress to Polk, October 7, 1834; William R. Rucker to Polk, October 12, 1834; and William Brady to Polk, October 11, 1834.

FROM ADLAI O. HARRIS¹

Dear Sir

Columbia 23 Jany 1835

I neglected to mention to you heretofore that I had rented your office for the present year to Dr Frierson & J H Thomas² and occupy with them a part of the year.

Your friend Col. Hill³ failed to pay me his note to you, though he promised me very faithfully that he would do so. Your woman Nancy came to me a short time since with a letter that she had recd. from Mr. Meek⁴ of Nashville, saying to her that her grandchild a little Girl of something over two years old was for sale and that he had promised her owner the preference in the purchase. She seemed very solicitous that you should get the Child and, Naomi⁵ told me that you had said something to her on the subject. I Saw Meek at Nashville a few days ago and he promised me that I should have the child at \$150 if I paid him in ten days. I had the child sent to McKay Campbells⁶ office to be examined by Dr. Esselman⁷ (for I had heard it had been sick) and the Doctor pronounced it sound, a very fine child

& very cheap at \$150. I have to day forwarded the \$150 to Campbell and requested him to take the Bill of Sale in your name. Mr. Meek promises to have the child taken good care of, until I can have an opportunity of sending for it.

I have been disappointed in getting off to N. Orleans, having had some business to attend to that I was not apprised of until about the time I was ready to start. I shall be detained yet about ten days.

All well and *getting on smoothly*. Nothing new in the Political World except the getting up of a White meeting spoken of to day by Kennedy & Booker.⁸ It is to take place some time next week, I understand.

A. O. HARRIS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Harris was the husband of Polk's sister Naomi. He had once been a partner in James Walker's mercantile business but was now a partner in a commission firm based in New Orleans, Caruthers and Harris. At this time Walker was so preoccupied with his mail contracts that Harris seems to have been more active in looking after Polk's business affairs back home.

2. James W. S. Frierson, a doctor, and James H. Thomas, a lawyer, practiced their professions in Columbia for a long time. Thomas was a son of Dr. Isaac J. Thomas. Later he was Polk's law partner. He also served three nonconsecutive terms in the United States House of Representatives.

3. This is probably a reference to William K. Hill, a Columbia merchant and farmer. Hill served for a long time as secretary to the state senate. The nature of this note has not been learned.

4. Jesse Meek Jr. was a Nashville resident but the nature of his business has not been ascertained. See Meek to Polk and Harris, April 2, 1835.

5. Wife of Adlai O. Harris and sister of Polk.

6. McKay W. Campbell, a lawyer who had recently moved his practice from Columbia to Nashville.

7. John N. Esselman practiced medicine in Nashville for many years. In September 1835 he published a letter in the Nashville *Banner* explaining the effectiveness of smallpox vaccine. He married a sister of George Washington Campbell.

8. Judge William E. Kennedy of Columbia was John Bell's cousin. He and Peter R. Booker, a Columbia businessman, strongly opposed Polk in politics and were Maury County leaders in the promotion of the candidacy of Hugh L. White.

FROM WILLIAM T. BARRY

Washington. January 24, 1835

Barry informs Polk that in addition to the thirty-eight clerks currently provided for by law, the Post Office Department needs forty-two clerks to perform its duties, and he suggests a salary scale for the proposed additional clerks.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOHN M. BASS¹

Dr Sir

Nashville Jany 24th 1835

James P Grundy as you will have learned before this reaches you is an applicant for the office of District Atty made vacant by the resignation of James Collingsworth Esqr. which was forwarded a few days since. His father, owing to his absence, could not of course be consulted as to the propriety or policy of his application & in order to relieve him from the delicacy of his position it was deemed most adviseable that a strong recommendation should be procured that the bestowment of the office to the son might assume less the appearance of personal favour to the father than a compliance with the public voice.

It seems from a letter rec'd this evening from Mr Grundy by James that there is something in the state of things at Washington (he does not explain what) which renders the application mal-appropos at least, at this time.² It is now however too late to prevent the resignation of Mr. C & the application of James G for the place. Every body here knows that both occurrences have taken place & from any thing we have yet learned no one from this quarter has applied for it. It seems to be generally conceded that he is to have the office.

The application at this time perhaps is unfortunate & it may place the President in an awkward position &c but it becomes us to look at the state of things at home in case James should fail to get the office. It would be set down to a want of influence on the part of Mr Grundy with the President & a disposition in the President to disoblige Mr Grundy. This I fear would have a worse effect upon Mr Grundy at home than any consequence to be feared from the state of things at Washing-

ton, especially in the absence of opposition & when there seems to be but one candidate & when persons of all parties have joined in the recommendation.

The office is one of no great consequence & if no steps had been taken in relation to it the course would be plain enough. It is now I am satisfied too late to withdraw the application or retrace the steps that have been taken without incurring all the consequences of a failure or defeat.

James is considered by all who know him as entirely competent to discharge the duties of the office. He is moreover a strong man for his age before the people & in the coming struggles in this state (& come they must) it may be a matter of importance to have his arm strengthened for the combat.

I have taken the liberty to write you thus freely knowing your friendship for Mr Grundy & have to request that you will call on him & advise what is best to be done under the circumstances.

JNO M. BASS

Addressed to Washington.

1. A popular and successful Nashville businessman, Bass was married to a daughter of Felix Grundy.

2. See Polk and Cave Johnson to Andrew Jackson, January 28, 1835.

FROM LAURENCE LOLLER¹

Berlin, Tennessee. January 24, 1835

Irish-born, Loller again asks Polk to forward letters to his family in Ireland.

Addressed to Washington.

1. In his letter to Polk on February 11, 1834, he clearly spelled the name as it appears here. In this letter, however, it is spelled Lawler. There is little doubt that this was the same person, and the change in spelling probably stems from Loller's inability to write.

FROM SAMUEL MOORE

Philadelphia. January 24, 1835

Moore asks Polk if the Committee on Ways and Means will address itself to the general problem of the value of foreign coins held by the United

States. He also asks that Congress give attention to the problem of raising salaries of employees of the Mint.

Addressed to Washington. This is a draft, signed by Moore, in Records of the Bureau of the Mint (RG 104), National Archives.

FROM BENJAMIN REYNOLDS¹

Chickasaw Agency, Alabama. January 24, 1835

Recent legislation provides that commissions of all Indian agents will expire in March, and Reynolds asks that Polk speak to the President and the Secretary of War in his behalf.²

Addressed to Washington.

1. An early settler in Maury County, Reynolds had served that county in the General Assembly for four terms. Later he was elected to the Alabama legislature.

2. Reynolds was reappointed, but assigned to Pontotoc, Mississippi.

FROM SAMUEL G. SMITH

Dear Sir

Cherokee Agency¹ Jan'y 24 1835

A few weeks since I apprised you of a visit in contemplation to reconcile the difference between the Cherokees and border settlers within the chartered limits of the State of Tennessee. I have spent a week in this nation bordering on the frontier. There is evidently much unfriendly feeling between the Whites & Indians, but I am satisfied that this matter can be adjusted so far as to guard against hostilities or acts of violence.

The Whites have been poring in this country since the passage of the law by the Legislature of Tennessee extending the jurisdiction over this country.² The population at present within that boundary is estimated at four thousand and rapidly increasing by emigrations.

The policy of Georgia, North Carolina and Alabama is pressing the whole Indians population over into the limits of Tennessee which causes the difficulties.

The land known as the Cherokee country within the three former states may now be considered as settled and literally in the occupation of the whites.

The subject is unusually agitated and may probably become a subject of discussion that when the Indian title is extinguished that part of the land in Tennessee is the property of the State and designed for the promotion of education—that the Indians now crowding in & settling will ask for reservations in a treaty. If such an impression should be made in Tennessee they will take decisive steps against the Indians.

My own opinion is that the principal men of the Nation are seriously engaged in the consideration of the subject of a treaty & that necessity will bring them to the determination to sell. They are holding private [. . .]^s the object of which is not disclosed but since I came among them several who were intently opposed to selling say they are willing and that they believe it for the best but they ask unreasonable terms. The time is fast approaching when the common Indians constituting the great body of the Nation must [. . .] where they are. The country will be filled up with the whites and it is now folly to think of removing them. Taking all those in the four states and undertake to remove them would be like depopulating a whole State.

I am about to make an excursion through the nation of about twenty days when I shall set out for home. I shall then be able to form some opinion upon this subject. I will then give you the opinion I form. Excuse this hasty & imperfect note.

I will write in reply to your letter in a day or two.

SAM G SMITH

Addressed to Washington.

1. The Cherokee Agency was located at Calhoun, McMinn County, Tennessee.

2. The act extending jurisdiction of Tennessee over the area was passed by the General Assembly on November 8, 1833.

3. The ellipsis here and the one a few lines below represent one illegible word each.

TO FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir

Washington City Jany. 26th 1835

I [*sic*] your request I state that in frequent conversations which we have had since the commencement of the present

session of Congress upon the subject of the next Presidential election, I have always understood you to say, that you were willing to support Judge White if he was taken up by our own political friends and run as our party candidate. You always expressed yourself to me that the party ought not divide, but should unite upon one man, and run but one candidate, and that the candidate selected by the great body of our political friends should be supported. I understood you to intertain friendly feelings towards Judge White, but that you would not separate from the party, or be the means by any act of yours of dividing or distracting it. We had frequent conversations early in the session and these were the opinions always avowed by you. On the evening before the meeting of a part of the Tennessee delegation took place to consult in relation to Judge White's running for the Presidency, we conversed together about the proposed meeting and concurred with me in opinion we would not attend it, and the opinions often before that time expressed to me, in relation to the Presidency, were repeated in our conversation. We both concurred in the opinion that we had acted properly in refusing to attend the meeting, or having any thing to do with it. I conversed with you again a few days after the meeting took place, and after we had both refused to sign a letter, which had been prepared to be signed by the delegation, addressed to Judge White upon the subject of his being a candidate, in which conversation you expressed yourself as you had always before done when conversing with me on the subject. The same reasons which had prevented you from attending the meeting, had induced you to refuse to sign the letter to Judge White.

[JAMES K. POLK]

Addressed to Washington. This is an unsigned copy, or draft, in Polk's handwriting, of a letter that was probably delivered by hand.

FROM SAMUEL G. SMITH

Dr Sir

Cherokee Agency Jany 26 1835

Your letter was received before I left home but on the eve of starting & not time to answer it.

We had some rumours as to what was the under current in Washington. You are aware of my great partiality for Judge White and I need not now say to you I concur with him as a politician to the full extent. I had hoped the opposition was prostrated not to rise again and now they can only come into power by some impolitic movement of the party or a division.

That they will resort to any means to succeed or defeat the measures of the Republican party cannot be denied. If they can produce a division the first object will be to bring out a candidate for the presidency suddenly with a hope of success.

If they cannot succeed or the prospect does not authorize the effort then they will unite with one division of the Republican party to control the election. Should they succeed the next object is to control & direct the policy of the government and entirely prostrate every measure contended for in the last eight years. With such a state of things the division of the Republican party who may be defeated will not give an efficient aid to the administration and the Executive must either upturn all the principals gained by the Republican party or be in the minority of the legislature and linger but a weak & futile administration.

Should such be the state of affairs produced by it then all the salutary effect which we anticipate from the measures gained by the success of the Republican party will be lost, confidence will be so much weakened in the government as to give the opposition & Bankites the ascendancy. I need not state to you what will be the fate of the liberties of the people.

As fine & patriotic as I know Judge White to be the source from which some of the movements were made, are hostile in feeling toward our venerable Chief Magistrate and only dare openly oppose him and it would be a bitter hostility. It is applicable to some near at home I fear. But as far as Judge White is concerned he is incapable of [. . .] motive.

It is very important that the party should unite upon one man. Beyond Tennessee and Alabama we are not informed of Judge Whites strength. In Georgia the Union party will if excited probably go for V B unless those of that party living in the western part may unite with the other; then Judge White would get the state. From present appearance Tennessee will

be decided for Judge White. Every means are used for that purpose. It is now boldly asserted that the President will be for him; that they were raised together & that Judge W. was the first to bring him forward. With those who feel a deep interest for the prosperity of this country and a regard for sound political doctrines such division must be a source of painful regret. I have heard nothing from Col L.¹ Should he still be at Washington you will confer with him & say I may not be at home sooner than the 20th Feby & that he must arrange it so as to remain until then for there is no one I can trust to do it for me.

SAM G SMITH

Addressed to Washington. The letter is marked "Confidential."

1. Samuel H. Laughlin.

FROM SAMUEL G. SMITH

Dr Sir

Cherokee Agency Jany 27, 1835

I am now getting to know something of the Indians. The policy of Georgia Ala & North Carolina is pressing the Indian over into the chartered limits of Tennessee & they are rapidly crowding in to that section of country. Some who are wealthy are coming in from necessity as they are dispossessed upon the ground of having taken reservations under former treaties as citizens & then moved into the nation. Upon examination it will be seen that Georgia is correct in this construction.

Georgia & Alabama will soon have dense population and the Indians cannot subsist in the chartered limits of Tennessee. Many of the leading men now see that they have too long adhered to a blind obstinacy & a great revolution is taking place in their feelings. It is unfortunate that all public officers engaged in this business with them are unpoptular [*sic*] and I fear not much pains taken to conciliate.

If the basis of a treaty could be agreed on at Washington and Commission appointed to meet them at the agency a treaty might be concluded. It is within the power of the chiefs for some who have influence, formerly violently opposed would now be willing.

In one week John Ross, Lewis Ross, Lowry & Martin¹ could prepare the nations & get their consent for a treaty. It is a mistake the power of John Ross. His strength is in exciting & operating upon the common Indians but Lewis Ross has entire controle over him & by that means rules the Nation. It would be folly to appoint any one a commissioner who is the least opposed to the administration. It is a part of the opposition to defeat this government nor will it answer to appoint any one who has been in any way concerned in these projects of gold speculation. They are still more dangerous. I would suggest the names of Col Richard M. Johnson² and General Thomas Hinds of Mississippi as suitable for the business. You need not rely upon any thing you hear in relation to the Indian, and their principal men are very reserved, but my situation is such that I shall be able to understand their feelings & situations. As Tennessee is likely to become more interested & must soon make it an exciting subject, I think it advisable for you to converse with the President on this subject. I shall set out for home in about thirty days. Excuse my imperfect letters.

SAM G SMITH

Addressed to Washington.

1. John Ross was the principal chief of the Cherokees and was adamant in his opposition to emigration of his people. He was the son of a white man and a woman who was only one-fourth Indian. He was wealthy, and despite the opinion of the writer of this letter, he was generally thought to be a man of great power among the Indians. Lewis Ross, his brother, was also wealthy but less known. John Lowery had been sent in 1830 by Secretary of War John H. Eaton to appear before the Cherokees and try to induce them to leave Georgia. John Martin was a prominent Cherokee. He had been treasurer of the Nation and was chief justice of the first supreme court of the Cherokees.

2. Johnson was a politically powerful Kentuckian who had served continuously in Congress since 1807; he was a Senator 1819-29. In 1837 he left Congress to serve as Vice-President.

FROM JAMES C. WILSON¹

Georgetown, D.C. January 27, 1835

Wilson, a clerk in the Engineer Department, lists salaries of clerks in other offices of the War Department and asks that the pay of his department be placed on the same scale.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A native of Virginia, Wilson appears to have been personally acquainted with Polk. At one time he had asked Polk's help in obtaining a clerkship in Congress, and during the previous year he had written a letter to Polk that closely resembled this one. See Wilson to Polk, November 29, 1833, and January 7, 1834.

TO ANDREW JACKSON
FROM JAMES K. POLK AND CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir Washington City Jany. 28th 1835

Understanding that *Mr Collingsworth* at present the attorney of the U. States for the District of West Tennessee, intends shortly to forward his resignation of that office, we take the liberty respectfully to recommend to your favourable consideration, *William T. Brown*¹ Esqr of Nashville as a suitable person to succeed him. Mr Brown is a gentleman of respectable standing in his profession, and we doubt not, would if appointed, discharge the duties to the entire satisfaction of the Government and the public. Believing him to be qualified and in all respects worthy we respectfully solicit, in the event of Mr Collingsworth's resignation, that he may be appointed.

JAMES K. POLK
C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Washington. The letter is in Polk's handwriting but is signed by both Polk and Johnson. It is in Letters of Application and Recommendation (RG 59), National Archives.

1. A Nashville lawyer, Brown received the appointment, but he served only a short time before becoming judge of the sixth circuit. Later he moved to Memphis, where he practiced law. At this time he was a partner of James P. Grundy, who was also an applicant for the office. See John M. Bass to Polk, January 24, 1835.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

My dear Sir; Near Murfreesboro. Tenne. 29 Jany. 1835

Yesterday was the day appointed by the Virginians to elect a Senator to Congress, and by this time (8 P.M. 29th) I think

it probable that you are advised of the result. From late indications I am far from being satisfied, that the defeat of Leigh,¹ if procured at all, will tend to as much good as had been anticipated. When at Nashville ten days ago I was told by the quasi Jackson people there that the White party in the Virginia Legislature had compelled the Van Buren party to abandon Rives,² and that the whole Jackson party, with some of the Whigs, through the influence of Gov. Barbour³ would unite on P. P. Barbour.⁴ They also added that Barbour would support White agt Van Buren. This is so much in character with the politics of that branch of the Jackson party to whom my informants belong, that I set it down as a thing altogether possible; and in the hearings which it may have to the prejudice of the closing scenes of Genl Jacksons administration you will at once see why I am not satisfied that all the exertions made to defeat Leigh will end in much profit. Leighs opposition was open & armed, his actings, doings & opinions carried their antidote wherever they went, in secret night or in open day. He who professes to war with you must be trusted in positions where he can do more mischief, with sufficient motive, than can be achieved by legions of the enemy in open combat.

I did not intend when I began, to spend a page on the Virginia Senator, but the reflections which grew out of the matter as presented, must crowd upon the mind of any man acquainted with some of the parties.

Since writing to you early in the month and before receiving your esteemed letter of the 17 Inst I have had some opportunities here & at Nashville of hearing opinions on the perplexing question of the Presidential election. The adherents of Mr Bell, without one exception that I know of except R. Armstrong,⁵ take sides, unconditionally for White. They had been forewarned of coming events, and were the better prepared for calling at once for a "show of hands." The Banner & Republican are both devoted to Bell. Childress,⁶ with much prudence, was absent, and I apprehend, that Catrons views and expectations with other considerations, will press heavily on him & produce a milk & water course or an abandonment of the paper; Barrow,⁷ being limited for the present to the State printing for the Banner & to a seat in the State House of Reps. he will after

troting about a while take in for White. I saw him when in Nashville & he was made fully to believe, that the voters of Davidson would approve that course & that East Tennessee influence in the assembly would secure the printing.

Now, my course is predicated on a conviction; that it is not Gen Jacksons opinion, nor the opinion, (so far as developed) of the great republican family, of which he is at present the head & organ, that Judge White has any remote prospect of being designated by a democratic convention of the people of the U.S. as the individual from amongst them to whom they will call the attention of the Nation as the most likely to unite the party against the assaults of the adversary. That such were the views of Genl Jackson I was sufficiently satisfied, though without ever having direct communication with him on that, or any other subject, and that such were the views of the public I collected from the various undefined channels of communication through which public opinions are formed. In both these I may possibly be mistaken, & Judge White may have clearer lights. If so it will be well for the Judge, & better for the Country than I had apprehended; for I will confess to you my candid convictions, that should the Judge be elected under the state of things, as I fear they exist, he will not be able to administer the Government, as he would under circumstances existing eighteen months ago. I did believe eighteen months ago, & so stated, that I knew no man better situated than Judge White, to administer the Governmt according to its principles and to the best of his judgment & ability, but I do now believe that if elected he would necessarily consider himself indebted for his elevation to a Junto of disaffected politicians, some of whom would in their strife for personal elevation deal as recklessly in the fates & fortunes of their friends, as did ever Napoleon in the blood of his conscripts. Mr Bell had several objects in view, either of which would in his estimation, justify him in sacrificing Judge White. If elected, it must be by the direct influence and assistance of the party against which the Judge has always acted, & in opposition to the known will of a majority of his own party. This will sanctify the ploughing with the enemies' heifer, of which the Speaker was guilty in attaining the chair. At the coming elections in Augt. it may be a comfortable thing to have been

of the number who signed the paper calling on the Judge to come out, & [David W.] Dickinson & Bradford⁸ may ask their competitors on the stump, who will they vote for should the election devolve on the H. Reps? Bell has believed for some time that Genl Jackson ought to die & be out of the way. Should that now fortunately take place, he thinks that, even with what is now done he has cemented a union with White who cannot be in his way, and that he will take station as chief of the united forces. Lea⁹ at all events will vote for him for Speaker next time. During last spring & summer the signs of the times were portentous that Grundy might be taken up as Van Burens Vice P. This was gall and wormwood and the White project came most opportunely in that behalf, & should it stop short this moment, Mordecai will at all events, have been removed from the Kings gate.¹⁰

The more I reflect on the picture of affairs, the more am I provoked at the success of iniquity. Almost every man in the community who takes part in or cares for public doings, finds himself occupying a false position which he is compelled to defend. I shall find myself opposed to Judge White, which is not true, so of Doct [William R.] Rucker & thousands of others, whilst thousands will find themselves opposed to Genl Jackson who are sincerely with him. Furthermore Genl Jackson & Judge White will find themselves in hostile attitude before the scene closes, whatever may be their hopes and expectations now. Should the Judge be elected it will be by the uprooting of all confidence of man in man in the government of public affairs, and the establishment of government by factions, the very evil which Utopians seek to avoid in denouncing party.

I have not much hope in the usefulness of The Paper spoken of, to be established in Nashville. Sam,¹¹ with all his capabilities is a weak vessel. He will be too often found wanting at the crisis. You must recollect the backing out from republishing the article from the Columbia paper in Sepr last. He got drunk on purpose to let the cup pass. He can do so again. It may be the means however of getting Bells Murfreesboro tirade fairly before the public. If so it will deserve patronage. [William] Brady is preparing for battle with Dickinson but spends too much time on low game already secure. He thinks he feels bold & speaks

publicly of the time when White came all the way from Knoxville to electioneer for J. Williams and opposed Jacksons election to Senate.¹² Referring you to my letter to Grundy of late date, (which ask him for & shew him this) I must close the sheet. Will you get Engineers & an appropriation to survey the rail road? The Mrs. Childress' dined with us yesterday. We all dined at Williams' today. Influenza not so bad here as North.

DANIEL GRAHAM

Addressed to Washington.

1. Benjamin W. Leigh was consistently anti-Jackson. He had been elected to the United States Senate to succeed William C. Rives and was now opposed by Rives in an attempt at re-election. Leigh won the election, 85 to 81.

2. William C. Rives, Jacksonian, had resigned from the Senate rather than follow instructions from his state legislature to oppose removal of federal deposits from the Bank.

3. James Barbour, a Whig, was a former governor of Virginia.

4. Philip P. Barbour, brother of James Barbour, was a Jacksonian. At this time he was a federal judge, and in 1836 he became a member of the United States Supreme Court.

5. Robert Armstrong was postmaster at Nashville, 1829-45, and at this time was under consideration as a possible gubernatorial candidate.

6. George C. Childress was at this time editor of the Nashville *Banner*. Not long after this letter was written he moved to Texas, where he helped draft the Texas Declaration of Independence.

7. Washington Barrow, a Nashville lawyer, was currently editing the Nashville *Republican*, having recently succeeded Allen A. Hall.

8. Theodorick F. Bradford, anti-Jackson leader in Bedford County, was expected to oppose Polk again, although Polk had beaten him badly once before.

9. Luke Lea of Knox County.

10. This refers to the story of Mordecai in the book of Esther. When Mordecai's foster daughter became queen, he sat in the king's gate to frustrate the machinations of the king's enemies.

11. Samuel H. Laughlin.

12. After having served in the United States Senate from 1815 to 1823, John Williams of Knoxville was defeated narrowly by Andrew Jackson.

FROM SUTHERLAND S. MAYFIELD¹

Franklin, Tennessee. January 29, 1835

Explaining that the tract of land granted his father in the Creek Nation has no value, Mayfield wishes the claim transferred to another area where the land is more desirable.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Mayfield was a physician in Williamson County. A graduate of Transylvania College, he was a founder of the Tennessee Medical Association. Later he was president of that organization.

FROM SAMUEL G. SMITH

Dr Sir

Cherokee Agency 30 Jny 1835

A few days since I wrote you from this place. Since then I have employed my time among the Cherokees. It is remarkable that not a full blooded Cherokee is to be found in power among the Indians. Many of the most influential are connected in a very remote degree.

The population of the nation including all those who are members of the Cherokee are, agreeable to their own estimates, fifteen thousand but supposed to be about ten thousand. They have recently taken the enumeration but the leading men conceal the true number. The white population in the entire Cherokee nation is supposed to be between thirty & forty thousand souls. Of that number about four thousand five hundred are in the chartered lands of Tennessee. Agreeable to the treaty of 1817 & 1819 many of the leading men were allowed reservations before giving notice in six months of their intention to occupy them under protection of the law. They all took the benefit of that provision and subsequently sold the land, many of them for large sums of money, & all moved into the nation and enjoyed the privileges as Cherokee. The State of Georgia has determined that such reservers are not members of the Cherokee nation and those who settled within the chartered lands of that state are being dispossessed and are now settled or making settlements in that part of the nation within the chartered limits of Tennessee. They are very numerous and wealthy. They are the means of a large portion of the common Indian settling in this same boundary. This may at some future day affect the interest of Tennessee in the event they are allowed reservations when a treaty is made, but that is a matter not now to be discussed as the great object is to extinguish the Indian titles.

They cannot influence things much by this change of settlements as this country is filling up so rapidly with white population that it is only necessary to keep order among them and they

will give way to the occupation of the whites. The white population within the chartered lands of Tennessee as a community are very reputable and industrious notwithstanding they bear the appellation of intruders. Should the General government consider it necessary under any circumstance to remove these people from the Cherokee Nation it would produce a scene of distress unusual in this country. The time is near at hand when the Cherokees must let go their occupation on this side of the Mississippi. They cannot subsist here. The day is past for a support from the game & the country is or soon will be too much occupied for the Indians to feel quiet among them. Those having wealth will find competition from the whites in their speculations and the chiefs will not only feel their own inferiority but the common Indians will discern this. A great revolution is now taking place. Many of those who were very obstinate are subdued in their feelings of opposition. Many who are & have produced the greatest difficulties are now so well satisfied of the necessity that I have been able to learn it from them. The emigrating system is attended with much expense although prosecuted with unbounded industry by Maj. Curry.¹

Should the nations be ultimately removed in that way it will cost a large sum of money. Many of them have improvements that they would value at \$10,000.

It would be well for the Government to make them a liberal offer should they propose to treat. It will relieve the states of much perplexity and so long as they continue it will be an exciting subject and the General government will have to withdraw all control over them or be subject to many unpleasant collisions with the States. Then should the General government cease to exercise any authority and the Courts of Tennessee determine that the Legislature cannot extend this jurisdiction you see what will be our situation. Already a population of 4500 and I consider it fortunate that I have been able to restore order and harmony among them.

I have taken great pains to see and converse freely with the Indians and to examine their situation and country.

They are more easily controled than I had anticipated. Some were a little cross and refractory but I conversed candidly with them & stated to them the consequence of any improper con-

duct and so far as relates to myself, am inclined to think have made a favorable impression upon them. Tennessee will, I am inclined to think, question that part of the boundary run east or South of Tennessee as I am of opinion the Cherokees gained considerable territory in running the lines not contemplated in the treaty.

I am informed they intend to propose a treaty and cession of that part of their territory south of [. . .] river being exclusively in the limits of Georgia but I have no idea that such would be a beneficial arrangement to the government as no one state would be relieved of them.

The leading men of the nation are men very much engaged upon the affairs of their nation and have a constant intercourse. And any mail conveys communications to and from the delegation at Washington.

I have shown some of them Mr Everett's speech² upon presenting the petition of Ridge³ & others.

This seems to be a great damper to them. He was looked upon as their champion in the H R last spring. Ridges party after making the treaty returned home & stated their friends at Washington told them they could do no more that every effort had failed and then they made the treaty. This the Indian contradicted & said they were bribed but now since E's speech they acknowledge it to be true.

The Indians although better informed particularly as to commerce and the mode of trading & traffic are, I am inclined to think, a more depraved people than they were half a century back. This is attributed to the whites who incorporated themselves in the nation.

While the relations with the Government kept out white men of honesty & industry disposed to observe the laws another class mixed with them.

The missionary establishments will soon be extinct in the nation. Those in the part included in the chartered limits of Tennessee are making preparations to go west of the Mississippi. The Indians do not wish such people among them. They only wish to learn the English language that they may be able to traffic with the whites. The Government has been unfortunate in the officers all becoming unpopular. This cannot be avoided

to the full extent. But it requires some tact and much conciliating to effect any arrangement with them. I doubt very much the expediency of Congress making any special appropriations to Ridge and others to emigrate. Would it not be better to keep it suspended in a discussion with them for the present. Should they be provided for and emigrate suddenly it will weaken their party in the nation and leave them without a leader.

If they remain the great acquisitions to their party recently may enable them to get the ascendancy.

The principal chief John Ross is among those who are dispossessed by Georgia. He is the popular man in the nation but controlled by his brother Lewis Ross who is a very wealthy man.

At this time I am inclined to think rather a mild course toward them is advisable until their feelings are known on the subject of a Treaty.

Should it be determined to attempt a treaty I am clearly of opinion as stated in my last letter that it would be advisable for the President to appoint Col. Richard M. Johnston of Kentucky and Genl. Thomas Hinds of Mississippi. These gentlemen are free from any of the prejudices or influences to operate either way.

The Indians know their character and standing and they know that should they (the Indians) defeat it by any evasion those men have the standing to put down all further clamour about persecution.

It is folly to appoint the enemies of the policy of the administration or any of those wild speculators who have been seeking fortunes about the gold mines.

My opportunity for writing is such that I cannot give you much of the extensive details I have learned since among them.

You will excuse my bad writing & imperfect letter.

SAM G SMITH

Addressed to Washington.

1. Benjamin F. Currey, a resident of Nashville, was at this time a special agent to the Cherokees to supervise their westward migration.

2. On January 19, 1835, Edward Everett of Massachusetts introduced, at the request of John Ridge, a memorial that had come out of the council

held at Running Waters in November 1834. He commented on the memorial and stated that during the current turmoil among the Cherokees the negotiation of a valid treaty would be most difficult.

3. John Ridge, a Cherokee subchief, had followed John Ross in opposing removal of the Cherokees but eventually had been convinced that the migration was inevitable. At this time he and Ross headed separate delegations in Washington to present their points of view. Ridge was ready to accept removal to the west.

FROM JOHN C. McLEMORE¹

My Dear Sir

Nashville 31st January 1835

I take the liberty of enclosing to you a power of attorney authorising you to sell for me, my undivided sixth part of a tract of land on the Neosho or Grand River, in the Territory of Arkansas,² including Chouteaus Great Salt Spring or saline and situate about ten miles below the "Grand Saline." Genl. Richd. Dunlap,³ Genl Sam Houston,⁴ Thompson and Drenning⁵ and M. H. Howard⁶ are the owners of the other Five Sixths of this valuable property, all of whom have sent you a similar Power to act for them. The *reservation* under which we claim is included in the late Cession by the Osage Nation⁷ to the United States, with a stipulation (as I learn) on part of the Government, to extenguish the title to *all reservations* within the ceded Territory. You will see by reference to the enclosed Power, that we claim the reservation of Amelia the daughter of Shemahunga⁸ a half breed Osage under the treaty concluded at St. Louis 2d. June 1825. The Honble. Mr. [William C.] Dunlap of this state, is fully advised by his brother of the nature of our claim, and will aid you in the sale; have the kindness to confer with him on the subject and do the best you can for us. No sale, I presume can be made of a part without the whole. My sixth cost me \$ and at the time of the purchase I was enduced to believe it worth \$.⁹ I must *now* however be content to get the best price I can; in other words submit to such price as the Government may think under the circumstances we ought to receive. We would much prefer to hold the property, provided we could be priviledged by the Government & Indians to work it and manufacture salt, as it would in that case be a large fortune and could be made with a small capital to produce an emense in-

come. But as we have no hope of securing the title in the way we desire, we are willing to throw ourselves on the liberality of the government and submit to such price as it may think just under the circumstances. Any communication you may think proper to make me on the subject of our claim will be esteemed a favor not to be forgotten, as I am anxious to know the result, be it what it may.

I see Judge White is out for the next Presidency and am glad to learn it is not with any agency of yours that he is brot out. It is evident to me, its tendency will only be to divide our party, which is just what the opposition desire. I for one will do nothing to divide the party or please the opposition. Am then opposed to his nomination and in favour of the true Jackson Republican nomination, of Martin Van Buren for President & Dick Johnson of Kentucky for Vice President. Benton in reply to his nomination in Mississippi for Vice President takes the right view of the subject and it is to be regretted that the majority of the Delegation from our state could not have taken the same view that he has, as in that case the Jackson party would have preserved an unbroken front, which is always irresistible. Still we cannot fail of success. I have a high respect for Judge White and would under different circumstances support him, but it is too evident; his nomination is to do injury to our party, without the slightest prospect of his success. He cannot as I believe *get a single vote out of Tennessee & Alabama*, without the opposition unite on him, which if done, I cannot see how any Jackson man can consistently support him. I should be glad to have your views on this subject, but I know they must accord with mine. At least I hope so. Our friend Lucius J. Polk¹⁰ got here yesterday in good health on his way from the city. He only called a few moments and pushed on home, he however remained long enough to tell me he was a moderate White man and I to tell him I was thorough going to Van Buren, so friends will differ in politics as well as in other matters. A short time will prove Lucius wrong & us right.

JNO. C. McLEMORE

Addressed to Washington.

1. John C. McLemore was a close friend of Andrew Jackson and had married a niece of Rachel Jackson. He was a wealthy land jobber, owning

lands throughout Tennessee. At one time he was surveyor general for Tennessee.

2. This land is now in the northeastern part of Oklahoma.

3. Richard G. Dunlap, a resident of Knox County, was a brother of William C. Dunlap, at this time Polk's colleague in the House of Representatives. Later in 1835 Richard G. Dunlap became a candidate for governor.

4. After he resigned as governor of Tennessee, Sam Houston lived among the Cherokees for several years. From 1829 until some time in 1834 he traded near Fort Gibson in the region just west of Arkansas.

5. David Thompson and John Drennen, at one time residents of Nashville, had been licensed in 1821 to trade with the Cherokees. Later Drennen settled in Arkansas.

6. Memucan Hunt Howard had engaged in land dealings in Tennessee along with his uncle, Thomas Hunt, as early as 1818. He had been one of McLemore's partners in locating land warrants in 1822.

7. This land had been ceded to the Osage Indians in 1825, and by a recent treaty negotiated by Francis W. Armstrong it was ceded back to the United States. It was to be then ceded to the Cherokees, and it was thought that this cession would be a strong factor in persuading the Cherokees still in the east to move beyond the Mississippi River. The treaty was considered advantageous to the Osages, but was justified because the Osages had been most unfortunate in their previous land cessions and were at this time in dire need.

8. Shemahunga was one of the two Osage wives of Auguste P. Chouteau, and Amelia was one of the six children of this couple.

9. These amounts were not given in the letter. Instead, a blank space was left after each of the dollar marks.

10. Lucius J. Polk, a resident of Maury County, was a son of Colonel William Polk of North Carolina.

FROM JOEL H. HADEN

Springfield, Missouri. February 1835¹

The register of the land office at Springfield notifies Polk that there is nothing irregular about a land entry made by Daniel D. Berry for his father-in-law, William W. Polk,² and says that the transaction cannot be used against him politically.

Addressed to Washington but delivered by hand.

1. No day or year was given by the writer. The year has been suggested by the Library of Congress and seems to be correct.

2. Aside from the fact that he married Olivia Polk, daughter of William Wilson Polk, little has been learned about Berry. William Wilson Polk was an uncle of James K. Polk.

FROM SAMUEL G. SMITH

Sir

Cherokee Agency February 3 1835

Yours of the 18th Jny. came today. I hope to be at home by the 18 of the present month as I hope in that time to adjust all matters between the Whites & Cherokees.

I find from the time of leaving home in the whole of my travels the people are almost unanimous for Judge White. That he will get the vote of Tennessee there can be no doubt. In East Tennessee they are flattered with the expectations of doing so in accordance with the feelings of the President. Some highly respectable men say to me they believe and hope that the President will give over all active candidates and consent to see Judge White run. All parties here have united for him. When I traveled in Middle Tenn the same feeling seems to prevail.

This I consider it proper for me to disclose to you. Having furnished one president the people of course are sanguine.

In our State affairs Genl [Richard G.] Dunlap is anounced for Governor. I have been solicited from many parts of the State by highly respectable sources.

The demonstrations have in some instances been in a formal way. Dunlap nor [Daniel] Graham have the least prospect of being elected either if one or both run. I do not know that Graham will. All parties look to me as being most in the way of their success.

The object of certain people will be to keep me out either by keeping me out of the canvass or to unite every effort against me. I could get the votes of either Graham or Dunlap or both if they were out of the way.¹

The people assure me I would have nothing to fear in any contest. Although repeatedly urged by my friends to do so I have not yet agreed to anounce my name as a candidate. I shall leave in a few days and shortly after my arrival at home determine upon it. Write me to Nashville.

SAM G. SMITH

Addressed to Washington. The letter is marked "Confidential."

1. Smith recognized the fact that if William Carroll chose to run, he, Graham, and Dunlap would have little chance. As it turned out, all of them dropped out and the race was between Newton Cannon and Carroll, with Cannon winning. Smith died soon after the election.

FROM RICHARD C. ALLEN¹

Tallahassee, Florida. February 4, 1835

Allen asks Polk's help obtaining the judgeship of the Apalachicola district, should that district be established by law. He refers Polk to Richard K. Call² for an assessment of Allen's legal accomplishments.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Allen had moved from Tennessee to Florida in 1825. As a surveyor and land speculator he accumulated considerable wealth and became a major stockholder in the Union Bank of Tallahassee. He got the judgeship he sought but not until 1838.

2. At one time a special aide to General Jackson, Call was practicing law at Pensacola. He was elected as the Congressional delegate from Florida Territory and later became governor of the territory.

FROM SAMUEL KING¹

Sir

N.C. Iredell Oakville Feby. 4th 1835

Permit me to thank you for your late inclosure, the report of the Secty. of War. From my remote situation, limited information, connected with a very fallible judgment, I am admonished to speak & write with diffidence, and I assure you with much sensibility & deep interest in favor of those who direct the councils of our Country.

On looking over the Secry Report, I see much to admire for perspicuity, research and illucidation of the fiscal operations of the Government, and if I could think with him in his premises, no doubt many beauties would appear that I cannot discover. The Secry. appears to take it for granted that Congress has not the power to Charter a Bank, that State Legislatures alone are competent to the exercise of that power, and that local Banks will answer all the fiscal operations of the Government. I never look over the Federal Constitution, but my astonishment is excited anew that after the adoption of that instrument, it should ever have entered into the views of a State Legislature to charter a Bank or emit money in any shape or form. I know the reasoning of your *Cloth* on this memorable 10th Section of the U.S. Constitution—previous to this member of that [. . .]. You doubtless have discovered 1000 times that to *coin money*,

is amongst the enumerated powers of Congress &c. and that immediately subsequently to the inhibition to "emit bills of credit" the prohibition is extended & confined to making "Gold & Silver" alone a tender. But my dear Sir, take up the whole Sect. and see that all the members disjunctive. And where is the man that would be found so wild, as to contend that a State could enter into a *Treaty*, alliance, pass Laws of reprisal &c. In addition to this is the debates in the Conventions that adopted the Constitution. On this number as well as my recollection serves me, all the prominent Speakers treated the prohibition on the states prospectively; and I have always understood this explanation of that member went far to render it popular.

Were we now about establishing a Bank, without the aid of experience—without the sanction of the most illustrious names in our Government, I could see much to admire in the Report; but when each of the dominant parties in the U. States at different periods have recommended the measure, and the Supreme Court adjudicated that it was within the scope of Congressional power to charter a Bank & regulate the currency,² I really think, if there is one power in the Government that is settled by authority, this is one. If Sir, we are never to have any precedents settled in the Government, I think I hazard nothing in saying we will have a very limited one in duration. When I say all this, I am clearly of opinion, and I think it is an undeniable truth, that both those *Charters* were granted as Financial measures & to sustain the Treasury, therefore I would say, it would be just as impolitic now to charter a Bank with the provisions they contain, as it would be to impose taxes. Why not simply do what every disinterested man believes to be right. Establish one bank with a capital of fifty millions of dollars & a branch in each State. Let the stock be owned by the Genl. & State Governments, say the former own ten millions of stock, divide 40 mill. amongst the States, and let them appoint as many directors as would correspond with their stock. In addition to this let Congress say by Law they would issue no Bills in payment of debts to the Treasury, who emitted Bills for less than \$20. after a limited term, and that the Bills of the National Bank should circulate @ 5 pr. ct, and my word for it you would find State Banks as harmless, as they are now im-

prudent. When is this system of oppression & persecution on the *Farmers* to cease? Will the rulers of this nation never think of relieving that meritorious class of citizens? Where is the civilized nation on Gods Earth, that is subjected to the curse of twenty five Legislatures claiming & exercising the right of giving existence to the currency of the Country? And for whose benefit is it? Why forsooth every man that can get his honest Father or uncle to endorse for him, that he may become a Negro Speculator, a merchant, horse trader, or something that will lead him to abandon the anvil & plough, thereby actually lessening the produce of labor in our Country, which alone can enrich a community.

My dear Sir, think of the impropriety of \$15 at least being in circulation for every dollar of specie. Permit me to say to you that I have recently travelled from Randolph on the Miss. that I never have heard greater complaints for change and that in Shelbyville when I had the pleasure [to see] you *greeted* by your Constituents almost to adulation, the Sheriff of Bedford^s told me he had been engaged for some days incessantly in his office & that he had never experienced the same inconvenience for change. Most conscientiously do I believe the Executive had, and has by his office, an indisputable right to remove the deposits & check that insolent Institution that was making strides to power that would put down every department in the Government; but what security have we that the cursed State Banks will not do the same thing, whenever they feel they are sufficiently independant. For Gods sake if you have rescued our money from the unhallowed hands of Foreigners let us learn wisdom from experience & establish Institutions that will free us from this thralldom in State Banks also.

We hear that the whole delegation from Tenn. (except Colo. Polk) has written a letter to Judge White soliciting him to become a Candidate for the Presidency & that he is quite *approachable* on the subject. Knowing as little as I do of the arrangements that are thought of, it becomes me to "learn in silence." From what I discovered in your State, it appeared to me either Judge M'Clain⁴ or White would greatly out balance M. Van Buren. In this State I should suppose the same result might be calculated on. I have taken the liberty to write with

much plainness, and know that my sentiments are at variance with you; but I fear not the scrutiny of time, and I am moreover as thoroughly convinced as I am of my existence, that a reliance upon State Banks will prove abortive. Believe me my friend, I would not vote to place the deposits in State Banks for the union if I respected the maintenance of my reputation. I well recollect when the same plan was proposed by Hal Clay^s in 1811, I was then just as much opposed to it as I am now.

You will excuse the freedom which I have taken and think with me that the constituent part of friendship is candor. I will be much gratified to hear from you in any way, and will be truly indebted to you for any communications you may make.

SAML. KING

P.S. Please send me a copy of the U. States Bank Charter of 1816 &c.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A resident of Iredell County, North Carolina. He had represented his county in the state legislature and had run unsuccessfully for a seat in Congress. During the preceding summer he had traveled through Middle Tennessee, where he had talked with Polk.

2. McCulloch v. Maryland, 1819.

3. William D. Orr was sheriff at this time. He also served at one time as county court clerk.

4. John McLean of Ohio.

5. At one time or another Henry Clay was called Prince Hal, Harry of the West, and various other nicknames. None of them lasted very long.

TO LEVI WOODBURY

Dr. Sir

Washington Feby 4, '34 [1835]¹

You mentioned in conversation the other day, that the amount of discounts on Domestic bills of Exchange, by the *Planters Bank, Natchez, & Union Bank, Nashville* had greatly increased, since the date at which the table annexed to your supplemental Report was prepared. Will you do me the favour, to send by the messenger a statement of the amt. at those two Bks. & also at the *Franklin Bk. Cincinnati*, at the latest dates received at the Treasury.

JAMES K. POLK

Delivered by hand. This letter is in the Papers of Levi Woodbury, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Polk addressed Woodbury as Secretary of Treasury, a post to which he was appointed in June 1834. It is obvious, therefore, that Polk erred in writing the date, and that 1835 is correct.

FROM GEORGE R. POWEL¹

Rogersville, Tennessee. February 5, 1835

Powel expresses his desire to serve as an agent to investigate pension claims and urges Polk to submit his name if such a position becomes available.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Powel was a Hawkins County lawyer who was finishing out the single term that he served in the lower house of the General Assembly.

FROM GEORGE W. LONG¹

Philadelphia. February 6, 1835

Long is seeking appointment as assistant surgeon in the Navy and asks Polk when the next examination for applicants will be held. If it is to be held before July, Long plans to stay in Philadelphia until that time.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A physician by training, he was a resident of Maury County.

FROM ELIZABETH NUNN

Chapel Hill, North Carolina. February 6, 1835

An elderly widow seeks payment of a board bill contracted by Polk's younger brother, William H. Polk, while a student at the University of North Carolina.

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 190.

FROM BENTON UTLEY

Chapel Hill, North Carolina. February 6, 1835

A shopkeeper seeks payment of a debt contracted by Polk's younger brother, William H. Polk, while a student at the University of North Carolina.

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 191.

TO JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Washington City Feby 7th 1835

I have received a letter from Mr Harris of the 23d ult. in which he informs me that Kennedy & Booker were on that day speaking of getting up a "White meeting" and that the meeting he understood was to take place the next week. I hope you were at home, for it is a matter of consequence that a wrong direction should not be given to public sentiment. Our people are, with few exceptions *Republicans* and the true supporters of the present administration, and I should think would not, if fully informed of the object which the opposition hope to effect, to "divide & conquer," be willing to separate from the great body of that party in the other states. It is now perfectly certain that the opposition intend to use Judge White to defeat the Republican nomination. We have many & undoubted evidences of this. A National¹ from Connecticut told me on the day before yesterday that his party in that State, intended to go for him, in order to defeat the man whom the Jackson party would support. It is said here that the Maryland Legislature, three fourths of which is in opposition to the administration will in a few days nominate the Judge. The same is said of the Virginia Legislature, the political character of which is well known & is fully tested in the re-election of Leigh to the Senate. All this done, mark what I tell you; at the proper time *Clay* will be in the field & the great struggle will be to throw the election into the House. This is the utmost they hope. How unfortunate therefore if any portion of our friends should be unwittingly drawn off, and made to unite with their bitter political enemies, [George] Poindexter, [Tristram] Burgess &c, and thus be the means of breaking up our party. Bell, Dickinson, Forester,² Peyton &c of our delegation already hold almost exclusive association with the opposition members. I hope you will do whatever can be prudently done, to let our friends at home understand what is going on. You could do this without saying from what source you get

your information, and with such men as Langtry, Williamson Smith, Col. Pillow (who has great confidence in Benton), Col. Dobbins, B. S. Hurt³ &c. Let them understand that the whole movement proceeds essentially from the opposition, and impress the necessity of Union.⁴

[JAMES K. POLK]

No address is available. This letter is incomplete and is so marked in the Library of Congress. Polk marked it "Confidential."

1. The Whig Party had absorbed various dissident political groups, one being the National Republicans, who had supported Adams in 1828 and Clay in 1832. The term here seems to be used as a means of differentiating this wing of the party from the nullification faction.

2. A McMinnville lawyer, Forester served in the United States House of Representatives, 1833-37.

3. Hillary Langtry, Williamson Smith, William Pillow, James Dobbins, and Burd S. Hurt were all residents of Maury County. Apparently Polk believed that they were not already committed to the candidacy of White. Langtry was a Columbia merchant. Smith was a young politician, firm in his support of Polk. Pillow was a veteran of the American Revolution and an uncle of Gideon J. Pillow. James Dobbins had served two terms in the state legislature. He lived in the Zion community. Burd S. Hurt lived in the north-eastern corner of the county at Hurt's Cross Roads, where he was post-master.

4. A page ends at this point, clearly indicating that at least one page of the letter has been lost.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia Feb. 8th 1835

Yesterday was a most piercing cold day and no body attended the second meeting called to take into consideration the claims of Judge White to the Presidency, so that no meeting has yet taken place. I should have been glad if the weather had permitted the people to turn out, that a correct judgement could have been formed as to public sentiment on the questions that would have been presented. I have not hesitated to assume what I believe to be the correct position and have taken some pains to fix public opinion in the same way. I am pretty well satisfied that the opinions I have heretofore given you will be found cor-

rect and that the leading influential men here will be decidedly opposed to any division in the Republican ranks and will sustain the man regularly agreed on by a majority of a convention of the party. I have talked freely to such men as Col Jo. Brown, Mahon,¹ Dobbins &c. and feel confident that attachment to correct principles and not men will govern the popular sentiment. The safety of the country requires that the great principles of President Jacksons administration should be sustained and the only way to sustain them with certainty is to preserve union in the administration party. I think it likely there will be no other White meeting called here; if there is I will attend it and express my opinions. Although I am satisfied that Mr Van Buren is to be the candidate of our party, I do not think it policy to yet come out and declare for him, but to endeavor to get our people pledged to sustain whoever may be decided on as the most acceptable to the Republican party.

My mail concerns have given me much trouble, and employed nearly all my time and attention. I have forwarded evidence to the Dept. which I think will satisfy them that the failures that occurred in Dec. were unavoidably produced by high waters. All mails that left N O from the 27th of Dec. to the 23d of January came up extraordinarily well for the state of weather & roads. The 23d of Jan. is the latest dates that have now been received and three sets of dates are now due. I regret this very much and it would be mortifying to me, if I did not feel confident that time will prove that there was good sufficient and unavoidable causes for the delay. Conscious as I am that the failures are unavoidable, they give me much pain. Mr. [James] Brown has been on the Southern parts of our lines since the 20th of January, and has doubtless done every thing in his power to get the mails through. In the high state of waters that I understand existed about the 25th January, his presence can avail but little more than to shew that we are making every possible effort. Brown writes to me that he is inclined to give up the business and will sell out to a purchaser that I will select. I think it indispensable to have one of the Contractors always on the Southern lines, and had so written him which may be one of the reasons he wishes to sell out and devote his attention to land jobbing. I was in a bad humor at Jackson last Fall on re-

ceipt of Col. [Charles K.] Gardners letter mentioning the complaints that had then been made against us, and would then have given up the contract and property upon being indemnified. I have now a different feeling and am determined not to give up the ship. We shall loose from 5 to \$6000 on the winter quarter, and as failures have ocured on our lines that our enemies are disposed to censure I cannot think of yielding until we prove that the fault is neither ours, nor the Post office Departments, but produced by circumstances over which neither had any controul.

In your letter you express the hope that we will be able to get a better mail through with regularity. We have less time (for the distance) between Nashville & Florence than on any of our routes, and an average of as bad roads. Still we have always been able to pass the *whole mail* between Nashville & Florence in proper time, and the reason is that we have ways of crossing all the waters on the Route, & our arrangements are so sufficient that we can scarcely calculate on any thing worse than a late arrival. Our provision as to property, men &c. is equally as good below as above Florence, but the difficulty is that when the waters are high there is no possibility of passing them either on horseback or in mail waggons, and failures are the inevitable result in either way. A regular letter mail might to some extent remedy this, but if that was resorted to, the letters would have to be selected, for our mail is about half or more letters, and the size and weight of the down mail for the last six weeks has averaged from 700 to 1000 *lbs*. We have litterally waggon loads, and it cannot be conveyed in any other way during the sessions of Congress than on 4 wheels. I hope we shall soon have regularity again and that the worst is over. The New Orleans mail is exceedingly important to this country. It never can be a very regular mail in the winter until Congress makes an appropriation to bridge the water courses & swamps. We have had a few days of very severe weather. Last night one of Alstadts² journey-men froze to death in his shop.

Andrew Hays⁸ has been confined for about two months. He was taken on his return from Miss. with an irruption something like the scarlet fever. The inflammation settled in his eyes, and he is threatened with blindness. He is exceedingly depressed. All

the rest are well. Anne Maria & Andrew Jackson⁴ are both improving very fast.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Thomas J. Mahon was an early settler in Maury County. Little has been learned about him except that he was reputed to be a strong Polk supporter.

2. John N. Alstadt was a Columbia saddler.

3. Andrew C. Hays, a cousin of Dr. John B. Hays and of James Walker, was formerly associated with Walker in the newspaper business. At this time he was postmaster of Columbia.

4. Anne Maria, about eight, and Andrew Jackson, two, were children of James Walker.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Baltimore, Monday, Feb. 9, 1835

I have just met a traveller from Cincinnati who assures me that the river was open from Wheeling on Thursday last. The prospect of a good passage is therefore before us.

I forgot to mention to you that a letter from the Hon. Mr. Lytle¹ to the type-founders, or to some one or more of his friends at Cincinnati—the editor of the Republican for instance²—might be of Considerable use to me. Such things under your cover, will yet overtake me in time. If any thing should disappoint Long³ of part of the provided means, we may want a little time for part of a paper-makers bill, and neither Long or myself know any body, except a letter or two which I had for merchants. One introduced me to a type founder, but that was all. Send after me.

Recollect my box at Mauro's⁴ and the exchange papers to be provided. You and Maj. D.⁵ must arrange for correspondence in the east, and at Washington & New York. Maj. D. himself will write me from Washington.

The Chief Justice⁶ has gone on and I hope he will find the "centre focus of indentation" as open on the river, and as free of ice, as any other "centre focus" which he may have to encounter on the road.

Present my respects to Mrs. P. and Mrs. K.⁷

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Washington.

1. Robert T. Lytle of Cincinnati was a consistent supporter of Jackson. He had served in the House of Representatives but failed of re-election in 1834.

2. The name of this Cincinnati paper varied somewhat through the decade. It had been edited for some years by Elijah Hayward, currently Commissioner of the General Land Office, but at this time it was being edited by James Allen, a Van Buren supporter.

3. Medicus A. Long was publisher of the *Nashville Union*, 1835-36.

4. This was a Washington firm that forwarded freight. See Laughlin to Polk, April 17, 1835.

5. Andrew Jackson Donelson.

6. John Catron was Tennessee's chief justice at this time. The "centre focus" reference remains obscure.

7. Unidentified.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dr Sir

Washington 10th Feby 1835

I enclose you the correspondence today in four different packages.¹ I shall not answer until I get home as I am imprudent as you know. Had you not as well write me your notions of the reply I should make? I think I shall not leave here until about the 20th. My circular is written & will be put to press tomorrow or next day. I take bold ground tho everything I learn from home seems unfavorable. To live or die is nothing with me except the mortification of the success of my enemies.

I have not been out & seen but few. Col. D____² calls me & tells me the Pres[ident] talk[ed] to Peyton with much animation & warmth & particularly agt. Col. B____³ on his usual stile. Your Columbia paper grows worse. I see the Whig called upon the White men to rally to his support, an evidence that there is some trouble in the camp. I think it fortunate I did not start. I am continuing to improve.

CAVE JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This refers to correspondence between Johnson and a part of the Tennessee delegation concerning Johnson's attitude toward the candidacy of Hugh L. White. See Polk to Johnson, March 26, 1835.

2. Probably Andrew Jackson Donelson.
3. John Bell.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dear Sir

Columbia Feb. 11th 1835

I reached Columbia last night after a three months Laborous tour. I got to Mississippi with our negroes on the 11th day of January. I remained there Eighteen days put up a house for Beanland, four Houses for the negroes, a smokehouse and a Kitchen and made a lot for our stock. I met with no bad luck going down. Mr. Beanland is very much pleased with his situation, the negroes only tolerable well satisfied. I gave you partial description of the Land; I will now describe it more fully. The Land lies in Yella Busha County six miles from Yella Busha River on a Creek called Perrys Creek, the tract one Mile and a half Long & a Mile wide, two good springs on it. I have not settled at Either. A great portion of the land is fit for cultivation and lies well and I think very Rich land to be Equal if not superior to any tract in the County. I procured some Cotton seed; some I bot and some I got without Buying. Directed Beanland to plant about 75 acres in Corn and all he could in Cotton. It does very well in that Country the first year. I have heard not of the smith tools. I got *Abram* in a shop to do some work we needed. I sent by a waggon to Memphis for the tools and if they are there they will be at the plantation shortly. I Wrote to Lawrence & Davis to send them if they had got there. You requested in a letter you wrote me to give you the amount of the valuation of our property. I had left it at home and therefore could not do it sooner. My property was valued at \$1477.42 yours at \$1331.42 then some other articles sold to [Peter R.] Booker that are not included in the valuation of your property. I have sent by Capt Lake¹ of Jackson Tennessee to Cincinatti for 2500 pounds of Bacon which he is to deliver within six Miles of Our farm in March at cost and two Dollars pr. Hundred for carriage therefore you need not buy any for us. We drove down with us 2500 pounds of Pork. If James Brown had felt as much interest in procuring you Land as I expect you did in procuring

the Mail Contract for him & Walker he might have saved us two or three thousand Dollars. I wrote to you I had no confidence in him and I still have none. I lost while I was down a negro woman named Juda and the day I got back to my farm in Haywood your Boy Hardy died with a disease of the Breast which he has had five or six months, which leaves not Enough of hands to Cultivate the farm in Haywood. It will be necessary for you to Buy another hand as soon as you can. Negroes are very high here I have no mony to Buy with. I drew on Simpson Walker² for \$150 of your money and will need some more before you return I expect. The first payment for the land was near \$3000, the corn \$500 and Expences of moving &c. I paid for you at Somerville \$170—to A L & Smith & Cooper³ & for repairing your Waggon near \$80. I think with good management we can make money in Mississippi. I think we are settled in a good Cotton Country where in a first rate season We can make a Bale per. Acre. This may be rather extravgant; at all events we can make money.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. This is probably Robert H. Lake, a partner in the Jackson firm of Armour and Lake.

2. Simpson Walker was a cousin and former partner of James Walker. He married an older sister of A. O. P. Nicholson.

3. Armour, Lake & Smith was a mercantile establishment in Somerville. Cooper is unidentified. William Armour and Robert H. Lake were the senior partners in a merchandising operation that extended over several western-district counties. The parent establishment in Jackson was called merely Armour and Lake. In Somerville a third partner named Smith actually ran the business, although it is not clear whether or not he owned any portion of it. In several other towns of the vicinity similar arrangements had been made, with the name of the person operating the branch appended to that of the parent organization.

FROM ZALMON WILDMAN¹

Danbury, Connecticut. February 11, 1835

Wildman argues that recent action of the House in renewing the patent on a device to form hat bodies is unfair. While willing to protect the rights of inventors, he complains that the action of Congress creates a monopoly for a select few.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Wildman was a hat manufacturer who had previously operated establishments in Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. He had been elected to the House of Representatives, but he died before serving a full year.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My Dr Sir.

Wheeling [Virginia] 12 Feby '35

I here met Robt Armstrong who will give you the best information of the State of things at home. This is a first flush depend on it; a view in favour of the new state of things. When Mr Clay is brought out, and the Election tends to the House, & plainly, you'll hear another tune then goin. When Judge White is brought out as the Candidate of the Nullifiers with say [Benjamin W.] Leigh as the Vice Presdt We'll hear the sensible men Speak. [William] Carroll and old Doctor Robertson¹ stand firm & by the end of June, or July, things will begin to settle for only one Candidate on the Democratic side. None are talking much in this business but young men, & those who are looking to office on the adoption of the new Constitution. So thinks Armstrong, i.e. that every office is to be had at the *new rate*, by turning. Let you & I go without.

I may get home too late to write you in time before I move, but call at my house instead of the Tavern. See me before you go home by all means. Carroll has been in Bed & few to talk *boldly* of the proposed state of things—of Tennessee marching over to the Enemy. Softly this shall be done, but Steadily, & *Boldly*; against the Party of the Bank we must go & by fall we must be for or against it. The Election of printer will test to some extent, & the Kentucky Convention, & the nullifying conventions in the South. The young gentlemen will see their attitude, but not until after the August Elections. So you may assure the Presdt.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Dr. Felix Robertson was a son of James Robertson. He studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and for many years had a lucrative

practice in Nashville. Although he was referred to here as "old," he lived thirty more years.

FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

Dear Sir

Columbia. Ten. February 12th 1835

You will see from the paper of tomorrow what we are doing in the way of President making.

The events of the day have induced me to write you a few of the signs of the times.

The meeting today was very small when it was first organized. There were not more than 30 men present. It increased to probably twice that number before it closed, a great majority of whom were your personal & political friends.¹

From my observations for the last two weeks but more particularly today I conclude that the *very* few who are & have been opposed to your elections, are busy. The plan is (as I believe) to get White & the people upon one side & Van Buren & my friend Col. Polk on the other. I heard it said today more than once that you were for Van. I asked how it was known. It was replied you had always been so, &c.

I know nothing of your preferences but I took about this ground, that you were a republican & as such would be for a republican candidate, as I believed; that your personal feelings were likely in favor of White but that you would be for principles not men &c. But believe me what few *Antis* you have, will do what they can. Mr. J. Walker offered Resolutions for White first & if he could not be sustained then for the republican candidate. Judge [William E.] Kennedy said "he was for White against the field" & this sentiment was applauded. Mr W. resolutions were lost.

I have thought that it would be proper to inform you of these facts, for the consideration of your own better judgment. If they are of any service to you I am paid, & if not my labor is not so valuable but I can lose this little. White is very popular.

JAMES H THOMAS

Addressed to Washington.

1. For another version of what took place at the meeting see James Walker to Polk, February 12 and 14, 1835.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dr Sir

Columbia Feb. 12th 1835

I intended to have gone to Nashville to-day, but understanding yesterday that a White meeting was to take place to-day, I concluded to be present & see what occurred. No person appeared until about 2 o'clock, when about 25 persons assembled at the Court House organized by appointing Judge Kenedy President, &c. You will see an account of the meeting in to-morrows paper. I consider this meeting as no way indicative of what our county will do in the coming Presidential election. I believe the majority will decidedly be for Judge White, if the contest is between him and any other single individual. But I believe that the principles contained in the resolutions I offered will be sustained. The only thing that makes me doubt this is that Cahal, Nicholson, Mack¹ and others that watch the popular breeze, opposed them most enthusiastically and found out something "magical" in them—a full giving up of Judge White and a pledge to sustain the Baltimore convention &c. I did propose a pledge, and avowed it, to sustain the Candidate of the Republican party, and I have yet no reason to believe that the county of Maury will fail to do this. It will be well for *you* to be cautious at present on this question. Your course yet cannot affect you. I have taken ground which I must and will stand up to.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Terry H. Cahal, A. O. P. Nicholson, and Robert Mack were lawyers in Columbia, and all were considered by Walker as political opportunists upon whose support Polk could not depend. Both Cahal and Nicholson had been mentioned as possible successors to Polk, should Polk for any reason not stand for re-election to the House of Representatives.

FROM WILLIAM WHITSON¹

Crawford County, Arkansas. February 12, 1835

An acquaintance of Polk and a former resident of Tennessee, Whitson asks for help in obtaining appointment as a high-ranking officer in the territorial militia.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. He had served in the lower house of the territorial legislative assembly.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr. Sir

Columbia Feb 13th 1835

Nothing new has transpired since I wrote you. In that letter I intended to have Requested you ascertain if you could how the lands belonging the Chickasaw Indians, To Wit, the Reserves & Floats as they are called, will be disposed of. There was some provision made in the Treaty for Indians who were not competent to transact their own business.¹ There are a great many persons among the Indians buying their Reserves & Floats. One Indian will sell his Reserve to perhaps 8 or 10 persons. Now which of the purchasers will get the land. Perhaps the second purchaser will agree to pay Double what the first agreed to pay.

It might be of advantage to you and myself to have the necessary information on that subject. I dont care about the information until you return.

I understand since I Returned that the B. Smith Tools have been shipped from Nashville to Memphis on the Boat *Pacific*. I have not heard from Memphis whether they have been received or not.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. The treaty of 1834 with the Chickasaws provided that a half section of land be set aside for each orphan. Funds from the sale of these lands were to be held by the government until such orphans reached their majority. The lands could be sold only with the agreement of the original signers of the treaty.

FROM SAMUEL G. SMITH

My dear Sir

Knoxville Feby. 13 1835

I have traveled up by way of Murfreesboro, Winchester and all the Hiwassee districts. In every quarter I have never witnessed such unanimity of Sentiment as prevails for Judge White.

His consistent course and political doctrine gives him unlimited popularity in Tennessee. I fear there may be a secret wish somewhere to bring you in an unpleasant collision with the people. I presume it will be but a short time before we shall see you at home. Judge Whites support seems to be very general.

SAM G. SMITH

Addressed to Washington. This letter was marked "Confidential."

FROM WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS¹

Dr Sir,

Franklin Ten. Feby. 14th 1835

I avail myself of this opportunity of acknowledging to you the many obligations I am under for your kind attention in forwarding to me the several public documents accompanying the usual message of the President and also the message transmitting the correspondence with the government of France in relation to the refusal of that Government to make provision for the execution of the treaty &c.² all of which have been examined with much satisfaction. But from what I can learn that perhaps the chambers are labouring under the impression that it will be bad policy on their part to acknowledge the justness of the principle on paying the debt however just that debt may be thereby acknowledging a principle that might bankrupt the nation, as other Nations might urge claims, on the same principle once acknowledged on the part of France. Therefore she might prefer the mode suggested in the message of reprisals not that she would resist that mode to the Government, still might deny it to others. The opposition in the West seems to cease their clamours about the probable prospect of a war with France and that part of the message recommending a war as they alleged. Those of them in Tennessee seem to think or to say that Jackson, the Southern party, and Jackson administration will soon be no more that the whole will be swallowed in the White party as though Judge White did not profess to advocate the same general principles as proclaimed by Jackson. Yet they go for *principle* but sir from what I can discover that the most violent opposition men are the warmest to urge the claims

of Judge White and that they are from great exertions gulling hundreds of the pure firm & honest supporters of the democratic party not denying tho by any that Judge White is not of that stripe but I say many, yes, very many of his warmest advocates, have always been in the opposite ranks. I am and always have been a friend to him yet I am unwilling to see our ranks broken in this manner and this is their great object altho the Judge may not think so. A national Convention will put all things right & I had expected that the Judge would respond to the Alabama resolutions^s as he was furnished with a copy, in which response he would rest his claim with the result of a Convention. I tell you they the opposition are up & doing & some are aiming a blow at you &c in not joining the Tennessee delegation requesting the Judge to give up his name as a candidate. I am told that some of the honourable gentlemen from this State will set up for themselves independent of Jackson & his friends. This is the report here as to the fact I cannot speak. Much excitement is anticipated here between this & August next. I enclose you five dollars for the purpose of paying for the Intelligencer for this year. You will please add a dollar to it & I will refund it on sight & bring me a receipt for the same. I am anxious that you call on me on your return. It may be to both of our advantage perhaps. You can say to cousin Sarah that her Mother & family are well. Isaac left here on yesterday.

W. G. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.

1. A cousin of Sarah Polk, William G. Childress was an important figure in local politics in Williamson County. He served as sheriff of the county, was a delegate to the constitutional convention in 1834, and then served one term in the state legislature.

2. Under a treaty ratified in 1832 France had agreed to pay American claims for goods destroyed or seized illegally by the French during the Napoleonic wars. No funds were appropriated to pay the claims, however, and not until 1836, when relations between the two countries became quite strained, were the payments begun.

3. On January 5, 1835, the Alabama legislature had passed overwhelmingly a resolution nominating Hugh L. White for the presidency. On the same day a resolution recommending a national nominating convention whose nominee they promised to support was soundly defeated by that body.

FROM JAMES L. EDWARDS

Washington. February 14, 1835

Edwards explains that the papers of several of Polk's constituents, including James Miller,¹ claiming service in the Revolution or the War of 1812 are incomplete.

Addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy in Letters Sent, Records of the Veterans Administration Pension Office (RG 15), National Archives.

1. Miller served in the War of 1812 from South Carolina. He was placed on the pension roll on February 13, 1836, to receive \$40 per annum, retro-active to March 4, 1831. See Polk to Edwards, June 2, 1835.

FROM DAVID C. GIBSON¹

Winchester, Tennessee. February 14, 1835

After identifying himself as a former resident of Giles County, Gibson assures Polk of his continued political support. He asks Polk's support in trying to obtain the appointment as postmaster at Winchester, adding that some of the applicants are not friendly toward Polk.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Little is known of Gibson except what he reveals in this letter. He did not receive the appointment.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Nashville Feb 14th 1835

I wrote you on Thursday evening a hasty letter giving you some account of the White meeting held at our town that day. You will by the time this reaches you see an account of it in the Observer. The committee will fully explain to you the character of the meeting; the committee made a majority of all present. I conversed with Zolicofer¹ after the meeting was over and he said he was determined that his action should be according to my resolution which was rejected. Nicholson, Cahal, [Peter R.] Booker, Mack &c were the movers of the whole matter, and much of it is intended for home political use. It is intended to affect you, Grundy &c. The calculation is that Judge White is to be as popular in Tennessee as Genl Jackson, and all that do

not go in for him are to fall. How any professing to be Jackson republicans could oppose the resolutions I offered I cannot conceive. You will see that they are worded with caution, and contain principles that the Democratic party must sustain. Time will shew whether Tennessee politics can be revolutionized, by this artful (and to us perplexing & difficult) movement. But let results be as they may a straight course is the only one. I cannot give you more information than I have done on this subject at different times. You must therefore judge from the present state of things the prospects ahead. A struggle is likely and it is likely if White runs, whether the Democratic party unite on him or not, that he will get the vote of Tennessee. But I cannot believe that those who are in favor of preserving the union of the party are to fall in popular estimation.

Since I came here to day I learn that Col [Robert] Armstrong has been gone to Washington about two weeks. Whether his trip has any thing to do with the New Orleans mail or not, I do not know. He has always been a very warm friend of Donleys² and prejudiced against us, is a decided leader of the Bell party here, and may be an able coadjutor with Wm B. Lewis³ in affecting us with the President. He interfered in the movements made here a few weeks ago (as I understand from Washington) and no doubt will feel a warm inclination to have us removed as contractors, and the contract given to some person for the benefit of Donley. Such unreasonable efforts have been made that I would not be surprised at anything. The policy will probably be to make the President believe we are failing and mismanageing our line then get an agent under the influence of Lewis, Armstrong or [Harry R. W.] Hill, appointed with full powers, and have that agent to come out to Nashville and take away our contract probably as Edington⁴ did your Fathers & mine without ever examining a mile of our road, or if there should be a show of examination the decision will have been already made, and justice will have no influence in the matter. If the Post-office Department is not satisfied with the evidence we have furnished them on this subject we are perfectly willing to abide the decision of Mr. Loughbrough⁵ or any agent that Col. Gardner will say he has full confidence in the honesty and impartiality of. We have vested about \$40,000 in

the business, a large amount in buildings & purchase of Stands which would be lost to us. It would be hard for a heavy loss to be put on us, especially if we have performed as well as any 5 or 600 miles of important Routes in the Southern or Western country. The Republican of to-day states facts as to the mails between here and Washington City which shows much more irregularity and failure than has been between here and New Orleans at any time this winter. All that we ask is to be put on a footing with all other contractors. Mr. Hough⁶ is the favorite of our enemies. Our line and performance will bear comparison between here & Louisville or Lexington in every respect. We have not had a single failure where the detention has been within 200 miles of Nashville, & Col. Armstrong can know nothing about the causes of them. The P. M's in the vicinity are the proper persons to report on them. If Caruthers is still at Washington I think he had better remain as long as Col. A. I may be too suspicious, but I apprehend he will interfere to our prejudice, and most probably with the President, who you know esteems him highly. He professes to be a Van Buren man. How does this correspond with his Bell & Foster politics. I have desired and endeavored to get on friendly with Col. A & still desire it and shall be glad if he does not interfere in our concerns. If you can in any way guard against what I apprehend, I will thank you to do so.

JAMES WALKER

P.S. Samuel⁷ will be here to night on his way to the north. I hope he will reach Washington before 4th of March.

Addressed to Washington.

1. While Zollicoffer was soon to become a political enemy of Walker and of Polk, at this time Walker seems to have trusted him.

2. John Donly of Nashville was a rival of James Walker for mail contracts in Mississippi. Walker did not trust Donly and looked upon him as a bitter enemy.

3. William B. Lewis was an intimate friend of Andrew Jackson but was never a friend of Polk. Walker was prone to distrust Lewis because of Lewis's friendship with John Donly.

4. Unidentified.

5. This seems to refer to John D. Loughborough, who was a special agent of the Post Office Department. The other person in the Department by that name, P. S. Loughborough, appears to have remained in Washington.

6. Joseph H. Hough, formerly a partner of John Donly in stagecoach operation and mail contracting, was a Nashville coach builder.

7. Samuel P. Walker was the oldest son of James Walker. This postscript was written on the envelope.

FROM DAVID C. GIBSON

Winchester, Tennessee. February 16, 1835

After he had mailed his letter to Polk on the day before, Gibson explains, it occurred to him that if he did not receive the postmastership Polk might help him get a job in connection with the removal of the Cherokee Indians. He expresses alarm concerning the recent attempt to assassinate the President.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM LEONIDAS POLK¹

Dear Col.

Raleigh Feb: 16th 1835

I hope you have not forgotten the application from our militia for authorizing the Sec. of War to "Cause an Survey." In accordance with his request I wrote to Mr Grundy explaining the nature & claims of the object, & as you were present at the meeting, referred him to you for any particulars not detailed. I hope he has attended to it though I have seen no notice of any such resolution. Will you please ascertain if any thing has been done, & if possible not let the matter so nearly accomplished quite to our wishes, fail for want of a little effort. I shall be happy to hear from you on the subject, though shall not take an omission "in high dudgeon."

Say to cousin Sarah that I did live through my ride to Pha. but that was pretty much all. The Thermometer the night of the day I got to Cumberland was 26° below Zero at that place.

I placed Susan² at the School of the Misses Smith No. 9 Washington Square³ where please say to Mrs King⁴ & the ladies she will be happy to see them. Miss Hawks could not feel at liberty to take her.⁵ Her house was already quite full, & Sue was at her instance placed with the Misses Smith. They are

nieces of the late Bp Hobart^s of N.Y. ladylike & accomplished women. I was much pleased with them.

L. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 191-92.

1. He was a son of Colonel William Polk of Raleigh, North Carolina, and a brother of Lucius J. Polk of Maury County. Leonidas Polk was graduated at West Point but had resigned his commission to enter the ministry. He was later a bishop in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

2. A younger sister of Leonidas Polk.

3. This school was located in Philadelphia.

4. Unidentified.

5. Misses Hawks Seminary for Young Ladies was located at the corner of F and Twelfth Streets in Washington.

6. Bishop John H. Hobart was a native of Philadelphia. He had died in 1830.

FROM JOHN FORSYTH

Washington. February 17, 1835

In reply to Polk's inquiry of January 21 concerning clerical needs in his department, Forsyth says that none of the clerks can be dispensed with. Additional clerical help is needed in the Patent Office, and if the archives of the department are to be arranged as required by law, a temporary clerk should be employed. He also maintains that the pay of many of the clerks is too low.

Presumably delivered by hand. This is a clerk's copy in Report Books from the Secretary of State (RG 59), National Archives.

TO SAMUEL JONES¹

Dr. Sir

Washington City, Feby. 19th, 1835

I have taken the liberty to forward to your care, four *boxes* containing *Books* & other articles, two of them addressed to "*James K. Polk, Columbia, Tennessee—Care of James Woods & Co. Nashville Tennessee*"; one addressed to "*J. Catron, Nashville Tennessee*" and one to "*Samuel H. Laughlin, Nashville Tennessee*," both to the "*Care of James Woods & Co. Nashville*

Tennessee."¹² I wish you to take charge of these boxes on their arrival at Baltimore and forward them to Nashville. I am not sure that it is strictly in the line of your business to attend to business of this kind, but having frequently during the life of Mr. *Talbot Jones*, forwarded packages to his care, he did me the favour to take charge of them, and I hope it will not be inconvenient for you, in this instance, to do so. I en[close] \$10.— to pay charges. If this be not enough [advise] me, & I will immediately remit the balance. I have paid the freight to Baltimore. May I ask the favour of you to inform me, when the boxes are arrived.

JAMES K. POLK.

Addressed to Baltimore.

1. Surviving partner of Talbot Jones and Company, a Baltimore firm with which Polk had done business in the past. See James L. Walker to Polk, May 2, 1834.

2. Several changes seem to have been made in the plans for shipping the boxes and there was some delay in their delivery to Nashville. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, April 17, 1835.

FROM STOCKTON AND STOKES

Baltimore, Maryland. February 19, 1835

In reply to Polk's inquiry whether or not the firm could provide an extra coach to Wheeling on March 5th or 6th, the stage line replies affirmatively but explains that because of certain circumstances Polk's company would be more comfortable on a regular stage. The regular stage of March 5th has been filled and reservations for eight have been made for the 6th should Polk give up his plans for an extra. The price of the extra is quoted as \$150 while eight seats on the regular line will cost \$112.

Addressed to Washington.

TO LEWIS CASS

Sir

Washington City Feby. 20th 1835

I take pleasure in recommending my young friend and constituent Mr Joseph B. Boyd, as [a] youth of good character, of

respectable talents, and well qualified from his advancement in learning, for admission as a Cadet, into the Military Academy at West Point. He informs me that he has forwarded recommendatory letters to the Department, from the President and Professors of Jackson College in Tennessee, where he has been for some months prosecuting his studies. Should there be any vacancy from Tennessee, it would be highly gratifying to his respectable relations and friends, if he could obtain a warrant to enter the institution in June next.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in United States Military Academy Cadet Application Papers (RG 94), National Archives.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Crawford County, Arkansas. February 20, 1835

Stating that according to territorial statute two or more militia brigadier generals will be appointed by the President, Yell asks Polk to support William Whitson, an old friend of both Yell and Polk.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Whitson to Polk, February 12, 1835.

TO JOHN FORSYTH

Sir

Washington City Feby. 21st 1835

Mr *Francis Slaughter* of Tennessee desires to obtain the appointment of Consul at Brazoria, if there be a vacancy, and if not at Galveston in Mexico.¹ Mr Slaughter is a respectable man, and if appointed, would I doubt not discharge the duties satisfactorily to the government & the public. Having known him personally, for several years, I take pleasure in recommending him to your favourable consideration for the appointment which he solicits.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand. This letter is in Records of the United States Senate (RG 46), National Archives.

1. See Slaughter to Polk, January 1, 1835.

FROM ELIJAH HAYWARD

Washington. February 21, 1835

The Commissioner of the General Land Office¹ says that Daniel Graham is entitled to compensation for his report on vacant lands in Tennessee, but that Graham has never submitted an account to the land office. He says that when such an account is received it will be sent to the Secretary of the Treasury for his consideration.

Addressed to Washington.

1. In August 1835 Hayward resigned as Commissioner of the General Land Office.

FROM STOCKTON AND STOKES

Baltimore, Maryland. February 23, 1835

Polk's reservation for March 6 is confirmed and the company will try to give his party a few hours to rest at night on their trip over the mountains.¹ The party will travel from Baltimore to Frederick on the railroad.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Stockton and Stokes to Polk, February 19, 1835.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia Feb. 24th 1835

I have received yours of the 7th and reflected much on its contents. In the matter alluded to by you great caution is necessary. A false move would inevitably prevent any good being effected in attempting to give the public mind a correct direction. The Press in Tennessee is unanimously for White, and have gone far towards taking the ground that he must be sustained in opposition to the Baltimore convention. Before any public meeting is called it is necessary to awaken republican and I might say patriotic feelings, and this must be done *among the people*. The small politicians are now all on the scent and expect to rise on the White excitement. I think they look at things superficially but I may be mistaken. Previous to any action, some consultation and concert is necessary. Huey,¹ [Thomas J.] Mahon, John Miller,² Col Jo Brown, and I think [James] Dobbins and many such men think correctly, and I think will act. It is necessary for the desired movement to come

from the country—from planters, and men unsuspected for personal or interested views. Whether the right persons can be got to take hold of the matter in time to have meetings and delegates appointed before your return, I do not know. At all events if it is done at all, it can be so far acted on as to throw off from you all suspicion of having any agency in it.

A writer in the last *Observer* attacked my resolutions. I have over the signature of "A Republican" replied, and taken the true ground at once. *Timidity* now would ruin everything. I am in for it, intend to sustain the position I have taken, and if I am found in the minority, am determined to adhere to what I consider correct principle and the true policy of the Republican party. I will send you the next paper to Wheeling & one to Louisville. I am not disposed to move until it is seen how these doctrines take with the public, and the prudent and effective course can hereafter be best determined on. I was at Nashville a few days since; wrote you from there. I will as soon as opportunity offers, consult with the persons mentioned by you. A movement ought to be first made in the Nashville District. I think our people can be made to understand how things are, but the appearances are now against us.

I will address you at Louisville about 4th of March.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Wheeling, Virginia, to be held for Polk's arrival.

1. James Huey was an early settler in Maury County and one of the first purchasers of lots in Columbia. He was a justice of the peace, generally a sign that the holder had some political influence. He had a grist mill on Rutherford Creek in the northeastern part of the county.

2. John Miller is a somewhat obscure figure in Maury County but was one of the first justices of the peace there. His son, John L. Miller, was a staunch Polk supporter.

FROM HUGH LAWSON WHITE
TO JAMES K. POLK AND CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir

Senate Chamber Feb. 24th 1835

Mr. [William T.] Brown of Nashville has been nominated District Attorney for West Tennessee to succeed Mr. Collingsworth who resigned.¹

I was surprised by this nomination, as I had not heard of

Mr. Collingsworth's resignation, and knew that Mr Brown had come to this place an applicant for the office of Judge in Arkansas.

I have inquired into the facts and find that Mr. Collingsworth resigned 25th January, his resignation was received on the 2nd Feb. and Brown was nominated on the 4th Feby.

For *this* office there seems to be no recommendation by any one Member of the Bar at home.

My wish is to act justly towards Mr. Brown and at the same time to do what is right by his Brethern having equal claims.

I find you are the only Members of the Tennessee Delegation, who have recommended Mr. Brown, and therefore presume you are the only ones here, acquainted with the circumstances. I would therefore respectfully ask you to inform me whether the profession in Nashville or the other parts of West Tennessee were apprised of Mr. Collingsworth's resignation, so that recommendations for others might have been furnished before the nomination of Mr. Brown.

The Case as it now stands is calculated to make the impression that there has been a secret contrivance to have Mr. Brown appointed before his Brother lawyers would be apprised that the office was vacant; a presumption of this kind is so inconsistent with the character given me of Mr. Brown, that I am very unwilling to act upon it. It is my wish to act fairly and kindly toward Mr. Brown, but in my situation I am bound to see that justice is done to the other Members of the profession in Tennessee likewise.

Any information you can give me will confer a favor. . . .

H. L. WHITE

Addressed to Washington.

1. See James P. Grundy to Polk, January 6, 1835; John M. Bass to Polk, January 24, 1835; and Polk to Andrew Jackson, January 28, 1835.

TO GEORGE TEMPLEMAN¹

Sir

Washington City Feby 25th 1835

I received your letter of the 23rd Inst. this morning. I have no knowledge of the matter to which it relates. I have no

recollection, that any person has at any time, had any conversation with me, about purchasing the books of which you speak. I do not know who the gentleman may be, who you say called at your store and conversed with you about purchasing the Books. I have not been requested by any one to purchase the books, and do not wish to purchase any such myself.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington and marked "Copy."

1. He was a well-known Washington bookseller.

TO HUGH LAWSON WHITE
FROM JAMES K. POLK AND CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir

Washington City Feby. 25th 1835

We have received your letter of yesterday in relation to the nomination of Mr [William T.] Brown of Nashville to be District Attorney for West Tennessee, which you inform us is now pending before the Senate. You express your surprize at this nomination as you had not heard of Mr Collingsworth's resignation, and knew that Mr Brown had "come to this place an applicant for the office of Judge in Arkansas." You state that as we "are the only members of the Tennessee delegation who have recommended Mr Brown, you "therefore presume" that we "are the only ones here acquainted with the circumstances," and you therefore ask us to inform you "whether the profession in Nashville, or the other parts of West Tennessee were apprized of Mr Collingsworth's resignation, so that recommendations for others might have been furnished, before the nomination of Mr Brown." In answer to this inquiry we have to state, that it is known to you that we left home early in November last. At that time we had not heard the resignation of Mr Collingsworth spoken of, and whether and to what extent his intention to resign had subsequently to that time attained publicity, you as well as other members of the delegation have the same means of knowing that we have.¹ The first information we had of the intention of Mr Collingsworth to resign was

communicated to us by a letter received by each of us from a member of the Bar in Nashville dated the 6th of January last,² informing us that he was expected to resign shortly, and requesting us to aid in procuring the appointment for him. Some time after we received the letters referred to, Mr Brown came on to Washington. We in a letter addressed to the President recommended the appointment of Mr Brown, instead of the gentleman who had written to each of us on the subject, requesting our aid in his behalf. In our letter to the President we spoke of Mr Brown as we then thought and still think he deserves to be spoken of. From what we had learned of his character we then believed and still believe him to be an honorable man, and one possessing respectable legal attainments, which qualify him to discharge the duties of the appointment. We have to regret the opinion which you seem to have formed, that, "The case as it now stands, is calculated to make the impression, that there has been a secret contrivance to have Mr Brown appointed, before his brother lawyers would be apprized that the office was vacant." We are not aware of any such "*secret contrivance*." We do not believe that any such exists; but if there be the slightest ground for such an opinion, we are wholly ignorant of it. If it is intended by you to convey the idea that we could be capable of lending ourselves to any such "*secret contrivance*," we feel ourselves called upon to repel an insinuation which your own sense of justice must satisfy you that nothing in our conduct, public or private has ever justified. You must know that the President of the United States who made the nomination is equally incapable of lending himself to any such "secret contrivances" for the advancement of any such purpose as those indicated in your letter. You must know further that the President of the United States, was intimately acquainted with the members of the Bar at Nashville, as much so as any representative of the State could be, and from his knowledge of their qualifications and character, was in possession of information to enable him to make the nomination without any recommendation whatever. Although this was the case, and was known to us, still we did not hesitate at the request of Mr Brown to address the letter in his behalf to the President, which we infer from your letter has been communi-

cated to the Senate and been read by you. In recommending Mr Brown, we have done nothing more than we have often done for other citizens of the State who have desired letters, to be addressed to the Executive for appointments within his gift. We think it probable that you and others of the delegation have often addressed such letters to the President.³ We have to add that we have understood that most of the Bar at Nashville (though we have never seen the recommendation) had recommended Mr Brown for a judgeship in Arkansas. That appointment was conferred upon another, and Mr Brown's name was brought before the President for the office of District Attorney for West Tennessee, for which he has been nominated to the Senate. It is proper that we should also add, that we have understood that a recommendation had been signed by some members of the Bar at Nashville (though we never saw it) in favour of the appointment of another person.⁴ The President with a personal knowledge of both gentlemen, as well as of the other members of the bar at that place possessed information altogether sufficient to enable him to select a person qualified for the office. He has chosen to nominate Mr. Brown.

JAMES K. POLK

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Washington. Marked "Copy," this is a final draft in Polk's handwriting of the letter actually sent, signed by both Polk and Cave Johnson. Johnson had sent Polk a full draft of a proposed answer to White. It was along the same lines followed by the revised version written by Polk, but it was somewhat harsher in tone. This letter, with two significant omissions, was published in Nancy N. Scott, editor, *A Memoir of Hugh Lawson White* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1856), pp. 256-257.

1. The version of the letter in Scott, noted above, omitted everything from this point to the end of the sentence concluded by "still believe him to be an honorable man, and one possessing respectable legal attainments, which qualify him to discharge the duties of the appointment." The omission was indicated by the insertion of three stars. It is significant that this is the place where Polk reveals his receipt of an application for the job about to be vacated as early as January 6. While Polk did not reveal the name of this applicant, White probably knew that it was James P. Grundy, son of Felix Grundy.

2. James P. Grundy to Polk, January 6, 1835.

3. The second omission in the Scott version consists of the next two

sentences. It seems significant that these two sentences reveal that members of the Nashville bar thought highly enough of Brown to recommend him for a judgeship even though it was not the one to which he was appointed. In her commentary Scott called this letter a "prickly effusion" and said that Polk and Johnson had determined to pick a quarrel with White, if possible.

4. James P. Grundy. This letter, as well as others of a similar nature, are to be found in Grundy's file in Letters of Application and Recommendation, 1829-37, Department of State (RG 59), National Archives. This file also includes a letter from White recommending Brown for the judgeship.

FROM HUGH LAWSON WHITE
TO JAMES K. POLK AND CAVE JOHNSON

Gentlemen: [Washington. February 25, 1835]¹

Your favor of this date, in answer to mine of yesterday, was handed me a few minutes since.

During the last session of Congress an idea was somehow taken up in West Tennessee, that Mr. Collingsworth would not be re-appointed; and several members of the bar were applicants for the office in case it should be vacant. Mr. Collingsworth was, however, appointed and continued in office until 25th of January, when he resigned. His resignation was received at the State Department on the 2d February, and on the 4th Mr. Brown was nominated, and until some days after the nomination, I had no knowledge that Mr. Collingsworth had resigned. I had been informed that Mr. Brown's business here was to procure the office of judge in Arkansas.

Under these circumstances I really did think, as I had heard of no application on behalf of any other gentleman, and as there did not appear among the papers any recommendation this winter from the profession, that it was my duty to the profession to make some inquiry to know whether they had been fairly treated. I found no recommendation from any of my colleagues except you, and very naturally concluded you could give me the information I desired; and I was the more inclined to apply for it, having always had a good opinion of Mr. Collingsworth, with whom I was acquainted, and having received a very high character of Mr. Brown, from friends in whom I had confidence.

I regret to see the spirit in which this inquiry is met in your letter; and that you feel yourselves called upon to "repel" what you are pleased to fancy an imputation upon yourselves, and upon the President of the United States. Neither of you believes for one moment that I intended to insinuate anything to his disadvantage, nor can you believe from the style of my letter that I intended, any imputation upon Mr. Brown. I sincerely wish that if ever the President should be attacked, when he has few friends, he may find as many zealous advocates as he now has when he has more friends than he can provide for.

I have too long known the President to insinuate aught to his disadvantage, or that he is capable of sanctioning a secret contrivance to do anything incorrect if he knew it; but, I tell you in candor, that I have not the same exalted opinions of all other. Many of those who beset him with professions of friendship, I think every way capable of making every cent out of him they can, either by telling what they know to be untrue, or by suppressing what they know to be true.

It will be time enough for you to repel insinuations against yourselves when you have reason to think they are made. When I make them, they shall be in language not to be misunderstood, and supported by facts which will remain, any efforts to repel them to the contrary notwithstanding.

HU. L. WHITE

Presumably addressed to Washington. The original of this letter has not been located. Undated, it has been published in Scott, editor, *A Memoir of Hugh Lawson White*, 258-259. This is an exact copy of the Scott version.

1. The date has been supplied on the basis of the earlier exchange and the reply to this letter written on February 26, 1835.

TO HUGH LAWSON WHITE
FROM JAMES K. POLK AND CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir

Washington City Feby. 26 1835

Your letter of last evening is received. Your letter of the 24th stated to us that we were the only persons of the Tennessee delegation who had recommended Mr Brown, and that we were therefore the only ones presumed to be acquainted with

the circumstances. You then stated in general terms without stating to whom you alluded, that "The case as it now stands is calculated to make the impression that there has been a secret contrivance to have Mr. Brown appointed." We could not tell to whom you referred. It was, to say the best of it, susceptible of doubt to whom you did allude. We knew that we had no knowledge of any such "secret contrivance." If we have misunderstood the spirit of your letter of the 24th we had certainly no desire to do so.

In regard to other topics mentioned in your letter of last evening, which are foreign to the professed object of your first letter, it is not necessary that we should reply, except to say that its general spirit has surprized us. We have a desire to avoid all controversy, & the present is not a time, if ever it shall be made necessary for us to say more. If it would be gratifying to you to know the name of the member of the Bar at Nashville from whom we received letters of the 6th of January, we have not the slightest objection to giving it. The letters were from *James P. Grundy Esqr.* The original letters you can have if you desire them.¹

[JAMES K. POLK]

[CAVE JOHNSON]

No address is available. This is an unsigned draft, in Polk's handwriting, of the letter actually sent.

1. This marks the end of the draft. Along with this page appears another, in Cave Johnson's handwriting, which seems to be the basis for Polk's last paragraph. It reads as follows: "We have recd yours of the 24th. Some allusions in it evoke our surprise but as the inference to be drawn from the whole of it is that you do not intend any imputation agst. us we of course will say nothing further upon the subject than giving you the name of the gentleman who addressed us the letter alluded to in our last. The letter to each of us was written by Jas P. Grundy Esqr."

FROM HUGH LAWSON WHITE
TO JAMES K. POLK AND CAVE JOHNSON

Gentlemen, Senate Chamber Feb. 26th 1835

Yours of this date is this moment received. I tender you my thanks for the information it contains, and assure you that any correspondence tending to a state of feelings unfriendly to

personal comfort, and a correct discharge of public duty cannot have given you more pain than it did. . . .¹

HU. L. WHITE

Addressed to Washington.

1. On the envelope Polk wrote, "No answer required."

TO LEVI WOODBURY

Sir

Ho. Repr. Feby. 27th, 1835

Such is the pressing nature of the business before the Com. of W & Means and in this change in the House that I fear it will not be in the power of any member of the Committee, to see you between the hours of 8 A.M. & 3 P.M. tomorrow. Col. McKinley & myself are very anxious to see you upon the subject of the Senate bill, so that we may have the benefit of your suggestions in relation to its provisions. As you will not be at home this evening between 5 & 9, we would call to see you at 9 o'clock this evening if it would be convenient to you, to see us at that time. If you cannot conveniently see Col. McKinley & myself at 9 o'clock this evening, we will if possible see you at your office in the morning.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Since writing the above the House have determined to meet tomorrow at 10 o'clock and it will be out of my power to see you in the morning.

J. K. P.

Presumably addressed to Washington although no cover sheet has been found.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia Feb. 28th 1835

I send you the Observer of yesterday, which will give you some knowledge of the aspect of things here. You see that Zolicofer has as he says hoisted the White flag and nailed it to the

mast. The Tennessee Press with scarcely an exception are for pressing the claims of White, and disposed to make it a test question. How these things will work, time will shew. In the mean while much caution and circumspection is necessary. It is hardly expected that with all the Press against it any respectable movement could be made to send delegates to the Baltimore convention. I doubt whether it can be done in the Nashville district. I have concluded to make no important or decisive move in this matter for the present, perhaps not until we see each other. I advise you to caution. Non-interference may be your true position. I have taken a stand which you will understand by reading the article over the signature of A Republican. I do not know how it will take. But my opinion is that if White runs (and he seems determined on it) that he will certainly get the vote of Tennessee. *The people* have not yet spoken, but the press has, and although the people might decide differently, or a respectable division be made, still our leaders in politics may think Whites the popular will and consider it an uphill business to go against the current.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Wheeling, Virginia, and forwarded to Columbia. Curiously, the letter was postmarked at Washington on March 14, indicating that it was long delayed in reaching Polk.

FROM LEVI WOODBURY

Dear Sir,

Washington City. 28 Feb. 1835

I have looked hastily at the Bill concerning the deposits.¹ The first section beside the objections before made generally to you against legislation at this time to require interest of these banks when it was not required of the Un. States Bank, though having higher privileges, & against requiring it except on a large balance in the Treasury over all outstanding appropriations, is open to many other objections.

It is so worded as to expect interest on the deposits of all collecting and disbursing officers under the act of 1809 if over \$50.000 &c as well as the Deposits of mony considered as in the

Treasury. This would be unheard of and unjust as the money is more emphatically subject to be called out daily.

It also makes no provision what shall be done with the money in the Try.[Treasury] by me, if any or all of the present Banks decline to keep the money & to do all the duties before done by the Un. States Bank & also pay interest.

A new clause ought to be added, empowering me in that event & making an appropriation to bring all the money to Washington & lodge it in the actual custody of the Treasurer & to pay it out only here; or to introduce a system of Sub Treasurers in all the States with heavy Bonds &c. The other provision as to $\frac{1}{5}$ Specie &c, is equally fatal to the system as heretofore explained to you, and a provision is needed to point out what should be done by the Deptmt. in case a selected Bank does not keep $\frac{1}{5}$ th, or declines to do it.

Indeed it may hardly be deemed jocular to add, as my opinion, that experience will be likely to show the Bill in its present form, if passing, should at least have had its title amended to "a Bill to pave the way to a renewal of the Charter of the United States Bank," or "a Bill to abolish prompt, safe & economical collections & payment by the Try. Dptmt." Excuse my haste and remember this scrawl is strictly private.

LEVI WOODBURY

P.S. If an interest acct. is to be opened in this Deptmt. with any Bank & charges made if not pay'd up &c one or two more clerks will probably be needed.

Presumably addressed to Washington. The letter is marked "Confidential and Private." A copy has been found in the Papers of Levi Woodbury, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

1. From the time Congress voted to withhold federal deposits from the Bank of the United States it had faced the question of what disposition should be made of such federal money. Taney had presented a plan which Polk had supported, but it was not accepted. The bill referred to here is a version produced by the Whig Senate, and one highly unsatisfactory to Polk. The deposit act as finally passed in June 1836 resembled this Senate bill in many respects. Furthermore, it was attached to the bill on distribution which required that when the Treasury surplus went above five millions, that surplus was to be distributed among the several states.

TO LEWIS CASS

Dr Sir

Washington City March 2nd 1835

Since writing my hasty note in relation to the Chicago Treaty, I have procured from the Senate a copy of the Treaty, and the communications from your Department addressed to the committee of the Senate. The committee of W & Ms have had a meeting and find as far as a very hasty examination would enable them, that the appropriation accords with the provisions of the Treaty.

The amt is very large, and the committee was of opinion that possibly the whole amt might not be required during the present year, and have instructed me to inquire whether a part of the appropriation may not be suspended until another year, without a violation of public faith, or any injurious consequences. Will you do me the favour to give me your opinion on this point, and if any reduction be made be so good as to suggest the amt of reduction.

It is probable that a large contingent appropriation may be proposed this evening in relation to our French affairs. If this prevail, added to the appropriations already made during the session, will make a very heavy draft on the Treasury.

JAMES K. POLK

Delivered by hand. This letter is in Letters Received by the Secretary of War 1835-1836 (RG 107), National Archives.

FROM JOHN B. FORESTER

Dear sir

Washington March 2nd [1835]¹

I see it is insinuated by one gentleman who recommends Mr Estill² for Post Master at Winchester that your friend Curl³ is an opposition man, an insinuation I never heard before. I presume it is not true as I have often heard him speak of supporting you while he lived in your district and knowing that some of your opponents were opposition men I think he would not have done so if he had been an opposition man. Whatever information you have on this subject if you would communicate

it [to] me you would confer a favour as I have recommended no one as yet and as I do not wish the claims of either prejudiced unjustly.

This information is sought for my own satisfaction and will not be used at the department without your consent. The boy will wait for your reply.

JOHN B. FORESTER

Delivered by hand.

1. The Library of Congress interpreted this year as 1833; the content of the letter, however, makes it clear that 1835 is the correct date.

2. William Estill was recommended for the position but was not appointed at this time.

3. Portland J. Curle, a former resident of Bedford County, was appointed postmaster at Winchester on March 6, 1835. See Curle to Polk, April 20, 1835.

FROM THOMAS CALLEN¹

Col. J K. Polk Bedford County Tenn March 3 1835

I write a line or two at a late hour as I am desiers to hear from you and know what you Big foalks is all dowing this Cold and hard weather, if you think you are earning your firewood, as we are all Laid up in wenter quarters hear Sence the first of Febuary and Continues to Snow on yet. But we think of craling out by Thursday to vote for or against our new Constitution. The new [constitution] has gained vots verry fast the two or three last weeks and I am in hope will Carry. For my part I will act the pouty Child no longer; if I cant get all I want I will except of part, for pudden day comes But one in Seven. Pleas inform honerabel Felix Grunday that I was a sufferer about or before this old Constitution was framed in this stat or emediatly after the defeat and treaty of Nicajack. The Cherocees stole my hors I considered. I produced good and sufficient proof that the[y] did Steel and had him in posesion. I purchased the rite of another which was stollen and proved to Be posession of the Cherocees from James Carothers of Sumner County, Beleving by aplication to Coln. Henly I would receive Sixty dollars a head as the treaty or law directed. After Coln. [Mage?] becom

agent I aplyed to him [. . .]² for pay. It was allowd, Sum excus was made, no mony on hand, or he had to write to the war agent, Call again, so that I never got my money. I got tired aplying and Sent on my papers to Judge Grundy at or about the sesion or about the time our last war was declering against Britten. He never returnd me an ansur. On the ocasion when I seen the judg I asked him If I had dun Rite By Sending them on to Congress. He said he was so Buisly Ingaged he had no time to examen them and So it [is] yet I sopose. Pleas let your Reflection or thought roll over this matter for a moment and let me know. I used to think the judg was verry friendly with me. I Recolect I was at the hotel in Nashville one eving; he presed me with so much politness and friendship to have My hors caught and go and stay a nite with him that I could not deny. I went; he Sent for a Bottel of Brandy as Sepose he juged I liked to moisen the Clay and took a sip or two with friendship. But I had like to forgot to tell you this was just a short time Before he was elected to Congress the first time. Now I have suffered the fait of Law or war. I am over powered at Law. My generals or Lawers or thear aids did not apear as the[y] promised. My enimes was many. The[y] fell on my rite and left; I was obledged to give way and Surrender by paing heavy costs. This and the death of horses has caused me Rid[e] [. . .]³ hors[e] than I would wish, so if I Can have any thing for those the Indens took Let me have it. I wish to know sumthing about Westpoint Academy and if thear is any Chance for a Bedford County Boy, and if one of my breed will do or Be excepted of.

THOMAS CALLEN

N.B. I Mean no harm Buy My Bad Spelling and ugly writing. I am not so mad yet with the old judg But what wish you to give him Complaments, and to littel David Dickeson.⁴

Addressed to Washington and forwarded to Columbia.

1. This name has been difficult to decipher, as has indeed, the entire letter. This appears to be the correct name although in an earlier letter the editors arrived at a slightly different version. See Thomas Collin to Polk, January 16, 1833, of which some parts are almost identical to this. More than the normal amount of editorial modification has been necessary to render this letter more nearly understandable.

2. What appears to be two short words were inserted here, but they have not been deciphered.

3. At this point one word is illegible.

4. This probably refers to David W. Dickinson of Murfreesboro, whose single term in Congress expired on the date of this letter.

FROM HENRY HORN¹

My dear sir Harrisburg [Pennsylvania] March 6, 1835

After a boisterous session of three days we have this moment without coming to any decision upon the nomination of a governor closed our labours and sent the question back again to the Sovereign People for their further action. There was no diversity of opinion manifested upon the subject of a national convention. All agreed to the measure and to Martin Van Buren as the candidate for President. The question of Vice President was scarcely spoken. The next convention is to assemble at Lewiston on the 6th of May next when I think there will be no difficulty in nominating our friend Muhlenberg² for governor and Van Buren for President. I had the honor of receiving your letter of the 2d informing me of the passage of my hardware bill.³ For your kind attention to this matter please accept the sincere thanks of your devoted friend. . . .

HENRY HORN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Horn was a loyal Jacksonian from Pennsylvania who had served with Polk in the House of Representatives, 1831-33. He had stood by Jackson and Polk in their fight against the Bank.

2. Henry Augustus Muhlenberg, a Lutheran minister, was a member of the House of Representatives, 1829-38. As Horn predicted, Muhlenberg was nominated for governor but he was disastrously defeated by a Whig, Joseph Ritner.

3. This refers to the passage of a bill that suspended portions of the tariff act of 1832. The portions suspended dealt with duties on hardware. Since Horn refers to the bill as his own, it is probable that he had been the one who suggested it in the first place. See Horn to Polk, December 25, 1834.

FROM WILLIAM WILSON POLK¹

Dr Sir [Middleburg,² Tennessee] March 6th, 1835

Please forward to me two Copies of the Washington Congressional Globe (without delay). We, Mr. C. J. Howard³ & my-

self holds the Post Masters Receipt (Docr. R. Dishough)* of Middleburg for payment in advance for said paper during that Session. The money & application for that paper was mailed in Middleburg in the early part of the Session of Congress but it has not yet come to hand. I Regret the failure exceeding, feeling a deep Interest at this time in Congressional proceedings. Our post Master assures me that he has written to the Editors of the *Globe*^e two or three times, but Receives no answer. But I know not whether he Speaks truth or not. I have no confidence in him as a Man of Integrity or Veracity, though It is possible in this affair he may be blameless. But in other matters he has *failed* in his duties, & also to state *facts*.

WILL POLK

Addressed initially to Washington and then changed to Columbia. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 192.

1. William Wilson Polk of Hardeman County was a brother of James K. Polk's father. In her version of this letter McPherson erroneously assumes that the writer was Colonel William Polk of Raleigh. At this time, however, the William Polk to whom she ascribes the letter had been dead for more than a year. Also erroneously assumed by McPherson is that the letter was written from Raleigh, although the envelope accompanying the letter is clearly postmarked at Bolivar.

2. Middleburg was a village about seven miles west of Bolivar, where the letter was posted.

3. Unidentified.

4. Reddick Dishough was postmaster at Middleburg for about five years.

5. Francis P. Blair and John C. Rives edited the *Congressional Globe* from its beginning in 1834 until the end of the Thirtieth Congress, 1849.

FROM WILLIAM WHITSON

Crawford County, Arkansas. March 10, 1835

Not having heard from Polk in reply to his letter, Whitson repeats his request regarding appointment as brigadier general in the territorial militia.¹ He gives news of his family and says that his prospect of being re-elected to the territorial legislature is very good.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Whitson to Polk, February 12, 1835, and Yell to Polk, February 20, 1835.

FROM HENRY HUBBARD

My dear Sir

Charlestown N. H. March 16 1835

Our elections have terminated most gloriously for the administration. We have succeeded by a majority at least of six-thousand voters. At no former period since the first election of the present incumbent to the Presidential office has he had such a strong hold on the affection of our people as at the present. His course of policy, his directness of purpose, his purity of character & his love of country, have secured for him a name that will endure as long as our granite hills shall last. The sentiment of New Hampshire is clearly for a National Convention. She will support the candidate of that convention, and will lend no aid directly or indirectly for any man put forward by the partiality of particular friends or by the voice of one state Legislature unless such a proceeding shall receive the sanction of the National convention. New Hampshire has ever been, still is and I trust ever will be the fast friend of our Federal Union, and in her judgment nothing can as directly tend to concentrate public opinion, and to produce harmony good feeling and a warm and devoted attachment to the free institutions of the land as an assemblage of delegates fresh from the people from every part of the confederacy. They will there represent their wants and their wishes. They will then and there be prepared to yield any local partialities or prepossessions when deemed necessary for the promotion of the general good. It is in such a full interchange of opinion and of feeling that must result from a national convention, that strengthens the hand of national union. We shall go, my dear Sir, for the nomination of the convention. We shall support it. We shall give to it our undivided support. Let every state do likewise and we shall have nothing to fear and everything to encourage.

Mrs. H. desires to be remembered to Mrs Polk and I join with her in the request.

HENRY HUBBARD

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM JOSEPH B. BOYD

Spring Hill, Tennessee. March 23, 1835

Having heard of Polk's arrival in Columbia he writes to inquire if there is any news on his application for admission to the United States Military Academy.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Boyd to Polk, January 19, 1835, and Aaron Boyd to Polk, January 20, 1835.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Baltimore 24th March 1835

I promised & therefore write. I had a verry bad day on Sunday. I was exceedingly sick upon my arrival & on yesterday. I feel better to day & shall leave this tomorrow morning. I prevailed upon Wm C. Dunlap to leave me yesterday & go on. I thought it then uncertain whether I should start for ten or twelve days. McLane¹ will be with me—the P.M. Genl² intimated to him, that he had been offered the mission to Spain. The rumors have therefore probably some foundation but I know of nothing tending to confirm that part of it as to the successor.

I travelled here with Genl. Gibbs³ who is evidently agt. us. He thinks a majority of Jackson men in Maryland will go for White. The opposition here have determined to hold off and have a state convention in December. Washington⁴ was at the head of it & I guess that the suggestion *to him* came from headquarters & that convention will nominate Clay. I can see or learn nothing to justify the opinion of Genl Gibbs. Col Bell is in New York, so is Genl [Richard G.] Dunlap whose business prevented him from meeting us.

This is a busy bustling city. I have met no acquaintance except Miss Buckner.⁵

I shall expect to hear the news from you upon my arrival home. I cannot even get a Nashville paper.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Louis McLane, former member of Jackson's cabinet, had temporarily retired from politics and was living on his estate in northeastern Maryland.

2. William T. Barry had been in the cabinet with McLane. He accepted the mission to Spain but died en route to Madrid.

3. George W. Gibbs, a wealthy lawyer and banker of Nashville, was in Baltimore on business for the Union Bank of Tennessee, of which he was president.

4. George C. Washington, a kinsman of George Washington, was a Whig member of the House of Representatives. On March 20, 1835, he was chairman of a Whig meeting in Annapolis that decided to hold a state convention.

5. Unidentified.

FROM CLEMENT C. CLAY¹

My dear Sir, Huntsville [Alabama] March 28th 1835

You will find enclosed my answer to your note of the 20th Jany. last, in relation to the next Presidential election, and your opinions expressed to me, and course of conduct, on that subject. I think it embraces everything necessary, but I will answer you more fully, if you think proper to request it, and will propound interrogations. Let me hear from you again, at all events, as early as may be convenient.

I was detained three entire days at Louisville, and was afterward seven days & nights on the voyage from that place to Tuscumbia. I did not reach home till the 25th at night. Clement² stood the journey better than could have been anticipated. We both reached home with bad colds, and much fatigued, but, I persuade myself, we shall escape the hands of the doctors. For my part I have not time to be sick. Your letter just came in time to catch me before my departure for Jackson Court,³ whither I am obliged to go in the morning.

I have not seen much indication of political excitement here, nor heard of much any where in this state, though I have been so short a time at home, that I am not yet prepared to judge with much accuracy. I hear of no opponent to myself yet, though it is said by some to be the subject of conversation (perhaps I might say of intrigue) with some of those who are against me and the administration. I still hope I shall have no opposition, but regard it as somewhat doubtful.

There are now *five* candidates to succeed me, in this District. They have been (except one I understand) going round with the courts & haranguing the people. I understand they have spoken sometimes in relation to the next Presidency. I do not think I am yet well informed; but I understand one of them, Mr. Ligon⁴ (who has been equivocal) comes out for Judge White against all others; and that Judge Smith⁵ expresses himself opposed to a division of our party &c. I shall probably hear them all at Jackson, and will be better able to inform you on my return.

Mrs. C. unites with Clement & myself in best regards to Mrs. P. and yourself. Mrs. C. expects, & hopes for a visit from Mrs. P. & yourself before you return to Washington, which we consider certain.

C C CLAY

Addressed to Columbia. This letter is marked "Private."

1. Member of the House of Representatives from Alabama, 1829-35, and subsequently governor of his state. He was a personal friend and political ally of Polk.

2. Clement Claiborne Clay, son of the writer of this letter, had been graduated from the University of Alabama in 1834.

3. Jackson County, in the northeast corner of Alabama, was in Clay's congressional district.

4. David G. Ligon, a Whig who was a prominent judge in Alabama, became a member of the state supreme court.

5. William Smith, former Senator from South Carolina, had moved to Huntsville in 1833. A political enemy of Calhoun, he was a loyal Jacksonian and was offered a place on the United States Supreme Court in 1836. He was seventy-four years old and declined the appointment.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir

Columbia March 28th 1835

The separte letter of Col. Bell to you, a copy of which accompanied your letter from Washington of the 10th Instant, demands from me some notice. Mr Grundy & myself seem continually to haunt his imagination. He will he says make no apology for introducing our names because he considers us as principals. If he did so, it is difficult to find an adequate reason

why he did not address us directly. His object is palpable enough. He assails us, and yet by addressing himself to you he does so in a way that he knew it must be embarrassing to us to notice it, without seeming to make the assault on him. The correspondence between you and himself is *private*. It belongs exclusively to the parties concerned in it. I have no right to make it public. This he perfectly knew. He was perfectly aware that if the contents of his letter to you were ever made known to me, that I could not make any communication to the public in my own vindication that would be understood without the publication of that part of the correspondence over which I had no control. He knew further that if I addressed him directly, that he could suppress the publication or not, as he might think most for his advantage, and that it could never see the light unless you should on your part think proper to publish it. Finding myself thus embarrassed, my only alternative is to address my reply, through the same channel, through which the attack has been made, giving you full liberty to publish this letter, if his should ever be given by himself or any one authorized to give it to the public. Col. Bell regards me as a principal in this matter. He has not the slightest ground for such a supposition except an unaccountable desire to involve me in it, for the purpose of achieving his own ambitious aims. It rests in mere suspicion.

The Speakers election is the last topic which Col Bell ought to have desired to see agitated. As far as I was concerned, I was contented. I have never complained of the result of that election. I had my reason to be satisfied. The votes which were voluntarily given to me, were given by my own political friends. I received the unsolicited support of a majority of my own political party; and I have never seen the hour when I would not have hated myself if I had been capable of compromising my principles, or shaping my course, to curry the favour, or [. . .] the support of my political enemies. My conduct public and private must determine, whether pending that election or at any other time, I was swerved from my duty. or by my course held in any respect an equivocal position. In that period of most violent political conflict ever witnessed in Congress, my enemies will be compelled to admit, I at least maintained firmly the

ground I had taken. Col. Bell knows perfectly well that he himself did look to the opponents to the administration for his election, and that he was elected by their votes. He knows that he did hold a consultation with a violent opposition member before the election came on, that he did tell that opposition member that he could not get more than 20 or 30 of the votes of the Jackson party in the House. He knows that that opposition member at that time assured him that if he got that many Jackson votes that the opposition would elect him. He knows that during the subsequent balloting he had another consultation with the same member and wished to know of him when the election would be ended, thus giving full evidence of the understanding between them that he (Col Bell) was to receive the opposition votes and was told by that member in reply, that it would not be on that nor the next, but on the third balloting from that time that the election would be made, and that he was told by that member that he must not let his firm friends of the Jackson party agree to an adjournment of the House, for that opposition would certainly elect him on that day (and he can best tell whether he did not speak to some of those friends accordingly & urge them to prevent an adjournment). Col. Bell knows further that before the election came on he did refuse to agree that the friends of the administration in the House should determine who of the friends of the administration party should be run as their candidate and that all others belonging to that party who were spoken of should withdraw and support the candidate thus agreed upon by the majority of that party. He knows that when applied to before the election for that purpose by a leading member of the House who was friendly to the administration he did refuse to submit to the friends of the administration his claims to the Speakers chair; that he did state that he did not expect to be elected by the administration party in the House; that he did not expect to get of that party more than 25 or 30 votes; and he knows that he was supported by the opposition and elected by them. And he best knows, whether his course during a most exciting Session. was shaped to attain this end. He played his game successfully & under the circumstances I have never felt any mortification at the result, but on the contrary felt that though beaten in the election mine

was the post of honor. I preferred it, to be[ing] elevated by a dereliction of duty, or by the votes of that relentless & embittered opposition which had been for months abusing in the grossest manner the President, and all his friends who stood by him in the darkest hour of his trial, when he was perilling his well earned reputation to save his country from the grasp of a monied aristocracy. I did not look to that source for elevation. I did not receive their votes.

After it was known that my name among others was spoken of for the Speaker's chair, I was applied to by several of the friends of the administration to know if I was willing to leave it to a majority of the friends of the administration in the House, to ascertain who was the choice of our party, that we might unite our strength upon one man and to run him as our candidate; to which I unhesitatingly agreed. I was perfectly willing to withdraw my name if it would produce harmony or was thought best by our political friends. I was told that others of our party who were also spoken of for the chair, had agreed to submit it to our political friends, to make the selection of our candidate, and all others to withdraw & support him. I was finally told that Co. Bell refused to submit to the choice of the party to which he *professed* to belong, and thus prevented any concentration of the friends of the administration upon any one candidate. He received a small fraction of the party to which he professed to belong. The great majority of his votes were received from the nationals [John Q.] Adams, [Tristram] Burgess and others, & the nullifiers Lewis¹ & others, and by their votes he was chosen. To all those political friends who spoke to me on the subject, I uniformly and publicly declared, that I did not wish or expect to be chosen Speaker unless I was the choice of my own political party, and was chosen by them. I did not descend to electioneer for the office. So far as I was informed by my friends, I did in fact receive but one opposition vote, and that, as I was told by others, was owing to Mr Bell's Bank opinions, not being willing to vote for a Bank man. If I received the vote of any other I am not aware of it.

During the last summer and autumn, judging from all I heard & what I saw in the Nashville newspapers, which I had reason to believe were under the control of Col Bell, that it

might become necessary in my own vindication to show the true state of the facts in relation to the Speaker's election, I addressed letters to a few of the members of the House, friendly to the administration, who had as good an opportunity of knowing the facts as any others, whose answers I send you. They will be found to sustain any material fact I have stated. In addition to the facts they state, it is well known that the opposition letter writers at Washington and the opposition press throughout the whole North & East, immediately upon Col Bell's election claimed a triumph over the administration. The Telegraph at Washington a day or two after the election claimed it as defeat of the administration and that Mr Bell was supported by the opponents of the President and authorized them to affirm that he was the anti-Van Buren candidate. When the transactions connected with the election were fresh in the memory of all, the statements they made were not attempted to be denied or corrected by Col. Bell or his friends.

I solicited no support from the opposition. I made no overtures or advances to any of the enemies of the administration. I made no pledges. On the contrary, when a few days before the election a friend of the administration from Virginia informed me, he had been inquired of by two of his colleagues who acted in opposition to the administration upon the deposit question, whether I was in favour of a particular man for the Presidency, and that if I was opposed to him, they and others would probably vote for me, I told him I would make no pledges, of that or any other kind; that I would not for the Speaker's office descend to do it. He replied to me that I was perfectly right, and said that was the course he had intended to advise me to pursue. When also I heard that objections were made by some, because of my anti-Internal Improvements opinions, and particularly my vote against the Cumberland Road, I promptly answered that I could not & would not compromise my principles. Out of what Col Bell has tortured what he erroneously attributes to me I know not. Conscious I am that my course was what I have represented it to be, and you and all my friends will bear testimony to it.

I spoke to no one on the subject of the election, except to a few intimate personal friends, unless the subject was first in-

troduced by them. To no member of the opposition did I ever introduce the subject. A short time before or about the time of the election, one or two of them from the South, one I remember from Virginia who had formerly been a warm friend of the administration, but who had more recently acted against it, casually mentioned the subject to me, and voluntarily, and without being inquired of by me, announced his intentions to vote for Mr Wilde² but in the event the contest should be finally between Col. Bell & myself, he and a few of his friends could not vote for Col. Bell, because as I inferred from what he said of some of Col. Bell's political opinions, what I do not remember. This gentleman however adhered to Mr Wilde until the last and did not vote for me on any balloting. Whilst the balloting was going on, (and whilst I was sitting in my seat), I was informed by my friends that a story had been put in circulation the House by the friends of Col. Bell (and he best knows whether he prompted it or not) using the slang of the opposition, representing that the "Kitchen Cabinet," had paraded to the capitol and were then in the lobby electioneering for me. I looked upon such a story as a low maneuver started for effect, and was naturally somewhat excited at hearing it. I rose from my seat, and went out of the House, and pronounced the statement to be untrue for I knew that with some of the best friends of the administration some of the persons, whom the opposition designated as the "Kitchen Cabinet," were unpopular, and whether they were or not, that any interference, such as the story that was circulated represented, would produce an unjust & prejudicial effect. I had been informed that Majr. Lewis, who was included under the denomination of "Kitchen Cabinet," was favourable to Col. Bell's election, and so far as I knew, the other persons, included by the opposition under that name, had given no opinion favourable to me. Feeling indignant that such a story should be started, at such a time, I expressed myself freely to several friends of the administration, repelled the charge which was circulating that I was the "Kitchen Cabinet" candidate, and may possibly [have] so expressed myself publicly in presence of, or to one or two of the opposition members, for neither I nor my friends made any concealment of our indignation at the circulation of such a story. I do not remember

the language I used, but probably expressed myself freely, in regard to Maj. Lewis whom I know to be no friend of mine. Out of this circumstance, it is probably that Col. Bell would torture something to his advantage and to my prejudice. After the election the same story made its way through the letter writers of the opposition into the opposition newspapers, and was widely circulated. During all this time Col. Bell can perhaps tell what exertions his brother-in-law in the House,³ and others of his confidential friends who are not presumed to have acted without his sanction were making with the opposition, to induce them to come into his support. About this time and in the midst of the confusion incident to such an occasion, I happened to fall in conversation with the same gentleman from Virginia who had before informed me, that he would vote for Mr Wilde (I do not remember whether any other was present or not) and said he was still voting for Mr Wilde and perhaps asked me when it would be over or what the probable result would be, to which I may have replied, though I have no distinct recollection of it, that probably that balloting would be the decisive one, for I expected the election to be ended several ballotings before it, for I thought the opposition would finally unite almost in a body on Col. Bell, and elect him, as they finally did.

It is wholly an erroneous supposition that I at any time expected the support of the opposition either Nationals or nullifiers, and if any of that "party took a decided and animated part in that election" in my support, it is strange that neither I nor my friends ever heard of it. It is still stranger if it was so, that I should have received none of their votes upon any of the 10 ballotings which occurred. But if any of them had voted for me, it must have been with a full knowledge of my principles and that they would be uncompromisingly maintained. From the position I occupied in the House as the organ of a committee having charge of the great question of the session (that relating to the Bank and the deposits) I had been the peculiar object of attack from both wings of the opposition Nationals & Nullifiers, up to the moment of the election. They knew I would as I did after as well as before the election, steadily maintain my ground. No human being in Congress of any side in politics, nor does Col. Bell himself think otherwise. Quite

different was the position which Col. Bell chose to assume for himself. Though he was constrained to act for the resolutions of the committee, and thereby continue to be ranked among the friends of the administration, yet he maintained his silence. His former opinions in favour of the Bank were unmasked, and rumours were circulated that he would bring forward during the session the scheme of a *Bank*. His attitude was therefore admirably equivocal & precisely such as to attain the "end he aimed at."

I unhesitatingly and willingly, gave my assent that the friends of the administration should make the selection of their candidate, and that I would support him be him whom he might. Col. Bell refused & substantially admitted that he looked to the opposition for support. He received that support & I have never complained of it.

My desire was that a Speaker should be chosen who was the true friend of the administration, one who accorded with it in opinion and would support its measures. I was amongst those spoken of for the station. I submitted my claims to my own political party. I could do not more. With the result I am perfectly satisfied. And why I should now be assailed by Col. Bell, you are as competent to judge as well as I can be. In conclusion I may confidently appeal to⁴

One other point in the correspondence remains to be noticed. In the suppressed part of the letter dated 5th of January not conveyed to you in the "extract," from it received by you on the 15th January, but sent to you with the last letter, much is said against caucuses and conventions, which so far as I am concerned it would not be necessary for me to examine, had not my name been so frequently introduced into that correspondence in connection with this as well as other things, with which I have had nothing to do. It is a remarkable circumstance that, that particular part of the letter to you, should have been withheld. I can perceive no adequate reason assigned in the last letter why it was withheld. That part of the last letter is obscure if not unintelligible.

[JAMES K. POLK]

No address has been found. This is an unsigned draft, in Polk's handwriting, of a letter intended for Cave Johnson. Polk's letter to Johnson dated

March 30, 1835, appears to be based on this draft. It seems likely, therefore, that this letter was never sent.

1. Dixon H. Lewis, an anti-Jackson member of the House of Representatives from Alabama, was cordially disliked by Polk and many of his friends.

2. Richard H. Wilde, a pro-bank Congressman from Georgia, had failed of re-election in 1834.

3. David W. Dickinson.

4. This sentence stops abruptly at the bottom of a page. It is possible that a portion of the manuscript has been lost.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother

Nashville Tennessee March 28th 1835

I have been anxiously expecting a letter from you by every mail since you left, relative to my contemplated visit to the district and fearing perhaps that in the general throng of business rushing upon you it might possibly have entirely escaped your memory—I have concluded that it would not be amiss to remind you of it as the time is drawing near when if I go it will be necessary for me to start. The speaking¹ will conclude Tuesday morning next and there will be a boat starting on Wednesday morning in which Edwin Polk² is going, and if I do not receive the money to carry me by that time I will perhaps have to remain here a week or ten days before I can get a boat. You will therefore please send it by Monday mornings mail so that I will receive it Monday night and have sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements for my departure. You must not fail to send me the money if not by Mondays mail by Tuesdays mail as I have detained Edwin Polk two or three days now and if I do not receive it both him and myself will be greatly disappointed. You will please send the extra ten dollars that I spoke to you about, five of which is to pay my Ball *bill* which is to be given to the speakers of whom I am one of the number. The other five is to pay for my washing. Give my love to Mother and all the ballance.

WILLIAM H POLK

N.B. I do not want the money which it will take to bear my expences to come out of my yearly allowance but out of my own estate. W H Polk

Addressed to Columbia. A note to the postmaster on the envelope asked him to hand the letter to James Walker if Colonel Polk was not at home.

1. It is not clear which speaking is meant here.

2. Edwin F. Polk was the son of Ezekiel Polk and therefore uncle of William H. Polk. Nevertheless Edwin was three years younger than his nephew.

FROM GERRARD T. GREENFIELD¹

D Sir, [Washington] March 29th 1835

Since you left here, the weather has been very bad, and the snow is now falling and the road in a desperate condition. I shall leave here as early as I possibly can. I promised to purchase you a couple of negro men or a man and a boy—or a woman and man.

I have not as yet, purchased any male negroes as they are difficult to get. I will still endeavour to purchase if possible but do not wish to disappoint you. There are a great many traders here, and men and boys are very scarce, at any price. Should I succeed in getting all the negroes I want, you can have your choice of two *and if you are supplied* before I get out, it will make no difference with me, as I wish to settle a plantation in Mississippi. The precise time I shall leave here depends upon circumstances. I sent out a man to purchase negroes of a certain description. He has failed. I shall set out as soon as the weather will permit.

G. T. GREENFIELD.

Addressed to Columbia. This letter has been published in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer as Revealed in His Letters* (Northampton, Mass.: Smith College, 1925), p. 86.

1. A wealthy doctor and farmer in Maury County who had moved there from Maryland as a young man.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir Columbia March 30th 1835

The separate letter or postscript of Col Bell to you, a copy of which accompanied your letter from Washington of the 10th Instant demands from me some notice. Mr. Grundy and myself

seem continually to haunt his imagination. He will he says make no apology for introducing our names, because he considers us as principals. If he did so it is difficult to find an adequate reason why he did not address us directly. His object is palpable enough. He assails us, and yet by addressing himself to you, he does so in a way, that he knew it must be embarrassing to us to notice it, without seeming to make the attack on him. The correspondence between you and myself is *private*. It belongs exclusively to the parties concerned in it. He was perfectly aware that if the contents, of his letter to you were ever made known to me, that I could not make any public use of it, which would be understood, without the previous publication of that part of the correspondence over which I had no control. Finding myself thus embarrassed, my only alternative is, to address my reply through the same channel, through which the attack has been made, giving you full liberty to publish this letter, if his should ever be given by himself, or any one authorized to give it to the public.

Col Bell seeks an apology for the attack he has made, by affecting to regard me as a principal in the correspondence he and others have had with you. He has not the slightest ground for such a supposition, except an unaccountable desire to involve me in it. It rests in mere suspicion. You will do me the justice to say that in the allusion made by you to the Speakers election, in your letter to Col Bell and others, dated 18th January, I was not consulted, and had not the slightest agency in it, and did not know that such an allusion had been made, until after you had written it. In that letter you were giving your own account of what transpired at the meeting and of the refutations, to which they had given rise in your own mind and which had influenced your course at, and subsequent to the meeting. The Speakers election is the last topic which [Bell] ought to have desired to be agitated. So far as I was concerned, I was contented. I have never complained of the result of that election. I had every reason to be satisfied. The votes which were given for me were given by my own political friends. I received the support of the body of my own political party, and have never seen the hour when I was capable of compromising my principles, or shaping my course to [. . .] the favour or

support of my political enemies. My conduct public and private must determine, whether pending that election or at any other time, I ever swerved from my duty or by my course held in any respect an equivocal or doubtful position. In that fiercest and most violent political conflict which arose on the question of the Bank and the deposits, ever witnessed in Congress, even my enemies will be compelled to admit, that I at least maintained firmly the ground I had taken. My principles were [. . .] maintained and defended. From the position I occupied in the House, as the organ of a committee having charge of the great question of the session (that relating to the Bank and the Deposites) I had been the peculiar object of attack from both wings of the opposition, *Nationals*, and *Nullifiers*, up to the moment of the election. They knew, I would as I did afterwards, as well as before the election steadily and unshrinkingly maintain my ground. No human being in or out of the Congress of any side in politics, not even Col Bell himself thinks otherwise. Very different was the position which Col Bell chose to assume for himself. Though he voted for the resolutions of the Committee, and thereby continued to be ranked among the friends of the Administration, yet he maintained his silence. His former opinions in favour of the Bank were unrevoked, and rumours were in circulation, that he would bring forward during the session the Scheme of a Bank. His attitude was therefore admirably doubtful if not equivocal, and well calculated to attain the object of his ambition. Col Bell was successful and under the circumstances neither I nor my friends, have ever felt any mortification at the result, but on the contrary felt that though beaten in the election we had no cause of regret. And why Col Bell, not satisfied with his success should now assail me, you are as competent to judge as I can be.

I had reason to think during the last summer and autumn, judging from all I heard and what I saw in the Nashville newspapers, believed to be under the contrroll of Col Bell, that it might become necessary in my own vindication, to shew the true state of the facts in relation to the Speaker's election. To enable me to do so should it be rendered necessary, by the course taken by Col Bell or his friends, I addressed letters to a few members of the House friendly to the administration, who had

as good an opportunity as any others of knowing the facts as they existed, and received answers from them. Their letters or statements were never intended to be used by me unless it became necessary in my own defence, or in the vindication of truth. The character of Col Bell's letter or postscript, now makes it proper that these letters or statements should accompany this letter. They are accordingly sent and are committed to your discretion. These letters show the facts within the knowledge of the gentlemen who have written them in regard to Col Bell's course and mine in that election. I return to you the copy of the letter forwarded to me by you last fall, which had been received by you from a violent opposition member of the House, from Kentucky, which though it was evidently written with a view to save Col Bell as far as possible with the administration party at home, yet develops some important facts. In corroboration of the facts stated in these letters, it is well known that the opposition letter writers at Washington, and the opposition papers throughout the whole North and East immediately upon Col Bell's election claimed it as a triumph. The Telegraph at Washington claimed it as a triumph of the opposition and openly declared that "Mr Bell was supported by the opponents of the President, and authorized them to affirm that he was the Anti-Van Buren candidate." When the transactions connected with the election, were fresh in the memory of all, the statements thus made under the eye of Col Bell were not attempted to be denied or corrected by him or his friends. The facts were notorious and to attempt to confute them was vain. Col Bell knows perfectly well, that *he did* look to the opponents of the administration for his election and that he was elected mainly by their votes. He knows that he did hold a conversation with a violent opposition member before the election came on, that he did tell that opposition member, that he could not get more than 20 or 30 of the votes of the Jackson party in the House, and he knows, that opposition member at this time assured him that if he got that many Jackson votes he would be elected. He knows that after the first balloting had taken place and the number of votes he received was ascertained (but a part of which were of the Jackson party) that he held another conversation with the same opposition member, and was re-

assured by him that he would be elected. He knows that during the subsequent balloting, he held another conversation with the same member, and wished to know of him when the election would be ended, and was informed by that member that it would not be on that nor the next, but on the third balloting from that time, and that he was at that time told by that member, that he must not let his few friends of the Jackson party agree to an adjournment of the House, for that the opposition would certainly elect him on that day. Col Bell knows further, that when applied to before the election for that purpose, by leading members of the House who were friendly to the administration, that he did refuse to submit to the friends of the administration his claim to the Speakers chair; that he did state that he did not expect to be elected by the administration party in the House; that he did not expect to get of that party more than twenty five or 30 votes, and he knows that he was supported by the opposition and elected by them. All these facts are established by the statements I send you, made by members of the House acquainted with the facts. He perhaps knows further whether the rumour was true, that the opposition held a private "caucus" previously to the election, and if so, what was resolved at it. He finally succeeded and mainly by the votes of that relentless and embittered opposition, who had for months been making war upon the administration and abusing in the grossest manner the President and all his friends who had stood by him in the darkest hour of his trial, when he was perilling the fame of a long and eventful life of public usefulness to save his country from the grasp of a monied aristocracy. After it was known that my name among others, was spoken of for the office of Speaker, I was applied to by several of the leading friends of the administration, to know if I was willing to submit it, to the friends of the administration party in the House, to ascertain who was the choice of a majority of our party, that we might unite our whole strength upon one man, and run but one candidate. I unhesitatingly avowed my readiness to act with the party, and to support the person thus selected by them to be run be him whom he might, and uniformly and publicly declared, that I did not wish or expect to be chosen Speaker unless I was the choice of my own political

friends. I did not descend to electioneer for the office. I made no pledges. I spoke to no one on the subject of the election except to a few intimate personal friends of my own party, unless the subject was first introduced by them. To no member of the opposition, did I ever introduce the subject.¹ Out of what Col Bell [would] torture what he would attribute to me, I know not.² I remember that a short time before or about the time of the election, one or two gentlemen from the South, one member from Virginia, who had formerly been a warm friend of the administration, but who had more recently acted against it, casually mentioned the subject to me, and voluntarily and without being enquired of by me, avowed his intention to vote for an opposition member whom he named, but if the contest should finally be between Col Bell and myself, he could not vote for Col Bell because, as I inferred from what he said of Col Bell's Bank or some other political opinions, what I do not remember if he mentioned them. When the election came on this gentleman did not vote for me on any balloting. I remember another circumstance which occurred. Whilst the balloting was going on I was informed by my friends, that a story had been put in circulation in the House, by the friends of Col Bell (using the slang of the opposition), representing that the "Kitchen Cabinet," had paraded to the Capitol and were then in the lobby electioneering for me. I looked upon such a story as one started for effect, and was naturally somewhat excited at hearing it. I pronounced the statement to be untrue, for I knew that with some of the best friends of the administration, some of the persons whom the opposition designated as the "Kitchen Cabinet" were unpopular; and whether they were or not, that any interference, such as the story, that was circulated was designed to produce an unjust and improper effect. I had been informed that Maj. Lewis who was included by the opposition under the denomination of "Kitchen Cabinet" was favourable to Col Bell's election, and so far as I knew the other persons included by the opposition, under that name, had given no opinion favourable to my election. Feeling indignant that such a story should be started at such a time, I expressed myself freely and publicly, to several friends of the administration, some of whom had first informed me of it, repelling the charge which was

circulated, that I was the "Kitchen Cabinet" candidate, and very possibly so expressed myself publicly in presence of or to some of the opposition members for neither I nor my friends made any concealment of our indignation at the circulation of such a story. I do not remember the language I used, but probably expressed myself freely, in regard to Maj. Lewis, whom I knew to be no friend of mine. About this time Col Bell can perhaps tell what exertions his relative³ in the House and others of his confidential friends, who are not presumed to have acted without his sanction, were making with the opposition to induce them to come into his support. After the election, the same story made its way through the letter writers of the opposition into the opposition Newspapers, and was widely circulated, and whenever I heard it afterwards, I expressed myself indignantly and freely in regard to it. About the time this story was circulated, and in the midst of the excitement incident to such an occasion the same gentleman from Virginia, who had as already stated, informed me before the election that he would vote for an opposition man (I do not remember whether any other was present or not) met me and said he was still voting for his friend and perhaps asked me when I thought the election would be over, or what the probable result would be, to which I may have replied (though I have no distinct recollection of it, or the language I used) that probably that balloting would end the election, for I expected it would be over several ballotings before it was, for I thought the opposition would unite almost in a body on Col Bell as they finally did, and elect him. Out of what Col Bell would attempt to torture what he attributes to me, I know not unless it be from what occurred as already stated, about the time, the "Kitchen Cabinet" story was put in circulation by his friends to affect me.⁴

Concious I am that my course was what I have represented it to be and you and all my friends will bear testimony to it. It is well known that I did not in fact receive the support of the opposition (nor did I expect it) either *Nationals* or *Nullifiers* and if any of that "party took a decided and animated part in that election" in my behalf it is strange that neither I nor my friends ever heard of it. It is still stranger if it was so,

that I should have received none of their votes except perhaps one, or at most, two or three of them for the reasons assigned by them, upon any of the 10 ballotings which occurred. But if any of them had voted for me, it must have been with a full knowledge of my principles, that they would be uncompromisingly maintained and with a full knowledge also that I looked to my own party for my election if I was elected at all.

I forbear at this time to mention other facts which came to my ears pending that election (my object being to defend rather than attack) some of which are susceptible of proof, and others rest upon apparently well authenticated reports, the truth of which I could not doubt. Should circumstances hereafter make it necessary I may do so.⁵

Throughout this whole matter, my desire was that a Speaker should be chosen, who was the true friend of the administration, one who accorded with it in opinion and would support its measures. Our own political friends were a majority in the House. I thought he should be elected by them and not [. . .] his election to our political [. . .].⁶ I was amongst those spoken of for the station. I unhesitatingly submitted my claims to my own political friends. Others of our party who were also spoken of and voted for, avowed their willingness to do the same thing; to leave it to the friends of the administration to select their candidate, to run but one candidate and all support him. All who were spoken of, as I understood, except Col Bell agreed to this proposition. He refused and substantially admitted that he was in a minority of his own party and looked to the opposition for his principal support. He received that support and I have never complained of it.

I may confidently appeal to you, to a majority of our colleagues, and to all those political friends, with whom I then and have ever acted, for the correctness of my conduct on that occasion. I have no inclination to have any controversy with Col Bell, though it is but too manifest he seeks to have one with me. Upon a subject so delicately connected with him & myself personally, I could have desired to be silent, preferring to leave it to the testimony of others to say, what his course and mine were upon that occasion, but he has left me no alternative

but to submit to injustice or persue the course I have in this letter.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Clarksville. Polk noted that this was a copy of the letter actually sent, but it was obviously an emended draft.

1. This sentence was encircled. A subscript, dated April 19, 1835, and signed by Polk, stated that encircled portions were not included in the letter actually sent.

2. The part of the draft beginning at this point and extending for several pages was encircled and crossed through.

3. This refers to David W. Dickinson, who was described in the draft of March 28 as Bell's brother-in-law.

4. The encircled part of the manuscript ends here.

5. This paragraph appeared after the signature, with a notation that it should be inserted at this point.

6. Here Polk inserted two sentences between lines. The second has not been entirely deciphered.

FROM HARVEY M. WATTERSON¹

Beech Grove,² Tennessee. March 30, 1835³

Watterson wishes to run for the state legislature and asks Polk's opinion on a question of eligibility that has been raised. The facts were that in the fall of 1834, he had bought a plantation in Mississippi, intending to settle there. Upon his return to Bedford County he changed his mind, and in January 1835 he returned to Mississippi for the purpose of selling the plantation. If successful, he intended to return to Bedford to live. If he failed, however, he had intended to move his residence to Mississippi. He sold the plantation without trouble and immediately returned to Tennessee.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A son of William S. Watterson, the writer was a young lawyer. He had edited a Shelbyville newspaper that was hostile to both Jackson and Polk. Later he distinguished himself as a newspaperman in Nashville, Washington, and Louisville.

2. Beech Grove was located in the eastern part of Bedford County until 1836, when it was incorporated into newly created Coffee County.

3. Watterson gave neither the month nor the year. The month was supplied on the basis of the postmark; the contents of the letter suggested the year.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia, Tennessee, March 31, 1835

I received your letter of the 10th a few days after I reached home, together with the copies, and have prepared a letter addressed to you, in answer to such parts as relate to myself, but will not mail it to you until I hear you have reached home. Write me the moment you arrive at home and I will send it.¹ As they doubtless have written for publication you are at liberty to publish the letter which I have written to you and which I will send as soon as you get home; whenever they or you shall think proper to publish the balance of the correspondence. As I have been attacked about the speaker's election, I shall give you all the facts. As war is forced upon me, and as it must come I am prepared to meet it.

You will of course have to answer their last letter. It is very vulnerable and you can do it very successfully, and at the same time in a dignified, temperate and firm manner. In my answers I have considered Mr. Bell as responsible for the whole of what has occurred and have so treated their letters.

The unworthy imputation that in what you have done or said, you have acted as the mouthpiece or "champion" or "Representative" of myself or any body else, I have fully met in my reply. It was due to you as well as myself that I should do so. I did not see you from the time I heard of the meeting until it was over. I did not see your first letter, until you showed me a copy, which you retained. Your second letter consisted chiefly of a detail of facts and conversations occurring at the meeting—at which I was not present—all which I have stated and exposed. I have also stated my knowledge of occurrences during the winter. Should a publication ever be made, it will be important, that your answer should be prepared and sent to Standifer or some other of the delegation immediately. Perhaps it would be best to send it to Standifer as the former correspondence took

place th[r]o' him. Send me a copy as soon as it is prepared.

I have no opposition as yet, though movements are I understand being made to bring out opposition. The [run?] is very great here, but our side has been heard—everything like [a] convention has been rendered odious. I will write you more fully again. I go to Bedford tomorrow and will make speeches on Friday and Saturday. I shall maintain firmly the ground I have taken.

JAMES K. POLK

No address is available but it was probably addressed to some point between Washington and Nashville. The letter is marked "Private and Confidential." It is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 219-220.

1. See Johnson to Polk, April 3, 1835; and Polk to Johnson, April 13, 16, 17, 1835.

FROM JOHN MCKINLEY

Dear Sir

Florence [Alabama] March 31 1835

I received yours of the 25, just as I was setting out for my plantation, from whence I returned on Sunday. I have drawn up, succinctly, a reply to your note of the 20 January, which will, I hope, be sufficient for all your purposes, & may, perhaps, be better than one more diffuse & in detail. At least it is, I believe, the substance of what passed between us.

Since I received yours, I have received a long letter from Judge Catron on the same subject, & more particularly on the Vice Presidency. He thinks it important to run [William] Carroll. Every one may work for himself in these matters: provided he does not compromit principle. I am very willing to accept him as a candidate for that office, if he can obtain the nomination of the party, in the regular way. But we must take care that we do not, in this matter, cross our own track. We object to Judge White, because he is not the regular candidate, & because he & his friends are unwilling to submit his claims to the decision of the party. Whatever therefore may be done in relation to Carroll must be on the express condition that he is taken up by the party. Except the politicians, & the opposition,

I do not think there is much feeling here in favor of Judge White. Gabe Moore¹ has published a long address to the people (not written by him) in which he abuses the legislature of Alabama & Van Buren & comes out strongly for White. This will, I have no doubt, open the eyes of the people.

A firm, steady, course, based upon the principles we have avowed, will carry us through finally. I did not reach home til the 24, two days later than your arrival. What detained you so long? We were detained in Louisville three days, & were seven days on the passage to this place.

Mrs. M. unites with me in respects to Mrs P & insists on the performance of your promised visit next summer.

J. MCKINLEY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Gabriel Moore had served four terms in the House of Representatives from Alabama, 1821-29, and more recently had served one term as governor of his state. At this time he was a member of the United States Senate.

FROM WILLIAM CARROLL

My dear Sir,

Nashville, April 1, 1835

I have delayed answering your letter under a hope that I would be able to communicate something of a satisfactory character.

In Sumner, Guild¹ and Saunders² are out for the lower house; and Major Watkins³ will probably run for the Senate without opposition. They are all favorable to a national Convention. I have heard from two sources to day, entitled to weight, that Burford⁴ will certainly be out for Congress. Of this we shall know more in a day or two. In this district no movement has been made against Bell. It is said that Burton⁵ will be out, but his friends here have heard nothing from him so far as I am informed. The two first numbers of the *Union*⁶ have appeared. How are they liked in Maury? I have not yet been able to ascertain whether the mere workers have determined upon opposition to me or not. The matter is with themselves. Should they determine to run any one, so soon as he is known I shall take the field, and if necessary carry the war into Africa.

The indications from all quarters shew that the people of the Democratic party will be very fully represented at the Baltimore Convention. Pennsylvania has already appointed her Delegates and Electoral ticket. If my Rheumatism improve a little it is my intention to be present at the convention, unless my services should be required at home. What appears to be the state of public feeling in Maury? Have the great body of the people adopted the White flag, or is it, as in many other places, only the workings of office seekers? Let me hear from you, and in return, I will from time to time communicate to [you] whatever I may deem interesting.

WM. CARROLL

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Josephus Conn Guild, a Sumner County lawyer. He served four non-consecutive terms in the General Assembly but is perhaps best known as the author of *Old Times in Tennessee*.

2. David M. Saunders. He is not further identified but it is likely that he was a kinsman of James Saunders, a large landowner in the Hendersonville vicinity.

3. Charles Watkins, an early settler in Sumner County, served in the General Assembly for five nonconsecutive terms, the first in 1821.

4. David Burford represented Sumner and Smith counties in the upper house of the General Assembly, 1829-35. At this time he was speaker of the senate in that body.

5. A Wilson County lawyer, Robert M. Burton had recently served as a delegate to the state constitutional convention.

6. The first two issues of the Nashville *Union* came out on March 30 and April 1, 1835. Samuel H. Laughlin was listed as editor and Medicus A. Long as publisher. The slogan, carried on the top of the first page was, "Our Federal Union—It Must be Preserved." This paper entered immediately into the political controversy over the presidential candidacy of Hugh Lawson White.

FROM JESSE MEEK JR.
TO JAMES K. POLK AND ADLAI O. HARRIS

Nashville. April 2, 1835

Having been instructed to send to Columbia a slave child owned by Polk, Meek suggests that someone from Columbia be sent to ride in the wagon with the child and assure that she will not be injured during the trip.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville April 3rd. [1835]¹

I reached home to day much improved in my health & recd yours. I shall be much pleased to receive the communication you speak of. I have learnt but little yet—every body here is said to be for White. I have no opposition & none expected by my friends here. My own opinion is that Genl. Cheatham² will be again enduced to take the field. I am alone in that opinion. My brother is out at a muster to day & Mr Boyd³ is at Dover Court.

I will write you soon & let you know every thing.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Johnson did not put the year on his letter but the content makes it clear that it was written in 1835.

2. Richard Cheatham, merchant and farmer of Springfield in Robertson County. He served five nonconsecutive terms in the state legislature and had been a member of the state constitutional convention in 1834. He did not oppose Johnson in 1835, but in 1837 he was elected to the House of Representatives as a Whig and served one term there.

3. This is probably a reference to George C. Boyd, a lawyer in Clarksville.

FROM ALFRED BALCH¹

Dr. Sir,

Nashville 4 April 35

I am anxious to see you but I cannot go to Columbia.

I wish you to send me a copy of the grant for 5000 acres of land to your father lying in Hardeman County which was granted to him in trust for the benefit of myself and Whitesides heirs.² Also send me the names of the heirs of your father that I may use them in ejecting some squatters from the land who will not go off. If the will of your father authorizes suits to be brought in the names of the Executors give me their names also. I will insert several counts in the declaration that I may not miss fire. As soon as I issue suits the rascals will go off, or take leases. Do attend to this business if you please. And be so good as to request Mr [Terry H.] Cahal to send the money of which

I spoke to him directed to Mr Crutcher³ to be paid over to me.

We are full of politics here. Much anxiety & excitement prevail in our City. The friends of Van Buren were brought to a stagger by the suddenness of Whites debate. But they are recovering from their surprize and are preparing to go forth well armed to the battle.

If Whites prospects decline there will be a revulsion of public opinion. My quondam friend Bell & his compatriots will then find themselves with their bare backsides on the cold ground. This event will fill me with joy. Our folks are coming out boldly & unfurling the Jackson Van Buren flag.

Efforts should be made by your friends to sustain our news paper. The pens of those who can write should be drawn to defend the good cause. It is now eleven years since I proposed the Magician as a future candidate for the Presidency. My affections, self love & *vanity* are all enlisted in his favour.⁴

A. BALCH

P.S. It has been proposed to have a Convention at McMinnville or some other town, of delegates authorized to nominate members to go to the Baltimore convention. Will Maury join in this measure? We are now left no alternative but to take our positions and make battle, the more openly & resolutely the better.

I have been requested to go up and have agreed to do so. I have been pressed to go to Baltimore but I cannot go.

AB.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Balch was a Nashville lawyer who had been involved in political affairs for many years. At this time he was the legal agent of the heirs of Jenkin Whiteside.

2. Jenkin Whiteside, lawyer, land speculator, and former member of the state legislature and of Congress, made his home in Nashville for a long time. In 1822 he died, leaving a large estate to be administered by his brother, Thomas. The latter delayed settlement and the heirs finally brought suit. One of the properties involved was the tract of land in Hardeman County that Balch mentions here. See Ezekiel P. McNeal to Polk, October 3, 1829; D. W. Wood to Polk and James Walker, July 31, 1830; and Alfred Balch to Polk, January 6, 1831.

3. Thomas Crutcher was at this time treasurer of the state, a post he had held since 1809. He was also a former mayor of Nashville.

4. Balch had been a Van Buren supporter from the presidential election of 1824.

TO LEWIS CASS

Sir

Columbia, Tenn. April 6, 1835

Herewith I forward to you the resignation of young Mr [James L.] Guest, as a cadet at West Point.¹ During the last Session of Congress, I recommended my young friend Mr Joseph B. Boyd, a citizen of my Congressional District, for admission into the Academy. There was then no vacancy from this District, but you intimated to me, that if young Guest should resign, that young Boyd could probably be appointed. He is a very worthy youth and is well qualified to enter the institution. If appointed, he will repair immediately to the Point. I take much pleasure in renewing my recommendation in his behalf and hope it may be in your power to appoint him. There is no cadet now at the institution from this District. Should Boyd be appointed, direct his warrant to him to "*Chapel Hill P.O. Bedford County Tennessee.*"

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington, this letter is in United States Military Academy Cadet Application Papers (RG 94), National Archives.

1. This resignation was written by Polk and signed by Guest.

FROM RALPH I. INGERSOLL¹

New Haven, Connecticut. April 9, 1835

Ingersoll encloses a two-column clipping from the New Haven *Columbian-Register* which indicates that the Democratic ticket has swept the Connecticut elections.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Ingersoll and Polk became friends while serving together in the House of Representatives. Polk appointed Ingersoll to be Minister to Russia, 1846-48.

TO MAHLON DICKERSON

Sir

Columbia Tenn. April 13th 1835

My young friend Isaac J. Thomas Jr.¹ is desirous to obtain the appointment of midshipman in the Navy. His residence is within my Congressional District, & his age seventeen years. He is a good English scholar, and of a highly respectable family. I consider him a promising youth & if appointed he will I doubt not discharge his duty well. Will you do me the favour to inform me whether there are at present any vacancies in the service, and if so what the prospect his appointment will be. I take pleasure in recommending him, as every way worthy, and will be gratified if he can be appointed.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found. This letter is in the Hoadly Collection, Connecticut Historical Society.

1. His father was a Columbia doctor.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia, Tennessee, April 13, 1835

I recd your letter of the 3rd when I was on the eve of leaving home, to make a visit to my constituents in the upper part of Bedford, and that must account for the delay in answering it. I returned last night; I found my friends in Bedford and the people generally, apparently satisfied with my course, and every body saying to me, I will have no opposition. How this may be a few weeks will determine. A. A. Hall¹ is making a tour through Bedford under the pretence of collecting; his real object you can conjecture. I accidentally crossed his path in a remote part of Bedford the other day. He had just left the House of a friend of mine. If his object be to talk politics I will be apt to learn it. When he shall report to the junta at Nashville I suppose it will be determined on, whether I am to be opposed or not. The document which in a former letter I promised to send you, shall be forwarded in two or three days, as soon as it can be copied.

I think the public mind is now too much excited to do us

justice, if your correspondence is now published. I would advise you not to publish at this time on your part. I would answer their last letter thro Standifer, and leave it to them to publish it or not, as they may think proper. There is another consideration, and that is if they publish it will show more clearly their intention to assail us. At present our policy is not to produce excitement, but to meet it if they produce it. At all events let theirs be the responsibility of commencing it. If they *do* publish, *then* you can furnish my letter, which I will have copied and sent to you in a few days. Let me hear from you.

I saw Grundy at Murfreesboro as I passed on to the upper part of Bedford. He told me he would write to you that day.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Clarksville, this letter is marked "Private." It is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 220-221.

1. Allen A. Hall, a Nashville newspaperman, was one of John Bell's most loyal partisans.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia, Tennessee, April 16, 1835

I send you the letter I promised by the mail which takes this. I could not get it copied, or it should have been sent a day or two ago. I send also a copy of Mr. Grundy's statement of the conversation of Standifer to him and myself, which is referred to in the letter. I have prepared also a separate answer to Mr. Bell's separate letter or postscript, which I will have copied and forward to you by the next mail; I will send with it certain proofs in my possession, upon the subject of the speaker's election. Both letters with the documents which accompany them you are authorized to publish, if they shall make a publication of the balance of the correspondence on their part.

I think you should as promptly as you can answer their last letter, and send it to Standifer, retaining of course a copy. There are many very vulnerable points in their last letter, in relation to yourself, which you can and ought to expose, but which I

could not well do without seeming to go too far out of my way. Their letter is written in a spirit that will require to be met in a corresponding tone on your part. In that part of it, where they wish to make the false impression that you attended as the *mouth-piece* of Mr. Grundy and myself, I have met it, as you will see. You should indignantly repel the insinuation, for we both know it is untrue. The facts as I have stated them you will see. I am satisfied I did not see you from the time I was invited to the meeting until it was over; nor did I see your first letter, or know you intended to write one until after it was written, when you showed me a copy of it. They should be exposed by you, for suppressing a part of their reply. This was wholly indefensible and should be dwelt on. The confused reason they assign for suppressing it cannot be the real one, for everything that is severe against you, was contained in the "extract," sent to you and not in the part retained by them. It could not therefore have been to save your feelings or to avoid a breach with you that it was retained.

Would it not be important for you to write to [William C.] Dunlap, and propound interrogations to him, in regard to *his* recollection of what occurred at the meeting; and as an honorable man, he *must* answer. I think you told me that his recollection accorded with yours in some important particulars. Learn from him, for example, whether he recollects Bell's speech which he says he made in the meeting; whether he recollects what Standifer and Lea said about Grundy and myself. And what occurred when the paper was signed, when Bell objected to Standifer's correcting it, and whether Standifer has not told him, since, what he told you and Grundy and myself, about our opinions as expressed to him; know of him whether Dickinson was not the person that proposed the election of the printer in the meeting. And such other points as may strike you. It may finally be very important to have his statement, and he is too honorable to refuse to give it, when called.

I would advise you not to publish the correspondence at this time. I think the public mind is too much excited *now* to do us justice. Let them publish if they choose, and let theirs be the responsibility. If they publish it will have the appearance of a design to attack us by force of their numbers. If you publish, we

will occupy the attitude of assailants by that act. *But when they do publish*, then I wish you to furnish my letters and documents for publication with the rest. In your answer have no reference to any thing I have said, and do not let them know that I have even written to you upon the subject. Let your answer appear to be wholly independent of mine. Write me immediately whether your recollection differs from mine, upon any point stated in my letter. When your answer is written, send me a copy, or the original, and I will take a copy, and return it by mail.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. When I begun this letter, my brother who is making the copy, told me he would have it ready. I now find it will not be done in time to go by the morning's mail; it shall be sent on the next day (Saturday).

Addressed to Clarksville and marked "Private and Confidential." This letter is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 221-222.

FROM KENNETH L. ANDERSON¹

Shelbyville, Tennessee. April 17, 1835

Anderson has heard rumors, which he discounts, that Joseph A. Kincaid, a Bedford County doctor and a member of the state constitutional convention of 1834, will oppose Polk for Congress.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Active in local politics, Anderson was one of Polk's most loyal supporters. In 1833 he was elected colonel in the militia, ordinarily an indication of local political influence.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir: Columbia, Tennessee. April 17, 1835

I send you herewith a copy of the conversation reduced to writing by Mr. Grundy. I send by this day's mail, the letter I promised. It is too long, but I could not well compress it. I

send it, in two packages—the one containing four, the other five sheets, paged from 1 to 9, inclusive.

I will send you in a day or two, my letter in answer to Mr. Bell's separate letter, or postscript.

I have no opposition yet, but should not be surprised if I do have. Every effort is making to produce excitement here, the main object I have no doubt being to reach me. You see our paper is gone beyond recovery. Monday is to be a great day here. All the candidates are called out by Judge Kennedy and others. They know my opinions and the object is at me. I shall stand unshrinkingly on my ground, and shall probably print my speech.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Clarksville. The letter is marked "Private and Confidential." It is in Souissat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 222.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir, Nashville, April 17, 1835

Your box, and Judge Catron's boxes have arrived by the last Wheeling Boat, consigned to S. Seay.¹ Yours was from Mauro's, the same House mine was to have been sent from. No word of mine. I fear the fellow did not *mark* or send it though I gave him written directions. Do you know any thing of it.

I congratulate you upon your chance of running alone.

We get along tolerably. Long is sick which leaves me scarcely time to eat, as journeymen and boys require constant overlooking. We have Bynum.² He is an excellent young man.

Do request Gen. [Gideon J.] Pillow to send me an article he wrote in the Observer in favor of Carroll. Our boys have cut up the paper, and as the Gov. has been attacked at Jackson, I wish to republish it. Ask him to cut it out of a paper and enclose it to me.

Hard efforts are making everywhere almost to retard the progress of the Union. You and Johnson must set your friends to work. Of the out counties, Sumner has sent us double the

number of any other. Lincoln is next best. Rutherford and Maury about the same.

A *jejeune*, as grand as that described by Sir Walter at the Castle Tillitudlem³ to his sacred majesty King Charles, was given by Dr. Shelby⁴ to the speaker by way of Dinner yesterday. I have heard no particulars. A subscription paper is in Circulation for a public dinner in all the month of May, to which Judge White, it is said, is to be invited.

All well. My respects to Mrs. Polk.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Samuel Seay was a manufacturer, merchant, and owner of steamboats who had a long business career in Nashville. He was best known as a wholesale grocer and commission merchant.

2. Probably Chesley Bynum of Maury County, who helped establish and operate a newspaper in Columbia during 1835.

3. Tillietudlem was a castle in Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Old Mortality*, published in 1816.

4. John Shelby was educated in medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and had served as a surgeon under Jackson in the Creek War, 1813. During the campaign he was wounded and lost an eye. He practiced for many years in Nashville, and in 1849 he was postmaster there.

FROM ANDREW BEAUMONT¹

My Dear Sir Wilkes Barre [Pennsylvania] Apr 18, 1835

You will no doubt be surprised to find the half of an obscure Country Newspaper enclosed.² But as it comes from a friend you will I am sure receive it in a friendly spirit. I send it more to shew that I have represented the sentiments of my constituents than as an ostentatious display of their approbation of myself. There have been several other meetings held in the different portions of this district all speaking the same language.

My principle object however in writing was to ask how the political currents were setting in Tennessee? How does the new coalition prosper at the head of which stands your colleague John Bell and at the tail Judge White? O the weakness & fatuity of human nature! That Judge White should have sold

his body to the dissectors is most wonderful, and that too so soon after they had insulted him before the nation by taking from him as vice President pro tem all the prerogatives which make that station respectable.³ But Judge White will share we trust, the fate of similar delinquents in having his name inscribed high in the temple of apostates. There is yet room to save the scanty remnant of Democratic respect which was once bestowed by the nation upon Judge White, by withdrawing his name from the unworthy hands into which he has so unadvisedly committed it. He must not flatter himself that the plot is not clearly understood. He seems to think that he can shelter himself under the pretense that it has been demanded by *the voice of the people* when it is known that it has only been obtruded upon the people by a contemptible conspiracy of recreants and that it has been so far responded to only by Federalist apostates & Tories. Write me if you have leisure & fully & freely & if you request it shall be confidentially retained. All the Democracy of Penna goes for the National convention.

A. BEAUMONT

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Beaumont was a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania, 1833-37, but did not run for re-election.

2. This enclosure has not been found.

3. Hugh L. White was elected President Pro Tempore of the Senate on December 23, 1832. On June 28, 1834, he failed of re-election and was replaced by George Poindexter of Mississippi.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia, Tennessee, April 19, 1835

I send you herewith the letter in answer to Col. Bell's Postscript, together with extracts from, and copies of, letters from several members of the House in relation to the Speaker's election, which I wish published with the balance of the correspondence if he should publish. I do not think they should know that I have written you this, or my former letter, until they appear before the public. Write me your opinion of both my

letters. I think you should in your answer indignantly repel the insinuation that in the allusion made by you to the Speaker's election, in your letter of the 18th January, any [suggestion] was made to you by me, before you wrote it. The fact is as I have stated it, that I had no knowledge of it, until after you had written it and you read it to me in the rough draft of your letter at your room. You can with more propriety speak fully of the facts you know, and those disclosed in the statements I send you, of his course and mine in that election, and the means by which he was elected; of his general association and intercourse with the opposition, of the efforts made by his brother-in-law¹ and confidential friends to obtain the votes of the opposition; of his studied and cautious silence during the Session; and of the great fact that he was elected by a small fraction of our party, united with the opposition strength, and that he now wishes to play a similar game as to the Presidency, and thereby have a sanction for his own course. You might if you thought it useful, notice the fact of the circulation during the balloting, of the "*Kitchen Cabinet*" story, and who were busy in the House giving it circulation. I thought on reflection that it was best for me not to notice it. The whole correspondence must probably come to the public at some time. They have made it *war to the knife*, and should not be spared. Every fact, or apparently well authenticated rumour should be stated, and if I mistake not, they will have reason to regret that they ever assailed us. Their great object is to prostrate us. We are in no danger. "Truth is mighty and will prevail." You should take great care in preparing your answer, and must not fail to send me the copy you retain, as soon as it is prepared. I will take a copy from it and return it; or if you choose to send it to me before you forward it to them I will return it and give you my opinion upon it. Grundy intends also to answer, and for that purpose told me, he intended to request you to bring the whole correspondence to Nashville where he could examine it.

The excitement continues here. Judge Kennedy was in town yesterday fanning it, and talking almost like a madman. He is you know Bell's relative and was disappointed in not getting the Federal Judgeship. Tomorrow [. . .] day. I shall make a bold speech [. . .] meet them full in the face. The eff[ect may] be

that Kennedy may have himself [brought] out against me. If so I shall not fear the result. The excitement is great about the town, but I do not think it has yet reached the County generally. *Burn* these private letters as soon as read.

JAMES K. POLK

P. S. Bell's course in the Speaker's election is wholly indefensible. It is his weak point, and cannot be pressed too hardly. You should state Ben. Hardin's conversation at the White Sulphur Spring which gave rise to his letter to you last summer.² This will be all necessary, to show, first, their boasting of their triumph, and secondly, how it happened that he wrote to you. Perhaps you retained a copy of your letter to Hardin, in which you may have stated what his conversation was. If so send me a copy.

Addressed to Clarksville and marked "Private and Confidential." This letter is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 222-224.

1. David W. Dickinson.

2. Benjamin Hardin was a Kentucky member of the House of Representatives. He had recently become quite critical of the Jackson administration and was in the process of becoming a Whig. See Johnson to Polk, September 12, and October 2, 1834.

FROM PORTLAND J. CURLE

Dear friend. Winchester [Tennessee] April the 20th 1835

You will please do me the favor to write to Genl. Jackson for me. I presume you received my letter while at the City requesting you to urge my claims to the postmaster genl to have me appointed Postmaster at this place. I have obtained the appointment and now the former Postmaster John Goodwin¹ & my opponent Wm. Estill² are trying underhandly to induce the President to believe that I am now and allway have been opposed to him & his administration which is woly[sic] false as you verry well now. I am an allways have been in favor of Genl Jacksons genl pollicy of govement. I am not nor never was much of a party man as far as my nowledg and information extends. If I may be called a Politition attall weak and feable as they have been they ware for the Old Hero. I have allway

supported Jackson men when I believed them to be sound Polatitions. The only grounds that my opponets have to gowe on are that I have some time back spoken some little in faver of the United States Bank. Partially opposed to the veto I did not nowe much about the matter and presume that it will turn out right. I am in hopes it will and I am prety well convinced that it will but suppose that men disagre in some little small matter and agree in the general principle & policy that is sufficient. Our then representave in Congress Judg Isaacks^a was of the same oppinion. I did not condem Genl Jacksons corse, only expressed a partial opposition occasionally, and those men are now ketching at it. A drounding man will cetch at a straw and that is the case with theese men. They cannot say any thing else against me not even any thing on that subject with any propriety. I am extreemly sollicitus not to be out done by haveing false representations made about me underhandly without having a chance of defending myself. Thare is no person here but Judg Isaacks that is personally acquainted with Genl Jackson to wright for me in my behalf and Isaacks is bead sick [. . .] and cannot wright often though if he should get well anough in a short time he will wright for me. I have conversed with him on the subject. He is verry much displased with thare corse although he wrought a letter for Estill in the first place not noweing that I was an applicent and afterwards wrought in my behalf to Barry not contradicting any thing that he had stated of course but explaining the facts and circumstances and the advantages that were taken in getting up Estills petition. Please wright to the General for me immediately & state that you have bean acquainted with me for say I think abot fifteen yers &c and all that you can consistatly say. In hast.

PORTLAND J. CURLE

Addressed to Columbia.

1. He was postmaster at Winchester from July 1824 until replaced by Curle on March 6, 1835.

2. See John B. Forester to Polk, March 2, 1835. Estill was appointed to replace Curle on June 13, 1835; apparently the rumors about Curle's being an opposition man were believed.

3. Jacob C. Isaacks had served as a circuit judge before being elected to the first of his five terms in the House of Representatives. He died in 1835.

FROM LEWIS CASS

Washington. April 20, 1835

Writing unofficially, Cass says that he is hard pressed on cadet appointments. Representative Samuel Bunch¹ of East Tennessee has complained that his district has been slighted in the matter of appointments, and Charles Gratiot² has said that John D. Goneke,³ from Polk's district, is now at West Point. Cass will appoint a cadet from Polk's district if there is not one already, but if there is one, he would prefer to let Joseph B. Boyd's application lie over till a later date.

Addressed to Columbia. This letter is marked "Confidential."

1. A resident of Rutledge in Grainger County, Bunch served in the House of Representatives for two terms, 1833-37.

2. A professional soldier and a graduate of West Point, Gratiot headed the Corps of Engineers and was ex officio Inspector of the United States Military Academy.

3. He was a son of John F. Goneke, a music teacher who had lived in Columbia for a short time.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir, South Field,¹ Nashville, April 21, 1835

I saw The. Bradford in this city a few days ago, looking and enquiring with much seeming anxiety for Col. Bell. He said to those of whom he was making enquiries that he wanted to see and must see him on business. Now what is it likely he was after. Some electioneering scheme, some intrigue no doubt. Since that time I have rec'd the [Shelbyville] Western Freeman of Friday the 17th instant, and now cut out of it and enclose to you a communication purporting to be addressed to you by one of your Constituents.² Curse 'em, as old Tommy Crutcher says, do they wish to start opposition to you. If they do, it will be fruitless, but it will put you to some trouble.

*Laus Deo.*³ Connecticut has acted gloriously, and now stands redeemed and disenthral'd.⁴ If Virginia shall "go and do likewise," the game will be up on the White balls;⁵ but our folks here wont give it up till the elections are over and our state officers chosen by the next Assembly. [George C.] Childress returns to wallowing in the mire of the Banner. Catron, I know,

does not approve of it, and I understand Marshall⁶ does not; but he is much more under the influence of Bell and Foster than of his better friends. He has not consulted Catron, or had not on yesterday morning. Dr. Felix Robertson has no influence with him. Let him go.

[Chesley] Bynum is bent upon having a paper in your town. I wish it was under way. Your present paper—or its editor—is making a perfect Judy⁷ of himself, whoever he is.⁸

Dr. Breathett,⁹ now of this city, says that by January next, there will be but two candidates, Van and the strongest man of the Nationals—Clay or Webster. He understands Kentucky designs and movements better than most men here.

As I go for the cause, regardless of the personal interest of either myself or [Medicus A.] Long, do let matters be hastened by the friends of truth, and the contemnners of humbug, in getting up a new Columbia Press. They have a paper at Gallatin, right and intended to be right. The Editor, however, like the witness Harris' wife, in the Sally Dillard Case, must be a "damned fool."¹⁰ The second number of his paper has been filled with praise of Judge White's speech in favor of Life-estate-offices.

Our candidates here spoke yesterday. Craighead and [Ephraim H.] Foster never touched the *Bank question*. Hickman, Cheatham and Ensley,¹¹ met it like men.

Sims¹² is off the field in Rutherford. Brady will be elected. If the Sumner people get Burford out, he will beat Peyton. Hardy Cryer¹³ tells me that they have hopes of getting him out. David Saunders thinks that by coming to the Assembly with [Josephus C.] Guild, he can serve our cause better than by running a doubtful race for Congress. I think so too. Carroll and Catron think Craighead is and will be *right*, but I cannot, as yet, feel any such faith. Cheatham goes the figure here and scores the presses, and the politicians who have abandoned the principles upon which they acted in 1832.

The Maine men have been faithful in forwarding several excellent Exchange papers, which came in due time. The Yorkers have not done so. I do not, as yet, get the [Washington] Globe regularly, nor in exchange. I will however receive it hereafter as it is now on the way. Our subscription list grows apace. We

have about 100 Tri-weekly city subscribers. Trimming men, fearful for offices held and sought, stand off, although warmly with us in heart. As the Georgians say, I would not give a dried apple curse for such men, and will never give my personal vote to any such people for any office high or low.

I have obtained, and now have in type Gen. Pillow's article in favor of Carroll.¹⁴ If it is not sent already, he need not trouble himself.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. South Field, southeast of the intersection of present-day Eighth Avenue and Broadway, was used for such public occasions as military reviews. Laughlin's home seems to have been adjacent to the field.

2. Obviously seeking to embarrass Polk, this communication requests him to clarify his reasons for not joining other Tennessee Congressmen in promoting the candidacy of Hugh L. White. It also asks why he had opposed resolutions proposing an amendment to the Constitution that would prevent a presidential election from devolving upon the House of Representatives. It reminded Polk that he had once favored such an amendment.

3. Praise to God.

4. The recent elections in Connecticut had resulted in a sweeping victory for the friends of the Jackson administration; they elected their gubernatorial candidate and won a commanding majority in each of the houses of the legislature.

5. This probably refers to the planning of dinners and other gatherings for the purpose of promoting the White candidacy.

6. Samuel B. Marshall, John Catron, Morgan W. Brown, and Benjamin Litton married sisters of George C. Childress. Marshall was United States Marshal in Tennessee, 1831-39. George C. Childress was a grandson of Elijah Robertson, Felix Robertson's uncle.

7. A term of opprobrium, stemming from the marionette character noted for foolish behavior.

8. Felix Zollicoffer of the *Columbia Observer* had announced his support of Judge White.

9. Dr. Edward Breathitt was a brother of Governor John Breathitt of Kentucky and a brother-in-law of John H. Eaton. He lived in Franklin for several years.

10. The editor of the *Gallatin Union* was D. C. Gaskill. In the humorous and fictitious Sally Dillard Case the witness, Harris, strayed completely from answering questions and berated his wife for foolishly raising her coat and wading through a swamp instead of using a footlog that was available.

11. David Craighead, son of Thomas B. Craighead, was a wealthy Nashville lawyer. John P. Hickman, Leonard P. Cheatham, and Enoch Ensley

were candidates for the legislature. An early settler, Hickman was the owner of large tracts of land. He was a son of Edwin Hickman, for whom Hickman County was named. Cheatham, a lawyer, was a nephew of General Richard Cheatham of Robertson County. He married a daughter of James Robertson, and their son, Benjamin F. Cheatham, was the well-known general of the Confederate army. Enoch Ensley was a man of prominence in the Tusculum community, where he was justice of the peace and postmaster. He was reputed to be one of the wealthier men of the state.

12. Leonard H. Sims had been announced as a candidate for the United States of Representatives. Later he moved west where he served in the legislatures of both Missouri and Arkansas. He served one term in the House of Representatives from Missouri.

13. Hardy M. Cryer, a Methodist minister, was closely associated with Andrew Jackson in horse breeding. Because of his church affiliation he avoided being directly involved in racing the horses he owned.

14. This apparently refers to an article from the *Columbia Observer* that appeared in Laughlin's paper on April 17, 1835. This article approved of the candidacy of William Carroll and spoke of him in highly complimentary terms.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Colo

Murfreesboro April 27th 1835

Susan & her mother have just come to the determination that they will come down to visit Sarah as soon as it will be convenient for Sarah to send up her carriage for them.¹ Mrs Childress would have sent word sooner but one of her negroes (Peggy) has been right unwell and she was afraid she could not leave her. She has however entirely recovered and there will be no difficulty on that score.

I received a letter some months ago from Dr. Hays² requesting me to attend a sale of some Negroes at Jefferson³ and to purchase two for him. I did not get the Drs. letter 'till after the appointed day of sale though by the bye there was no sale owing to an agreement among the legatees of the estate to be sold. I should have answered Dr. Hays letter before this time but I have been looking out for some negroes that would answer the description of negroes that he said he wished to purchase. Tell him if you please that I have not found any that would suit him.

Our politicians are very busily engaged. You are I suppose

informed before this time that Symms⁴ has declined running for Congress & that Maury⁵ has taken the field. I do not think that he can endanger Brady's election. The opposition at any rate seem hard run to get up a candidate. Maury is at this time on his first visit to this county. I suppose he will be a very hot White candidate as I learn that he was the leader in the White meeting in Williamson County some time ago. Governor Carroll was here the Saturday after you left and made a short speech to our Citizens and sustained himself very handsomely. A good many that were opposed to him before they heard his speech became reconciled and disclosed that they would support him and laughed at the arguments used to prove his ineligibility. I have no doubt but that he will beat Cannon⁶ in this County and it is very likely that he will beat him in every County in the State.

I see from the late Globe one of which was franked to me by the President that Speaker Bells intrigues are likely to be exposed to publick reprobation & merited indignation. His collusion with the opposition backed by Colo. Johnston⁷ & some of the friends of the administration in New York in order to beat you is in a fair way to be brought to light. There never was a set of people worse deceived and betrayed than the Citizens of the State of Tennessee have been within the last two years. And what seems strange to me is that a great many when they have the means of being undeceived they are not willing to be convinced that they have been imposed upon but obstinately persist in their errors. They are not willing to have it understood that they have been foolish. Mjr Dance⁸ got home I believe a few days after you left here. He was with the Speaker at several places on his route, New York, Baltimore & Philadelphia. He was for union; the integrity of the party before he left home but he returns a full blooded *White* man! In conversing with him one day I attributed the bringing out of White to some disaffected Administration men about Nashville. He replied that Luke Lea would tell a different tale and that other politicians had been instrumental in bringing him out. I told him that I had heard before of some of Mr Lea's insinuations but I took the liberty of pronouncing them false. I understood him to allude to you.

We have had no account from our friends on the Texas expedition⁹ since they left New Orleans which was on the 19th of March. We begin to look out for them a little but think it is most probable that they will not get home until about the middle of May.

We are all well.

W. R. RUCKER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. On May 7, 1835, Rucker wrote a letter to Sarah Polk saying that the carriage had arrived but that the return trip had been postponed for two or three days because of rainy weather and bad roads.

2. John B. Hays was the husband of Polk's sister, Ophelia. He was also a cousin of Andrew C. Hays of Columbia, who was at this time postmaster and who had been engaged in the publication of newspapers there.

3. A village in Rutherford County, northwest of Murfreesboro.

4. Leonard H. Sims served one term, 1831-33, in the state senate from Williamson and Rutherford counties.

5. Abram P. Maury Jr. had served one term in the lower house of the state legislature. He was a lawyer and planter and had for a while been engaged in editing newspapers. In this contest for a seat in the House of Representatives his success was largely due to the sudden death of William Brady while the canvass was under way.

6. Newton Cannon of Williamson County was an active candidate for governor. He had run for that office in 1827 and had been beaten by Sam Houston.

7. Richard Mentor Johnson of Kentucky, to whom Bell was reputed to have made political advances, hoping to win him as a White supporter. Johnson, however, bided his time and was nominated for the vice-presidency at the Baltimore Convention in 1835.

8. Russell Dance, a Murfreesboro merchant and a lesser figure in Rutherford County politics, had succeeded Polk as clerk of the state senate, a position which Dance held for many years.

9. The personnel and purpose of this particular expedition have not been determined.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dear Sir

Columbia Apl. 28th 1835

I am in daily expectation that I will have an opponent for Congress. The political junta at Nashville have decreed that I am to be opposed. Letters have been written to my District, and I learn [Theodorick F.] Bradford was in Nash-

ville last week, doubtless to consult and receive orders. Nothing will prevent opposition but the apprehension that it would be unavailing. I have been busy and do not fear it, if it come. Should it come there will be a scene of violent excitement here never before witnessed.

Should it come it will be necessary that I should be prepared at all points. About two years ago I wrote to you for copies of the letters of recommendation, on file in the Department of State, written by Thos. H. Fletcher, T. Yeatman, Jno. P. Erwin, Col. John Williams, and Thos. Washington, in behalf of T. F. Bradford when an applicant for the appointment of Marshall of West Tennessee in November 1827.¹ In reply you furnished me with extracts from these letters, but with a request that your name should not be used in any use I might find it necessary to make of them. It did become necessary for me to use the extracts you forwarded, though your name was not given. I am now informed confidentially by a friend, that if I have opposition this is to be one point of attack, and that I am to be called upon for my proof of what the letters, the extracts from which you forwarded, contain. In that event I shall be awkwardly situated, unless I have either copies of the letters themselves from the Department or an authority from you, to state that the extracts are truly copied from the originals. I make no doubt but Bradford has been informed through *Bell*, who was intimate at the Department of State, through what channel I was furnished with the information. It has occurred to me that if I should be attacked upon this point, that I could challenge Bradford to deny the truth of the letters, and call upon him to agree that copies might be furnished by the Department. If he assents there can certainly be no objection to furnish them, and I submit to you, whether copies cannot now be furnished to be used only in the event, he assents to the production of them. Unless the copies be furnished now, there might not be time to obtain them after the attack is made. If they are furnished now, no use will be made of them, unless it shall be necessary in vindication of truth, and not then without his assent, if that condition is imposed. Should I have opposition I am satisfied it will be indispensable I should have the copies themselves. I can see no objection to furnishing them,

especially under the restrictions I have stated, if such be required. Will you see Mr *Forsyth* and the *President* immediately, and I am satisfied they will direct the copies to be sent, when they see that they will be necessary for the vindication of truth, and with the assurance that they shall not be used without Mr Bradford's assent. All general rules must have their exceptions, and with the assent of the party interested, (and he dare not refuse it, [. . .] does attack me,) all objections would be answered. The President once directed a similar document relating to Col. Erwin² to be furnished and he will I doubt not do the same thing now. Will you attend to this immediately.

We have great excitement here, and it is increasing daily. The newspapers are almost exclusively on one side, and in fact might almost as well be opposition papers. I made a speech a few days ago,³ and will send you a copy as soon as printed. I will write to the President to day or tomorrow and must refer you to my letter to him for more particulars. Make our best respects to Mrs D. and to the President.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. The letters copies of which I want, are from *Thos. H. Fletcher*, *T. Yeatman*, *John P. Erwin*, *John Williams* and *Thos. Washington*, recommending *Theodorick F. Bradford* for the office of Marshall of West Tennessee. They were written in November 1827 and are now on file in the Department of State. The copies need not have any official authentication, unless the Secretary thinks proper.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Washington. Marked "Private," this letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. Since Polk did not divide this letter into paragraphs the editors have taken the liberty of doing so.

1. Fletcher, Erwin and Washington were Nashville lawyers. Williams, a former Tennessee Senator, was from Knoxville and strongly anti-Jackson. Thomas Yeatman was a wealthy commission merchant, banker, and iron manufacturer who had married a sister of John P. Erwin. He had recently died, and in October 1835, his widow married John Bell. See Donelson to Polk, May 30, 1833, and Polk to Louis McLane, June 24, 1833.

2. This is a reference to Andrew Erwin, Polk's opponent in the congres-

sional race of 1825. It should be remembered that Andrew Erwin was the father of John P. Erwin, of Mrs. Thomas Yeatman, and of James Erwin, a son-in-law of Henry Clay.

3. This speech, made in Columbia on April 20, 1835, was mentioned by Polk in several letters. Obviously he attached considerable importance to it.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir

Columbia, Tenn. Apr. 28th 1835

My speech or rather that part of it which related to the election, will be printed in the *Observer*¹ of Friday next. In any notice you may take of it, be careful to say nothing which would produce local irritation or excitement here. I am not unapprized that every exertion is making at Nashville, by letters written into my District to bring out opposition to me. The first effort was made upon Maury, and I have no doubt you are right in supposing that the object of Bradford's visit to Nashville was to consult, and to receive instructions. Since his return home there are rumours here, that consultations are going on in Bedford, and that he will probably be a candidate. Letters from Nashville to this County, *I learn confidentially*, have promised, if opposition can be brought out, that a magazine can be furnished from Nashville to blow me up. They doubtless allude to the correspondence with [Cave] Johnson. Upon that and all other points I am fully prepared. I have been busy, and if opposition comes I do not fear it; still I desire to avoid the labors of a contest, and wish therefore to avoid any thing which might excite and produce it. In any thing you may say, of my speech, and the doctrines it advances, which I know to be in accordance with those of our friends whose object is to preserve the party, urge the necessity of union, & be careful to say nothing of the convention (for that is an abstract question, the discussion of which now can be of no practical use), and say nothing of any particular candidate for the Presidency. Those who would fan the present excitement, have their objects to answer in the coming elections, after which, the sagacious men among them, must see it must cease to exist. It is doubtless a prominent object with Mr. B. to have me beaten for Congress. I will disappoint him if I can. It occurs to me that you might in a

short pointed article expose the fact, that the Tennessee press now quotes almost exclusively from the bitter opposition papers in other states, and that they are in fact taking a course in opposition to the present administration. The last Observer for example claimed it as a triumph, that the opposition (the Whigs) had succeeded in the election in 4 out of 7 counties in Virginia. Might you not make a strong appeal to the old friends of the President, and those who approve his measures to stand by him and sustain him, in the last two years of his term. In the closing part of my speech I have allusion to it. I might have added that it might well be doubted, whether at the close of the last session, the President was not in a practical minority in the House as well as the Senate; as for example upon the question of the printer's elections. We have been for years feeding from the Treasury Gales & Seaton² & Duff Green to abuse the President, & all his friends and all his measures, and yet with a professed majority of 40 as they left the hands of the people we could not elect the only administration organ at Washington to do the printing of the House. By whose votes were we defeated? Who were opposed to the viva voce vote? The Journals will show. By whose votes too did we fail to pass the deposits³ Bill? It occurs to me that you might nail the Jackson flag to the mast, and in a series of numbers expose the efforts now making to destroy him. Upon this point I know in this quarter, you can produce much effect. Expose too their hypocrisy when they pretend to praise him, and before all is over the people will believe they are in open opposition. Carrolls speech here had a good effect. They can't beat him. *Bob Foster*⁴ tells me *Cannon* is to be here this week to make a speech. I shall be obliged to you to keep me advised confidentially of what is going on.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I send you a Congressional Directory, with a mark in the margin thus X opposite to the name of each Jackson member. Will you send your paper which may contain my speech to each of those, opposite to whose names the mark X is prefixed. Send to them also any other number of your paper relating to our home politics, which you may suppose they would desire to see. Keep an account of it & I will settle with you.

J.K.P.

My box has not yet come.⁵ Will you inquire for it & have it forwarded.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private and Confidential." This letter has been published in Joseph H. Parks, editor, "Letters from James K. Polk to Samuel H. Laughlin, 1835-1844," The East Tennessee Historical Society's *Publications*, No. 18 (1946), 148-149. Hereinafter cited as "Polk-Laughlin Letters."

1. The *Columbia Observer*, edited by Felix K. Zollicoffer.

2. Joseph Gales and William Seaton, editors of the Washington *National Intelligencer*.

3. The edition mentioned above interpreted this word as "defense." In the last days of the final session of the Twenty-third Congress Polk had worked relentlessly but unsuccessfully to pass a bill that would permit depositing federal funds in certain state banks. This bill was defeated, many former Jackson supporters voting against it.

4. Probably Robert C. Foster Jr., a Williamson County lawyer and a brother of Ephraim H. Foster.

5. See Laughlin to Polk, April 17, 1835.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia April 29th 1835

It was only yesterday I wrote you to Washington. To day I learn that you are in Davidson. We are in the midst of great political excitement here and I am in daily expectation of an opponent for Congress. Efforts have been made by the political junta at Nashville to bring out opposition here, but without success. I learn within the last day or two that movements are making in Bedford with the same object, and that *Bradford* is probably to be the man. He had just returned from Nashville whither he had doubtless gone to consult, and receive¹ orders. Bell intends to use him, not with a hope of beating me, to effect his own objects. If war is made on me, I shall look to the principals and to none of their deputies. I do not fear the result if opposition is made. I have made a speech upon the Presidential question, and have taken the ground boldly which I have occupied from the beginning. It will be published, and I will send you a copy. I am informed *confidentially* by a friend, that if opposed, I am to be violently assailed.

About two years ago I obtained through you extracts from the letters of Jno. P. Erwin, John Williams, T. Yeatman, T. H. Fletcher & T. Washington, recommending Mr Bradford in November 1827 for the office of Marshall of West Tennessee, and giving his politics as they understood them. In the course of the canvass at that time, it became necessary for me to use those extracts, though your name was not mentioned. I am now informed that this is to be one principal point of attack, and that I am to be called upon for my proof, and the manner in which I obtained the information. Unless I had copies, or an authority from you, to state that you had seen the letters on file in the Department of State, and knew the extracts to be truly copied I will be awkwardly situated. It was for the purpose of asking this liberty, only in the event it becomes absolutely necessary in the vindication of truth, that I wrote you to Washington. I have written to the President to day² and requested him to order copies to be forwarded to me, and have no doubt he will do it, but I fear they may not reach me as soon as I may need them. Bell was intimate at the Department of State, and I have but little doubt has informed Bradford of the manner in which I obtained the information. Unless I am authorized to give up your name as the person from whom I obtained the information, an attempt may be made to fix a falsehood unjustly on me. If *absolutely necessary*, am I authorized to say I obtained them through you? They are public documents, in a public office, and I can see no impropriety in it.

I do not fear any contest I may have, though if one come it will doubtless be a bitter one. I see the Globe thunders now. If it had done so in time, we would have been saved our present troubles. I should be much pleased to see you. Will you be here before your return? Will the President be in Tennessee this summer? Who will be nominated for Vice President? Give me any news you may have of the movements elsewhere.

JAMES K. POLK

No address is available. Marked "Private," this letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Often Polk slurred across words, especially those containing *ei* and *ie* combinations. For the sake of clarity the editors have made such corrections silently.

2. This letter has not been found. A letter from Polk to Jackson on April 29, 1835, which has been found does not mention this matter. It is clear from Jackson's letter to Polk of May 12, 1835, however, that he received the letter Polk refers to here.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir,

Columbia Tenn. April 29 1835

In regard to the Vice Presidency on the democratic ticket, I take the liberty of making a suggestion. Though not unfriendly to Col. [Richard M.] Johnson, I am sure I cannot be mistaken, that in this State, Alabama, and the Southwest generally, he would bring with him no strength, but on the contrary in this State would be a dead weight. This grows out of his domestic relations, which would be much used against him, and the opinion generally entertained of his talents and capacity. Carroll in this State is the most popular man except yourself and if selected as our candidate would unquestionably carry the State. In Alabama, and in all the West he is popular. Col. May¹ of Illinois told me last winter that next to yourself, he was the strongest man in the Union, in that State. I do not doubt the fact. At all events his nomination would improve our situation here. Carroll has made a speech at this place as a candidate for Governor. He takes the ground I do, and avows himself to be in favour of the strongest man of our party, whomsoever he may be, and against any division whereby we may be weakened and defeated.² He is a native Pennsylvanian and would have strength in that quarter. I pray you to think of it, and consult our friends on the subject.

J.K.P.

No address is available. This is a typescript, marked "Private and Confidential," in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. The original has not been located. The contents of the letter clearly indicate that it was written to Jackson.

1. William L. May, a native of Kentucky, served, 1834-39, as a member of the House of Representatives from Illinois. Later he moved to California.

2. John Catron had suggested Carroll as a vice-presidential candidate, and it is possible that this letter was written at Catron's suggestion.

TO ANDREW BEAUMONT

My Dear Sir

Columbia Tenn. May 1st 1835

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 18th ult. with its inclosure, and am much pleased to learn that the Democracy of the Key Stone State are firmly fixed in their purpose to preserve the union of our great party, as the only hope of perpetuating the political doctrines and principles we profess. I am still more gratified to find that you receive the reward which all public men should most prize, the approbation of your constituents.

You ask how the political currents are setting in Tennessee. I do not doubt but that the people of the State, from old feeling, state pride, and a personal knowledge of the man, would have preferred Judge White, if taken up & run by our Democratic friends in other states as their candidate. The politicians have made great efforts to produce excitement, and to overwhelm by it, myself and all others who have been daring enough to throw themselves into the breach, and maintain the necessity of continued union in our ranks.

I do not think the *real people* here have yet spoken. We have however about the towns and villages greater excitement than I have ever before witnessed. The newspaper press in the State until recently, has been almost exclusively on our side, and relying upon the power of that immoral engine over public opinion every effort has been and will be made, by Mr Bell and a designing few at Nashville, who were never heartily with us and who have their own selfish local aims to accomplish, to prostrate and put down every man who will not join with them in the shout they have raised. Greater efforts have perhaps been made upon my District and more excitement produced in it, than upon any other. In this state of things a great effort was made a few days ago, to intimidate and drive me from my ground. A call was made upon me through the press, and I was required to come out "*unequivocally for White against the field,*" with a distinct annunciation that such men only were to be regarded as "good men & true." I responded to the call in a speech a copy of which I send you. It was well received except by an intemperate few. I maintained my ground, as you will see,

firmly but temperately & prudently. If I am pressed further I will make further developments of what all saw and knew at Washington last winter.

As yet I have no opposition for Congress, and do not fear the result, if I should have. Mr. Bell has been writing letters to my District to have opposition started to me. If they succeed in this they calculate that the White excitement which they think they have gotten up temporarily (for temporarily it must be) will sweep all before it. They are mistaken. We have a great battle to fight & will fight it like men. Though when we reached home the excitement was great about the towns, yet it is already abating, and many honest people, at first carried away with the idea of having a second Tennessee President, without reflecting on the consequences of division in our ranks, are now pausing, and many resolving to go for the strongest man. A great effort has been made by the press, to impress the public mind with the belief that there would be but two candidates, Van Buren & White, and that we had to choose between two of our own men. That delusion is rapidly passing away. Mr. Bell and his organ at Nashville are busy in denouncing a convention as a *packed caucus of office holders*, and in abusing Van Buren.

Our friends at a distance could not perform a more acceptable service to us than by sending us occasionally, papers containing well written articles shewing the real designs of the opposition to divide and conquer us. Our people are emphatically Democratic, and the great body of them, as every where [. . .] are honest, and I can never believe, will consent when properly informed, to separate them[selves] from the great body of the party, and permit the government by our unwise divisions to go into the hands of our enemies. So far as I can contribute to it they shall be informed.

Our friend *Johnson* has as yet no opposition & cannot be beaten if he should have. We will probably have true men from the Districts lately represented by *Dickinson, Inge & Crockett*. From the other districts my information does not enable me to speak with certainty. You will perform an acceptable service by causing as many of your Democratic papers as you can to forward exchange papers with *The Union* at Nashville. The paper of my own town, in which the speech I send you is printed is

against me. We will probably have another here shortly. I shall be happy my Dear Sir, to hear from you often. Let me know whether the excitement between Wolf & Muhlenburgh is likely to weaken us or do any harm in your State. You will regard this letter as confidential & as in no way for the public.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and marked "Private and Confidential." This letter is in private hands. A copy is in the folder of Andrew Beaumont in Miscellaneous Manuscripts in Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir

Clarksville May 1st. [1835]¹

I recd yours of the 28th today. I recd your other letters in proper time by the mail with their inclosures and have been ever since absent until yesterday. I looked over them; I approve entirely of your course & shall in a few days look over all the papers I have & compare & digest etc & will then again write you. I have not yet prepared my answer but shall finish it during the next week & shall inclose you a copy unless you can meet me in Nashville the 15th of May. I go tomorrow to Dover.² I think I shall be without opposition—it is said efforts are making in Nashville to produce it. I do not believe it can be done. The Nashville people wish the Genl. in the Legislature & his brother-in-law (Turner)³ has been feeling the public pulse but I am informed today he will not run & he has today started down to New Madrid bend⁴ but if I had opposition I have nothing to fear except the trouble. Among *Jackson men* my course is entirely approved; Scarcely an exception. The opposition & Bank men talked much & loud to form public opinion. I sent 300 of Burton's⁵ letter home. That has given tone to public opinion in the Country & saved me much trouble. In addition to that I am circulating the Union & the prospectus of the *Extra Globe* & will have many subscribers, to counteract the influence of our Newspapers. I think the Whig & Republican will discontinue very

generally at the close of the present year & the Union substituted. My Editor acts badly.⁶ He is & has ever been personally my friend & for me ag[ains]t the world & professedly a Jackson man, disapproving however of almost every thing done by the administration & damning all our prominent men & is at heart for Webster—belongs to a very extensive & influential connexion who have always sustained me. I have therefore to be cautious & my efforts have been directed principally to secure him for my friend in the Legislature or rather to keep him out of the hands of the Junta at Nashville. If he should have vigorous opposition, I think before the election we shall have him nearly right. By my carelessness I have become embarrassed & can do but little that requires the use of money. Humphreys⁷ is agt. our notions & goes for me from personal considerations & will keep down opposition if it can be done. Blount⁸ is with us but is confined & probably will be unable to go out hereafter. Very much leading men are for Van Buren under all circumstances but I think public opinion is generally favorable to *White first* but agt. a division of the party & for running the strongest man. I shall circulate your speech verry extensively. I was glad to hear Gordons⁹ course. I was doubtful of it. [William] Overton will probably represent this county. My brother will beat Frey¹⁰ easily for the Senate. Powell¹¹ (for us) will represent Robertson unless Cheatham runs agt. him & great efforts are making to bring him out. George Smith¹² (for us & without opposition) will represent Dickson. Gray¹³ (doubtful but professedly for me) will probably represent Dickson, Humphreys & Stewart. Whitson¹⁴ will I think represent Hickman (my warm friend) & Gordon in the Senate. Pravatt¹⁵ (for us) will represent Humphreys & I shall have a friend from Stewart as all the candidates are my friends. T Ward¹⁶ personally & politically—Kay¹⁷ personally but opposed in politics. I should guess the latter would succeed tho I have not yet been in Stewart. My district will be decidedly favorable in the next Legislature. I am decidedly stronger than at any former period & it is admitted by friends & foes that opposition would be in vain. I am taking much pains in forming public opinion but act gently. The press here has not the slightest influence. I would as soon have it agt. me as for me except its influence at a distance.

I am in better health than I have been for years—have no symptoms of rheumatism.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. Johnson omitted the year. It has been supplied on the basis of the content of the letter.

2. This small town on the Cumberland River was the county seat of Stewart County.

3. General Richard Cheatham, a merchant and farmer of Robertson County, had been mentioned as a possible opponent of Johnson. William K. Turner, Cheatham's brother-in-law, was a Clarksville lawyer. He announced his candidacy soon after this letter was written, but Johnson beat him easily.

4. A bend in the Mississippi River on which New Madrid, Missouri, is located. A double bend marks the western end of the Tennessee-Kentucky line, and it was here that the earthquake of 1811 centered.

5. Robert M. Burton.

6. The newspaper editor was William Overton, who is mentioned below. He was a lawyer and was editor of the Clarksville *Chronicle*. He was elected to the lower house of the legislature in 1835 and served one term.

7. Parry W. Humphreys had served one term, 1813-15, in the United States House of Representatives and had lost to John H. Eaton in a close contest for the Senate. In 1836 he moved to Mississippi, where he died three years later.

8. Willie Blount, former governor, was a member of the 1834 constitutional convention. He was in bad health and died in September 1835 at the home of Willie B. Johnson, a brother of Cave Johnson.

9. Boling Gordon, a brother of Powhatan Gordon of Maury County, lived in Hickman County near the Maury-Hickman line. He was a member of the General Assembly, 1829-37 and 1843-45, and twice ran unsuccessfully for Congress.

10. Henry Frey of Robertson County, where he had been sheriff, was in the state senate 1823-25. Willie B. Johnson, a Clarksville lawyer, defeated him in 1835 as Cave Johnson predicted he would, but Frey was again elected in 1837 and served three consecutive terms.

11. Richard P. Powell, former sheriff of Robertson County, was in the General Assembly for one term, 1833-35.

12. George Smith was sheriff of Dickson County, 1825-35, and served one term in the General Assembly, 1835-37. Later he moved to Hickman County.

13. James Gray was completing his third term in the legislature. Defeated in 1835, he returned for a single term, 1837-39. He was a well-to-do farmer of Stewart County and was also for many years a Baptist minister.

14. Samuel Whitson was a Baptist minister and justice of the peace who

lived near Centerville. Later he served for a short time as circuit court clerk. In spite of Johnson's optimism he was not elected.

15. Stephen C. Pavatt was a lawyer in Waverly at this time. Tradition has it that Pavatt suggested the naming of the town for the series of novels by Sir Walter Scott. He was the incumbent in the lower house and was re-elected.

16. There were two men named Thomas Ward who lived in Humphreys County at this time. The one intended here has not been identified, and no person named Ward was elected to the legislature at this time.

17. William Kay, a leading merchant at Dover, was postmaster there, 1827-37.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

My Dear Sir,

Washington May 3d 1835

I have been awaiting with some anxiety for your promised letter. I have become fearful that ill health or some other cause has prevented you from writing as you promised, for I am sure the little noise, and various meetings got up by the instrumentality of Mr Bell and Co. cannot have alarmed *you*.

I have been a constant observer of human nature since my youth and in the political world there is not an exception, whenever a political man has abandoned the principles he avowed, and which acquired him the confidence of the people, where the people did not abandon them—witness Mr. Clay, Calhoun & the unfortunate Burr. Just so in the present case Mr. Bell, Davy Crockett & Co. had placed judge White in the odious attitude of abandoning principle & party for office, and with the association of the nullifiers in Congress put his name up to carry the state of Virginia by the force of judge Whites name and popularity! How they have failed, and in what position have the[y] placed themselves and the judge! In the ranks of the opposition! The eyes of the people soon were opened to this wicked plan, to divide and conquer the Democracy of the union, prostrate the present administration by making it odious, by crying out corruption and misrule, and being supported by office holders and corruption, thereby to bring into power the opposition, recharter the United States Bank, destroy the republican government & substitute in its stead, a consolidated government under the control and management of a corrupt monied monopoly, which

would destroy our republican institutions and place us under the despotic & corrupt rule of the U. States Bank. Mr Bell & Co. have not succeeded. Virginia is erect again. Fifteen members, who support a national convention, have been elected to congress, a majority in the House of delegates, Virginia, of from 25 to 30 & twelve majority in the Senate.¹ Leigh & Tyler will be instructed to vote for Col Bentons expunging resolution. I say *expunge*, for there is no other word that can meet the case, judge Whites amendment to strike it out, to the contrary notwithstanding.²

I now ask you to look at the position Messers Bell & Co, *now* stand in—identified with the blue light federalists and modern *wiggs*, in the north, and the nullifiers, in the south. Does not common sense tell every one that they must become as odious to the virtuous yeomanry of Tennessee as those men do. Can any one believe that the republicans of Tennessee will abandon their principles, and party, to support any man, or set of men, who have abandoned their republican principles for office sake. I tell you, *I know the Tennesseans better*, and have too high an opinion of their virtue & honesty, to believe it. *It is a slander upon them*. The only lasting popularity, is based upon this rule—take truth, & principle for the guide & public good the end constantly in view, and the people will sustain the man that practises fearlessly upon it. Political demagogues, hypocrites, and apostates, may delude the people for a short time, but the moment the deception, and abandonment of principle, is discovered, the people will hurl them from their confidence, and the *recoil is overwhelming*. Just so with Mr. Bell, Davy Crockett and Co. The moment the people of Virginia discovered the wicked movement, not one member of congress who raised the White Whigg flag, but Tolliver,³ was elected, and he beat Chinn⁴ 50 votes on Chinn's vote against the 3,000,000 for preparation for contingent defense.⁵ That you may have a bird eye view of Virginia, I send you the Richmond Enquirer. Judge White cannot get one vote except in So. Carolina & Tennessee and surely Tennessee will never put herself in the false position of joining the piedbald opposition of *Whiggs* nullifiers, blue light Federalist, and Hartford convention men. It cannot be—heaven and every principle of virtue and republicanism forbid it! How

much better it would have been for our old friend judge White to have taken the advice of his real friends—to *have stuck to his party, and old republican principles* [. . .] thrown himself on a convention fresh from the people, (not upon the repudiated caucus of a few members of Congress with Davy Crockett in the midst) where his true merits would have been considered, and where, I have but little doubt, he would have been taken up at least, for vice president. But as he is, he has abandoned the republican fold, and is forever lost in their estimation. He has been placed by Mr. Bell & Co, as the candidate of the opposition under the odious imputation of abandoning his old republican principles & *party*, for office, and whether he has or not the world has taken up that opinion, and he never can regain the confidence of that party again. The opposition never intended that he should be elected, they meant to use him to divide, that they might conquer for Mr Clay who, you may rely, is to be their candidate at last. There is one use that the nullifiers, I mean Calhoun & Co, mean to make of judge Whites names if they can. That is to build up a Southern confederacy, and divide the union, but I hope judge Whites eyes may be opened and he will *now* see that he is in a false position and abandon Bell, Davy Crockett & Co, and withdraw himself from the odious attitude these intriguing apostates have placed him.

You and Grundy, (by the true Republicans in Congress) are looked to, to take a firm and open stand in favour of the republican principles, *a national convention by the people*, and in toto against nullification & disunion and against *little* cacuses, of a few apostate members of Congress, & preserve Tennessee from the disgrace of uniting with the piebald opposition to put down my *administration and my fame* with it, and give the reigns of government into the hands of those who have secretly conspired to recharter the Bank. Look at its extended loans to upwards of 14,000,000—extending its loans on stock for three years, two after the expiration of its charter when all its banking power cease on the 3rd of March next, and say whether these are not signs of its intension to make another panic, and regain a charter of *the Bank*—or as Mr. Bell says, *a Bank*. We fight for principle, and it is expected all will take an open and vigorous stand to perpetuate our glorious & happy republican system. Do your

duty, (as you have here) *at home*, and you will stand high with the republicans every where. Connecticut and Rhode Island has faithfully done their duty. Rhode Island gives us a Senator, & Connecticut a full representation in congress, and can it be that Tennessee will abandon her republican principles and be ranked with apostates, nullifiers, & bluelight Federalist. Tristram Burges says she will. *Forbid it virtue, forbid it heaven*. Tennessee has sustained me thus far, and I trust she never will abandon her principles for any man. I write in great haste, and for your own eye, not for the papers. Present me & my household affectionately to your Lady & accept the same for yourself. . . .

ANDREW JACKSON

P.S. My health has been quite delicate, is better.

P.S. Say to Col. Walker I have recd. his letter but ill health has prevented a reply.

Addressed to Columbia. At the top of the letter Jackson wrote: "Private for your own eye—it is wrote in haste."

1. The Virginia election was less decisive than Jackson's statement indicates. The margin in neither house of the legislature was so large as he estimated, and most of the races were quite close.

2. White had said that he would not oppose repealing or rescinding the censure of Jackson but that he opposed expunging because that would involve mutilation of the Senate records.

3. John Taliaferro, a Fredericksburg lawyer, had served in the House of Representatives three times, at widely separated dates, 1801–03, 1811–13, and 1823–31. He was elected as a Whig in 1835 and served until 1843.

4. Joseph W. Chinn, a lawyer from Lancaster County, had represented Virginia in the House of Representatives for two terms, 1831–35. After his defeat he moved to Richmond, where he practiced law until his death in 1840.

5. This bill provided appropriation of money for fortifications, ordnance, and other military supplies that might be necessary for defense of the country prior to the next meeting of Congress. Some complained that the amount asked was too large, and since the money could be expended under direction of the president, others argued that the bill would confer upon Jackson unlimited military power.

FROM SAMUEL A. GILLESPIE¹

Dear Sir

Canton Madison County, Mi. 4th May 1835

Will you be so kind as to inform me whether or not there is any prospect as you know of the Texas Countrys be soon ceded

to the United States. While at Natchez a few weeks since was induced to believe that there might be some truth in the rumor, as Mr. Marshall Doct Gwinn Doct Duncan² and two other Gentlemen I understood had sent off an Agent with seventy five thousand dollars to procure lands in Texas to the best advantage. They must have had some assurances of a treaty for that Country by our Government or would not have been willing to vest so largely in the speculation. Scrip in the Robertson or Leftwich Grant³ is worth in N O & Natchez \$1000 each. I have an interest in a Eleven league claim located by William Harden⁴ a resident of Texas, containing forty eight thousand acres, my interest being $\frac{1}{4}$ of the whole. I could sell the claim now for a handsome profit but do not wish to dispose of it if there is any prospects of the Country soon being ceded to the U. S. Those lands are located 1 league around the Galveston Bay the other ten upon the River Trinity containing one league each of 4444 Acres. Harden writes that the locations are very fine.

I will take it as a great favour of you in case you have any [information] on the subject that you would inform me of the same. I have a small sprinkle of cash that I would like to vest profitably but as it is a scarce article with me would prefer to vest it in something certain. Should you be able to give me any information on the subject it will be confidentially & thankfully recd. by me, and in case there is any chance of speculation on early information I will give you a handsome interest in any thing that I may profit by intelligence that I might receive from you. I would presume if there is any negotiation going on between the two Governments that no man would have a better opportunity of knowing it than your self.

Write me to Canton M[adison] County by return of mail in so doing will greatly oblige.

SAML. A. GILLESPIE

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Gillespie was a former resident of Columbia, where he was a merchant. Since he did not move to Mississippi until 1833 he was well known to Polk.

2. Levin R. Marshall, William M. Gwin, and Stephen Duncan were wealthy residents of Natchez. Duncan was a planter with large landholdings. Marshall was a businessman and a banker. Gwin was active in politics.

3. A colonization project called the Texas Association was begun in

Nashville in 1822. In 1825 Robert Leftwich acted as agent for the group and contracted to settle eight hundred families on a grant in Texas. The Leftwich grant was second in size only to that obtained by Stephen F. Austin which adjoined it. Colonization plans languished, and there were sharp disagreements between Austin and Sterling C. Robertson, then the agent of the Nashville company. The latter established the validity of his claim, and thereafter the grant was named for him.

4. William Hardin was a former resident of Columbia. In 1825 his father and his four sons, including William, were involved in an affray in Columbia during which two young men were killed. The four brothers set out immediately for Texas and were never returned for trial. The father, Swan Hardin, was convicted for complicity and served a three-month prison term before joining his sons in Texas. William Hardin was a man of considerable ability and did well in his adopted state. See James N. Smith to Polk, February 13, 1828, and Polk to Henry Clay, April 1, 1828.

FROM EPHRAIM D. DICKSON¹

Mills Point, Kentucky.² May 7, 1835

Dickson states that many of David Crockett's constituents are dissatisfied with the stand he has taken regarding lands in West Tennessee. He wants to know whether Polk had in Congress forced Crockett, contrary to previous statements, to accept the conclusion that these lands were among the most fertile in the United States. He also notes that many voters in the district do not understand that by supporting Crockett they are voting against Jackson's administration.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. An early settler in Weakley County, Dickson had been a member of the first county court held there. At this time he was postmaster at Dresden, the county seat.

2. A town on the Mississippi River some eighteen miles south of Columbus, Kentucky, at or near the present site of Hickman, Kentucky.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia, Tennessee, May 7, 1835

I am uneasy for fear my former communications to you may have miscarried, as I have received nothing from you, acknowledging the receipt of them. Write me whether they came safely to hand. If they did not, I retained copies.

I see from the Banner of yesterday, that an allusion is made to the meeting at Washington and the correspondence, and a [banter?] given to publish.¹ Let *them* publish, if any publication be made. Let *theirs* be the *responsibility*. It is very important that they should make the publication if any be made. We would then appear before the public to be on the defensive, as we really are. Have you prepared your answer?

I have just returned from Bedford; have no opposition yet, and think now I will not have, though it is not absolutely certain. What do you think of my speech, and what is said of it?

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Clarksville. Marked "Private and Confidential," this letter is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 224.

1. This is a reference to the meeting of the Tennessee congressional delegation held in Balie Peyton's room on December 23, 1834. Knowing that the meeting was being called for the purpose of promoting the candidacy of Hugh L. White for the presidency, Polk and Grundy did not attend. Cave Johnson attended but refused to go along with the plans of the remainder of the delegation.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Nashville, May 11th 1835

In answer to yours just receivd. The judicious course is a plain one—say nothing. That is the unanimous opinion of our friends so far as I have heard them speak here. Johnson will be here tomorrow I expect. After I see him, you shall hear from me again. We have twelve members of Congress certain in Virginia, two more probable—and a majority in both branches of the Genl Assembly. Your speech is just what it should have been, so say all your friends. Your enemies say nothing about it. I have not been able to do any thing as yet about the Shelbyville matter. I am still trying. On your account & Johnson's, stillness is adviseable. You will see by the Union of today that a smart feeling is getting up against Bell.

FELIX GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

TO LEWIS CASS

Dear Sir

Columbia May 12th 1835

Yours of the 23rd ult. reached here during my absence from home, or it should have been immediately answered. My young friend [Joseph B.] *Boyd* is exceedingly anxious to go to the Point, is fully prepared and ready to start, and is only waiting your reply to my letter, in the confident expectation that he will be appointed. From what I learned from you, before I left Washington, I wrote him that if [James L.] *Guest* resigned he would be appointed. Since my return *Guest* has resigned, and since that time he and his family (who are highly respectable) have taken it for granted that he would be appointed and have made preparation for his departure accordingly. I do not recognize [John D.] *Goneke* as hailing from my District. His father formerly resided for a short time here, but before his appointment had removed, and now resides without the State. He was appointed in the following manner. He had been for some time at the *Point* or some other point North taking private instruction. He called on me at Washington the winter before the last, with letters to the President or yourself or perhaps both. I told him there were several applicants from my district, and that I could not take him up & recommend him as coming from my District. At his request however I introduced him to the President & yourself. He gave his letters to the President, and the President made some endorsement on one of them in his behalf, which he took & delivered to you. About the same time *Guest* was appointed from my District. *Guest* having now resigned there is no *Cadet* at the Point from my District, and has not been since *Thomas*¹ graduated some two or three years ago. He considers that I am pledged to him, that he would be appointed & that through me he has the promise of the Department that he should be appointed & his family have shaped his course of study & preparation accordingly. I would not under other circumstances press his appointment, but I know *he & his friends*, will probably be dissatisfied with me if he be not appointed. You will confer therefore a singular favour by appointing him, not only upon him, but upon me. I hope you can do so. I will see him in a few days, and [in] your letter you say, if there is now

none at the Point from this District, you will certainly appoint one; I think it very probable he will go immediately on to Washington in anticipation of the appointment, so as to be at the Point at the proper time.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Cadet Application Papers, United States Military Academy (RG 94), National Archives.

1. John A. Thomas, a son of Dr. Isaac J. Thomas of Columbia, was graduated from West Point in 1833.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

Dr Col.

Washington May 12th 1835

I have recd. your letter with the enclosure to Major Donelson who is now in Tennessee.

You cannot get official copies of the letters of recommendation you have alluded to¹ but as you say, you have extracts, you being a member of Congress, who has the right to see and peruse any letters of recommendation, you have a right to use the extra[c]ts, as you can state positively, as you have them, their contents and charge Mr. [Theodorick F.] Bradford² to dare to deny them, that they are on file in the Dept., that you have seen them &c. It will answer all the purpose you desire to shew, that he belonged to the opposition at that time and again he has come out in his true Whigg character, still what he then was, and wield them to good account, and with truth shew that Bell Davy Crockett & Co. are his true coadjutors now, and has placed judge White in the true attitude in which Mr [John Quincy] Adams then was. Your extracts will shew, that Messrs. Fletcher, Col John Williams, Genl Gibbs, Hannum³ Tanehill,⁴ Yateman, John P. Erwin & all⁵ recommended him for his political attachment to the then administration and wished Purdy⁶ to be left out because he was unfit both as to capacity, and politick. You can vouch for these letters being on file in the State Department. Bradford dare not deny this.

How is it that there is no man in the Republican ranks to take the stump, and relieve Tennessee from her degraded atti-

tude of abandoning principle to sustain men who have apostatised from the republican fold for sake of office? How degraded Tennessee must [stand] in the eyes of her republican sister states. Tennessee, the once republican state repudiating the republican mode of a national convention fresh from the people, that she stood foremost [for] in 1832, and now in 1835, brands with being a plan of corrupt office seekers, and for what—to support men who have abandoned the principles advocated by the people & upon which Mr Bell & judge White obtained their popularity and the confidence of the people. Once let the eyes of the people be opened to the truly degrading attitude that these men have placed the State in, and my life upon it, that the people hurl them from their confidence. What! Tennessee, the once Democratic Tennessee apostate from the republican fold, and the only State in the Union unrepresented at the national republican convention at Baltimore by members fresh from the people and left as the only associate of the nullies in So. Carolina headed by that arch apostate Calhoun, and sepeparated from all her republican brethern.⁷ How strange! how humiliating to every real friend to the democracy of our beloved country. If my hands were free, if I was a mere citizen of Tennessee again and wanted everlasting fame, I would ask no other theatre to obtain it than before the people of Tennessee. I would bring to their view what Tennessee once was, her present degraded attitude, and then enquire the cause, by whom she was placed in this dilemma and then apply the remedy, and Tennessee in six weeks would be as Virginia now is, erect upon her republican legs again, and Mr Bell Davy Crockett & Co, hurled as they ought, from the confidence of the people. But I am afraid that there are too many paralised lookers to the Legislature of the State for office. But these could be aroused by arousing the people, and inducing the people to put proper interrogatories to them, which for the safety of principle ought to be done, and I hope will be done by some bold fearless republican. It is no time for temporising. It is destruction to any man or any cause in the end.

The Baltimore convention will be filled by high talents and more than ever attended any previous convention, and how degraded, & humiliated must Tennessee appear, and how emerge

from her false position in which she has been placed by those apostates, Bell, Crockett & Co.

The freemen of Tennessee I trust will snatch republican Tennessee from the disgrace brought on her by these apostates and hurl them from her confidence forever. This is inadequate to the disgrace brought upon her.

You will see this is wrote in haste, by beginning on a single leaf and for your eye—the *sentiments for every body*. With my respects to your lady & all your connection. . . .

[ANDREW JACKSON]

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private." The letter is in Jackson's handwriting but it is not signed. On an accompanying card is a note in the spidery handwriting of George Bancroft dated June 7, 1887. Bancroft noted that he had found sheets of the letter in two different parcels of papers. He put the sheets together and filed the letter in its proper place. This letter has been published in John Spencer Bassett, editor, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson* (7 vols.; Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1926-1935), V, 345-346.

1. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, April 28, 1835.
2. In the edition mentioned above this man was erroneously identified as General J. B. Bradford.
3. Washington L. Hannum was a lawyer and businessman of Nashville. His name had not been mentioned in earlier correspondence concerning Bradford's recommendations.
4. Wilkins Tannehill was an author and newspaperman who had been mayor of Nashville in 1825-26. At this time he was publishing a newspaper in Louisville. He returned to Nashville in 1841.
5. Bassett transcribed this "John P. Enwindall."
6. Robert Purdy was successful in his contest with Bradford and remained as marshal of West Tennessee until death in 1831.
7. Tennessee and South Carolina were the only states sending no delegates to the Democratic convention in Baltimore. In the case of Tennessee, which strongly favored Hugh L. White, there was little sentiment for participating in the convention, where the Van Buren forces were expected to be in full control.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia Tenn. May 15th 1835

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your kind favour of the 3rd Inst. I delayed writing to you longer than I had intended, but ere this, you will have received my letter writ-

ten about a fortnight ago. No earthly consideration can induce me to abandon the great political principles which have heretofore governed my public course, or to separate myself from those political friends with whom I agree in opinion and with whom I have so long acted.¹ Every day makes new developments of the game that is playing to divide and conquer us. I will lend no countenance to so wicked a design. My views are expressed in the speech a copy of which I sent you.² I hope they may meet the approbation of yourself and my other political friends at a distance. My associations, as I know yours were, have been for many years, of the most intimate kind with Judge W. and if his claims had been or were submitted to his own party and they had taken him up, there are but few if any that I would have preferred to him. I so expressed myself. If he be not, "Measures not man," shall be, as it has been my motto, and I will give my support to the strong man of the party.

Since my speech was made great efforts continue to be made to bring out opposition in my District. Political letters with that object, are constantly written from Nashville to my district. I understand further that *Senator Moore* of Al[abama] who has disgraced his seat in that body, has written a letter to a relation in my District, to have me opposed and beaten. So far they have not succeeded in bringing out opposition, and if they do, I do not fear it. I am and shall continue to be active in my District. The excitement I think, especially about the towns has increased and is increasing. Among other movements here, is an invitation gotten up to Judge W. to dine. If he comes I will maintain my position firmly. The press here is almost in open opposition to your administration; so much so that I can have no intercourse with its present conductors. My friends and the friends of your administration and the continued union of the party, are resolved to have another here shortly.

Virginia has done nobly, and must I think go far to extinguish the hopes of those who would throw themselves into the army of the enemies of your administration, for the purpose of dividing & destroying the great party who have heretofore supported you. There must be a reaction here. When the people see that the Nashville press has gone into open opposition, they will not bear it. The article in the *Banner* of yesterday³ in relation to

the appointment of Mr Kendall for example has seldom been exceeded by the most violent opposition prints. They should, as I trust they will, be so treated, by the true friends of the administration any where. Johnson has no opposition yet. I think it probable we will have true men from Inge and Crockett's Districts. Genl. Brady will without doubt be elected.

I was on the eve of starting to Bedford⁴ when your letter reached me and write in haste. I still think the information, which I requested Majr. Donelson to forward to me, may be important.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private and Confidential." This letter has been published in Bassett, editor, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, V, 346-47.

1. In his version of this letter Bassett omitted everything above this point.

2. This speech, which Polk mentioned a number of times in his letters, was delivered at Columbia on April 26, 1835. He explained his position on the White movement, saying that while he personally preferred White, he would abide by the desires of the majority of his party, avoiding if possible any division in party ranks that might give aid to the opposition.

3. This article appeared in the issue of May 13, 1835. The writer charged that while Barry had not been dishonest, he was indolent and a poor businessman and had allowed the Post Office Department to be shot through with corruption; Kendall was able, but he was a mere party man in whom most of the people had no confidence. The article contained also a thinly veiled attack on Jackson, saying that he had been misled by his own passions and by false information, and had used Post Office Department patronage in such a way as to threaten the freedom of elections.

4. Bassett erroneously read this word Bradford.

TO LEWIS CASS

Dear Sir Bedford County, Tennessee May 16th 1835

I had the honour to write to you a few days ago in answer to your letter in relation to the appointment of my young friend Mr *Joseph B. Boyd* as a cadet at the Military Academy at West Point. In anticipation of the appointment, (of which he had no

doubt,) from the information given to him by me, after the resignation of [James L.] *Guest*, young *Boyd* had made preparation to set out for the Point. From your last letter, and the facts of the case I can still entertain no doubt of his appointment. He is very solicitous to obtain it, and in the expectation that he will obtain it, he will go on immediately, and will hand you this in person. As I wrote you, I do not regard Mr [John D.] *Goneke* as the Representative of my District at the Point. *Goneke* obtained his appointment in the following manner. He came to Washington, the winter before the last with letters to the President or yourself or perhaps to both. He called upon me, and at his request, I went with him and introduced him to the President, telling him at the same time that there were several applications from my District, and that I could not take him up so as to defeat an appointment from my District. He delivered or shewed his letters to the President, who as well as I remember made an endorsement on one of them, and he then delivered them to you. About the same time I recommended young *Guest* from my District, and you were kind enough to give him (*Guest*) a warrant to take effect in June next. I considered *Guest* as the only representative from my District. Young *Goneke's* father had lived a short time before *his* appointment, in my District, but had at that time removed from it, and does not now reside in the State. At the last session of Congress I informed you that young *Guest* would probably resign, and in that event I wished young *Boyd* appointed, and understood from you that there would be no difficulty, in appointing him, if *Guest* did resign, and I so wrote to young *Boyd* and his father. Since my return *Guest* has resigned, and it will be a great disappointment to young *Boyd* if he should not be appointed. I write to you from his fathers house. All his preparations have been made to leave home; himself and his family are very solicitous to obtain the appointment for him. and have calculated upon it. He is a very promising young man, of highly respectable family, and is well prepared to enter the institution. I tell him I think there can be little if any doubt of his obtaining the appointment, and as he fears that he could not obtain an answer from you in time to get on in time, he concludes to go on immediately. I hope nothing can occur to disappoint him. It will be

highly gratifying to me as I have heretofore said to you, for him to obtain it. He will wish to pay his respects to the President, and as he is the son of an old friend, who served with him in the Southern campaigns I have given him a letter of introduction to him.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington; apparently delivered by Boyd to Cass. This letter is in Cadet Application Papers, United States Military Academy (RG 94), National Archives.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir Bedford County Tennessee May 16th 1835

I take pleasure in making known to you, my young friend *Mr Boyd*, who will hand you this, and who will call to pay his respects to you. He is the son of your friend Col. Aaron Boyd of this County, who was in the service with you during the Creek War. Young Boyd is very solicitous to obtain a Cadet's warrant. The Cadet residing in my District (*Guest*) has lately resigned, and from what the Secretary of War told me before the adjournment of Congress, and from a letter since received from him, I hope there will be no difficulty in his obtaining the appointment. I have written to the Secretary of War fully on the subject.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Cadet Application Papers, United States Military Academy (RG 94), National Archives. It was delivered to the President by Boyd, and on the envelope in Jackson's handwriting appears the following: "Let Mr Boyd be appointed vice Guest who has resigned. A.J."

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir Columbia May 18th 1835

To prevent misrepresentation at home as well as at a distance, if you think it right I wish you would reprint the Editorial marked in the *Observer* I send you. I have an intimation

that [Micajah G.] Lewis wrote it, and the present Editor could not refuse to publish it. That part of Bell's speech was intended to affect me, and on that account, I wish the contradiction of the Editor here to appear in your paper. [Newton] Cannon & [Richard G.] Dunlap I understand made furious speeches here on Saturday. I was not at home. My friends think they were intended for effect in my District. Opposition is still threatened & I think will be brought out. I do not fear it. All is well so far in Bedford. I was in the County on Saturday.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Write me the news. Did you send my speech?

J.K.P.

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private and Confidential." On the envelope Laughlin wrote that he had received the letter on the 20th and had answered on the same day. This letter has been published in Parks, editor, "Polk-Laughlin Letters," The East Tennessee Historical Society's *Publications*, No. 18, 149.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Sir.

Bolivar May 19. 1835

I had intended addressing you Earlier, but have been prevented. Gov. Carrolls speech went down well with the people. He spoke firmly and unreservedly on the subject of the Presidential Election, and of his preference for Mr. Van Buren. With one accord the people said he was honest in all he said and ought to be permitted to vote as he saw fit. Even our Editor this morning Compliments him for his honesty.¹ My own opinion is he will beat all his competitors. Things may change before August, but I think it will all be in his (Carrolls) favour.

You will preceive from the Enclosed letter and paper that my opinions with regard to the course of P. G. Gaines was right.² Stronger Evidence could not be wanted. His paper is taken by about 1300 persons principally in the district. This Exceeds all the other subscriptions put together (of our Village papers) from which you may Expect Every kind of justice. Some acknowledgement of your knowledge of *his* friendship will be well recd. by Mr. Gaines.

The cholera is subsiding to the west of us. No fears are entertained here.

I write in much haste.

JNO. H. BILLS

P.S. The Virginia Election will relieve you of the pending "Storm."

B.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This seems to be a reference to James B. Walker, who was publisher of the *Bolivar Free Press* at this time.

2. Pendleton G. Gaines had settled in Lauderdale County in 1829. He was trained in law but became editor of the *Memphis Gazette*, a pro-Jackson paper, which he continued from 1834 until some time in 1838. In 1839 he was elected to the lower house of the General Assembly from Shelby County and served one term, 1839-41. The enclosures mentioned here have not been found.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville May 22nd 1835

I send you today the balance of my letter, do examine correct &c & send it back as early as convenient that I may give it a start & then make *a start myself*. Mr. [William K.] Turner announced himself to day as a candidate agt. me (Cheathams brother in law). He is not as strong as [Richard] Cheatham.

I do not fear the result but dislike the trouble exceedingly. I have a slight return of rheumatism in my shoulders. I shall expect as early as convenient to have a reply.

C. JOHNSON

Mr. T. runing may possibly have the effect of identifying his & [Henry] Freys friends in this county & defeating my brother.

Addressed to Columbia.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia, Tennessee, May 25, 1835

I have given the letter which I return to you, by this day's mail a very careful perusal. I find no discrepancy between your recollection and statement of facts and my own. In the phraseol-

ogy employed by you and by me in my letter to you of the 28th March, in the hands of insidious enemies, some attempt might be made to show a discrepancy, which does not, in fact or in truth exist. To avoid this I suggest that the language of your reply not affecting the statement or sense, but making both more clear and distinct, might be changed. I will state them to you. 1st In my letter to you of the 28th March I use this language (you will find it on the first sheet of my letter), viz., "You know further that your first letter, that of the 23rd Decr., a copy of which you have sent me, was written by you, without consulting me, about the propriety of writing it. After it was written you showed me a copy of it." On the 4th sheet of your letter, and 2nd page of that sheet you say, "to two or three members personal friends I showed my letter of the 23rd Decr., and asked their opinions as to the propriety of my course. This was before the delivery to Col. Standifer, which took place on the morning of the 26th December." My recollection is that it was the *copy* you retained and not the original sent, which you showed me. You had written it and showed it to me before we conversed on the subject. There is no material difference in the two statements, but to give no advantage to our enemies, I suggest if it accords with your recollection, that the sentence in your letter be changed in its language to read as follows, viz., "To two or three members personal friends, I showed my letter of the 23rd Decr., or a copy of it after it was written, but had not consulted them as to the propriety of writing it." This is precisely true and to prevent your language from being misconstrued, had it not better be so stated.

On the 3rd page of your second sheet a pencil mark is run around certain words, which I suggest had best be omitted, as it can now answer no useful purpose to discuss the convention question, and as it has become a cant word, and been rendered to some extent odious, it might be used to your injury, at least require you to make explanations. By omitting the words incircled in pencil the sense is not changed, and I think they had best be omitted. The same remark may be made about several other passages in the letter, around which a pencil mark has been drawn. I think they had better be omitted.

Your reply I think as to style, temper, and arrangement of

facts, a masterly one, and I should have no objection to see the whole published if *they think proper to publish*. You ought to take it or send it to Grundy as soon as possible, and then transmit it to them.

I am not sure I can have time to complete the examination of the separate letter before the mail closes. If I cannot, it shall b[e] forwarded tomorrow. I have had n[o time] to have a copy made of either. Will you send me a copy, when you send off the original?

Burn this.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Clarksville. Marked "Private and Confidential," this letter is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 224-225.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia, Tennessee, May 25, 1835

I received by yesterday and to day's mail your several communications, and regret to learn that you have a competitor. I have none yet but continue to be strongly threatened. Letters have come from Nashville to my District, urging as I understand that I should be opposed. I wish I may have no opposition, but do not fear it if it come. I have been busy and hope you have been and will be so. There is no mistake about Boling Gordon. He is with us, strongly.

I have company at my House and have had only time to glance over your letter hastily, and approve it. I will have leisure tomorrow and will return the papers.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Be busy in your District. We have principle on our side and have nothing to fear.

Presumably addressed to Clarksville. Marked "Private," this letter is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 225.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia, Tennessee, May 26, 1835

Enclosed is the separate with one or two pencil corrections which you will understand. In the last clause, if you say anything about sending Grundy and myself copies, it ought to be, that you *have sent* them, and not that you *will send them*, because my answer already bears date and was written in March last. I submit to you whether the last clause might not be omitted, or whether it is necessary to say anything to them about sending copies to Grundy and me. The other suggestion made in pencil on the 1st page is, that it was *after he refused to submit his claims to his own party*, that you spoke to others. If he had agreed *our own party* would have settled it, etc.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Clarksville. Marked "Private and Confidential," this letter is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 226.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

Columbia May 27th 1835

Your old friend *William L. Williford*¹ (the mathematician) understands that he was nominated to the Senate for the office of Surveyor General of Mississippi, on the last night of the late Session of Congress, & rejected on account of his non-residence. He is much gratified at the confidence you had in him, and begs me to express to you the gratitude he feels. He is still very Desirous to obtain the office, and if there be any one man in the United States better qualified for such an office than any other, I would say he was the man. He is at present professor of Mathematics in "Jackson College"² in this County, and has the offer as he informs me of the Presidency of literary institution at La Grange in Alabama.³ He has for the present suspended his acceptance of the offer made him, greatly preferring to be Surveyor Genl. if there is still any prospect of obtaining it. He is inclined to emigrate to Mississippi, and would go if he thought there was a prospect of his appointment hereafter. I am unable

to inform him whether the appointment has been made, or what his prospect would be, if he did remove. I write you at his request, and will only add, that his appointment would be highly approved by all who know him; and all must admit his entire capacity to discharge the duties well.*

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I will write to you again in a day or two.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Williford had experience as a surveyor and had sought appointment to surveying jobs on several occasions.

2. Formerly Manual Labor Academy at Spring Hill.

3. LaGrange College, a Methodist institution, was chartered in 1830 and opened shortly thereafter in Franklin County, northwest Alabama.

4. Williford was living in Maury County five years after this letter was written and it is believed that he never moved to Mississippi.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia, Tennessee, May 27, 1835

I wrote you this morning and returned to you certain papers. The mail of this evening brings information that astonishes me. The *McMinnville "Central Gazette,"* of the 23rd inst. contains the reply of the Tennessee delegation of the 1st of January to your letter of the 23rd of Decr. Only the "*extract*" first sent to you is published. No other part of the correspondence is given. The editor does not state how he came by it. How does it happen? By whose authority has it been done? I know neither you nor Grundy could have known any thing about it or you would have written to me. I have conjectured that it may have been one of the *private copies*, that may have been sent home from Washington by [John B.] Forester, to some of his friends, that may have fallen into the Editor's¹ hands. It stands very awkwardly as it is. Neither your first letter to which it is a reply, nor your answer are given. Nothing but the naked "*extract*" is published. But as a part is published and that part too, which is most unfavourable to you and to Grundy and myself, I think it

is due to your character and ours that the whole should now be published. No other alternative seems to be left us. I will write to Grundy immediately, and my advice to you is to go immediately to see him, correct and send off your last letter without delay, and have the whole published. The war *must* come and let us fight it *bravely*. Presuming that you will do so, I will write to Grundy that you will go to Nashville immediately. If you dont go write to him forthwith. In any publication that is made publish all my documents about the Speaker's election, and especially not omitting *Ben Hardin's* letter to you. In the publication be particular to distinguish between the "*extract*" sent and the part *suppressed*, so as to show what part was sent and what retained. I know you will be busy but write me a single line what you intend to do and when. Did you ever write to Dunlap or get an answer from him?

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. We have nothing to fear from the controversy.

N.B. As the publication will have to be made so soon I am the more confirmed in the opinion, that you had better *strike out altogether* the last clause in your separate letter to *Bell*, that in which you inform him that you have or will send Grundy and myself copies of their letter. When they wrote to you, they did not notify us and when we write to you they ought not to expect to be notified of it. I suggested this in my letter to you of yesterday, but did not then think it of so much importance.

Addressed to Clarksville. Marked "Private and Confidential," this letter is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 226.

1. The editor was John W. Ford, who continued to edit the paper for at least six more years. He was a supporter of Polk and his friends; he became postmaster at McMinnville just a few months after this letter was written.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir.

Nashville, May 28th 1835

I was surprised to see in the McMinnville paper this evening a copy of the extract from Bell & others to Cave Johnson published. I have written to Johnson to come up next Wednesday, when you can probably be here.

I shall say to each Editor here tomorrow that if the extract be published to say, that the statements as to you and myself are incorrect.

I think you had better be here Wednesday.

F. GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir, P.O. Nashville Evening May 29, 1835

I have this moment received your two letters of the 27th, and sit down here to write you a few lines to Shelbyville, so as not to loose the post which goes out in an hour.

I was surprised to find the article in the McMinnville Gazette. I cannot divine from whence it came unless Forrester had a copy for his own use, and that the editor procured a copy in some way. This was what Grundy and myself concluded upon last night. But you will recollect a letter exposing the caucus was written from Washington last winter to the Gazette, exposing Bell &c. and that now this letter is published to make good the charges of the letter of February. I think H. C. Williams,¹ a clerk at Washington, originally from Winchester, must have written the letter, and that in some way it is possible he may have procured and forwarded the copy. How it is, God knows—I don't. I intended to have written you to-night to Columbia informing you of the fact, that if I published the article from the McM. Gazette, it should be accompanied by a distinct avowal, for which I had obtained Mr. Grundy's authority as to you and him, that the letter to Johnson from the "8" did both you and him gross injustice, and I would have pointed out wherein. But G. and myself have both written to Johnson to come here immediately. You shall not be compromitted, and shall be defended at every point. You have nothing to fear. I saw Col. Sam Mitchell,² your warm friend and he says you were never stronger in Bedford than at this moment.

I will not publish til Johnson comes. You will find that other documents and facts are here in pickle for Mr. Bell of which you

wot not. I wish you could come this way as you go home from Shelbyville. I want you to see matters. If you cannot, write me from Shelbyville and I will send you *copies* of things which Mr. Bell little suspects. They are ready, in anticipation of [Robert M.] Burton's coming out, which now, he must do.

As to your enquiries about dinner &c. I will write you on Sunday as it is a leisure day. The 200 said to be there, consisted of 110 men and boys, many of them Van Buren men and many of them the President's enemies. John P. Erwin is not as *White* a man as you think for. Old Petway³ dragged in all the store boys &c he could influence to go. It was a poor affair.

[John H.] Eaton⁴ is here, and is for peaceable means, but his wishes on the main subject I think right. I have talked freely with him, but have confided nothing to him of the real state of things. I must close without looking over what I have written.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Col. Mitchell said here to Read,⁵ I believe, that he wanted our paper. What is his address, as to Post office.

Addressed to Shelbyville.

1. Hampton C. Williams was a clerk in the Fourth Auditor's office.
2. Mitchell was a Bedford County resident who was twice elected to the lower house of the General Assembly. He had served under Jackson at New Orleans and was at this time a colonel in the militia.
3. Hinchey [Hincea] Petway, a loyal supporter of John Bell, was a Nashville merchant and a director of the Planter's Bank.
4. Eaton, a former member of Jackson's cabinet, was at this time governor of Florida Territory.
5. Thomas J. Read left Nashville some months after this letter was written. He became a wealthy commission merchant at Louisville, Kentucky.

FROM JOSEPH B. BOYD

Dear Sir

Washington City, May 30th, 1835

I promised that as soon as I arrived here and ascertained the decision of the War department, I would write you a letter. I came here this morning and visited the War department but found that Gen. Cass was absent but Mr. Harris¹ was officiating in his place. I therefore presented your letter to said gentleman

who after examining the case found that there were an over number already appointed that Mr. [John D.] Goneke² had been appointed and the appointment handed to you so taking this into consideration he could not feel safe in appointing me without seeing the President. He then accompanied me to the Pres. house and in handing your letter to him he wrote on the back of it (Let Mr. Boyd be appointed in place of Mr. Guess [Guest] resigned) and handing it to the Secretary who says that if I will come over on Monday morning next he will have my warrant prepared, so I consider myself safe, but by nothing more than your kind and benevolent aid, and great influence which you have so copiously conferred on me. I cannot express with my mouth or portray with my pen the great obligation I am under for your kind support. I always heard and thought that you were a faithful servant to your country but now I know it and I trust that with your faithful, firm, and wise course you may some day be promoted to the highest office our republican people can confer and if you keep the course you have kept thus far I have not much doubt but my wish will come true.³ I do not say this because I am writing you but because I have good reason to believe it. I must conclude by saying that I hear not half so much about Hugh L. White for our next Pres. in this country as I did when in that state. The people seem to think here that Van Buren will be the safest republican to run. I will write to you again when I get to the Point and get settled, if I do.

J. B. BOYD JR.⁴

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Carey A. Harris, former resident of Williamson County, rose from position of clerk in the office of the Secretary of War to that of Chief Clerk. In this responsible position he served as Acting Secretary of War in the absence of the Secretary himself.

2. See Polk to Lewis Cass, May 12, 1835, for a full explanation of the situation in which young Boyd found himself.

3. This is one of the earlier predictions from his district that Polk might some day ascend to the presidency. For another see Henry Turney to Polk, February 15, 1836.

4. The "Junior" was appended to distinguish young Boyd from an older kinsman by the same name. He was a son of Aaron Boyd.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, May 30, 1835

I am confident now, that the whole of the documents and correspondence, in relation to the nomination of Judge White, will now have to come out! I wrote you to Shelbyville,¹ in great haste however, what course I would take; that I would await Mr. Johnsons arrival or instructions. How did [John W.] Ford, of the McMinnville Gazette get the letter? I can't answer to my own satisfaction.

I informed you that I have other, not new (but now proved) matters ready for Mr. Bell. His Correspondence, or the fact of his correspondence last fall with Colonel [Richard M.] Johnson, and the substance of his letter to the Col. is now proved, and I have the proof, irresistible, now in my pocket. That he urged him to become a candidate for the Presidency—that he urged him to go for the Bank—and argued the necessity and propriety of such an institution, is proved beyond his power of disproof or denial. I will, however, extract a denial from his organs here, and have now in preparation, an article calculated to extract such denial, and I have no doubt that [George C.] Childress is weak enough to do it on *authority*. The moment he does so, I will pin him and his authority to the wall. T. J. Pew,² Esq. of Kentucky, a member of the Baltimore convention, saw and read the letter. His name, however, on Old Dicks [Johnson] account, is never to transpire or be used until authorized by himself. I have been some time in private correspondence with him, but not on this subject. He furnished the statement to Mr. [Francis P.] Blair at Washington, a few days before the Convention met, so as to enable Blair to justify himself against the accusations of Bell and others. I have the use of a copy, through Mr. Grundy, from Head Quarters. Pew is respectable, and is the present Editor of the Lex. Ky. Gaz.

I wrote a hasty article yesterday morning—a short *Posture*, in which I have endeavored to prove that the election of Judge White, so far from having a tendency to produce political quiet and allay party contentions, would be a sure means of increasing strife and excitement.³ If it takes, I will pursue the subject.

On Monday, I will be out on Bell. Barrow charged last week

that all my clamor about a caucus at Washington was wholly disproved by Bell's letter lately published, as well as all other accusations against him. That allegation in the Republican, and Bell's charges against the Globe and others, affords me ample ground to begin upon, and to begin *me defendendo*.⁴ His tools (Bell's tools) have waged a war, *delenda est Carthago*,⁵ against us, and I am determined, come what may, that they shall have enough of it, especially, if Burton will come out like a man and give us something to fight for. I am now confident he will, if he has either heart or soul.

The dinner I told you, was a poor affair. It was really a [. . .] business. A number of our warm friends were at it, constituting, when it comes to votes, as I believe, about one fourth of the number; among whom I recollect Col. Love, E. D. Hicks R. Woods &c.⁶ The whole number, Decker⁷ says, who dined, was 110. After all the begging, inviting, advertising &c old Petway, Dr. Shelby, Barrow &c. could only raise 100 men and boys and *invited guests*. Among the latter, was Judge Woodruff⁸ of Louisiana, the Railroad Commissioner. The toasts speak for themselves. Holeman,⁹ (formerly a senator from White) who is one of us, out and out, was there, and heard the speech. He says it was tedious, labored, studied, and came to the point in nothing. It told of fearful persecutions against the "victim of circumstances." He urged all his friends as matter of prudence and wise *policy*, (where were principles and truth?) who were for Judge White, not to abandon General Jackson—not to be driven into opposition. What a damned hypocritical rascal—pardon swearing—to urge such a course, such a policy, such a trick to cheat the people, and to deceive those who heard him. He would not regret to see General and his Administration thrown into the maelstrom, yet his hypocrisy, his love of falsehood and strategem, lead him to pretend friendship and adherence, as "matter of wise policy" only, mark you. My opinion is, it will never be published—as delivered it surely never will.

[John P.] Hickman is running ahead. If things go right, Cheatham—the truest man in the field—who is open in his avowels, will beat [Ephraim H.] Foster. [Enoch] Ensley has Lytle¹⁰ on the hip, and [David] Craighead is evintly [*sic*] behind, as it is very probable he ought to be.

They can't even make a run in Su[mner] against [Josephus C.] Guild. Nothing but absence of opposition, and having many personal friends, can re-elect [Balie] Peyton. They have been trying to get out Gen. Hall,¹¹ who is open-mouthed for V. B. but I fear they cannot.

Gov. Carroll brings cheering intelligence from the District. The White men of sense there, since the termination of the Virginia elections, give it up as lost, but for consistency's sake, intend to "hold on," until after our elections.

I will give my neighbors some salt food from Georgia to digest on Monday.

I am glad a certain lady is in good spirits, and engaged in the *amusement* of politics, though from my heart I could wish that she had some more *amusing amusement* to *amuse* herself with—something more domestic for instance. Wishing her, however happiness, and her husband success. . . .

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Laughlin to Polk, May 29, 1835.

2. Thomas J. Pew, editor, 1833-35, of the Lexington (Kentucky) *Gazette*, was a member of the Kentucky delegation to the Democratic Convention at Baltimore where Van Buren and Johnson were nominated.

3. This issue of the Nashville *Union* has not been found. On June 1, 1835, the Nashville *Banner* quoted from Laughlin's article and followed with several paragraphs in refutation. The *Banner* particularly criticized Laughlin for stating that Tennesseans were anti-Jackson merely because they preferred White to Van Buren. The *Banner* denied that White was anti-Jackson.

4. I defend myself.

5. Carthage must be destroyed. These are the final words of a speech given by Cato the Elder in the Roman Senate.

6. Charles I. Love, Edward D. Hicks, and Robert Woods were prominent in business circles in Nashville.

7. John Decker had once operated a confectionery in Nashville and at this time he was manager of the Vauxhall Gardens.

8. Clark Woodruff, a Jackson supporter, was a resident of New Orleans, where he was a promoter of the ill-fated effort to build a railroad between New Orleans and Nashville in 1835.

9. James T. Holman had served one term in the upper house of the General Assembly, representing White, Overton, Fentress, and Jackson counties. At this time he was in a law partnership with Robert B. Turner in Nashville.

10. William Lytle, an early settler in Davidson County, had served several terms in the General Assembly.

11. William Hall had served in the state legislature and for one term in Congress. When Sam Houston resigned as governor, Hall succeeded him.

FROM THOMAS HARNEY

Clinton, Mississippi. June 1, 1835

A lawyer who had formerly practiced in Columbia, Harney has been accused of changing his politics because he did not get an appointment he sought. He asks Polk to confirm his claim that he had always been a nullifier, but that in spite of his disapproval of some of its policies, he had always been an administration man.

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

FROM CAREY A. HARRIS

Washington. June 1, 1835

The acting Secretary of War informs Polk that he has signed the papers appointing Joseph B. Boyd Jr. to the United States Military Academy.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Boyd to Polk, January 19, and May 30, 1835.

FROM ANDREW A KINCANNON¹

Dr. Col.

Fayetteville 1st. June 1835

I saw a letter on Thursday last written by Hbl. John Bell, to a gentleman of Giles County requesting him to have you called on through the press, to say, whether in the event you were not a candidate for Speaker of the house of representatives, you would or would not support him for that high office.²

I have seen the letter & intend to get possession of it if possible with the liberty of using it if needs be. It is addressed to C. Cassady.³ He felt indignat and talks about it. I should like to hear from you.

A. A. KINCANNON

Addressed to Shelbyville and delivered by hand. It was marked "Confidential." A copy of this letter was published in the *Nashville Union*, June 17, 1835.

1. Kincannon was a Lincoln County lawyer and farmer who was an active participant in local politics. He had served as county sheriff and as a member of the constitutional convention of 1834. At this time he was a candidate for a seat in Congress.

2. This letter, written to Charles Cassedy, was of great political importance. It was used by Polk and his supporters for several purposes, particularly as evidence of outside political meddling in Polk's district. A copy of this letter appeared in the *Nashville Union*, June 26, 1835.

3. Charles Cassedy was a writer of some ability whose career was blighted by his weakness for drink. He acted as Jackson's private secretary during part of the Indian campaign in 1814 and was for a long time private secretary to General James Winchester. He engaged in newspaper work in Pulaski for a while, but at this time he seems to have been engaged in independent writing. He was a resident of Bedford County but received his mail at a post office in Giles County.

TO JAMES L. EDWARDS

Sir

Shelbyville June 2nd 1835

Enclosed I send the amended declaration of James Miller for a Pension. The original declaration is on file in your office. From what I have learned of the applicant, I can have no doubt, but that he served as he has stated, and is entitled to a pension. He is blind and very poor.

If he is found to be entitled to a pension, forward his *certificate* addressed to himself at "*Thompson's Creek P.O. Bedford County Tennessee.*"

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Pension Application Files, War of 1812 (RG 15), National Archives.

TO ANDREW A. KINCANNON

My Dear Sir

Shelbyville June 1st, [2] 1835¹

Your esteemed favour of the 1st. was handed to me by Mr Smith² last night. If the writer of the letter of which you speak had chosen to make a *more direct* application, he would have

found no difficulty in *obtaining, in an undoubted form*, the information, which he seeks. I am fully aware of his hostility to me, but cannot conceive the object he proposes to accomplish by the information if he had it. It looks to me to be not only a strange but a foolish inquiry; still as there doubtless is an object, I should like exceedingly, to get possession of a copy of the letter. Connected with certain other things which may hereafter be developed it may & would tend to shew the *real selfish designs* of those, who wish in their hearts to see me prostrated. I fear not any of the machinations of the little *junta* of self-constituted, would-be-great men at Nashville who wish to control the State, and to prostrate all whom they may suppose, stand in the way of their own advancement. When you next see the person to whom the letter was written, if he feels authorized to give a copy I should like exceedingly to have it, or if not a copy, to have the fact in a way I could use it, if necessary. I am exceedingly obliged to you for the information. I have no opposition (and though there have been constant *threatenings from Nashville* that I should be opposed) I do not now expect any. All is now calm here and in Maury. I do not think I was ever so strong in my District. What are your prospects?⁸ I should be pleased to hear.

JAMES K. POLK

No address is available but the letter was presumably addressed to Fayetteville. Marked "Private," it is in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

1. The first sentence below indicates that Polk made an error in dating his letter. The promptness with which he replied is evidence that he thought the letter from Bell to Cassedy was of political significance.

2. Unidentified.

3. Kincannon was a candidate for the state legislature.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Nashville, June 5th 1835

Johnson has gone. I cannot see how the publication can be avoided. Manuscript copies on the other side have been shown freely. You must direct to Johnson under cover to me. I will open & hand over to Laughlin. You had better not seal the

letter to Johnson but if it comes under cover to me, I will open it any how.

There is a rumor that Burton will offer; we shall know tomorrow, I suppose. The caucuss part of Bell's letter you must send me. Johnson has mislaid it. When the address of the Baltimore Convention arrives many copies will be struck and distributed every where.

Edmund Rucker behaved badly in voting¹ & the Convention incautiously in permitting it. How did you & Carroll get on at Bedford. We are rising here considerably.

FELIX GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. Edmund Rucker of Rutherford County had become notorious when without official sanction he cast the votes of Tennessee at the recent Baltimore Convention. It will be remembered that Tennessee chose no delegates, expecting that the convention was already committed to the nomination of Van Buren. Edmund Rucker was William R. Rucker's cousin; he married a daughter of General James Winchester.

TO CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir: Columbia, Tennessee, June 6, 1835

I have received yours from Nashville informing me that you had forwarded your reply, and had left all your documents at Nashville ready for publication. I think the suggestion you make a good one, to address the Editor at McMinnville, and send him a copy of your letter of the 23rd Decr., and your reply of the 18th January, and there stop on your part, unless *they* choose to publish further. It is my opinion that it will never do to suffer the "*extract*" they have published to stand unexplained, but if you think the further publication *now* would affect your election, I would postpone it for the present. If you think it will not affect you, I should think the sooner you publish the better, for the "*extract*" will unquestionably make its way into papers out of the State, if not in it, and will be used to our prejudice. Did you leave my letters to you, with the papers accompanying them with your other documents for publication also? Grundy writes me so laconically, that I learn

but little from him. I know you must be busy, but if you can conveniently, cause a copy of your reply as sent to Bell, to be forwarded to me, I should like much to have it. I have sent to Grundy to day the part of their letter to you, which you had mislaid, I mean the suppressed part about caucuses and conventions. I saw Capt. Gordon¹ (Boling's brother) on yesterday, who informed me you would get from 800 to 900 out of the 1100 votes in Hickman. He speaks confidently and says there is no doubt of it. Fresh efforts are making by Bell to have opposition out to me. I have the proof of it. Let it come. I am ready. Write me if your leisure permits, but do not neglect your canvass. Beat your man as far as possible.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I have not learned whether Grundy has written any thing or not.

Presumably addressed to Clarksville. This letter is in Sioussat, editor, "Polk-Johnson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 227.

1. Powhatan Gordon, two years younger than Boling, lived in Maury County and farmed lands along the Duck River. Later he was twice elected to represent Maury in the state legislature.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Nashville, June 7th 1835

[Cave] Johnson's suggestion about publishing at McMinnville was abandoned before he left here, and the following adopted, that it should be ascertained, whether [Robert M.] Burton would offer. If he should, then before he came out, the whole to be published here. A messenger has gone to see Burton. Tomorrow, we shall know. If he should not offer, Johnson & yourself to direct about publication. Johnson has no fears of the publication injuring him—indeed he seems anxious for it. Johnson, [Thomas] Claiborne, Gwin¹ &c., the latter having read all the papers, were of opinion that Bell would immediately reply & again introduce me upon the stage. That then I should separately take him up and that this would rally my friends in this District with much more effect than any thing I could place at the end of such a book as the publication will be. I

incline to the same opinion. Claiborne & Gwin think the publication will ruin Bell.

Your mail has not come in, & of course I have not received the dissertation against caucuses.

Be sure to get the letter, the original, which Bell wrote to Giles &c. At any rate get a copy.

You see the Republican, Bells organ is at me almost daily. I suspect old Standifer has played the dog, and quite likely he has furnished Bell with all sorts of certificates. I want to see them, to put the lie on them direct. I am preparing my piece hypothetically, to be altered to fit Bells, when it comes out. Johnsons last letter² is the best thing I have ever seen. He sent it to Bell before he came here. I saw something was the matter but could not tell what it was until Johnson came. We are gaining strength here fast & shall have a Van buren & Johnson meeting about three weeks hence.

F. GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

1. James Gwin, a Methodist minister, had moved to Tennessee from North Carolina in 1790. He was a friend of Bishop McKendree and had served as Jackson's chief chaplain at New Orleans. He and his sons, William M. Gwin and Samuel Gwin, actively participated in politics as firm Jackson supporters.

2. The letter to which this refers seems to be the letter from Johnson to Bell bearing the date June 8. If this is the case, then Grundy had seen the letter in advance.

FROM JAMES W. BREEDLOVE

New Orleans. June 8, 1835

Breedlove, Collector of the Port of New Orleans, asks Polk to see Valerius P. Winchester, Breedlove's brother-in-law, concerning a matter related to the character of John Bell.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM JAMES LEETCH¹

Sir, Bigbyville, Tennessee June 8 1835²

I consider my duty at all times to inform you as early as possible of any and every thing that may have any bearing on your high standing and fair character.

Of late a report has been circulated that you are in favour of *V. Buren* and not really friendly to *H. L. White* because you do not Worship and Idolize him as most others in your district do, and we hear in conversation that *you* and *Esp James Walker* are about to *establish and Eddit* a *V. Buren News paper* in Columbia with the intention of course to destroy the Election of *White*. This District are pretty generally for *White*, and as you have a few [rusty?] enemies, whose Mouths have been shut, for want of Opportunity, a few of them appear to rejoice (from their remarks) in saying if these things are so, it will be the last time you will go to Congress. Others say the[y] would be glad you had some opponent &c. and that after all you said publicly, they knew you privately supported *V. Buren*. I could wish the press had been located some where else, and was glad to find you had not put your Name to the Subscription list a few days ago, and altho you may take the paper I should wish that you would not subscribe if it is congenl with your independence.

Thus Sir we see how little dependance or stability is in men generally. A verry Slight Event may be the means of great Changes in other events and be the Means of occurrences verry different from our expectations. As a proof of my oppinion read the History [of] *Bonapart* and many other great men. They were loved, hated, & feared by the same people as the *Scottish Paul* said "I will nail it in Scripture". In the History of *Paul* he preached and to an astonished Congregation who esteemed him as a God and at the Close of the discourse the[y] brought Oxen and Garlands with which to worship & adore him, but being duped and mislead by a few of *Pauls* enemyes who followed him and stirred up the people, the[y] haul him before the Judges, alledge *Paul* was a disturber of their peace, an Enemy of their Order. He was in a few days condemned as a Malefactor, stoned to Death, and drawn out of their Citty for Dead. Here are bad and good Characters treated in much the same Way, and it often happens so as the prejudice of the people leads them. Nor doth it depend so much upon the virtue or vice of the Men in office or for Office as in the Whims and whirlwind if [party?] and partiality leads.

I have believed that the Americans are much like the Anual

Monsoon of the South. The heat of the Season has an effect upon their system and often overheats their brain red hot. In winter they are as cold as the frigid zone.

I am not satisfied with either Van Buren or Hugh L White. I presume the first could be bought like a Mule in the Market, and for a fat bribe would sanction the Charter of a U. States bank. I presume the latter has not the stern independence of our Jackson to veto any road or Charter that might happen to pass a rotten Senate.

I would like to see a Letter V. Buren wrote to the Pope of Rome a few years ago. It runs in my mind a Christian would not have wrote such a piece of popish stuff. Perhaps he himself may be of popish church; if so he must be sworn on the sign of cross, as the Scriptures can not bind the papists. I do not believe a protestant would have wrote it & I should hate to see a Popish influence in Am'a or a Pope on the Throne.

I have some doubt H. L. White is at least a half Federalist & if so the federalists would accept of a half Loaf rather than no bread.

I am afraid the inveterate parties at present pushing their man with undue Zeal will effect their own overthrow, and so nicely divide the parties and let one of those rascally Villians viz Clay or Webster upon the Throne.

I despise caucuses and partial conventions even in favour of my best friend. It certainly is an unfair, unmanly shuffle for power and party. It aims at dictation and cannot be republican if not general and more Open.

I equally despise the attempts of the press to rule the whole republick and force their impertinent oppinions upon Society and many of their Scribblers who with more sail than ballast disturb the peace of society and claim an infallibility to their ipse dixit.^a

I have been confined at least the one half of my time to bed since Thursday Morning. I complained of debility when I had the pleasure of rising but it has continued and rather increased. I am alone my wife having gone to Mr Galloways^t in consequence of Mrs Gall'y having a fine Son. I cannot say when she may return. I have amused myself and, for a few minutes have nearly forgot my infirmities in conversing freely with you. You

may observe my hand is not steady but perhaps you can read it, and will I presume believe that my real intentions are for your interest, as I do not want to pry into your private sentiments in the above matters, but merely to give you ours, that you may be prepared to Meet and refute every unmanly Attempt to injure you Elevaton in high Standing and will with pleasure communicate all such reports that I may think would have any serious bearing upon you in any way.

With best respects to Mrs. Polk

JAMES LEETCH

Addressed to Columbia.

1. An elderly man, Leetch died about two months after this letter was written. Earlier he had been associated with Polk's father in some land business. It is probable that he was a near kinsman of William Leetch of Moulton, Alabama, who had married Naomi Knox, a sister of Polk's mother. See James Walker to Polk, June 6, 1836.

2. The place and date appeared below the writer's signature. Bigbyville was a village lying a few miles southwest of Columbia.

3. Dictum.

4. Unidentified.

FROM ROBERT MITCHELL

Zanesville, Ohio. June 8, 1835

A physician and former colleague in the House of Representatives, Mitchell congratulates Polk on the success of administration forces in the recent elections in Connecticut, Virginia, and Rhode Island. He believes these victories coupled with the denunciation of John Bell by the *Globe* will throttle the Whig movement.

Addressed to Columbia but not sent through the mails.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Nashville, June 9th 1835

It appears, there is little probability of Burton's offering, therefore, the correspondance will not at present be published here.

Laughlin will send a copy of Johnson's reply to the published letter to McMinville &c.

There will be a calld meeting of the Van buren & Johnson men in this place on 27th June.

FELIX GRUNDY

Yr papers will be held up, until you direct their publication.
GR

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

FROM GERRARD T. GREENFIELD

D sir, [Maury County]¹ June 10th 1835

This will be handed you by Mr. Neil.² I regret to say, it was out of my power to purchase you any negroes.³ Every exertion was made. I intended to let you have two of my negro men but they run away, and I sold them.

I have no servants along, but family slaves, and those connected with them.

I am happy to hear that no candidate will be out against you. As the people say it would be useless to oppose your election. The people are beginning to understand this presidential business, confidential, [. . .] White & Vanburen.

G. T. GREENFIELD

Presumably sent to Columbia although no address appeared on the envelope. A part of this letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, 86.

1. Greenfield had been out of the state, but the fact that this letter was sent by a messenger indicates that he was probably back in Maury County when he sent it.

2. Unidentified.

3. Polk had asked Greenfield to purchase some slaves for him. See Greenfield to Polk, March 29, 1835.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Col. Nashville, 10th June [1835]¹

I recd yours on Monday the 8th informing me of the publication. I came up hoping to meet you here. I sent my reply by mail on the 8th to Col Bell. I shall send one also [to] L. Lea at

Knoxville as soon as I can have a copy made. The Pres. wrote the strongest letter to Gov. [Willie] Blount that ever was seen, demeaning Bell & Co. saying that he had joined the Whigs and brought out White to divide the party & destroy it, [examining?] the Baltimore convention & mortified deeply at the position that Tennessee seemed likely to take & saying that the people of Tennessee when properly informed would "hurl from their confidence" every man connected with it. This is the outline. I dropped the letter to day and fear I shall not again find it. [William K.] Turner is not so strong as [Richard] Cheatham nor is he as good on the stump. I have no doubt of the result. We have met & spoke four times. I had the decided advantage in every one.

I shall leave tomorrow. My health is precarious. I have been constantly in rain & I am much troubled with my old complaint but I hope to keep my feet.

C JOHNSON

I shall leave all my documents here ready for publication. I doubt myself the necessity of publishing unless they commence it in the Nashville paper or forward the publication to my district. My own opinion is that I should address the Editor at McMinnville & send him a copy of my letter of the 23rd Dec. & my reply of the 18th Jan'y & there let it rest unless they publish theirs of the 24th of Feby. Then mine should follow. I have been so busy with my reply that I have not written Dunlap but will do so on my return.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The year is supplied on the basis of contents of the letter. The accompanying envelope shows a postmark of June 5. It is believed that this envelope belongs to some other letter.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville 15th June 1835

I recd yours of the 6th last evening. I left your letters with mine for publication (those intended for publication) & I left all the papers. I had not time to prepare a copy & I have directed a copy to be prepared *for me*. I had not even leisure

to send a copy of my last to East Tennessee. I sent it directly to Bell (as the bell weather of the flock). I have heard nothing since from it. I am clearly of opinion that my letter of the 23rd. Dec. & mine of the 18th. [January] should be published at least. Mr. G[rundy] seemed to think it unnecessary unless it was republished at Nashville or used against me in my District. We should let so much be done as to show clearly that *we are assailed*. There is now I understand in secret circulation here, some portions of the correspondence. I shall to day write to Mr. G. telling this & inclose an address to the Editor & asking his advice. I will also ask him, to have sent you a copy of my last letter. I do not see that its publication can affect me in any way injuriously except some may abuse me, who will do so any how & perhaps more effectually by using such portions of the correspondence as may best suit their taste. My impression is that [William K.] Turner is not so strong a man as either [Richard] Cheatham or Marable¹ & he is altogether unable to use the White question agt. me with any force. We have been together in the three northern counties & I think myself decidedly stronger than at any former period. The only danger I am in, is from the Rheumatism. I have had much difficulty in keeping up the last week. If I shall be able to keep up, I think I shall beat him further than I did either Marable or Cheatham.

I shall go tomorrow to Robertson & spend three or four days & then go to Humphreys & upon my return about ten days hence I shall be able to form an opinion better than now as to the result.²

Carrol speaks here to day. If Humphreys³ should *decline*, I should be able to make much out of Carrol's popularity. I will write you on my return.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. John H. Marable was a Montgomery County doctor who had served two terms, 1825-29, in the United States House of Representatives. In his effort to win a third term he was defeated by Cave Johnson.

2. Johnson's congressional district at this time consisted of Montgomery, Stewart, Robertson, Dickson, Hickman and Humphreys counties.

3. West H. Humphreys had been promised the support of many voters if he would run for governor. He entered the race and was a poor third in the final count.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, June 17, 1835

I have received yours of the 14th, but have not had time to give you my views of its contents. I only have time now to say, that from what appears in the *Banner* of to-day, I must forthwith have a copy of Bells letter now in the possession of Osburn.¹ You must neither obtain it or send it, but some person must do it forthwith. I will use it discreetly. I have shown your letter to Mr. Grundy.

I will publish the whole review of Bells letter from the *Globe*. In publishing the letter of the Hon 8,² I will interpose a protestation of the injustice it does you & Mr. G. from *authority*, and from my own knowledge.

We will have a glorious meeting here on the 27th. The call will be signed by several hundred names—three to four I think. Our *Bulletin* and *Resolutions* shall be up to the handle. They are *being gotten* ready, as the yankee scholars say.

Send a confidential person—have such a one sent—to get the copy from Osburn, and let it be enclosed to me by mail forthwith from Cornersville or Shelbyville, not Columbia.

Tom. P. Moore³ is here. Says Mississippi is safe, doubly safe. He has just spent three or four months in the state.

You see I began on the wrong side of my paper. My respects to Madam. . . .

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. James Osburn, a firm Polk supporter, lived near Cornersville. It was he who eventually transmitted a copy of the Bell-to-Cassedy letter to the *Nashville Union*. This letter and the one from Bell to Cassedy appeared in the *Union* on June 26, 1835.

2. This is the letter mentioned by Polk in the first sentence of his letter to John Blair et al., January 20, 1835. The "honorable eight" were the members of the Tennessee delegation in the House of Representatives who signed the letter. This letter, including the names of the signers, appeared in the *Nashville Union* on June 22, 1835.

2. Thomas P. Moore was a former member of Congress from Kentucky. He had also served as minister to Colombia.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Nashville June 18th 1835

The Globe has published the letter of Bell & others to Johnson. Shall all the correspondence now be published? I have written to Johnson for his opinion & wish. I shall have a piece of my own ready &c. I am thinking of giving my statement & yours, respecting Standifer to the Union for publication tomorrow.

A report respecting Bells letter to Cassedy has reached here from Cincannon¹ thro Gen'l Patterson of Alabama.² That should be authenticated certainly & published. It is a great outrage on propriety.

FELIX GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. See Andrew A. Kincannon to Polk, June 1, 1835.

2. Benjamin Patteson of Huntsville, Alabama, was a brigadier general in the militia and was later elected major general. He was for a long time United States Marshal for the Northern District of Alabama.

FROM ALFRED FLOURNOY¹

Dear Sir

Pulaski 21st June 1835

Your favour of the 17th. Inst. has this day been recvd. and without delay express to you the pleasure it affords me at any time to receive such favours, but particularly at this time. I am aware of the efforts that are making not only to prostrate you, in your own district, but to injure you, in the estimation of your fellow citizens throughout the State. It may be possible that in some particular sections for a while they may dim your prospects, but I cannot bring myself to believe they can prevail ultimately.

I had heard a few days previous to the recpt of your letter of the Cornersville document.² I intended to have visited that place for the special purpose of procuring a sight of it, and if possible to get it in possession. I am very well acquainted with the gentleman to whom it is addressed and have no doubt he will let me do with it as I please. My only fear is that the

original may be destroyed, as Cassady is one of the most notorious drunkards on earth and when in that situation, which is always the case whenever he can get his liquor, he may either have lost it, or given it away. I will however see him in the course of a few days when you shall know the result of my interview with him. I would go at once to see him, but some of my black family is sick, so much so, that I am compelled to remain at home a few days. If the letter can be procured, I believe I will come to Columbia and see you, as I am anxious on many accounts to see you.

Your friends in this County are as ardent in their feelings towards you as at any former period, and if ever they have an opportunity of testing their regard, will satisfy you of the fact.

I will write you again in a few days. I think I can leave home by Friday. If so by the Sundays mail you shall hear from me.

Please remember me to Mrs Polk and accept for yourself the sincere regard of an old friend, who thro all the changes of the times will be steadfast for you.

ALFRED FLOURNOY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Flournoy, a Pulaski doctor, was an old friend of Polk. He had lost a leg while serving under Jackson at Pensacola. He moved to Louisiana approximately a year after this letter was written.

2. This refers to the letter from John Bell to Charles Cassedy.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Nashville 21 June 1835

I have delivered to Long to day for publication our statements with Standifer also Johnson's on same point.¹

All the papers you speak of in your letter are here I believe, but Laughlin is drunk &c. I cannot leave here at this time. I do not know that it is material that we should see each other at this time. I have receivd no answer from Johnson respecting the publication of the correspondence.

Bells letter to Cassedy must be made public. Permission must be had immediately.

FELIX GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

1. Medicus A. Long was publisher of the *Nashville Union*, of which Samuel H. Laughlin was editor. On June 22, 1835, there appeared in the *Union* statements by Grundy and Polk denying that they had ever said that they would support White's candidacy under all circumstances. They seemed to believe that Standifer was responsible for the fact that their names were listed with those of the Tennesseans who had attended the Washington caucus in December, in a declaration of unconditional support. Both Grundy and Polk maintained that they had said they would support White if the party chose him as their nominee, but not otherwise.

FROM WILLIAM C. DUNLAP

Purdy, Tennessee.¹ June 24, 1835

In order to refute charges of excessive absence from Congress, Dunlap asks Polk to write stating the number of days he failed to attend the House of Representatives. He also notes that his chances of re-election have been bolstered by the withdrawal of Lewis P. Williamson, a resident of Fayette County and a progressive planter.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. At this time the county seat of McNairy County in Dunlap's congressional district.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Nashville, June 25th 1835

You see I have but a [. . .]¹ before a short letter.

Tomorrow, Mr Bells letter will appear. It is a strange document and will do him much damage. That letter, will make you Speaker I think. You will see the Editorial remarks aim that way.

I doubt whether, it is best for you, that the correspondence of Johnson & others should be further published. I however wait for Johnsons orders. We cannot be injured, where we stand. We are now in a safe position. Blair will disseminate our disavowal.

Van Buren is rising here astonishingly. A good business will be done on Saturday of which you shall hear promptly. The speakers will be Andrew Hays,² Claiborne, [. . .]³ & J. P. Grundy, all well prepared. Preamble [. . .] resolutions now ready. A book containing the proceedings will follow.

F. GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

1. This letter is blotted and smeared in several places. At this point two or three words are so smeared as to be illegible.

2. Andrew Hays, a brother of Dr. John B. Hays of Columbia, was a Nashville lawyer.

3. At this point what appears to have been still another name has been blotted out.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Nashville. June 26, 1835

Armstrong reports that upon receipt of Polk's note he informed George W. Pollard¹ that the money sent from Memphis by John C. McLemore is in the hands of Willoughby Williams, sheriff of Davidson County.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Pollard was a son of Joseph Pollard and was also a nephew of A. O. P. Nicholson. It appears that Polk may have asked Pollard to bring the money in question to Columbia. See Pollard to Polk, July 1, 1835.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Nashville, June 26th 1835

All things are now going right. Bells letter to Cassedy with very appropriate remarks is to come out to day; on Monday Johnson's first and second letter, agreeably to his own written instructions. Laughlin is himself again, and uses a sharp pen as you will see in his comments on Bell's letter. There is great excitement here against Bell on account of his letter. His friends say they dont believe he wrote such a letter, some of them doubt and hang their heads. The Union in an hour or two will tell them how it is.

Burton is said to have had a fight at Lebanon last Monday with Muirhead¹ and behaved badly in it. But for this, we could beat Bell now with him. This however would prevent his running to any advantage.

Johnson writes to me he is out of danger. I have directed Long to send 100 copies of his next Tuesdays weekly paper to your District. It will contain Bells letter & the commentary, also Johnson's two letters. I am to furnish the list. I have the materials, but you had better send a list by return mail. I shall do the same for Johnson's District.

We shall have a good meeting and doings here tomorrow. The proceedings will tell, I promise you. They are well prepared and up to the point &c.

FELIX GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

1. John Muirhead was a farmer and merchant at Lebanon and at this time was a candidate for the lower house of the General Assembly. He lost in this election but later was elected to three terms in the General Assembly. Details of the fight between Muirhead and Burton have not been learned.

FROM JAMES OSBURN

Dear Sir

June 26th 1835 at home [Cornersville]

After my return home I found by Mr Wineow¹ that I was missatakin about Cassedys permission to publish the Bell letter. He only consented that we might call on him through the public papers. This misstake I want you to corrected for I asure you I have nether Eat nor slept since I found out the misstake. I depend on you to have the matter set right. Mr Wineow will hand you this.² Any thing you and him will do I will be satisfied with.

JAMES OSBURN

N B I tak the hole blame on my self. I was mistaken.

J O

Delivered by hand to Polk at Columbia, apparently by Henry Wineow.

1. Henry Wineow was a farmer in whose hands Cassedy had left the letter. While Osburn and Wineow were neighbors they actually lived in different counties, Osburn in Bedford and Wineow in Giles.

2. Enclosed was a copy of the letter of transmittal from Osburn to Samuel H. Laughlin dated June 22, 1835. It read in part: "I send you enclosed the *copy* of a letter, addressed by the Honl. John Bell to Charles Cassady Esqr. of Bedford County. . . . Having the authority of Mr. Cassady to make it public, and the letter being of so *extraordinary* a character, I think, it should not be longer withheld from the public."

FROM WILLIAM C. DUNLAP

Dear Sir

Perry County June 28th 1835¹

Times are very warm here and in all probability will be more so. When I wrote you from Purdy² to state the time I was absent from the House I believed all that would be necessary would be for you to state the time. I wish you to state at what time it was. You will find by the journals that I was always in the House up to the 7th of April and the next vote taken after that week I was again in the House.

If you recollect I left the city the next day after the vote on the deposits.³ The House did not sit on Saturday owing to the time we were engaged the day before and on Saturday evening [John] Blair, [David W.] Dickinson & myself left the city and on the next Saturday night I returned and was in the House ever afterward. On Monday night after my return Dennis⁴ died and on Tuesday & Wednesday the House only met & adjourned. On Thursday my vote appears.

I wish the time of my absence stated that I may read the journals and show that during my absence my constituents were not interested in the votes taken.

I expect to be met by a general statement from Col. Crockett that I was absent two or three weeks. I can satisfactory show from the journals the time I was in the House if the date of my absence is shown. You may state in your letter that I was generally faithful and regular in my attendance on the House. Write me immediately to Bolivar. I may have occasion to publish your letter.

W. C. DUNLAP

If you recollect my telling you I was going to examine for a runaway negro woman of C D. McLean,⁵ state it.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Although the letter was apparently written while Dunlap was in Perry County, it was not mailed until July 1, 1835, at Huntingdon in Carroll County.

2. See Dunlap to Polk, June 24, 1835.

3. This vote has been considered a turning point in the long congressional battle of the Bank. On April 4, 1834, the House of Representatives passed three resolutions upholding the policy and actions of Jackson and Taney. The first resolution opposed recharter of the Bank, the second opposed restoring federal deposits to the Bank, and the third recommended continued deposit of federal funds in state banks. A final resolution called for an investigation to determine whether or not Bank policies had been determined for the purpose of provoking a financial panic.

4. Littleton P. Dennis, a member of the House of Representatives from Maryland, died on April 14, 1835.

5. Charles D. McLean had published newspapers in Clarksville, Nashville, and Jackson, but at this time he seems to have been living on a farm in Shelby County.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Sir

Waxhaws A.T.¹ June the 29th 1835

We have all landed at this place in good health. I have been once a round my circuit and find this business of *Judging* a new sort employment but not so perplexing as I anticipated. In this county a common county court Lawyer can shew off pretty well. So far as I have been able to learn I have given pretty general satisfaction. My prediscisor was very unpopular. From that circumstance I have been quite will received.

I shall leave here on Sunday next for the Superior Court at Little Rock in company with Col McKisick & Jacob Merton² your constituents &c. They can give you more of the News of the day than I can in a short letter, and to them I refer you for prticulars about the country & its future prospects.

Since the Baltimore Convention all our folks are for a State Govmt & so am I, but to be candid with you at this time, *Judge White* would get the vote of Ark. But before the Election the people can & will be informed of the true situation of affairs and will support the candidate of the party, as Dick Johnson is the Uncle of Col Sevir.³ But our party can be brought to act

together if I am not mistaken, tho *White* is popular here, and it will require the united effort of all the *Sevir* party to succeed. The opposition to *Sevir* has always been strong in the Territory and are yet, & if they should be able to take off some of our *Jackson-White* men the result may be doubtful. They are also for a state govmt, with a belief that they can succeed in the election of a majority in the 1st Legislature & secure their Senators, 2 *white* men if they can do no better; and at present there is the danger. Col *Sevir* can be elected to the Senate but who will be his colleague is not determined on and is uncertain & will depind greatly on the strength of parties.

Our present most excellent Chief Magistrate Govr [William S.] Fulton I think can be elected the first Govr. tho not without a press and a hard one. Col Dick⁴ will be his competitor I anticipate & he is very formadable. He is a good *Jackson* man, formerly a *Crittenden* man, now a *White Jackson* man. This will give him some strength that he never could before array. The opposition here are endevirng to brake down the old party lines of *Sevir* & *Crittenden*⁵ & the latter make their stand for *White* or Anti Van Buren. Who is to be our first representative is unknown, perhaps Col Rector⁶ a good *Jackson* man as any in the Territory, but how he is on the presidential question I am unable to say. I fear from what I have lately heard, his split with his relation *Sevir*, he may go for *White*. If so he will be very formidable as he will split the party. Judge Cross⁷ has been spoken of and I think is strong but he is a poor electioneerer & can not get along with the *boys*. Col Bean⁸ of this County, a good *Jackson-White* man is one of the strongest men in the Territory. If he should run, he tells me he will not, my own impresion is that he can be elected over any of them. This County holds the balance of power between the two parties. Bean can get a large majority in this County which sent 6 membrs to the Legislature, 3 times as large as any other in the Territory, and two of the other strongest centers in Teritory is in this circuit in the North & where he has many influential relatives. The North has begun to think she must have some of the best offices, & they have the strength if they unite, for my circuit alone votes near half the strength of the Teritory, and Bean is the only prominent man we have in the North.

Judge Johnson the *Fatherinlaw* of Sevir & brother of Dick will wish to be Federal Judge, and he ought to be. He is the best choice we have and a first rate fellow. I am for him. What is to become of the balance of us, I mean Lacey⁹ & myself, the Lord only knows. We are but new comers & must put up with such living as they may see proper to confer, or perhaps nothing.

So long as I fill my present office I shall not meddle with politicks. I may be a candidate for the convention tho that will depend on circumstances. If I should take a hand for an office before the people, I shall try to go to the convention, & may be to the 1st Legislature tho I am now undetermined. My friends here are some of the anxious for me to run for Congress, but I am too much of a stranger. Bean is my friend & would not oppose me. On that subject I will keep you advised. Bean will be elected to the council from this county without opposition; he is my devoted friend. Col Whinnery¹⁰ will be one to the H R you know [who] he is; the others you dont know but they are my right hand men the most of them, and I shall endeavor if we divide the county, to have the new county called *Polk*.¹¹ I have some half dozen others of my old Tennessee army acquaintances who will go it such as Col J McKain¹² family of Columbia.

The only pay I shall ever be able to make to you is by giving your name to some poor County in Ark. If I should ever get into Congress & you are not in the *Cabinett* I may have a chance to vote for you for Speaker of the H.R. There is much more probability of you going into the Cabinett than my getting into Congress. To you & Genl Jackson I owe all my good fortune and you must do me the favor to call on the President and in a suitable manner return him my unfeigned gratitude for his repeated acts of kindness. I can not express toward him what I feel but do me that kindness & I shall be under renewed obligation.

I go the whole for our Tickett I shall continue to do so, let the state of parties be as they may in Ark. and will use my influence and exertions to place in the U S Senate those that will support the President in all his leading missions & will also use my exertions to secure a member in the H.R. who can be relyed on in a Presidential vote. This is all that I can promise the party at this time. More if I could.

Present me to your good Lady and accept for yourself the best wishes of your friend.

A. YELL

Addressed to Columbia and delivered by Colonel James McKisick of Bedford County. This letter has required more than the usual editorial license to make it comprehensible.

1. Yell named his home at Fayetteville for his birthplace in North Carolina.

2. James McKisick was a close friend of Yell and a firm supporter of Polk. He had served as county court clerk in Bedford County. Jacob Merton is unidentified. It is possible that Yell's difficult handwriting here has been misread.

3. Ambrose H. Sevier, Arkansas Territorial Delegate to Congress, had married the daughter of Judge Benjamin Johnson, a brother of Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky.

4. It is unclear whether this was a family name or a given name. No person with Dick as either family or given name was a candidate opposing Fulton.

5. At one time the political parties in Arkansas Territory were led by Sevier and Robert Crittenden, a brother of John J. Crittenden of Kentucky. The parties were sometimes called the Tennessee Party and the Kentucky Party. Sevier was a Jackson man while Crittenden supported Henry Clay.

6. Wharton Rector, a member of a large and politically powerful family, was at this time an agent to the Creek Nation. The reason for the break between Rector and Sevier has not been learned, but early in April 1835 Sevier had written to Jackson in support of a rival applicant for the post of surveyor general, although he knew that Rector wanted the job.

7. Edward Cross moved from Tennessee to Arkansas in 1826. He was appointed a federal judge in that territory in 1830 and was reappointed in 1834. He became surveyor general in 1836 and after that time had a distinguished political and judicial career, serving three terms in Congress, followed by ten years on the Arkansas supreme court.

8. Two persons with this name were prominent in political affairs in this part of Arkansas. It appears, however, that this is a reference to Mark Bean, who served several terms in the territorial legislature. He was also elected as a delegate to the convention that drew up the constitution under which Arkansas was admitted as a state.

9. Thomas J. Lacy was a former resident of Columbia, Tennessee, where he had practiced law. He had been given an appointment as a federal judge in Arkansas in 1834.

10. Abraham Whinnery was another former resident of Polk's district in Tennessee. At this time he was a member of the territorial legislature.

11. The county was divided but none of the new counties was named for Polk. In 1844 a county far south of Fayetteville was named for him.

12. Yell's handwriting and spelling are so inconsistent that it is impossible to identify this person positively. In spite of the spelling, however, it appears to be a reference to Joseph W. McKean, formerly of Columbia, Tennessee, and at this time a member of the territorial legislature from Sevier County.

FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON POLLARD

Nashville. July 1, 1835

Pollard is yet uncertain that he will want to rent Polk's storehouse. Since he will not know until September he tells Polk not to hold it for him if another opportunity to rent it arises. He adds that as soon as McLemore returns from Mississippi the money will be available.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Robert Armstrong to Polk, June 26, 1835.

FROM VALERIUS P. WINCHESTER¹

Dear Sir,

Nashville July 1, 1835

Your favor of the 24th ult. was duly received. Intending to start for the eastward tomorrow, I can only at this time express my regret at your determination not to advise in the matter submitted² while at the same time I acknowledge the sufficiency of your reasons for so determining. My opinion is that Mr. Bell could yet be beaten if we could get out any man of strength, but I have despaired of doing that. In the Union of today you will see an acct of our meeting on Saturday.³ Though not very large, it was respectable, and great warmth & unanimity prevailed. I should say that there were two hundred persons present, which is as many or very near as many as the *White* folk, had at theirs notwithstanding they boast of having 19/20ths.

V. P. WINCHESTER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Valerius Publicola Winchester was a Nashville lawyer. He was a son of General James Winchester and a brother of Marcus Brutus Winchester.

2. The nature of the matter mentioned here has not been ascertained.

3. This meeting was only briefly reported in the Nashville *Republican*, while the *Union* gave it four full columns.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Col.

Washington July 4th 1835

I send you herewith the Globe containing Mr. Livingstons last communication to the Duc de Broglie¹ and some strictures on the course of Bell & Gales.² There is a remarkable coincidence in the measures which are taken to bring the administration into disrepute. You must be pleased to see how easy the operation of the Enemy on the French affair as well as on the more domestic relations of the republican party are foiled.

When I reached here, finding that the President had written to you on the subject of your letter to me in Tennessee, I thought it best to let that case stand as he had placed it.

Another reason for doing this grew out of my not being able to lay my hand on my former letter to you on that subject, which it seemed to me ought to be considered as private, particularly as since that time you had the same opportunity that I had to look at the papers on file in the Department, and a much plainer right to use them in your own defence. Certainly no one could deny the existence of those papers in the face of your assertions that they were on file, and that they could be verified by any one that the parties intended should designate for the purpose.

The only objection to furnishing copies is the general one founded on the consideration that such papers are not generally designed for publication and frequently contain suggestions that may be useful to the executive which would not be made with proper freedom if they were regarded as open to the inspection of the world.

My recollection is that on the receipt of your letter I responded to your inquiries, not thinking of the consideration above stated which might have prevented a strict compliance with your letter.

Since my arrival here I am happy to find that the belief so general when I was at Nashville, that you would be reelected without difficulty, is confirmed by the letters of many of our mutual friends and acquaintances. Your course has so thoroughly identified you with the Republican cause, and the success of the measures which have guided Genl. Jackson's administration

that all the true friends would deplore your absence from the next congress.

Wishing you success, and tendering to Mrs. Polk as well as yourself our cordial respect. . . .

A J DONELSON

This letter was delivered by hand.

1. In the *Washington Globe*, July 2, 1835, appeared a letter from Edward Livingston, Minister to France, to Duc Achille de Broglie, Minister of Foreign Affairs. This letter was dated April 25, 1835. Having been called home, Livingston made one last effort to improve relations between the two countries by trying to soften the tenor of Jackson's harsh words about the French in his message to Congress, December 1834.

2. In the July 2, 1835, number of the *Washington Globe* appeared the first of two articles that pointed out the close parallel between statements made by John Bell, and those appearing in the columns of Joseph Gales's *National Intelligencer*. In effect, the *Globe* accused Bell and Gales of collaborating in attacks on the Democrats and particularly on the Jackson administration.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, July 5, 1835

I am now fairly in a state of belligerency with my worthy neighbors. I have them, I think, in a good way if I can keep them so. A gradual but sure work of reformation in public sentiment is in progress here, and I hope the same work is going on throughout the state. I have no fears of carrying the election in 1835, bad as the prospect has been, and unfavorable as some may yet esteem it.

Have I taken the right *tack* in my last on the subject of Bell's letter? It is a subject which I will follow up. It is worth pursuing, and the impudence and folly of my opponents renders it necessary. The article—Bell's defence—in the last *Banner*, I have no doubt was written by himself. When I published the letter with my first remarks, he was in Wilson. The *Banner* and *Republican* preserved a chop-fallen silence till his return. Then, after two days labor, the *Republican* came out and the *Banner* the day after. [Washington] Barrow wrote the *Republicans* de-

fence, but [George C.] Childress did not write the other. He is incapable of it.

After I published the letter with [James] Osburn's authority, I received another note from Osburn saying that, perhaps, he had mistaken the authority given by Cassedy which extended only, as he then believed, to the power of interrogating Bell or his friends. The note came too late—one day after publication. You will perceive that the presses here do not venture to *abuse* Cassedy. They are evidently trying to mollify him. We should do so too. He should be made to believe that he has been *mis-used*, that they have attempted to make a tool of him to do their dirty work. That is the opinion *here*. Have it impressed upon him.

How come on Bynum & Cameron? I hope to receive their *first* in a few days.¹

Our subscription list keeps increasing, about as I expected; the income, however, as yet, not meeting all the expenses of the office. This I anticipated, as I informed you last winter; but the militant and embarrassed state of the concern, as a new experiment, every where opposed, will pass away; and [Medicus A.] Long will make his way well enough. I only suffer, as I receive not one cent from the business. As it takes all my time, this is pretty tough, but I will hold on to the last. In the mean time, however, I must look to some source as a means of some time making something. In attempting to do so, I must engage in something which will be sure to make me money in time, and in which, from any investiture made, I must run no risk. It must be something requiring at present, nor for two years or so, any part of my time; and which can go on with very little of my personal attention. I think I have hit upon the very best thing that could be devised and ask your advice, and also your assistance, but not in money; for you, as well as myself, ought to keep an eye to a provision for future life. It is true, you have a competency which will grow into fortune, which I have not; and you have not what I have—six or seven children to provide for. It is right, however, for you not to give all your time to the public to the neglect of wordly affairs.

Now for my project: I have several thousand acres of good barrens—barren land—in Warren, *well watered*, and unim-

proved, except as to one or two very small tenements. This land produces, even in its wild state hay enough, if the fourth of it only were saved, to winter and keep all the stock in Davidson County. It is as good as timothy as has been tested by Bates² and others, Pennsylvania farmers, who have tried it. They have also tested the capacity of the land for other artificial grasses, wheat &c. and find it the best adapted to their culture of any land in this country. This land, some of it, cost me nine pence per acre, some of it one cent, and some of it only the fees of procuring the title. It cannot *now* be taxed beyond its value. It therefore costs almost nothing; but can be made more valuable for the purpose in view and more subservient to rearing and supporting stock, than the most valuable land in Maury or Davidson. I mean cows, sheep, scrub mares for rearing mules, mules, horses &c. It is not good for hogs. In view of its capacity, I have entered into correspondence with a gentlemen of distinction and experience in Ohio,³ one of our friends in the legislature from Muskingum, on the subject of getting two or three German families, consisting of steady young men and their wives to settle on my land. I can engage such, and such as can be recommended as industrious and honest, who are now at work for a pittance of wages on farms or on the National road. When settled in comfortable cabbins, I only have to supply stock, salt, utensils &c. placing two or three old negros, men and women &c. among them, and give them the word to go ahead. Robertson,⁴ in Warren, the only man in the state who has tried the business, now has, in three years from his beginning, an income of from \$1500 to \$2500 pr. annum, from the services of three or four negros, and the expense of a few hands hired for a few weeks annually in saving hay. I have fine springs and pure running water in abundance for every purpose. So much for the project—the wind work—but what for the means? There's the rub. On that I want your advice, and, perhaps, assistance, neither in advancing or endorsing however.

Here loans may be obtained, but only for short periods, all our business, rates of interest &c. owing to scarcity of solid capital in the country, being in a state of continual fluctuation. I wish to procure money for four, five, or six years, about from five to seven thousand dollars. For its security, I wish to give

mortgage on property so as to make it ample, on real property here, always to be kept ensured for the double safety of the lender, and on ten or a dozen negroes. The security to be approved here, and the property conveyed to a trustee here to be approved by such person as lenders may select to make such approval, and the interest in the mean time to be paid punctually, annually, or semi-annually, at such bank, being a depository of the United States, as the lenders may select, and the mortgages to be forfeited, and the whole sum to become due on failure so to pay interest. On these terms, cannot the money be borrowed in N. York or Philadelphia? The sum to be borrowed to be payable at the expiration of the loan, at such Bank in either of those cities, or such bank in Nashville as may be agreeable to lender. The mortgage to be made & duly registered here, and certified to lenders, before the money is advanced.

If it can be so borrowed, my son in law,⁵ in pursuit of his business, will be in New York or Phila in September, and can receive it, and deliver all the necessary evidence of the security. I would elect that you should designate a trustee, or you and Mr. Grundy. The person I would suggest should be W[illiam] T. Brown the District Attorney, or Mr. Brown and some respectable merchant &c. and that Mr. Grundy and Governor Carroll for instance, judge of the security as referees for that purpose. I think this can all be done. If it can, I can draw a subsistence from the concern, and I am sure, make the establishment which I will be enabled to make, pay for itself in five or six years, by refunding the money, and leave me in possession of more than the amount in improved stock. Into the mortgage, if need be, 2000 acres of the land may be inserted in addition and all the live stock I may be enabled to put on it in the mean time. This had better be stated also with the above. I would not take \$1 per acre for that much of the best of the land in cash.

Now, my dear [sir], what I want you to do is to write immediately to Hon. C. P. White, C. C. Cambreleng,⁶ or some friend to ascertain if such loan can be negociated, and how soon. I wish to effect it forthwith, and I must have my Dutch negociation attended to, as well as some *cow* arrangements made through Professor Yandel.⁷ Commonstock, of all kinds, I can procure most cheaply here. Sheep can be reared to great

profit both for wool and mutton. An improved breed, full blood or half blood Merinos, I can get cheaply, for improving stock, by way of the river from Bellemont, Ohio; and from the farm of a Mr. Ewing^s near Wheeling Va. You see I have fully matured the matter as far as the *wind work*.

It is somewhat discouraging to be working hard here, *pro publico*, I hope *pro publico bono*, without any certain prospect of any reward at all, while men, hundreds of them around me, who are not I believe more capably or more advantagiously [. . .] as far as public interests are concerned, are employed in their own affairs and daily growing independent if not rich. I find, however, that I must do something. Long is bound to pay me something after he can pay others, but as he has to live in the meantime and work hard, the prospect is remote, too remote for me to rely upon with my incumbrances, and rely upon it alone, when I think I have a fair prospect of doing something else, without in the least diminishing my usefulness in my present employment. I want your advice and assistance as above. I know if our New York friends were aware of the case, and the privations I am submitting to as it regards my private interests, and all for the common good of a great cause, they would find a lender on good security, whose accommodation would enable me to make something for my future benefit, for my benefit at a time of life when I shall need it most. I submit it to your discretion, to be considered and disposed of as you think best. I wish to be independent and to labor faithfully in a manner suited to the notions of honesty in procuring it. Do as you please.

Of the papers containing Bells letter to Cassedy, Johnsons correspondence, proceedings of our meeting &c. several thousands of extra copies have been distributed over the state. Johnson's letter, upon which I have not had time to make comments, makes a strong case for us.⁹

I wrote to Osburn that his last letter came too late, that he had done his duty &c. In the next Union, I go on with Mr. Bell.

It is Sunday and I am scribbling at home. Mrs. L. desires her respects to Mrs. P. Make my compliments to the same lady, and join with me in prayer for the success of our cause, and in cursing Rucker's vote.

Our 4th went off very well yesterday, but I took no part except to hear the Oration by Young Shelton, (a student of Rucks' from Smith).¹⁰ All party politics were suppressed on both sides at the dinner and during the festivities of the day, and amusements of the Evening. This was by agreement. The *State Guards* invited Mr. Grundy to their Dinner at Vaux Hall, but he was not there. Jim [Grundy] is out and out right, and so are Bass and McGavock¹¹ right, but they are so cautious, so fearful about their official prospects, that they seem to lean the wrong way. This in confidence. It is a course which is doing them no good. The party White men dont claim them, dont want them, and the warm open Van Buren men, who know that they are privately with us, blame them both for want of *Independence*. *Inter nos*, they are more than half right. Independence, a bold stand, is all we want to carry our cause.

Let me hear from you. I must make a money arrangement. In addition to my scheme, I have a safe business friend here, engaged in the wholesale salt and grocery line, who offers to join a like sum with mine and *secure* my principal and half the profits. This would be good, a good business, and would support me *well*; but in the meantime, the prospect of a large ultimate profit, in proportion to the capital vested, does not promise so well as the *cow*, *sheep* and *mule* business.

SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

P.S. The illness of my father;¹² aged and decrepid, whom I could not leave but for a few minutes at a time during the day, was the reason I did not go out fourth-of-Julying yesterday. He is better to-day.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Chesley P. Bynum and Ewin Cameron were beginning publication of the *Columbia Democrat*, a weekly Jackson paper. Bynum was a resident of Maury County, and Cameron was a former resident of Franklin.

2. Unidentified.

3. Probably Sam Cox, a state senator from Muskingum County, Ohio, and a supporter of Jackson.

4. Unidentified.

5. Timothy Kezer, a Nashville merchant and hat manufacturer, had married Laughlin's daughter during the previous year.

6. Campbell P. White and Churchill C. Cambreleng were members of the

House from New York. Cambreleng was a member of the Committee of Ways and Means and later became its chairman.

7. Lunsford P. Yandell of Rutherford County was a physician and paleontologist and a pioneer in medical education in the Ohio Valley. At this time he was teaching medicine at Transylvania.

8. Belmont is in eastern Ohio, about twenty miles west of Wheeling. Ewing has not been identified.

9. Richard M. Johnson's letter of acceptance of the vice-presidential nomination was published to demonstrate that his views paralleled those of Jackson on the bank, tariff, and internal improvements.

10. James Rucks was a prominent Nashville lawyer who later moved to Jackson, Mississippi. James Shelton of Smith County studied law in Rucks's office and was admitted to the bar during 1835.

11. Probably John M. Bass and Jacob McGavock, who had married daughters of Felix Grundy.

12. John Laughlin, father of Samuel H. and John R. Laughlin, moved to the area of Murfreesboro in 1829.

TO WILLIAM C. DUNLAP

Dear Sir

Columbia July 6th 1835

Upon my return home last evening after an absence of several days, I received your letters of the 24th & 28th ultimo. I can state that since you have been in Congress, I knew of but few members, who have been more regular and faithful, in their daily attendance upon the sittings of the House, and in their attention generally to their duty. I think the Journals will show, that you were generally present upon all important votes, and that you always acted with the friends of the administration, and firmly and uniformly sustained it. I do not remember that you were at any time absent from the City except once, and your absence then, made so little impression on my mind, owing probably to the fact, that no important vote was taken during the time, that my recollection as to the precise period at which it occurred is indistinct. I think, however it was immediately after the vote was taken and the question divided on the Report of the Committee of Ways & Means, relating to the Bank and the removal of the Deposites. That vote was taken on the 4th of April 1834, when you were present, and for a few days immediately succeeding, I think yourself and some others were

absent, during which period I have no recollection that any important question was decided. If you were absent at any other time, it escaped my attention, and I have no recollection of it, and do not believe you were.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Bolivar, Tennessee. This is a signed copy, in Polk's handwriting, of the letter actually sent.

FROM ISRAEL FONVILLE¹

Dr Sir

Shlbyville July 6th 1835

That after my return home from Chap[el] Hill I see severl papers sente to this county and I thinke you had better come to Bedford.

IL. FONVILLE

P.S. I wish you to knote state this letter to any person for you know howe I stand at this time in county.² Excuse me for write so shorte.

I.F.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Israel Fonville was a political figure who was often a candidate for minor office in Bedford County.

2. Fonville was a candidate for a seat in the state legislature and feared lest his communication with Polk might damage his chances of success.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir

Columbia July 7th 1835

If I do not weary your patience, possibly the suggestions I make for your *private ear*, may be of use to you, in your *bel-ligerency* with your neighbours. If they *are not*, they will only cost you the trouble of reading, when I expect you to burn my letter. I wrote you last evening, but in a hurried and confused manner. The facts stated however you may rely on.

That Mr. *Bell* did write a letter to *P. R. Booker* two or three weeks ago avowing that he had written not only one but several letters to my District to have me opposed will not be denied by him. The letter has been seen by a respectable gentleman [. . .] is publicly spoken of here. He wrote to *Booker* after he had heard that some of his letters had come to light. At the time he wrote he probably did not think of the *Cassedy* letter, but probably supposed that some other of his letters had been seen. So that the case as it regards him and myself stands thus. Whilst I stood during the *panic*-session of 1834 daily warring with the opposition, and warding off the assaults of *Federalists, Bank-men, Nationals* on the one hand, and *Nullifiers* on the other, and was fighting up to the knees in blood, defending the administration, and upholding the cause of the country; whilst I stood defending and vindicating the President against the foul slanders of his enemies who daily assailed him, *Mr Bell* sat in mysterious silence, with folded arms, did not raise a finger or perform a service and though the President was his neighbour and constituent, he came not to his rescue, nor lisped a word in his behalf. But when *honors* were to be bestowed, the *bitterest revilers and calumniators of the President*, and of all his prominent friends, *elected Mr Bell* to the Speaker's chair. All this [. . .] it is known that I continued to fight on & to do my duty to the end of the Congress, he performing no service to the administration or party whatsoever. When Congress adjourns, he comes home and *modestly* interferes with my District, writes letters to my constituents, has personal conversations with some of them, urges them *to turn that fellow out*, but if you can't do *that*, why then d—n him, make him vote for him (*Bell*) for Speaker. This it seems to me is substantially his course, and if necessary a strong case may be made out of it. In order to effect his objects he mounts the *White* hobby, and endeavours to prop his falling fortunes by Judge *White's* popularity in Tennessee. He cares not for Judge *White*, further than he himself can be benefitted by hanging to his skirts. A main object with him has been my prostration, and every movement since the caucus last winter gives evidence of it. If they make war on me, as I think it likely from the tone of the Nashville press, they will, I thought these suggestions

might call your attention to some of the facts. The truth is, his course in the last Congress will not bear examination. I fear not to submit mine to the severest scrutiny. By turning to the Journal in the Secretary's office you will find that whilst I was always present & always voted, he was absent & failed to vote almost half his time, and sometimes upon important questions. Yet he would have my constituents turn me out of Congress for his benefit, or at all events "*made to pledge myself to go for him against any other candidate*" for Speaker. This is indeed modest on his part. I repeat that it is apparent that he has no higher aims in the *White* matter, than to advance himself, and hence the efforts that have been made to raise an excitement, that should overwhelm me.

In any thing you may hereafter say, I repeat the suggestion of my letter of yesterday, that you say nothing of my position in the *Presidential Election*. That is understood & known both in my District & elsewhere, and to speak of *him* or of *me*, as connected with that contest is only to give him the benefit of *White's* strength which is not his own. It ought rather to be shown that he is going exclusively for himself, not for *White*, but attempting to shelter himself under *White's* popularity. I see *Barrow* is severe upon Andrew Hays as a disappointed office seeker. He lays himself open to a severe thrust. *I know that in January 1835 Barrow was himself an applicant to the President for the office of District Attorney, & was himself at that time a disappointed office seeker. The rule ought to work both ways. Judge Kennedy, too among us, was an applicant to be Federal Judge & was a disappointed office seeker. He is Bell's cousin, and is now the most violent & furious man among us. I mention these things simply to remind you of them. People that live in glass houses ought not to cast stones.*

I had nearly finished this letter before I recvd yours of the 5th. I will attend to your request and write you again on Friday. I will be absent from home tomorrow and cannot do it sooner. You have the facts as relates to *Osburn*, and must not fail to defend him promptly if he is assailed.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private."

TO JAMES L. EDWARDS

Sir

Columbia Tenn. July 8, 1835

The communication from your office in relation to the application of *James Miller* for a pension, has been received, and happening to be in his neighbourhood a few days ago, I visited him, and at his request, prepared the enclosed explanatory or amended Declaration.¹ I hope it may be satisfactory, for he is not only *blind*, but *miserably poor*, and I cannot doubt from the conversations with him, and the reputation for truth & honesty which he bears where he is known, but that he served as he represented, in the Revolution. I have known *David Weaver*² who made the affidavit enclosed, for several years, and know him to be a man of good character, and of truth. Be pleased to give the case a reexamination, and if a pension be granted, enclose the certificate to him, for him.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Records of the Veterans Administration, Pension Application Files, War of 1812 (RG 15), National Archives.

1. This document has been found. It is in Polk's handwriting and is signed by David Weaver. See James L. Edwards to Polk, February 14, 1835.

2. Unidentified. A man by this name appeared on the census of White County in 1830 and is possibly the one who signed this document.

FROM MEMUCAN H. HOWARD

Nashville. July 9, 1835

Enclosing a power of attorney allowing Polk to sell Howard's interest in a salt spring in Arkansas,¹ the writer also informs Polk that he has found a buyer for some of Polk's land in Henry County, Tennessee.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See John C. McLemore to Polk, January 31, 1835.

TO CAMPBELL P. WHITE

My Dear Sir

Columbia Tenn. July 9th 1835

I am requested by a worthy friend here, to ascertain through some friend in New York, whether a loan of a few thousand dollars (say seven thousand) can be obtained in your city,

secured by mortgage on real estate, for a period of five or six years.¹ The borrower would of course calculate to pay the interest quarterly or half yearly, as might be preferred by the lender. The security given would be ample, and may be approved of by any persons in this county indicated by the lender; or if he have no friend or acquaintance residing in Tennessee, it is suggested that *Governor Carroll* or *Mr Grundy*, who are known abroad, might estimate the lands mortgaged and see that the security was ample. If a loan upon such terms & security would be made [by] any of your capitalists, will you please inform me, or my friend who will probably inclose you this, the rates of interest which would be charged. I have no interest in the matter whatsoever, and merely write you as an acquaintance to procure the information for my friend. Could he obtain the loan I have no doubt it would be a great advantage to him.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to New York. This is a signed copy, in Polk's handwriting, of the letter sent.

1. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, July 5, 1835.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Little Rock, Arkansas. July 12, 1835

Yell introduces Matthew Leiper, Receiver of Public Monies at Fayetteville, and asks that Polk give him a friendly reception in Washington. Leiper also has firsthand information about politics in Arkansas.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM JOHN F. H. CLAIBORNE¹

Dear Sir: Madisonville, Mississippi² July 14th 1835

On my return home this morning, I had the pleasure of finding your favor of the 20th ult with its enclosure. I thank you very much for the promptitude with which you observed my request. I do not design to use your name or in any wise to

implicate you, in any controversy, that may arise between Mr Plummer³ & myself. Mr P and myself have been very intimate. Heretofore I have been the only man residing in the vicinity of Natchez, who gave him an open support, for which he has ever expressed much gratitude. Since however, my nomination by the Democratic Convention as a candidate for Congress, he has, I understand, become very hostile to me, and as a pretext, states that I assailed him in my letter to you.⁴ It was not to deprecate his opposition, but to convict him, if necessary, of a very *ungentlemanly failing*, that I requested the return of my letter, and I again assure you, that your name shall not be used in the affair.

JOHN F. H. CLAIBORNE

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Claiborne began his law career in Natchez and then moved to Madison County. He was a Jackson man and was elected to the seat in Congress formerly held by Franklin E. Plummer, serving 1835-37. His health was bad and he retired from active politics and turned to newspaper work. A prolific writer, he published a history of Mississippi. While in the House of Representatives he was thought to be its youngest member.

2. This was a town on the Pearl River in southeastern Madison County. It no longer appears on the map.

3. Franklin E. Plummer was a native of Massachusetts. Upon moving to Mississippi he taught school for a while and then began the practice of law. After serving two terms in Congress, 1831-35, he was defeated in his candidacy for the Senate. Formerly a Jacksonian but at this time a Whig, he was held in contempt by Jackson supporters, who considered him a turncoat.

4. This letter has not been found.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville 16th July [1835]¹

I have just reached home & recd yours of the 9th. My election is verry safe by a majority over a thousand & I think verry nearly two. Bets are offering among my friends from a 1000 to 1500. Turner is afraid to avow himself for Bell as Speaker. I have said in my speeches that his first act if elected would be hostile to the administration, that he would vote for Bell. He does not deny or affirm & I think it probable after last Monday

at Centreville,² he will meet me as seldom as possible. His circular will kill him *effectively & forever* half Bank, half tariff, half internal improvement. Abuses Van & Crawford³ & every body connected with the admn. & lauds the President &c, a *true Bell* man. I am verry feeble as yet unable to travel on horse back. I shall remain here near a week & write a circular.

I wrote you a line from Hickman.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Johnson omitted the year. The letter has been placed among the 1849 or undated papers in the Library of Congress collection, but the body of the letter makes it clear that it was written during the political campaign of 1835.

2. Centerville was the county seat of Hickman County, a part of Johnson's congressional district.

3. This is probably a reference to William H. Crawford, a former presidential candidate, who had recently died.

FROM JAMES L. EDWARDS

Washington. July 20, 1835

Edwards states that a favorable decision on the Revolutionary War claim of James Miller cannot be made until the applicant makes a distinct statement of his terms of service.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Polk to Edwards, June 2, 1835.

FROM ANDREW A. KINCANNON

Dear Col.

Fayetteville 21st. July 1835

I was from home when your letter of the 6th Inst. arrived here, and did not return untill two days ago.

You are at liberty to use my letter to you, informing you of the existence of Mr Bell's letter to Majr. Cassedy.¹ And if in the least material, use my name too. I can see no reason why my letter & name should not be used if material. I have betrayed no confidence by giving you the information contained in it &

therefore do not object to its use. The contents of the letter of Mr Bell seemed not to be at all a secret about Cornerville. I thought Majr. Cassedy felt indignat, as he ought, in my opinion, at the writer of a letter so indelicate in its nature.

ANDW. A. KINCANNON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Kincannon to Polk, June 1, 1835.

FROM KENNETH L. ANDERSON

Col Polk

Shelbyville 24th July 1835

By way of redeeming my promise I have set down to say a word but in truth I have nothing to write but what you know. I have since you were here made it a part of each days business to talk a little about Mr. Bradfords 4th of July speech and Mr. Bells excelent and dis-interested letter to Mr. Casada [Cassedy]. The results of all only tends to prove that if a man without an opponent can at the veray Eve of the Election increase every hour in the Estamation of an enlitened public and by his manly course bring his few and scatered enemies into more and distressing confusion than their folly had heretofore placed them the honor is all your own. But the pleasure Dear Sir belongs to your friends. An opponent is not thought of in Town and as you know with a very large majority of our Citizens in the Country it would perhaps be actionable. I am saying to all that you will certainly be here on the 1st day of Court and remain until after the Election. As to the declaration of Genl. [Richard G.] Dunlap I am inclined to think it will be conducive to [William] Carrolls prospects here, though I cannot speak with certainty.¹ Our county elections I know nothing about as I have taken no part whatever in them.

I should be pleased to hear the news from Maury if you have any thing new, and shall still be pleased to a much greater extent to see you on the 1st Monday in Decr. next elevated in the language of Mr. Bells friends, to the 3d office in this great nation. Present me to Mrs Polk and accept for yourself the best wishes. . . .

K. L. ANDERSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Dunlap had begun a speaking tour of the state. On July 7, at Shelbyville, he came out in favor of the candidacy of Hugh L. White. On June 11, at McMinnville, he had announced that his health would not permit him to continue as a candidate for governor.

FROM RICHARD WARNER¹

Dear Col

[Bedford County] July 31st 1835

I a few minnits since recd. your Communication. I am truly sorry to hear of your indisposition. Your matters are all right in this County. The Feds seem to be as still as death, not one word saying, yet I think you had better be at Court or at least in Shelbyville the day of election although I have no thought any thing can posibly be done or will be attempted to your prejudice and the reason is they know that they can do nothing.

The candidates in this County are all well and all think they are doing well. We this day close the campaign or at least complete our circuit round the County.

We shall be in Farmington² tomorrow. I have no doubt but J.W.³ will be elected in the Senate, H.M.W.⁴ in the lower branch and R.W.⁵ also or I am altogeather mistaken. T.D.⁶ will be the man my enimies will run to beat me but I think I am 400- or 500 at least before him. The candidates are now speaking, consequently my attention directed to them and cannot write much. Do not indanger your health either to be at Court or Shelbyville at the election.

RICHD. WARNER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Warner was a farmer in the Chapel Hill neighborhood. He had served under Jackson at New Orleans and was wounded in that battle. Active in politics, he had served one term in the lower house of the General Assembly. Later he served four additional terms in that body.

2. Farmington was a village in the western part of Bedford County that became a part of Marshall County when that county was created in 1836.

3. Jonathan Webster, a resident of Noahs Fork community in Bedford County, had already served five terms in the General Assembly. Warner was correct in his prediction that Webster would be elected. When the General Assembly next met Webster was chosen speaker of the senate.

4. Harvey M. Watterson.

5. This is a reference to the author of the letter himself. He was a candidate for the lower house of the General Assembly, but in spite of his belief that he held a lead over his chief rival, he was defeated.

6. Thomas Dean was a farmer in the Flat Creek vicinity. A large landholder, he had not been very active in county politics until this time. He polled more votes than Warner and came in second to Watterson. Bedford's two members in the lower house were thus Watterson and Dean. In the 1837 election Dean and Warner were chosen.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir,

Rip Raps¹ August 3rd 1835

It is a long time since I have heard from you, except thro the Public Journals, and since I have been hear, I have received the Nashville Union very irregularly. The other Nashville papers, like base coin, circulate freely, but they have become the mere echo of Duff Green & other opposition prints, that I have no reliance on their statements and they are, or of right they ought to be, identified throughout the Union, as real genuine *Buffalow Whig* papers. It would therefore be a pleasure to hear from you the real attitude at present of old democratic republican Tennessee, whether she has abandoned her old principles, joined the Whigg, that Mr. Speaker Bell should regain the Speakers chair, & judge White elected president *as the real Whig candidate*, not omitting the fact whether through Mr Bells intrigue with Mr Cassedy, you have been instructed to vote for Mr Bell for Speaker. The Cassedy letter has given the finishing stroke to Mr. Bells intrigues. This has unrobed him every where and he will now only live as the real object of scorn, of all honest men of all parties. He can have no hope after this, only thro the influence of the Bank & unprincipled men under its influence, of being sustained for speaker of the House of Representatives.

You are aware that judge White was popular in Virginia. That popularity is gone forever. He will not be sustained by the Whiggs in Virginia. Mark what I have long since said, and now repeat, that Clay is to be the leading candidate for the opposition. He will be brought out by a caucus next December. White has, & will be held up as a candidate, for the purpose of dividing the south & west, but Clay will be brought out to concentrate all

the opposition votes in the north & East, believing that he is more popular than Webster, and Webster will be withdrawn, if he will consent, as they Whiggs believe Clay the strongest man. At any rate Clay will be run, and run the highest on the opposition list, and when judge White has been *used to distract & divide the republican ranks* and Van Buren abused until, as far as the abuse of the opposition can make him odious; the nullifiers in the south, & the Whiggs will unite upon Clay & abandon the judge. How far Mr Speaker Bell may be benefitted by this sacrifice of judge White, I cannot say, but the judge will be left politically prostrate as ever Aron Burr was, and as few to sympathies with him on his downfall. If Mr. Bell can by this sacrifice of his friend, reach the Speakers chair, from what we have seen of his intrigue and hypocrisy, I am sure he will have but little sympathy for the fate of the judge. Judging from the developments and the imprecations I have heard from many who voted for Mr Bell as Speaker, his political sun has set in Congress. He will not get one republican vote for speaker. This you may rely upon.

The elections being over it behoves you, Grundy, & Johnston, to stir the people. Every county ought to get up meetings to instruct their representatives to vote against the Bank, & any national Bank as a substitute. The people ought in the State Legislatures to pass resolutions instructing their Senators to vote for expunging Clays resolutions in the Senate charging me with a violation of the constitution and law, in vetoing the Bank and removing the Deposites, and also to vote against the recharter of the U.S. Bank and all substitutes for it.² You will at once see the propriety of these things. First it has become a political struggle between Clays friends, and those of the administration whether I shall be exonerated from his false & foul charge, of violating the constitution & laws, or by a vote for expunging them, Clay pronounced to be a slanderer of the Executive by the denunciation, when he was religiously sustaining and executing both, for the true interests of the people, and that, at the imminent hazard of my life. Surely the people of Tennessee whose will I was carry into effect, will not permit me to be thus handed down to posterity for the gratification of Mr. Clay, Calhoun, Poindexter & Webster, by the aid of the vote of

any of their Senators. I am sure, if the subject is fairly brought before the people of Tennessee they will instruct their representatives in their assembly to vote for such instructions, from the course of judge White in the latter part of last session in the Senate making that highly proper.

The resolutions requesting their representatives to vote against the charter for a national Bank become proper from the present attitude of Mr. Bell. His intrigue to bring out Col Johnston in favour of a Bank, and in opposition to a national convention has been made public before his election. Having no opponent I suppose, he was not required to make any pledge upon the subject of the Bank, but his sentiments being made know[n], tho secretly communicated, he will vote for the recharter of the Bank & justify himself on the ground that his sentiments being known to be in favour of a recharter of the present or one on similar principles, his reelection was instructions to vote for one, or in other words, to exercise his own judgment in this matter. Therefore the people in his district has no security for his voting against a recharter but by instructions.

The instructing resolutions ought to be proposed before the Legislature meets, and presented before any candidates for the Senate is announced, to prevent, if judge White or Mr Bell is proposed, and one of them will be, of the cry of persecution should this cry be made. The letter of Mr Bell to Mr Cassedy can be well used, to shew that the system adopted by Mr Bell of noncommittal is a dangerous one for the people in the selection of Senators, when the order of the day by the opposition are to disregard all instructions of their constituents & after being elected, violating all pledges, reference to Geo. Poindexter, Black, Moor of Alabama, Ewing of Ohio, Mangum of N. Carolina, Leigh & Tyler of Virginia and the two New Jersey Senators,³ and it is now more necessary when the opposition have entered into a League, to maintain a majority in the Senate, regardless of instructions. These instructing resolutions being submitted and acted on before the election of Senators the candidate could be called on, before the ballot, for his pledge to comply with the instructions; if he refused, drop him from the canvass.

This movement among the people will open the eyes of old Democratic republican Tennessee, and bring her back to the

good old republican fold. This is a subject that has nothing to do with the election of President. It alone relates to the basis of our republican institutions, the sovereign right of the people to govern, to instruct their agents, who are bound to obey. Without this feature being religiously maintained by the people, their agents becomes the sovereign source of power, and the fundamental principles of all republic are destroyed, and the people become the mere machines, or hewers of wood & drawers of water for their agents, who have become the sovereign power. I do suppose that Mr Bell, nor his pensioned presses, would not hazard the avowal, yet, of such a creed. If the people take it up in any one county it will roll over the state and the Legislature dare not hesitate in passing these resolutions.

I came here for retirement & ease but business & company follow me every where, & I have been labouring some days past under my aff[li]cting headache.

Let me hear from you on the receipt of this, all the political features of your assembly & its members. See judge Grundy. I have written him, and put your business in train. They [*sic*] resolutions ought to be offered by a man of firmness & talents. Guild of Sumner will be a good aid in this matter as I believe. But once commenced and but few dare oppose if any.

I need not say that this is for your own eyes, and when read & noted for the flames.

Mrs. Donelson, Sarah & little ones are with me & my son, who all enjoy good health, & join me in kind salutations to you & Mrs. Polk and all your connections.

ANDREW JACKSON

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private." This letter has been published in Bassett, editor, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, V, 357-359.

1. Rip Raps is a small island near Old Point Comfort, Virginia. Easily accessible to Washington, it was used by Jackson as a retreat where he could relax and rest.

2. On March 28, 1834 the Senate adopted a resolution introduced by Henry Clay censuring Jackson for having assumed unconstitutional powers by ordering deposits removed from the Bank of the United States. Jackson formally protested the censure on the ground that he had been charged with an impeachable offense without being given an opportunity to defend himself. Almost immediately there began an effort in the Senate, led by Thomas H.

Benton, to remove or "expunge" the censure from Senate records. The fight on expunging went on for many months, and party loyalty was often judged on the basis of attitude toward expunging. Finally, on January 16, 1837, the resolution of censure was expunged from the Senate Journal.

3. George Poindexter and John Black of Mississippi, Gabriel Moore of Alabama, Thomas Ewing of Ohio, Willie P. Mangum of North Carolina, Benjamin W. Leigh and John Tyler of Virginia, and Theodore Frelinghuysen and Samuel L. Southard of New Jersey, were well known as anti-Jackson members of the Senate.

FROM JOEL YANCEY¹

Seminole Agency East Florida²

Dear friend

5 August 1835

I arrived here 22 last April & have been generally well since, but dont like the foggy damp weather we have now, but I make a fire & sit by it till breakfast every morning to keep away disorders which I hope will be effectual. The country I think is healthy, being pretty high, piney & sandy & not many swamps near to emit nauseous exhalations, & the water here is tolerably good. The Hammock, or Sugar lands which tho considerable are but a very small portion of the territory, which timbered with live oak, Magnolia Bay trees, Hicory, White Oak, Ash, & various strange timbers, will no doubt sell high before long when brought into market, as you know that Sugar lands are scarce in the United States & I think that as soon as the door is open, there will be a great influx of wealthy purchasers here, & the vegetation being ever green will make it one of the best stock countries in America.

I am trying in some degree to repair my shattered fortune, which arose from being long in public life & neglecting thusly my domestic affairs, & by security [. . .] & sad misfortunes, & amidst all thank God I never deviated from integrity in my dealings & never intentionally deviated from the good old Jeffersonian, 76, Democratic or Jacksonian policy. I know that you have been and are now a genuine disciple of that school and I regret extremely to see a Bank party in disguise springing up in your State, under the auspices of our old friend Mr John Bell & Judge White & their adherents. I tell you my friend, that they may say what they will, but the course they are taking is part-

nership with the Pseudo Whig party, the old Tory party, the Bank party, the Bluelight Hartford Convention party, & I awfully fear that that fell monster the United States Bank is at the bottom of intrigue by which these men are to do all they can to rise into power from a schism in our ranks & thusly prostrate us, but I am sure that you and the rest of the virtuous democracy are & will be on the alert & united & that we will come out triumphant over the machinations & Machiavelian intrigues of these combined enemies of the equal, inherent & inalienable rights of man.

How cordially I do congratulate you and all other real 76 Whigs on our glorious triumph in the recent Virginia elections & the Baltimore Convention. *Sic venit glori[a] mundi.*³ All we want is to be virtuous & trusted & put our trust in the great omnipotent God of battles & then we shall shine conspicuous & resplendant as a pillar of fire amidst a world of [. . .] despotism, lighting the path of unborn millions to the [. . .] of liberty, & the result I trust of the next Presidential & Vice Presidential election, will speak as from the mouths of cannons with a stentorian voice, & prostrate the Aristocracy as with rivers of molten lava from the Crater of Mount Vesuvius. I could write a volume in this strain, but you are impervious I know to the wiles of our enemies & they have no more effect to cause you to swerve one iota from uncontaminated democracy than the roaring billows which have been pelting the Rock of Gibraltar and falling harmless at its feet for ages past, have to move it. Let us my good brother democratic friend pursue our attachment to Union & representative government, support the general government in all its constitutional vigor as the best anchor of our peace at home & safety abroad & the State governments in all their reserved rights as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns & the surest bulwarks against antirepublican tendencies & the powers of Hell (to wit Aristocracy & the Bank) shall not prevail against us. I rejoice that you can go to Congress when you please & hope that you may, as long as you persevere in your sincere devotion to the equal rights of man & no longer. Give my best respects to your amiable lady & believe me always your friend.

JOEL YANCEY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Yancey served, 1827-31, in the House of Representatives from Kentucky. When he failed of re-election he went to Florida, where he became clerk of the federal court. At this time he had just become assistant agent at the Seminole Agency.

2. This agency was located about two miles from Ft. King, in the immediate area of present-day Ocala. It was about seventy miles southwest of St. Augustine and almost a hundred miles northeast of Tampa.

3. Thus appears the glory of the world.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear sir

Nashville, August 6, 1835

You will see the manner in which I have hastily put together an article on the subject of Bell's letter, embodying the letter of Kincannon and the hints or abstract furnished by Mr. Walker.¹ In the mean time, if they should venture upon a denial of writing other letters, you must inform me of the person who saw the letter to [Peter R.] Booker, and arrange the means by which I can get an answer from that person to a note of enquiry which I will direct to him. I will ask an answer in self defence. I do not know whether I get affairs along well. One thing I know, I could do much better if I had more efficient assistance in the subordinate business of the office, which occupies too much of my time, Long being in bad health. I do the best I can under all the circumstances. Mr. Grundy has returned from Kentucky; prospects there are not bad. Harrison is much more popular as a candidate for the Presidency than White, the latter having literally no friends.

I hope Kincannon will succeed. Brady's² death (we could have better spared a better man) is a heavy loss to us. [Abram P.] Maury will be elected. [Daniel] Graham is here and says there is no doubt. It is much the best it should be so. He will not *identify* himself with the opposition; he will not suffer himself to be *led* and *used* by Bell; and Col. Benton, who once took him to Missouri,³ can do more with him than all the Whites and Bells in America. I wrote to Dr. Rucker and other friends in Rutherford on the subject, and am sure things will go right. Mr. Grundy went to Franklin to send *Daniel* Maury⁴ to Rutherford,

so that I have no fears for the result. Jetton⁵ is an obstinate man; claims honor from relationship to White, and is, withal, no true Jacksonman. Bell can use him as he pleases for any purpose, good or evil.

Our election is going on. No reasonable conjecture can be formed of the result. There is strong hopes of Lytle's being beaten; if Craighead and Ensley had compromised, there would have [been] no doubt.⁶ I have not much faith in Davy [Craighead], however, although he is believed to be true by Catron and Carroll. Foster, I suppose, must be elected; between Hickman and Cheatham, it is *hard-up*. Goodlett is out of sight, behind.⁷

I sent your letter to Mr. C. P. White, merely enclosing in it an abstract of the conditions upon which it was wished to borrow the money. I feel every day the necessity, more and more, of having some other prospect, or some other iron in the fire besides the prospect of remuneration from this office, which must support itself and pay its debts, before it can yield me a cent. Impressed with this necessity, and under a firm determination to stick to it until the final battle is lost or won, let what may happen, I hope you may not think it amiss, or transcending the bounds of a reasonable favor to write confidentially, and somewhat more pressingly to the Hon. C.P.W. In the memorandum I enclosed, I mentioned no name, nor did I disclose my own, merely mentioning it as an abstract prepared by the person who wished to borrow the money and vest it in farming stock, cattle, sheep, hogs and mule-breeders. If you should write, write directly to N. York, and request as speedy an answer as may suit Mr. C's convenience. Kezer, my son-in-law, will necessarily [go] to New York in September, where he has large dealings; and through him I wish to complete the arrangement. Two families of my German emigrants are already here, sober, industrious, primitive cultivators of the earth, one man's wife being a dairy woman, deeply versed in all the mysteries of curds, butter, cheese &c.

Your troubles end to-day, for a season at least, and so will Johnson's. I am glad of it. You must both put it upon some of your constituents to go in for the Union, for Longs benefit and preservation, a little more freely than you have heretofore been

at liberty to do. The war shall and must be kept up. The subscription list is about 1200; it ought to be increased to double the number of January, and can be, with proper exertion. It must be gotten on to something like three thousand before it stops. It is a most [. . .] affair, but Long shall not fail, if I have the skill or ability to devise ways and means short of stealing or some other unjustifiable mode.

Let me hear from you. Present me respectfully to the lady of a Congressman elect. . . .

S. H. LAUGHLIN.

P.S. I hope you have recovered your health.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Laughlin's article appeared in the Nashville *Union* of August 3, 1835. Walker's hints have not been found. The chief import of Laughlin's column was that the Nashville *Republican* and other Bell supporters had attempted to draw attention away from the main point, that Bell had actually written the letter, by criticizing Osburn, Kincannon, and others for their role in getting the Bell-Cassedy letter into print. Laughlin charged that this was not the only such letter that Bell had written to persons in Polk's district in an attempt to damage Polk politically, and dared the *Republican* to deny it.

2. William Brady's death had confused the campaign in Rutherford County. A candidate for Congress at the time of his death, Brady was a friend of Laughlin. When Laughlin married Mary Clarke Bass in 1816, Brady had been a member of the wedding party.

3. Abram P. Maury had been a newspaperman in both Nashville and St. Louis. A protégé of Thomas H. Benton, he had done newspaper work in St. Louis at Benton's request.

4. Daniel W. Maury was Abram P. Maury's brother. It is not entirely clear why Laughlin thought that Daniel W. Maury's presence in Rutherford County would have any significant political effect.

5. Robert Jetton was a seasoned politician, having served four terms in the General Assembly. He served under Jackson in the War of 1812 and in the Seminole campaign of 1817-18, and he was recognized as a Jacksonian.

6. David Craighead, William Lytle, and Enoch Ensley were seeking a seat in the state senate. Laughlin was accurate in his prediction. Craighead beat Lytle by about two hundred votes. The combined vote of Craighead and Ensley was far greater than that of Lytle.

7. Again Laughlin's prediction was accurate. Ephraim H. Foster led the ballot, with John P. Hickman, Leonard P. Cheatham, and Adam G. Goodlett following in that order. Cheatham was a nephew of General Richard Cheatham of Robertson County and was the father of Confederate General Benjamin F. Cheatham. Unlike his uncle he was a Democrat and a political ally

of Polk. Goodlett practiced medicine in Nashville for many years. He was for nine years a surgeon in the army and was present at the Battle of New Orleans. After the War of 1812 he carried dispatches to American diplomatic representatives in Europe.

FROM KENNETH L. ANDERSON

D. Col

Shelbyville 7th Augt. 1835

On yesterday morning I undestood that some few of that miserable rimnent that have since your first appearance as a public man been your settled enemies, had said you did not treat as you had no opponent.¹ I fourthwith went to each Grocery, 5 in number and directed them to set out any amt. necssay, which they done. The bill at all I got this morning which is 21.00. I should like to hear the news from Maury. Write me by return mail all news. Say if Bedford has done her duty.

K. L. ANDERSON

(Only about 2500 without including the Bedford letter)²

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Local custom required that rival candidates treat the voters to whiskey at election time.

2. "Bedford letter" obviously refers to the letter from John Bell to Charles Cassedy, but the remainder of this postscript is obscure.

FROM WILLIAM J. WHITTHORNE¹

Farmington, 10 oclock P.M.

My Dr Sir

August 7th 1835

We have just heard from Shelbyville. The votes were as follows in this co[un]ty.

Cannon	1535 ²	Waterson	2287
Carroll	998	Dean	1487
Polk	2348	Warner	1333
Webster	1380	Steel	628
Fonville	845	Marbury	483
Philips	738		

I have seen a Gentleman from Lincoln County who says Carroll is considerably ahead in that County. I hope it will be generally

so, all over the state. I will see you in Columbia in three or four weeks. In Haste.

W. J. WHITTHORNE

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A merchant at Farmington, Whitthorne was a faithful and enthusiastic supporter of Polk, having named a son for him.

2. Whitthorne made no effort to separate the candidates according to the offices they were seeking. Cannon and Carroll were leading candidates for governor, Polk was unopposed, Jonathan Webster, Israel Fonville, and Samuel Phillips were candidates for the upper house of the General Assembly, and the last five were seeking seats in the lower house. Harvey Watterson and Thomas Dean were elected over Richard Warner, Carlo D. Steele, and Leonard W. Marbury.

FROM JOEL R. SMITH¹

Dear Sir

Huntingdon 9th August 1835

Our Elections are over & I have waited till today to hear the result & it gives me great pleasure to say to you that the great *Hunter* one Davy has been beaten by a *Huntsman* by a majority of the [. . .] of four hundred votes.

The result has done me so much good that I could not refrain from communicating my feeling to you who I have no doubt have feelings similar to my own & of saying to you that we conceive the District has to a certain extent redeemed herself in the present election to Congress.

We have elected Jas L Totten Esq Senator & Capt Sion Rodgers² representatives to the State Legislature.

As you have no opposition I conclude you are good for Washington.

My family are well.

As I wrote to you some years since to be my representative in Congress & let me know the news of the day at Washington, I dont wish you to consider yourself relieved now that Crockett is out for although Hunts[man] is elected yet I cant be too well represented & therefore please be my guardian in part in congressional matters.

With the same respect I formerly felt for you I remain. . . .

JOEL R. SMITH

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Joel Ridley Smith had lived in Davidson and Maury counties before moving to Huntingdon in Carroll County. He was a builder and contractor, and he erected the first brick court house at Huntingdon. A colonel in the militia, he served two terms, 1831-35, in the lower house of the General Assembly. See his letter to Polk, December 12, 1833, in which he identifies himself to Polk.

2. Totten was a brother of Benjamin C. Totten and A. W. O. Totten, both prominent judges. James L. Totten was practicing law in Trenton at this time but soon moved to Jackson; eventually he went to Mississippi to live. Sion Rodgers was a farmer who lived near Huntingdon. He had moved from North Carolina and had served as sheriff of Carroll County, 1822-32. Totten and Rodgers each served one term in the General Assembly.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Beaver Dam Springs¹

Dear Sir

Hickman Cty. Ten. August 14th 1835

I have been for several weeks in feeble health, a part of the time confined to a sick bed, but am now convalescent, and am spending a few days at this *retired watering* place for the benefit of my health.

Our elections are over, and as you will have seen, I have been re-elected without opposition, though I was threatened with an opponent, by the *new party* in politics here, almost up to the moment of the election. I am not indebted to the forbearance of my political enemies, both *without*, and *within* my District, for the favour of being permitted to run unopposed, for had there been the slightest hope of my defeat, I should unquestionably have had a contest. After my speech in April (which was published)² I was active in my District; gave to the people, that information, which in the present state of the *newspaper-press* here, they could not obtain, through that channel; informed them fully of the place of the opposition, amalgamated & united as they were, with a *succeeding fragment* from our ranks, in the unholy effort to *divide and conquer us*. I stated without reserve the facts connected with the *caucus nomination* at Washington, last winter, and my reasons for declining to have any participation in it; maintained my position firmly and declared my fixed determination to stand or fall with my political friends and prin-

ciples. I was thus enabled to co[u]nteract in a great degree, the incessant efforts made by the press, and the political leaders of the *new party*, who had mounted the *White Hobby*, and by their constant abuse of *Mr Van-Buren*, with a view to make him odious before the people, hoped to create a local excitement, which would overwhelm every man, who would not join in the shout for "*White against the field*." The result I am now happy to say, was, that the *real people*, every where in my District, so soon as they learned the *truth*, manifested by their declarations, that they not only approved my course last winter but their determination to sustain me, and I have no doubt they would have done so, by an increased majority over that of any former election, had there been a contest. I was not unapprised that I was the [. . .] object of hate, with the leaders here, who have produced the present state of things. They desired my defeat more than that of any other man in the state, and made greater exertions to effect it. Numerous letters from Nashville and elsewhere, and among the rest and *one* of which I heard, from Senator *Gabe Moore of Al.* were written to my District to effect it. And it was not until late in the canvass definitively settled that I was not to be opposed. I understand, that in consultation among the leaders, at Nashville but a few weeks before the election, upon full information of the state of public opinion in my District, it was concluded, that any effort to defeat me would be hopeless, and that to give me unsuccessful opposition, would have the effect to strengthen *Mr Van-Buren* in my District, and therefore the idea of opposition was abandoned.

I have never before witnessed so much excitement in the State. On our return home last spring, as I wrote you in a former letter, we found almost the whole *newspaper-press* in the state against us, and it was difficult and required time to convey the *truth* to the people. At first it was natural, from State pride, and a personal knowledge of the man, for the people of his own State, to be for *White*, and *had a majority of the Republican party of the Union, selected him as their candidate, or rather if he had thrown himself upon his own party, and not looked to the opposition for his main support*, there is but little doubt, but the people here would have preferred him. So soon however as the people discovered the game of the opposition, the danger of

division in our ranks, and the interested and selfish designs of certain leaders amongst us, *who had broken off from the main body of our party*, and united with the opposition, in the covert attempt to prevent the principles of your administration from being carried out by your successor, a re-action commenced and is now going rapidly on. I have seldom witnessed greater changes than the last few weeks have produced. All the people want is correct information and they will *practically* carry out their *principles*. "*The Union*," has done much good, since its establishment. "*The Democrat*" recently established at Columbia, has already produced astonishing changes in its vicinity. Its tone at first was moderate, but firm. It was perhaps prudently so, considering the efforts that were made by the noisy politicians to crush it in embryo. It will however I have no doubt be sound to the core & thoroughgoing. Our people, are as you know, by a vast majority *Democratic* & I confidently express the opinion that Tennessee will be ultimately found to be *an adhering member of the Republican party in the coming contest*. She will not separate herself from her Republican friends of other states, and be found in a false position, acting with her political enemies, the *Poindexters, Calhouns, Clays, Burgesses &c.*^s in their unholy efforts to distract, divide & conquer the great party of which she is a prominent member. My opinion is, that the State, with proper exertions, will go with her Republican brethren of the other States, though we will have a bitter & a hard contest, and ours may be regarded "*the debateable ground*." I form the opinion that the State will ultimately go for *the regular candidates of our party*, from what I have already witnessed in a part of the State, and from a knowledge of *the stern Republican principles* of the mass of our people. We will have however to fight against great odds for a time at least. We will have to fight against a regularly organized party, who can address themselves to the local prejudices, and personal predilections of the people for men, a party who have the almost exclusive possession of the press, that tremendous engine in the hands of artful and designing men; a press too, whose power it is the more difficult to resist, because it *pretends, by hollow and insincere professions* to support your administration. Our victory would be much easier, if they had the manliness, to hoist their true colours, and profess

to be what they really are, *in the opposition*. I have not failed upon all suitable occasions, in the recent canvass, before the people, to expose the *hollowness* of the *pretended* support, of the two Nashville presses, of your administration; their abuse of you for the exercise of the franking privilege; their false charge of *dictation* in the Gwyn letter; their denunciation of the late appointment of Post Master General; their cry of proscription from offices; their indiscriminate abuse of Mr *Van-Buren* and all your prominent friends; and the fact that their columns are of late filled almost exclusively from opposition papers, and wherever I have done so, it has opened the eyes of the people, and weakened their ability to mislead the public.

Having come to this place shortly after the election I have not received full returns from the whole state. *Cave Johnson's* majority of 1287 votes is a great victory. The whole power of the *White* excitement was brought to bear against him. The influence of the Bank, and of *Mr Bell & others*, without his District, was also I understand in active requisition. He met it all firmly, and whilst the political arrangers at Nashville, calculated with much certainty on his defeat, are astounded, and deeply mortified at the result, *we* are rejoicing. But for the sudden and lamented death of *Genl. Brady*, we should have had a *good man and true*, from that District. As it is, *Maury* who is elected, it is said, is uncommitted in his course, and the fact that he was opposed after *Brady's* death by *Jetton*, who is *anti*, a devoted friend of *Bell*, boasts of his *Whitism*, and was moreover supported by many of *Dickinson's* prominent friends, it is by many considered doubtful, what *Maury's* course will be. I have myself no information that enables me to form a conjecture as to what his course will be. *Dunlap* of the District, it is said, has seen the error of his way last winter, and is now right. He is probably re-elected. His opponent *Williams* (a cousin of Col. John Williams) is opposed to your administration. In *Crockett's* District, the contest will be close. Should *Huntsman* be elected, there is some hope that he may go right, though from what I hear it is not *positively certain*, what his course would be. *Shields*, who is elected from the *Giles* District, was one of the first to commit himself for *White*, though I am told that recently his enthusiasm has abated, and he has become more moderate. He probably sees

more clearly, the true condition of things than he did at first. *Carroll* I fear is defeated for Governor. If he is, it is to be attributed *mainly* to the objection suddenly started on the eve of the election, and urged with great effect against him, that he was not eligible under the revised constitution.⁴ I know that in the Counties of *Bedford* and *Maury* alone it lost him hundreds of votes. It is true that the leaders of the *White* excitement, at first attempted to break him down upon that question, but finding it was not likely to take with the people, they were compelled to admit before the election, that *Carroll* was stronger than the question, and could not be beaten upon it. Still if it should turn out, that he is beaten, they will no doubt toss up their caps and claim it as a *White* victory. From what I have seen of the election returns, there will be many more *Van Buren* men in the Legislature, than was anticipated. In addition to these, there will be many others, who will not feel themselves called upon by any public duty, to go into a *Legislative caucus*, to make a nomination. If a nomination is attempted it will be by no means unanimous. I should doubt when they count strength, whether it will be attempted.

I have availed myself of the leisure on my hand here give you thus freely and unreservedly, my opinions & views of the present aspect of political affairs in Tennessee, supposing it might not be unacceptable to you to receive them. I shall remain here about 10 days when I will visit Nashville, and again write you if any thing of interest occurs.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. Marked "Private," this letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. This was a resort in an isolated part of Hickman County. It was located on a fork of Beaver Dam Creek, a tributary of the Duck River. The sulphur springs made this a popular health resort for persons living as far away as Maury County.

2. This refers to the speech Polk made at Columbia on April 20, 1835.

3. These were all leaders of the anti-administration forces in Congress.

4. When the new constitution was adopted *Carroll* was in his third successive term as governor. The new constitution, like the old, provided that no governor could serve more than six years in any eight. Had the old constitution been in effect, of course, *Carroll* clearly would have been ineligible. His supporters, however, claimed that under the new constitution he was eligible to begin another period of six successive years as governor.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia Aug. 14, 1835

I have but little to communicate. You will see by the newspapers that Carroll is beat. But the result of the elections for members of the Legislature is much better than could have been expected. Warren & Franklin have sent each a Senator & two Representatives, good V.B. men.¹ Trousdale² is elected, Pavatt &c. Upon the whole, the Legislature cannot be strong White. I saw Grundy, Carroll, Laughlin; they very heartily gave in to the views I suggested & will write the letters suggested. Catron is absent holding Court in East Tennessee. Laughlin will see him immediately on his return. Carroll felt that he was beat, bears it well, but he says he is for *War* and would go to Washington City if he thought he could make you 5 votes by it. He thinks he can set the train for you to get Shields³ vote. It is said that when Huntsman saw Bell's letter to Cassidy, he declared against him, and said he was not to be considered pledged. This however is mere rumor. Mr. Grundy says you must make your arrangements to set out for Washington by the 10th of Nov., that he will be ready to go with you & that he would write to Johnson to be ready to start same time—That you ought to be there at least two weeks before the meeting of Congress &c.

We are all in usual health. I feel my dignity a little increased by being a grandfather.⁴

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to "Beaver Dam" and delivered by hand.

1. Warren and Franklin counties shared a senator, electing Josiah F. Morford. Warren County elected Bromfield L. Ridley and Woodson Northcutt to the lower house, and Franklin County elected Hopkins L. Turney and Wallace Estill.

2. William Trousdale of Sumner County was elected to represent Sumner and Smith counties in the state senate. Trousdale resigned before the convening of the legislature and went to serve in the Seminole War. Later he was quite active in Tennessee politics and served one term, 1849–51, as governor of the state.

3. Ebenezer J. Shields, a Pulaski lawyer, had served one term, 1833–35, in the lower house of the General Assembly and had recently been elected to succeed William M. Inge in the United States House of Representatives. He served two terms in that body; upon failing of re-election he moved first to northern Mississippi and then to Memphis.

4. Although unconfirmed, this seems to be an obvious reference to the birth of a child to Walker's oldest son, Samuel Polk, and his bride of a year, Eleanor Wormeley. None of Walker's other children had married at this time.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir.

Clarksville 16th August [1835]¹

I recd yours of the 9th several days ago & delayed answering until I could fix upon some time to be in Nashville. I propose to meet you in Nashville on Wednesday evening after the first Monday in September & will return with you by Columbia to Hickman Court the 2nd Monday in September. I intended to have gone to the Beaver Dam Springs but our Circuit Court sits here next Monday. I regret Carrolls defeat. In other respects I have but little cause of regret in my district here at the results of the elections. My majority would have been much larger if any body had entertained a doubt as to the result. My strength agt T[urner] upon a full vote would not have been less than two thousand. He was esteemed the strongest man that could be procured in the district. I think myself Cheatham a much stronger man. Overton² is anxious to give up the paper & I have been calling about for a suitable successor. I will see that it does not get into improper hands. He wishes *to change his course*, is convinced that he is wrong but has committed himself to such an extent, that a change must be gradual. He is an excellent worthy man & very intelligent. If now we can succeed in defeating B[ell] & making you the Speaker, I believe I shall be willing to retire to my professional pursuits & locate in Mississippi, a project I have had some time on hand & would probably have executed last fall if my health had permitted.

I am exceedingly careless or rather forgetful. I forgot my bill until it was too late to avoid a protest & I recd notice today. Arrangements will be made immediately to pay it & therefore you need not be uneasy or put yourself to any trouble upon the subject.³

I have an idea of leaving home early in October and visiting N. York & Philadelphia, as it is probable I shall not have a better opportunity probably not another & besides travelling will be perhaps beneficial to me.

I think my health better than it has been for years, tho I have occasional unpleasant symptoms that alarm me.

I shall remain in Clarksville a few days during court and then shall get myself in motion & I expect [. . .]⁴ trip fishing &c until I get ready to leave home.

I should have been much gratified to have met you at Beaver Dam.

C. JOHNSON

	My election	
	J[ohnson]	T[urner]
Montgomery	720	707
Robertson	799	732
Stewart	489	435
Dickson	519	323
Hickman	814	229
Humphreys	661	290
W. B. Johnson election		
	W.B.J.	F[rey]
Montgomery	1017	414
Robertson	989	1046

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The writer gave no year but the material on the election makes it obvious that it was 1835. Moreover, Polk noted on the envelope that he answered the letter on August 31, 1835.

2. William Overton was editor of the *Clarksville Chronicle*.

3. It is not clear which bill Johnson makes reference to at this point. Since Johnson expected Polk to precede him to Washington it was perhaps a bill there.

4. At this point two or three words are illegible.

FROM HENRY W. CONNOR¹

Green Wood Lincoln Cty N.C.

My dear Sir.

Aug 17th 1835

The first day of trial is passed and Judge White is found wanting greatly in my district. I obtained a majority over my opponent of 1412. Each of my counties gave me a majority. White & Van Buren was the question & I had to carry the P.O.

dept. to boot. The effort was a violent and a very noisy one. I sincerely hope that yourself & Johnson are safely delivered, and that you will have an increase of friends with you from your state. I have heard nothing from other districts that can be relied on. A little from one of Grahams² counties, not favourable to his success. You have seen that Hawkins is reelected, & Hall beaten.³ Its thought Barringer, Deberry⁴ & Graham in the West may be beaten, from the east. I have heard nothing.

HENRY W. CONNOR

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A Democrat, he served in the House of Representatives for ten successive terms, 1821-41. He lived in Catawba County and this letter was written while he was away from home.

2. James Graham had served one term in the House. He took his seat again in December 1835 but it was declared vacant. He was then elected again and sat continuously until 1843.

3. Micajah T. Hawkins of Warrenton served in the House 1831-41. Thomas H. Hall of Tarboro had served in the House 1817-25 and 1827-35.

4. Daniel L. Barringer of Raleigh had been in the House since 1826 but was beaten in this election. He then moved to Bedford County, Tennessee. Edmund Deberry of Lawrenceville won. He was in the House 1829-31, 1833-45, and 1849-51.

FROM W. H. Y. JONES

Chapel Hill, North Carolina. August 20, 1835

A North Carolina merchant seeks to collect debts contracted in Chapel Hill and Raleigh by William H. Polk while he was a student at the University of North Carolina.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir, Union Office, Nashville, Aug. 21st, 1835

I have attended carefully to writing the letters mentioned to me the other day by Mr. Walker. I have written two more than those mentioned in his memorandum. I think *that* matter will do. We have the entire delegation of Indiana, and five good men

and true from Kentucky. Williams has beaten Beaty in that State.¹ Whiteism in Alabama is dead. Here it is not quite so easily killed, but here it must die also—here it will die.

Mr. Grundy has gone to the Western District. I think Huntsman and Dunlap now safe for us—for you. When Mr. G. returns home we will know more.

In the mean time, the Cincinnati debt falls due. Mr. G. has left Mr. Bass² to adjust his matter next week. Can you through Mr. Walker or Dr. Hayes,³ place the \$500 in my hands any time next week. Mr. Kezer is endorser, or properly acceptor of Longs bill, and I am bound to him. The Bill is now here, and the Bank notice served on Kezer & Long, to fall due in 8 or 10 days. Perhaps I ought to have given you, for your convenience, longer notice; but in arranging business as with Mr. Kezer preparatory to his leaving for the East, to purchase goods, I discovered that the time was shorter than I expected.

Let me intimate one matter. Laporte of Pennsylvania, is, I think, a dog. I believe he is for Bell, under Senator McKean's⁴ auspices, and if there is any way to operate upon him it would be well to have the means set in motion.

I was two or three days in Warren [County] last week, where I am trying to settle a stock farm, some of my dutch being here. It is a delightful place for water, grass and health. I would not be much sorry if I were living on it, plowing and growing potatoes, in preference to being here in hurry, bustle, haste, poverty, quarrel and strife from Monday morning till Saturday night of each week. My position, however, much as I sigh for the quiet of domestic life, in some unexciting pursuit, must for the present continue as it is.

Present me respectfully to Mrs. P. and give her my congratulations on her being again a *membress* of Congress-elect.

Please attend to the main matter of this letter.

S. H. LAUGHLIN.

P.S. You will see that Keeble's Murfreesboro' Monitor,⁵ is, out and out, ours, and on our side. *Good*.

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private and Confidential."

1. Sherrod Williams had defeated Martin Beaty in a Kentucky Congressional district that bordered on Tennessee.

2. Apparently this was John M. Bass, a Nashville merchant and banker who had married one of Felix Grundy's daughters. Samuel H. Laughlin was married to one of Bass's sisters.

3. This probably refers to John B. Hays, of Columbia.

4. Samuel McKean and John Laporte were political figures in Pennsylvania who lived in the same county. McKean had served, 1823-29, in the House of Representatives and was at this time serving in the Senate. He had formerly supported Jackson. Laporte served, 1833-37, in the House of Representatives.

5. The *Monitor*, published by Edwin A. Keeble, soon had to be abandoned because the people of the county would not support it.

FROM WILLIAM MOORE¹

D Sir

Mulberry² 22nd Aug 1835

It has been along time since we have had any correspondence. I attribute this to negligence on the part of both of us, and nothing else.

I would be extremely glad to see you here at Sept Court for many reasons, one is that I would like to have a long talk about things & matters generally.

I read your Columbia address. You I have no doubt, learned my views in relation to the great controversy now going on between the friends of Mr. White & the friends of Mr. Vanburen. I have viewed the two as twin Brothers, & think it a misfortune that a split should take place and I fear it will result finally in a split in the Democratical, or Jackson Ranks. This will give our Enemies fresh courage.

I am at a loss to understand how so many of our old members of the Senate have been left out. [David] Burford is the last that I thought could be beaten. I expect [Willie B.] Johnson in Room of [Henry] Frey is not a bad exchange. [Jonathan] Webster is an old member (pale Blue).³

Will there be any effort to organise parties in the Legislature. If so who will take the lead.

I would like to have your opinion on those subjects, as well as such other communications as you may think proper to make. Let me hear from you on the receipt of this & often thereafter.⁴

WILLIAM MOORE

P.S. Col. Yell left your Uncle's portrait⁵ with me. I have it in a neat frame, placed it in my parlor where I take much pleasure in seeing it.

W. M.

I will write you again on the Recpt of yours.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Moore was a resident of the eastern part of Lincoln County where he had large landholdings. Active in politics and a loyal Jackson man, he had been a member of the lower house of the General Assembly, 1825-29, and represented Lincoln and Giles counties in the senate 1833-37.

2. A settlement on Mulberry Creek in Lincoln County, on the road between Fayetteville and Lynchburg.

3. The meaning of this parenthetical remark is obscure. Since Webster was suspected of drifting into the political opposition it could mean that he was not true blue.

4. Polk noted on the envelope that he replied to this letter on September 1, 1835.

5. It is not clear which uncle was meant here.

FROM JAMES BROWN

Jackson, Tennessee. August 24, 1835

Brown forwards to Polk his share of the proceeds from the sale of lots in Jackson, and asks Polk to acknowledge the deed to the property which will be forwarded by the firm of Armour and Lake.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A business firm in Jackson which did business over a large area. It had branches in several other towns in the western part of the state. See William Armour to Polk, September 7, 1835.

FROM ALFRED FLOURNOY

My Dear Sir

Pulaski 26th August 1835

When I wrote to you last, I intended long before this to have either seen you or written again. The very day I put my letter in the office my Brother Silas¹ was taken sick, and he continued so very dangerous for more than two weeks that I could not with

any propriety leave him. In mean time the Cassady letter made its appearance which made it unnecessary for me to go to Cornersville. If I can learn when you will be at home I will come over and see you. I wish very much to have your advice about a matter we have in hand here.

Our little press has suspended its operations for the present.² Its friends are trying to reinstate it again. A fiew of your friends are desirous of becoming the proprietors, which will somewhat change its political complexion. We are a little at a loss for a suitable Editor and some other small *trimmings* that would be acceptable. If you will let me know what day I can certainly find you at home I will come to Columbia.

A. FLOURNOY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Alfred, Silas, and William C. Flournoy were brothers who lived in Pulaski. The three brothers married three daughters of Dr. John H. Camp of Pulaski.

2. Alston B. Estes, formerly associated with Andrew C. Hays in publishing a paper in Columbia, had for some time published the *Tennessee Beacon* at Pulaski. Estes was a cousin of A. O. P. Nicholson.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir

Pulaski August 27th 1835

I could not fail to approve both the time and place of your "Beaver dam" retreat. The waters are very fine & the valley as retired & lonely as to even *invite* the weary politician, who has lived "ten years in a hurry" to fly to it for repose, from the detractions of rivals & the denuniations of party. I sincerely hope your health & spirits may have improved, for I take it for granted, that both may have suffered, in the exciting & in some respects vexatious incidents that have befallen you since I had the pleasure of seeing you. The Wheel of Fortune has made one of those capricious revolutions for which she is so justly celebrated. In 1834 the pride & boast of the State & in 1835 renounced & even denounced! I except of course, your own generous & confiding constituency, whose renewed assurances of confidence must be peculiarly gratifying to you at the present

moment. I am persuaded however the cloud will soon pass away & full justice be done to those motives which could sacrifice the strongest personal friendship for the safety & integrity of the great republican family. Even if future events should show that in fact, the democratic party was not endangered by the nomination of Judge White, still all candid & intelligent men will admit, that under the circumstances of its being made, such was the *conspicuous* connexion between you & that party, that *you* ought not & could not consistently have joined in soliciting him to become a candidate.

After all, I do not think the Politics of Tennessee to be much out of joint as yet. I believe a large majority are for Judge White against Mr. Van Buren, but still a much larger majority will be found in favor of Mr. Van Buren rather than look to the house of representa[tiv]es for a President. The only difficulty will be in convincing the people that adhesion to Judge White, will throw it into the house. This cannot be done *now*—it should not be attempted now—but the Press should lay all the information before the people of the State. Announce fairly all the developments of opinion in other states & my word & judgement on it, an immense majority of the People of Tennessee will abandon White, would abandon even Genl Jackson himself, rather than see the Bank, with its 10 millions of *bribery money* corrupting the representatives of the people on the floor of Congress.

I agree with you, that much depends on the *soundness* of the public press in Tennessee. The two leading Journals of the state, are now, whatever they might have once been, in my opinion unfriendly toward Genl. Jackson's administration. They are to say the least of it, more intent to bring in their favorite successor, than to defend & sustain & close up with honor & dignity, the labors of the present one. The press in this *Town* will in future, look to the success & glory of the present, more than to the coming administration. If it press not the claims of Judge White, so *vehemently* as heretofore, it will not be because it has lost sight of his talents or confidence in his virtue, but because it will pay homage to no man at the sacrifice of principles, nor perpetrate the foul injustice of elevating this [. . .] of one friend by the slander & detraction of another. Judge White

& Mr Van Buren have long been members of the democratic party, unsuspected friends of the present administration & neither can be the fit subject of slander & abuse by the friends of the other.

A new paper is about to be started in this Town, whose principles will be such as I have stated & the proprietors of which are determined to place it if possible on high ground for the soundness of its political views, the dissemination of useful knowledge & for enculcating wholesome morals. But I am not writing its prospectus & therefore leave the whole field of politics, whose mazy pathway I have not trod so long, that I am not even familiar with the technicalities of the science.

The Legislature will soon meet & be made the Theatre of much political manoeuvring—an unconditional nomination of Judge White—perhaps an unmeasured denunciation of Mr. Van Buren will no doubt be attempted & then by excessive zeal, if the latter should be elected, the politics of the State must be thrown into the arms of the opposition. Tennessee ought most probably to make a temperate & dignified nomination of the Judge, avoiding all sinister reflections on Van Buren & his friends, reiterating their continued admiration of the head & devotion to the principles of the present administration & explicitly avowing a determination to support either Van Buren or White, rather than throw the election into the house of Representatives. This course seems due to the present state of the public preference for Judge White, to the position we occupy in national politics & *contains all the modifications* which could reasonably be expected, by those who are inclined to complain of the course taken by Tennessee in the approaching election. At present the wise & the prudent ought to be satisfied, if they can only avoid such wild & intemperate movements as may be calculated to endanger the safety of those great principles for which the democratic party have lately been so severely contending. If the State cannot be kept *precisely* right, she may be prevented from getting *greatly in the wrong* during the next twelve months. Resolutions instructing our Senators, on Mr. Benton's expunging resolutions will be brought up & the vote will be a perplexing one, but I think if that subject is stirred at [. . .] it will be more for party effect than for any practical

influence it will be likely to exercise on general politics. Judge White objection to *expunging* is very plausible & will shelter many a vote, against such instructions. Such a resolution (one of instructions) would bring about a crisis between the true & devoted Jackson men & the White men at once, but is it adviseable at the present *moment* to bring about that crisis? Do not the Van Buren friends hazzard more in a pitched battle *now* than 10 months hence? I think they would. On the whole my opinion is that the Friends of Mr Van Buren, should *expect* nor *ask any* Legislative developments in his favor & that Judge White's should ask nor desire any thing more than a simple nomination for the Presidency, without reflections prejudicial to the character of Mr. Van Buren & expressly disclaiming any desire to throw the election into the house of Representatives & an unalterable determination to support Mr Van Buren or Judge White to prevent such a result as future incidents may develop themselves.

I expect to leave in a few days for the South—The *Nation* first—South Alabama & as far as Mobile the next—\$10,000 on the Chickesaw for spectuation—20,000 on a cotton farm in Greene or Marengo counties for cultivation & a residence in the City of Mobile for practicing the Law. Such is the dream of the moment. I know not how it may be fulfilled. But *howsoever* & *wheresoever*, believe me as ever your very sincere friend & well wisher.

A. V. BROWN

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Col.

Washington August 28, 1835¹

I congratulate you with all my heart upon the fidelity of your District to the principles of the Republican party and for the firmness with which they held over you the aegis of their strength. If the intrigues of Bell had have succeeded against you, we should have had reason to fear that Tennessee was grown unmindful of old friends and was ready to ratify a bar-

gain sacrificing her political consistency. As matters stand we do not despair of the decision she has yet to express on the subject of the next Presidency and the principles which should govern the administration of the Government. I feel confident that that decision will place her where she has always been heretofore, not among Federalists & Whigs, but among her republican sisters of the Union and that Mr. Bell will yet find that there is a vast difference between an individual preference for Judge White as a Republican and as an instrument of dividing a party, and giving his political enemies a chance of obtaining power.

I have talked with many of our friends in this quarter on the subject of the next Speaker of the House, and find the common wish to be that that honor should fall upon you. What will be the feeling of the new members from Alabama in this respect? Clay, the Governor elect, I trust is as fixed as ever in the determination to go with the great body of his republican friends, and not allow Bell to transfer the south to the enemy, or what would be the same thing to throw away its vote upon Judge White. It is all important that the friends of the administration should be at their post in time to agree upon a candidate for the Speakers chair. You should see to this in your section of the country.

The Genl. is in good spirits, notwithstanding the defeat of Carroll. His motto is—good comes out of evil—truth ultimately conquers error and falsehood. Let me hear from you, confidentially your calculations in regard to your strength in the next Congress, and rely upon my friendship.

A. J. DONELSON

Remember me to your good lady.

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. For some unknown reason Polk did not receive this letter until September 22. See Polk to Donelson, September 22, 1835.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Aug. 30, 1835

Yours of the 27th has been duly received. Its contents will be attended to and observed.

It seems that one of our North Western friends thinks as we

do. The subjoined is a copy of a letter just received by me from Gov. Reynolds.¹ It must have been written while one to him on the same subject was in *transit*. I have written him again on the same subject. I put the matter to all of my correspondents on the following and other grounds.

1. That your friends here, important as your election may be to our party in Tennessee, will not consent to have you run unless it is expressly run as the candidate of the party—that they are sure you will not consent in any event to be run in any other way.

2. That your election will prostrate Bell and the White influence in this State, by showing to the people the true position of Bell, and how his position is viewed by the Republican party every where else, and that they are only sustained now by the false opinion which prevails that they are friends of Gen. Jackson.

3. That your election will unmask the White party and exhibit them as opponents of the Administration.

4. That Bell and his Colleagues and their presses have so far kept up the delusion of their friendship for the President as a means of preserving themselves; but that their defeat will certainly follow your election, as that will put an end to all deception in future.

5. That Carroll's defeat is no sign of our weakness, but affords an earnest of our future strength &c. That we have little doubt of carrying the electoral vote next year, if the republican party will afford us the great aid which we will derive from your election &c.

6th. That much is due to you. That you have stuck when others failed. That you have been attempted to be sacrificed by Bell's treachery, and ought to be made the instrument of his defeat. That your confidential relation to the President ought to be considered both as a merit and as a necessary qualification in a Speaker &c.

I hope all will go well in this matter.

Tomorrow I shall publish Maj. Donelson's refutation at large of the Republican's slanders.² It is contained in a letter for publication to myself, and is backed by a letter from the President to Mr. Gwin, in which every fabrication about the abuse of the frank is pronounced to be a *vile calumny*.

The moment you hear from Mr. White,^s let me know. I am anxious about my neglected private affairs and wants.

The following is the copy of Gov. Reynold's letter:

Bellevill (Ill) 20th Aug. 1835

My friend,

I have this day written to the Globe suggesting the propriety of bringing before the Nation the election of Speaker of the House of Representatives. The elections are now over, and Congress will soon meet. In this matter I suggested the propriety also of bringing out Col. Polk before the people. He ought to be the Speaker of the Democratic party. I am interested, and, perhaps, have a pride in it, to have established in the H of R. the *viva voce* mode of electing the Speaker and other officers. I will, if alive, try to get passed this resolution before the election of Speaker, so that it will operate on that and other elections. This mode of voting, you might, if you deem it right, bring also before the people in your paper.

There are a few men here, whom I beat in elections, that are hostile to me. If you would deem it proper in your paper to state the course I pursued last winter, it would quiet this faction, and thereby do me a service. Please write a long letter. . . .

JOHN REYNOLDS

P.S. Rest quiet as to this State going for the democratic party. There is in my opinion no doubt at all of it. Whatever you may say in your paper will be republished here.

J.R.

Now what say you to the *viva voce* mode of voting mentioned by the Governor? I can do him the service he desires without committing myself or our party in the least. But what ought *we* to *wish* on the subject? Let me hear. Care and caution on such subjects is necessary.

I really have not time to look over and make corrections, nor is it necessary I should in writing to you.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

P.S. You will see that in hurry I have used a sheet with scribbling on the back of it.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. John Reynolds, long active in political affairs in Illinois and a former governor of that state, had entered the House of Representatives the previous December.
2. Donelson had been accused of misusing the President's frank.
3. Campbell P. White. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, July 5, 1835.

FROM JOHN F. GILLESPIE¹

Maryville, Tennessee. August 31, 1835

Gillespie asks Polk to recommend him to the members of the state legislature from Polk's congressional district for the office of secretary of state.²

Addressed to Columbia. It was not posted until September 5, 1835.

1. Gillespie was a member of a politically prominent family in Blount County. He served three nonconsecutive terms in the General Assembly. Polk spelled this name Gillespie, as did many other contemporaries.
2. See Gillespie to Polk, October 13, 1835.

FROM ANDREW A. KINCANNON

Fayetteville, Tennessee. September 4, 1835

Kincannon asks Polk to use his influence with Jackson to secure his appointment as chief agent for the Choctaws, a post held by Francis W. Armstrong¹ until his recent death.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The brother of Robert Armstrong of Nashville, he died in Arkansas on August 6, 1835. Polk supported the appointment of Kincannon, but the post went to William Armstrong, another brother of Robert Armstrong. See Polk to Jackson, September 10, 1835.

FROM ANDREW BEAUMONT

My Dear Sir

Wilkes Barre Sept 5, 1835

It gave me great satisfaction to learn that you are too deeply intrenched in the affections of the people of Tennessee to be overthrown by the unnatural conspiracy which disturbs the

harmony of that Republican State. Mr Bells conduct meets with universal reprobation among all highminded and true men. Judge White is only spoken of in Penna with pity & regret at human weakness in a man who had been raised so high in public view. The Wolf¹ Electoral Ticket will in all probability be withdrawn after the October election. It was got up by a shallow intrigue like the nomination of Judge White. The leaders of those who got up that ticket had every thing in view but the welfare of Mr Vanburen. They were the loudest in his opposition in 1831 & 32. Mr Muhlenberg² is the true regular Democratic candidate and is identified with the true & rational supporters of General Jacksons administration & of Martin Vanburen. General Jackson has had the misfortune to misapprehend his true friends in Penna. His to[a]st on the late 4th of July was a most unkind cut considering the state and character of the parties.³ My honest opinion is that Geo Wolf cannot obtain one third of the votes in Pa and one half of those will be given by the Whigs. The fact is that thro' the force of circumstances we have been compelled to support Geo Wolf while the principles & policy of his administration has been hostile to the Democratic cause. During the 3 first years of his administration he to our utter disappointment has supported the recharter of the US Bank & most of Mr Clays distructive measures and even in 1834 when he made a feeble demonstration in support of General Jacksons measures in relation to that dangerous & fearful monopoly it was not until (as you know) the whole democratic force had come up to the aid of the President, in dispite of the Governor's former messages. And even that equivocal message at the late hour that it came was so dubious & undecided, so qualified & ambiguous as to have almost damned the cause with faint praise. It rejoices me to learn your recovery from your sickness. Present the respects of Mrs Beaumont & myself to Mrs Polk. . . .

A. BEAUMONT

P.S. Both our Democratic papers will exchange and we intend to keep up a steady fire upon the Whigs & apostates as soon as our own local politicks are settled which will be in about one month.

A B

Addressed to Columbia.

1. George Wolf, governor of Pennsylvania at this time, was nominally a Jackson Democrat but many Pennsylvanians believed him too friendly toward the Bank. Throughout the gubernatorial contest, however, he claimed to be a Van Buren supporter.

2. Henry A. P. Muhlenberg, a Lutheran minister, was nominated for governor by the anti-Wolf wing of the Democrats. His followers assumed the role of a reform element and considered themselves the true Jacksonians. The result was, that while both factions professed support for Van Buren, they brought on a party defeat by their internal quarrel. The Whig candidate, Joseph Ritner, won decisively although the total of the combined votes for Wolf and Muhlenberg was greater than his total.

3. The two Democrat factions came to be called *wolves* and *mules* and both sent invitations to President Jackson, asking him to attend Fourth of July celebrations in Pennsylvania. Jackson declined both bids and forwarded toasts to both committees. The toast sent to the Wolf committee read, "To the people of Pennsylvania—The decision and firmness with which they upheld their patriotic governor, in the recent contest with the bank of the United States, have given them new claims to the admiration and respect of their republican brethren throughout the union."

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My Dear Sir

Columbia Sept. 6th 1835

Your letter of the 30th ult. inclosing the copy from *Governor Reynolds*¹ was duly received. I am under additional obligations to you for the interest you take in my affairs. I have received several letters from members of Congress upon the same subject avowing their friendship and expressing their intention at the opening of the next Session. I have answered them politely of course, but have been careful to write nothing upon that subject. I do not intend to write any *Cassedy letters*. That is a matter that my friends can attend to, if they choose. I cannot with a becoming self-respect as it seems to me write upon the subject at all, and think I had best not do so.

Some of the leaders in your town, have their correspondents in this quarter, who in order to shew their consequence sometimes *talk too much*. I heard on yesterday that one of these had said, *upon apparent authority*, that *Mr Bell* would come very near being elected, but would probably be beaten, but that there

was one consolation about it, and that was that *Polk* was not the man that would do it. *They say* it will be so managed that *Polk* will not be the administration candidate. One of the leaders in Nashville (*Foster*)² mentioned the other day to a friend of mine, that *Polk* would not be the man run. Now I will tell you my suspicions of what is going on. *Bell* would rather be beaten by any other man than by me; first because to be beaten by any other would not be so wounding to his pride & secondly because it could not do him so much injury in Tennessee. *Billy Lewis*³ is his *confidential man* at Washington, and through him I suspect an intrigue to prevent me from being taken up as the administration candidate. In furtherance of the same design the Nashville Republican is to play its part at home, and by its *false* insinuations and inuendos, endeavor to make the impression upon the friends of the administration abroad that I was elected as a *quasi White-man*. They know this to be *false*. Every man in my district knows it to be *false*. *Lewis* is a *White* & a *Bell-man*, is in every way wrong in his politics, but he takes a special care to conceal this at Head Quarters, and retains therefore some ability to do mischief. He is intimate too with *Blair* of the *Globe* and will endeavor to operate upon him. He will set the *Governor of Florida*⁴ to work too if he can.

*Mr Mason*⁵ of Va. is the man they speak of as I learn. Now *Mason* is a highly honorable man, but I do not believe he has ever thought of it himself, unless it has been recently suggested to him. He has been intimate with *Bell*, voted for him in the last election, and it was late in the contest upon the Deposit question before he learned the *will* of his constituents and took ground. He is however a clean man and is now I believe right in all things, but I do not think would voluntarily come in collision with me. All the while I was in the front of the battle, and last winter when our delegation broke off, I stood my ground firmly with *Johnson & Grundy*. To be very candid with you, after all that has happened, my friends will consider that I have been very badly treated if I am not selected as the candidate of the party. I have letters enough in my possession already to satisfy me that *I am the choice* of a majority of our friends if left to themselves to choose. *Foster* says, & *Bell's* friends here say, that *Mason* is the man to be run against *Bell*. This I take it, is rather

what they wish, than what they know. It would be very strange if *Bell & Co.* should select our candidate for us. Let what will happen however, I will stand firmly upon my principles and with my political friends.

What is the meaning of the charge in the Republican that *Blair* of the *Globe* promised the Speakership to Virginia at the Baltimore Convention? What had they heard from their spies there, or is this another of their falsehoods? With the intimations we have, of what is going on, I think my friends cannot be too active. A plain, strong letter from you to *Blair* of the *Globe*, I have no doubt would have a fine effect. The feelings of the President & [Andrew Jackson] Donelson I have no doubt are strongly with me. Having been beaten before, my pride, & my future standing too, I consider deeply concerned in the matter, and unless by management a different direction is given to things, I have no doubt I will be the man.

I have a letter from *Dunlap*. He is my friend. I hear from two friends who speak with certainty, that *Huntsman & Shields*⁸ will be so, but would probably, especially, the latter be for *Bell* against any other candidate. A strong letter from one of our friends to *Silas Wright* N.Y. and *R. M. Johnson*⁷ would be important. [John] *Catron* if he has returned could write to some one in N. York. The sooner these matters are attended to the better. This letter is for your *own eyes & when its contents are noted for the flames*.

I have heard nothing yet from *Mr White*.⁸ I am expecting an answer daily. Mr A. C. Hays will write you to day.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I have been so sick and am still so weak that I have been able to attend but little to the interests of the *Union*. I have seen Majr. *Rivers* & Dr *Flournoy*⁹ of Giles, who will shortly forward you a list of 10 subscribers & as many more as they can get. As soon as I get out I will stir myself in this county. I have written to *Gilchrist*¹⁰ to do the same in Bedford. I wrote to *Cave Johnson*, that I would meet him in Nashville on Wednesday next. If I am not there, tell him it is because I am too feeble to come. He will be going to Hickman Court, & tell him he must without fail, come this way and see me.

J.K.P.

FROM JACOB GREER¹

Dear Sir

Bedford County 8th September 1835

My mind has been much perplexed of late by the various statements in the public papers on the subject of Slavery. When Nullification and a dissolution of the Union was first broached in South Carolina it caused my heart to sicken and fear for the great and glorious cause of liberty. That storm however soon blew over through the intervention of our patriotic and venerable Chief Magistrate, together with the action of Congress on the subject. Can the nefarious plans of the antislavery society be put down by the same power? The schemes of that society are deep laid and are well calculated to mislead through the power of fanatical zeal, thousands of hypocritical professors of the Religion of the Redeemer; hence the great danger. The only appoligy I need offer for addressing you my dear sir on this important subject is that I want information for myself and other friends of Union on the following points to which my reflections have been drawn.

By our excellent constitution three fifths of all the slaves in the United States are added to and form a part of the normal population that send Representatives to Congress. Can it be the design of these misguided fanatics to deprive the slave holding states of that part of their Representation in Congress, or is it to come in short order to a seperation of the Union. A few years ago he that would have breathed any thing like the dissolution of the Union must have been held in universal disesteem, but now it is openly proclaimed and we are scarcely inclined to shudder at the thought. In another part of the Constitution Congress is forbidden to abridge the right of the people peacably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances. Can it be that our Northern brethren are aggrieved by our holding in slavery the Africans descended to us from our venerable ancestors? If so, ought they not to petition Congress to propose an amendment to the Constitution to effect their purpose, instead of sending in an unconstitutional memorial, praying the abolition of slavery in certain parts of the Union, over which Congress has the power to legislate.

In the Sixth Article of the Constitution, we have the following words, the Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and members of the several states legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers both of the United States and of the several states shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this constitution. To this clause I wish to call your particular attention. Can a member of Congress, either of the Senate or the house of Representatives, after taking the oath enjoined, sit and hear a long unconstitutional petition read, much less discuss the merits of it, without forfeiting or forgetting his oath? Would it not be proper to throw all such petitions under the table? Can any state legislature pass laws of general emancipation without violating the second section of Article first of the Federal Compact as well as their oaths of office?

You will confer a singular favor by giving your views on the points alluded to, and any others which you may conceive, properly connected with the subject.

JACOB GREER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Jacob Greer was a slaveholding planter who had moved to Bedford County from South Carolina several years before this letter was written. Here he voices the uneasiness of many of his fellows in the South.

FROM ALFRED FLOURNOY

Dear Sir

Pulaski 10th September 1835

On my return from Columbia I got our friends Brown, Rivers, and my Brother William¹ together and consulted about the propriety of closing immediately with Estis for the $\frac{2}{3}$ interest of his establishment. From the representation of Estis it will be necessary to advance at least \$400 on the spot to procure some new type &c to give the paper a decent appearance, that amount in addition to \$400 which we have to pay up, for the present establishment as it stands is thought to be rather *hostile*. The truth is, it is not our calculation to receive one cent of *dividend*. The interest that *we* would have, we expect to give to some one qualified to Edit the paper with some spirit and abil-

ity. What we are willing to give, we consider as a donation to the concern, without ever expecting to be again remunerated. It is for the benefit of our friends, and as far as I am concerned it will be given with cheerfulness. Our other friends say the amount is larger than they can stand. We have appointed Saturday next to have another meeting, when Estis will have a bill of all necessary articles made out and we will know precisely what we will have to pay out. I thought in the interim I would write to you for your advice on the subject. Whatever you have to say will be between ourselves. I fear there will be difficulties in the way. I write in haste as the mails will close directly. Let me know what impression the Judge made in Maury.²

A. FLOURNOY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Aaron V. Brown, John H. Rivers, and William C. Flournoy were attempting to establish a newspaper at Pulaski that would not join the parade of Tennessee newspapers declaring for Hugh L. White. They expected to buy from Alston B. Estes the equipment he had recently used in publishing the *Tennessee Beacon* at Pulaski.

2. William E. Kennedy had turned against Jackson and Polk and was now hotly espousing the cause of John Bell and Hugh L. White.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Sir

Columbia Tennessee Sept. 10th 1835

I take much pleasure in recommending *Col. Andrew A. Kincannon*, of Fayetteville Tennessee, as a man in every way qualified to discharge the duties of *Emigrating Indian Agent*, lately filled by *Majr. Armstrong* deceased.¹ Your personal knowledge of *Col. Kincannon* renders it unnecessary for me to add my testimony to the high character he bears wherever he is known. He is a man of strict honor & integrity, and possesses an energy of character, which peculiarly fits him for a station such as that he now seeks. As additional evidence of the estimation in which he is held where he is best known, I will only remind you, that he represented *Lincoln & Giles* in the late State Convention,² & at the late election received a very respectable poll for Congress. He has a family & is poor, and desires employment. His appoint-

ment would be highly gratifying to many of his & your mutual friends in Tennessee, and to none more so than to myself.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington but not sent through the mails. This letter was probably sent to Kincannon to enclose in his letter to Jackson.

1. See Andrew A. Kincannon to Polk, September 4, 1835.

2. Tennessee Constitutional Convention of 1834.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir, Nashville, Friday morning Sept. 11, 1835¹

Johnson is just about to leave. We have had a pleasant time since his arrival on Wednesday, your absence was the only matter of regret. He has written you, when he will be here again. You must be punctual at that time.

I shall be at Gallatin next week. I shall see Gild & Trousdale² and notify you when you must be in this place.

Upon the subject of the Speakership, I have written and received an answer from the highest quarter of the most satisfactory & encouraging character. When in the District I did not and wished not to see Huntsman, but directed Doctor Butler to hold the proper talk with him. Shields you must have attended to, thro A V Brown. &c. Clay, McKinley & Mardis,³ should attend to their successors. You ought to get in the Stage and see McKinley. He could write to Clay & Mardis. You should write nothing, if it can be avoided. Graham is appointed Secretary of State pro Tem. You can have something done, with the Southern members, towards making him beat Allen Hall in the Assembly.⁴

You have seen, that Pearce & Sprague our friends are elected in Rhode Island, and old Buggess⁵ is beaten. If Huntsman, Shields & Dunlap and the three Alabama members alluded to can be secured for you, I think every thing will be safe. You should make your arrangements to be in Washington one week at least before Congress meets.

Give my respects to Mrs. Polk.

FELIX GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

1. Grundy's failure to give the date of this letter has led to some confusion. At the Library of Congress it was filed under 1833, using the September 13 postmark as the day it was written. Contents of the letter make it clear that the letter was written the same day that Cave Johnson wrote to Polk, Johnson's letter also being postmarked on September 13, 1835. Since September 11 rather than September 13 fell on Friday in 1835 it is obvious that the letter was written on that day.

2. Josephus C. Guild and William Trousdale had just been elected to the General Assembly. Trousdale resigned to serve in the Seminole War.

3. Clement C. Clay, John McKinley, and Samuel W. Mardis were members of the Alabama delegation in the last Congress. None had run for re-election. Clay was elected Governor of Alabama, McKinley was elected to the United States Senate, and Mardis died a short time afterward. All were Polk's political friends.

4. Neither Daniel Graham nor Allen Hall was chosen. Graham, who had served, 1818-30, in this capacity, was chosen the first comptroller of the state under the new constitution. Hall returned to newspaper work.

5. Dutee J. Pearce and William Sprague had been elected to the House of Representatives, Sprague beating Tristram Burges, an extreme anti-Jackson man who had served five consecutive terms. Sprague, however, became a Whig.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir, Nashville Sept. 11th Sept (Friday) [1835]¹

I reached Nashville Wednesday evening and reed yours the next morning. I regret to hear that your health is so bad. I wished to have seen you verry much. I have declined going by Hickman. I left my friend George Boyd² exceedingly low with the congestive fever & went to Robertson to see my brother in law & sister,³ both of whom were dangerously ill with the same complaint. I left there on Wednesday morning, the Doct. considering them out of danger tho I did not. I feel it my duty to return there & shall continue with them until I am satisfied they are out of danger. My part of the country has been desperately afflicted.

I have seen every body here & heard much of politics but nothing that I know of that would much interest you except all our friends are desirous of having you made Speaker. What little I can do to advance your interest I shall do cheerfully. I have

not yet written to any of my friends tho I intended to have done so after I saw you here & shall do so upon my return tho I do not know that I can be of the least service. All my friends I think entertain the same views.

The Union gets on badly. Long has the Pthisick⁴ & S. H. L[oughlin] will get drunk. I fear that he cannot be got to abandon it. They are in great want of money & I fear will be always so. I & Grundy & they are to have a meeting this morning. I shall talk verrey freely to them. If the paper be not sustained, if they do not perform their parts we shall go to the dogs. Rather, you & Grundy, as I shall be out of politics hereafter & perhaps go South or do worse get married. I think I shall leave early in October. My rheumatism has again returned & I am a good deal troubled. I think I shall remain some weeks at the Virginia hot Springs. I wish to get Dunlap & Shields with me. I was at Mr G's last evening—a party of gentlemen, mostly good men & true.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. As he frequently did, Johnson failed to put the year in the date; rather absent-mindedly he gave the name of the month twice. Internal evidence makes it clear that 1835 is correct. Polk confirmed the date by writing on the envelope that he replied to Johnson on September 16, 1835. Polk's letter of that date has not been located.

2. George C. Boyd, a Clarksville lawyer.

3. Johnson's sister Nancy was married to William Coutts, a farmer who lived near Springfield in Robertson County.

4. The term phthisis was commonly used as a synonym of consumption or tuberculosis.

TO AARON VANDERPOEL¹

My Dear Sir

Columbia Tennessee Sept 12th 1835

We have just heard the result of the Rhode Island election, and I congratulate you on the signal triumph of Democr[ac]y in the defeat of *Old Burgess*. The spring and summer elections have proved most disastrous to the *Whigs* and their new *White*

allies. Their first defeat was in the *old Dominion*; *Connecticut* soon followed; in the *North West* we have gained; even in *Alabama* they have been beaten; and in *N. Carolina* we have maintained our ground. A letter from *Connor*² of 17th August, informs me, that in his District, the Presidential election was made a full test; his majority was 1400 votes. He confidently expresses the opinion that, that state will not separate herself from her Democratic friends, but will be found in the coming contest, to support the Regularly nominated candidates of the party.

In Tennessee we have had a most exciting summer. *Johnson & myself*, breasted the storm, have passed through unscathed & unhurt, and to the great annoyance of our political enemies have been triumphant. I was the peculiar object of *hate* to *Bell* and others of the *leaders of the new party* in politics here, who have mounted the *White-Hobby*, abused *Van-Buren*, and exhausted all their means, by appealing to state pride, sectional prejudices & feelings, and personal preferences for men, to produce an excitement, which they vainly hoped would overwhelm & prostrate every man in the state who refused to give in his unqualified adhesion, and join in the *shout*, for "*White*" *against the field*. Great efforts were made to have me opposed. I was however active in my District, openly and fearlessly announced my opinions evry where, and firmly maintained the position I had taken at Washington, and such were the demonstrations of public sentiment among the *real people* every where in my District, that my political enemies finally determined that to oppose me with any prospect of success, would be hopeless, and that to give me unsuccessful opposition would only have the effect to strengthen Mr Van-Buren in my District; and therefore the idea of opposition was abandoned. *Johnson* they did oppose, with their strongest man. He firmly met and resisted the whole power of the *White question*, the combined influence of the *Bank*, and of *Bell* and his associates, and against all these, was re-elected by the triumphant majority of 1287 votes in his District. The *White-leaders* were deeply mortified at this result, whilst we are rejoicing. Our colleague *Dunlap* has seen the error of his way, since last winter and is now right. Two or three others of our delegation elect, will probably

go with us. We lost our Governor in the late election, by a small majority, but his defeat is to be attributed mainly to other causes, than the influence of the Presidential question. A majority (but not a large one) of our Legislature will probably be for *White*. The Presidential election was not made a full test in any of our elections, but it was not because the *White-leaders*, and the *press* did not strain every nerve to make it so. I think it probable that a Legislative nomination of *White* will be attempted. If so it will be by no means *unanimously* made, or by the "nineteen twentieths," at first ridiculously claimed by some of our newspapers. In addition to the avowed friends of Mr *Van-Buren* in the Legislature, there will probably be many others who will not feel themselves called upon, *now* to take ground by joining in a *Legislative caucus* to make a nomination.

We are to have a hard and a bitter contest in Tennessee, and though we will have to fight against great odds, for some time at least, yet I have great confidence in the *stern Democracy of our people*. I confidently express the opinion that Tennessee will be ultimately found to be *an adhering member of the Great Republican party*, and will not be found in the coming contest associated with her old political enemies, *Nationals, Old Federalists, Nullifiers & Modern Whigs* in their unholy attempt to divide and conquer us. Though *ours may now* be regarded as *debateable ground*, yet from a thorough knowledge of our people, I cannot believe that they will fail when properly informed, *practically* to act out their *principles*.

Great changes have already taken place in some parts of the state, and a reaction is now going rapidly on. Upon our return home last spring we found the whole press of the state, with one or two exceptions, in the hands of the enemy. We have *now* the "*Union*" and *five other sound presses*,^s and among them "*The Democrat*", in my own town, that have already done much to convey the truth to the people, and have not failed to produce their effect upon public opinion. Upon a review of the whole ground, I entertain the opinion, that with proper exertions, the state will finally go with her Republican brethren of the other states in supporting the Regularly nominated candidates of the party. The *White-party* leaders here are already becoming reckless, and are much annoyed at the movements in favour of

Harrison.⁴ This is but the beginning of their troubles. They will I think before all is over be heartily sick of the unholy attempt they are making to transfer & betray the state into the hands of her political enemies. I have given you thus frankly and undisguisedly, a brief view of the *political currents* in Tennessee, as I understand them. I had intended long since to have done so, in reply to your esteemed favour of the 22nd May,⁵ for which permit me now to thank you. I neglected it at the moment and a severe indisposition almost ever since our election in August, has delayed it until now. As I do not write for the public, but for your personal satisfaction, I have given very freely and unreservedly my views and opinions, and shall be happy to learn from you, what you understand to be the present political aspect of affairs in the North & East. I do not doubt however, but that all is right in that quarter. I am glad to see the proper spirit prevailing among your people against the abolitionists. The enemies of *Van-Buren* in the South & West would use that question against us if they could. In this state, the leaders are reckless enough to seize upon any means to affect their purposes.

You will please make the kind Respects of Mrs. Polk and myself to *Mrs. Vanderpoel* whom we hope to have the pleasure of meeting again at Washington in December. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I promise to be more prompt in reply to your next letter.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Kinderhook, New York, and marked "Private." This letter is in the New York State Library.

1. Aaron Vanderpoel, a Democrat of Kinderhook, New York, served in the House of Representatives 1833-37 and 1839-41. After leaving the House he moved to New York City and retired from politics.

2. See Henry W. Connor to Polk, August 17, 1835.

3. It is not clear which five newspapers Polk meant here. Efforts were afoot to place friendly ones in Pulaski, Shelbyville, and Athens, Alabama. It is likely that Polk considered the papers in McMinnville and Murfreesboro "sound" and there had been talk of changing editors in other towns.

4. It was generally understood that General William Henry Harrison was a candidate for the presidency. Meetings in support of his candidacy were being held at various places in the north and west.

5. This letter has not been found.

FROM HENRY L. ELLSWORTH¹

[illegible]

Permit me to congratulate you on your election and also on the prospects before us. I feel a deep interest in your welfare and hope your high efforts will be duly appreciated. I have addressed each of our Representatives from Conn. urging them to be here in person and expressing to them all, the strong desire manifested by the democratic party to support yourself for speaker. I believe you will succeed, but should the party after conference here agree to sustain any other one, I know your cheerful acquiescence to the will of the majority.

Give my kind regards to Mrs P & accept my best wishes for you and yours.

HENRY L. ELLSWORTH

Addressed to Columbia. The address was given correctly on the envelope but at the bottom of the letter it was written "Columbia, Kentucky."

1. A son of Oliver Ellsworth, he had been appointed in 1832 as a special Indian Agent to supervise the resettlement of Indians south and west of Arkansas. Earlier in 1835 he had become the first Superintendent of the Patent Office, a position he held for ten years.

2. Ellsworth did not indicate the year on his letter. The 1835 date was assigned at the Library of Congress. The correctness of the date is attested to by the material in the letter.

TO ALFRED FLOURNOY

My dear Sir: Columbia, Sept, 14, 1835

Yours of the 10th, but postmarked on the 13th, was not received until today. I hope you will meet with no difficulties in effecting the arrangement of which you speak. In all conflicts such as that upon which we have just entered, no party can fight with hope of success, when all the fortresses, all the army and ammunition are in possession of the enemy. I can add nothing to impress the importance you know I attach to this matter, still I fear and feel sensibly that all those of us who do not agree to surrender at dissention, and give up our principles, will have many burdens and difficulties to encounter.¹

You are aware of my opinions, my dear Sir, and I cannot insist further than I have done. If you choose to go two parts, you will have nothing to do but to let me know it, and I will liquidate one of them, and the transaction so far as I am concerned, *will rest between you and myself, alone*. I hope the matter will not fall through for you may rely upon it, if it does, the battery will be turned upon you by our enemies.

You ask me what impression the Judge [White] made here. I think none, except that some of the scourgings who saw him think he does not look much more like a great man than other folks. *John Randolph's* remark made in my presence once, may be applied to the Judge in this instance—“*great men are always greatest at a distance.*”

Mr. Speaker Bell was escorted out in the stage on yesterday by *T. Jeff Porter*² and is now here. This is the first day of County Court and of course a great many people were out. He was attended all day by my old bitter political enemies about this town—and shown and introduced to the people as a great man. He has, I understand, no business. The object of his visit is doubtless political—and for my especial benefit. They are treating up to give him a public dinner, and are getting anybody they can to sign a paper to that effect, and you know how easy it is to get people to sign papers of almost any kind. The object is political effect, and to make the impression at a distance, if they can, that even in my district he is a powerful man. He wishes to have me disparaged if he can in the estimation of persons at a distance, by that means, hopes to prevent me from being run against him as Speaker. At home I am at his [. . .].³ The movement here is by my political enemies exclusively, of whom I have for years asked no favors. There are enough of them, however, to make a show upon paper, and by offering him a public dinner, they hope to affect me in the state, but more especially out of it—by making the impression that he is in truth the greatest man in all Tennessee.

As he is upon an electionering tour, I think it probably (though I am not in their secrets) that he will pass on in your direction. He may wish to see your [. . .] or at all events have the *modus operandi* of the Cassedy letter brought to bear upon him.

Judge Kennedy is of course very busy and the object will be to make a great parade. Though I understand full well that *his visit, at this time*, has been by consent with my political enemies, and is for my special benefit, I am "*calm as a summer's evening*". My reliance is not upon the village politicians, but upon the *real people*, who have never failed to sustain me, and I have no reason to fear that they will do so, as long as I do my duty.

Of course this letter is intended for your own eyes and, when its contents are duly noted, for the flames.

This sea of politics is troubled water, is it not?

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. My health is improving slowly.

Hon. T. P. Moore of Ky. was in town last night and took tea with me. He says Ky. will go for Van against any man but Clay and that as to Judge White, he has no party in the state and will have no ticket there. He offers to back his judgment on these opinions.⁴

Addressed to Pulaski and marked "Private and Confidential." The original of this letter has not been found. Typed copies have been located at the Library of Congress and at the Louisiana State University Archives.

1. This refers to the efforts of Flournoy and others to get a newspaper started in Pulaski. See Flournoy to Polk, August 26 and September 10, 1835, and Aaron V. Brown to Polk, August 27, 1835.

2. Thomas Jefferson Porter, a member of an old family in Columbia, was not politically friendly to Polk. In 1833 he had entered the congressional race in an attempt to split the Maury County vote and thereby permit Theodorick F. Bradford to win. Porter attracted few votes and Polk won by a large margin.

3. At two points both typescripts indicate that a part of the original letter had been torn away. The ellipses are used herein to note the places where the manuscript was torn.

4. The three sentences concerning Moore were written on a separate page, according to the two typescripts.

FROM BROMFIELD L. RIDLEY¹

Dr Sir

McMinnville Sept. 14th 35

Shall Judge White be permitted to walk over the track without a competitor? I mean, is there no man having temerity enough to enter the lists with him for the honourable appointment of Senator?

I suppose that a large majority of the ensuing Legislature will support Judge White for the Presidency. But I trust I may be excused for saying that *you* could beat him for the Senate with John Bell thrown in as a make weight.

In this Country we go for Jas K. Polk for the Senate, for the Speakership or any thing he may ask, the great *John B. Forrester to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding.*

Will you be in Nashville about the 1st Monday in October? I assure you Sir it would afford me great pleasure to support you for the Senate. My Colleague² too is surely your friend & I *believe* the whole Mountain District. Being a Stranger to you (I mean personally) I can not expect an Answer to this letter.³ In truth you may consider it very much out of place. But you know "from the fullness of the heart the tongue speaketh."

We go here for Van Buren against the world on the broad ground of superior tallents & equal purity to any of his competitors. We believe besides that there is no candidate who will so certainly perfect or carry out the policy of the present Administration.

BROMFIELD L. RIDLEY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A lawyer in McMinnville who was a graduate of the University of North Carolina. He had just been elected to the lower house of the state legislature. This was his only term in an elective office. Later he helped found the Lebanon Law School and was for a time professor of law there. He moved to Murfreesboro in 1840 and from that time until 1861 he was judge of the chancery court.

2. Woodson Northcutt had just been re-elected to the lower house of the legislature, where he served 1833-40. Later he moved to Mississippi and then to Alabama. He was elected to the Alabama legislature, serving 1845-49.

3. Polk noted on the envelope that he answered this letter on September 22, 1835, but that reply has not been located.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

Dr Col,

Washington Septbr 15th 1835

Your letter of the 2nd instant¹ was recd. this morning, and as Major Donelson is writing you, I think it proper to add to the suggestions in his letter, that I have sent to Governor Car-

roll, an outline of resolutions believed to be best suited for the occasion. The Govr. if you approach him confidentially, will shew them to you. You can ask him if he has not prepared some resolutions for the occasion and he will shew them to you, or it may be you will find them in the hand of Major J. C. Guild as the Governor intimated that the Major would be selected to present them.²

You must be at Nashville some days before the assembly meets, every arrangement ought to be made, and as soon as the House is formed the resolutions ought to be offered, or the opposition will forestall you by a set prepared for their own pallate. Be prompt and do not permit yourselves to be out generalled. The first blow is half the battle, and as they are preparing to elect a senator, these resolutions being presented will strike terror & confusion in their ranks, produce a panic, and blow up all their digested arrangements, and will add all the doubting members to your ranks. Let me repeat, your success depends upon your prompt movement in this business, and may thereby obtain a united vote, at least a large majority. Let not the Whiggs into your plans and the surprise will be the greater and success the surer. I will tomorrow send to Governor Carroll the Book containing the last two years Extra Globe in which you will find all Bentons and others speeches & Mr Tanys³ report &c which may be usefull reference on this occasion. Let not a moment pass before the resolutions are presented. They must be discussed before a senator is elected. If Major Guild will take a bold & energetic stand and if necessary, call *all* things by their proper names, he will prostrate the opposition. The people are beginning to ask why are we in such a situation, who has produced it. If the Major will answer this question and expose it to the people there will be a revulsion such as never has been seen before in Tennessee.

You must be here some days before the meeting of Congress. The New England states will sustain you. There must be a meeting of the friends of the administration & select the candidate for Speaker and elect him the first ballott. When you read & note burn this. With my best wishes to you & Mrs Polk I bid you adieu.

ANDREW JACKSON

Marked "Private and Confidential," this letter seems to have been enclosed in a letter from Andrew Jackson Donelson, addressed to Polk in Tennessee. It has been published in Bassett, editor, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, V, 365-366.

1. No Polk to Jackson letter bearing this date has been found.
2. The proposed resolutions would instruct the Tennessee senators to vote for Benton's Expunging Resolution. Since White was up for re-election and had voted against the Expunging Resolution before, he would be in an embarrassing position.
3. This perhaps refers to Roger B. Taney's report concerning removal of the deposits from the Bank of the United States. The report was made while Taney was Secretary of the Treasury in Jackson's cabinet. He became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court a few months after this letter was written.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr Sir

Bolivar Sept 16, 1835

I am this far on my way to Mississippi. I came by this place for the purpose of getting Clothing & Leather. I am taking down a *gin*. I could not get a Gin Either in Somerville or Brownsville¹ made. I have taken the one I had at my farm but am to get one at *Brownsville* by the time I will need one. I found Mr. [Claudius C.] Jones sick and some of the Negroes. Jones is very sick yet, not able to attend to business, and three of the negroes. There is a great deal of sickness in this County and a great many *deaths*. Our Cotton & Corn Crop in Haywood is tolerable good. They have commenced picking Cotton but the hands on the place will not be sufficient to pick out the Cotton. I expect to bring up four or five hands from below. I dont expect Jones will go to Mississippi. I have No Idea of employing Beanland. I should like for you to see Mr. *Odle* who is living with *Fountain Wade* who is the son in Law of Mr Henry Pointer.² If Wade has not employd him for the next year I think he can be got on good terms, and am told he is a good Overseer. We want a man to go to *Mi*. I expect he can be got for \$250 or \$300 or at most \$350. As consequence of so much sickness I have not had time to see *Glass*³ about that money. I expect to see him when I return. I expect to be gone to *Mi* fifteen or Eighteen days. I have got no letter from you. Write to me to Somerville. I expect to return that way. I understood you have had *President White* at Co-

lumbia, that he visited [Peter R.] Booker, P. W. Porter & David Looney.⁴ Very suitable company for him I expect, *Nulification* &c. I don't expect to be at home before the 15 of Octo. Tell Eliza⁵ *I am well*.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Somerville was the county seat of Fayette County, where Polk had owned a plantation. Brownsville was the county seat of Haywood County where Polk and Caldwell had a plantation.

2. Henry Pointer and Daniel Fountain Wade were prominent farmers in the Spring Hill area. Much of Pointer's land lay in Williamson County. John Odle (or Odil) lived in the same vicinity, but aside from the fact that he was an overseer nothing has been learned about him.

3. A person named Glass had owed Polk some money for some months and it is possible that it was Robert Glass, a resident of La Grange who had formerly lived in Maury County.

4. These men were prominent in business circles in Columbia and were among Polk's local political enemies. Parry W. Porter was a brother of Thomas J. Porter. David Looney, son of Abram Looney, had married a daughter of Patrick Maguire.

5. Eliza Polk Caldwell, wife of the writer, was visiting in Columbia at this time.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville Sept. 16th [1835]¹

I know you will be gratified to hear that I have been for two days past almost rid of my disease & begin to hope that I shall soon be well. I have been on foot two days & given up medicines, prescriptions &c, even the steam doctor's composition &c have been thrown into the fire.

I have every reason to believe that I shall have no political troubles in future, if I am inclined to continue longer in Congress. From hints I can occasionally hear I think Maj. B[oling] G[ordon] will be against us unless *you can save him*.

Genl Terry² wrote me to the city to pay you his note if I bring it to him. Send me the note & I will get you the money.

I have not heard from Ben Harden yet. Remember me with my respects to Madam.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. In the Library of Congress this letter was assigned to 1836. Internal evidence, however, points convincingly to 1835 as the proper date.
2. George W. Terrell.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir

Columbia Sept. 17th 1835

Enclosed I send you \$5. for subscription to the Tri-weekly Union, to be sent to *Mr. Lemuel Phillips*¹ at this place. Please send also the Weekly Union to *John W. Record Esqr*² directed to *Macon P.O.*³ *Bedford County Te.* Esqr Record promises me to get you a handsome list in a few days & forward to you. Mjr. [John H.] Rivers of Giles & Col. Wm. Son⁴ Smith of this county will both do the same things. I am, as I am able to get out among the people, setting my particular friends to work. I hope they will get you many subscribers.

Bell is still here & they are still [. . .] up for a dinner. I think it probable however that it will be a *paper* & not an *eating* dinner at last. It is for effect abroad. I will certainly be in Nashville on Wednesday next if I do not have another relapse to prevent it. Did you write the letter I suggested to Blair?

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Nashville, although no envelope has been found. This letter is in the Huntington Library.

1. Phillips moved to Maury County about 1817. He was a merchant in Columbia and also operated a tannery.
2. Formerly a justice of the peace in Maury County, Record had moved to Bedford. When Marshall County was created he was the first trustee of that county. He was probably a close kinsman of James C. Record, but the exact relationship has not been determined.
3. Established in 1830, this Post Office was discontinued in 1836.
4. Polk often used this abbreviation for Williamson.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia Tenn. Sept. 22nd 1835

By some derangement in the mails, your letter of the 28th August, did not arrive here until to day. My letter to you, of

date some two weeks ago,¹ anticipated most of your inquiries, and substantially answered them, as regards the Speakership. I heard from Governor [Clement C.] Clay of Alabama a few days ago. He is sound to the core, and gives it as his opinion that Alabama will without doubt go for Van Buren. From other sources of information too, I have not a remaining doubt on that point. From what I learn *three* certainly, and perhaps *four* of the delegation elect to Congress from that State, will be right as regards the Speakership, as well as in all other matters. I saw Dr [Alfred] *Flournoy* a few days ago who tells me that [Ebenezer J.] *Shields* declares his intention to vote for me against any body else, but that if I am not a candidate he will vote for Bell next. I have now no doubt about *Huntsman*, and *Dunlap & Johnson* you know are my friends. [Abram P.] *Maury* as far as I can learn has declined saying what he will do. It is said he dislikes Bell personally and if he votes for him, he will probably do so, under the influence of Whiteism in his District. I think it uncertain how he will vote. You request me to give you confidentially my calculations in regard to my strength in the next Congress. I have received many letters from members of the House, and think my prospects most flattering, greatly more so than they were in the former contest. Indeed I do not see any thing to prevent my success unless the scheme of our enemies here of which I fully informed you in my last, shall be made to operate so as to produce confusion in our ranks, which I think can and will be prevented. Since my last T. P. Moore of Ky. has been here, who tells me that the five Jackson members in that State are looking to me as the man. He says further that two of the others, *Calhoun & Hardin*² (the former of whom is not he says a full-blooded opposition man) will not vote for Bell. Within the last week I have received letters from Governor [John] *Reynolds* of Illinois and Genl. *Carr*³ of Indiana, assuring me that the delegations of those states will support me, unless it be perhaps *McCarty* of Inda who is supposed to be in feeling an opposition man. I had previously received similar letters from Genl. *Ward*⁴ of N.Y. and others, who have written to me voluntarily and without having been addressed by me. If any of the members elect of *our party*, are looking to any body else, I have not the slightest intimation of it. If the N. York delega-

tion who are numerous will not hesitate and divide as they did before, but will take their stand in time, it will beyond all question settle the matter. Yourself and other friends can see to this. And as *Ward & Vanderpoel* particularly from that State have written to me, they might be addressed, and also such others as you might think right upon the subject.

In the South and West all will be right. *Mr Bell* you will see, has lately made a political visit to this place. He and my enemies & the enemies of the administration, have had the [. . .] chiefly to themselves. His visit has operated badly upon himself as well as the cause he espouses. Every body understands that I was the object aimed at. The tendency of it has been to rouse my friends, and to reduce the *White* strength to that of *Mr B.* which is very small here. They now see it, but it is too late to remedy the mischief. You will see an account of it in "*The Democrat*". His letter more effectually removes the mask, than any thing he has ever done. The re-action continues here, & has ruined a rumor imputed from *Mr B's* visit. All understand that it was to affect me abroad by making a show of strength for him upon paper by my *old enemies*. If the *Globe* will properly expose it, it will perform an acceptable service to our friends here, and help our cause in this quarter. My opinion is that *old Maury* would tomorrow give *Van Buren* a majority of her votes, and before the election I have not a remaining doubt but that that majority will be overwhelming. I have the most flattering accounts, from letters received from some of the members of the Legislature elect, from the mountain District and the Tennessee River country, with whom I have lately held a correspondence upon the subject of the *expunging Resolutions*, and our course generally. *Nicholson* one of our representatives, who is a man of talents, and a good debater, will take an active part on that question, has his preamble and resolutions already in course of preparation, and will if no other does, himself introduce them. They will be correctly pressed and I think with success. My health has continued so bad, that I have not yet got out from home. Within the last few days however, it is much improved, & I shall on tomorrow go to Nashville. Make our kind respects to Mrs. D. & the President.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S.⁵ After *Mr Bell* on his late visit here, had declined the dinner offered him, as it was no doubt *previously understood by the managers* he was to do, knowing as they did, full well, that a dinner attempted here would turn out to be "a niggardly account of empty bases." A few of the leaders got up an informal, though public dinner at one of the taverns by themselves, attended by persons of their own politics and everybody else they could induce from curiosity or any other motive to join them, at which toasts were drank &c. The general character of the toasts I am told was in opposition to Genl. Jackson & his administration. One of these is likely to produce great excitement here, as I am sure it ought and believe it will throughout the Union. It is publicly spoken of and is reported to me, by two gentlemen of character & respectability who attended the dinner more from curiosity than to do honour to *Mr Bell*. It is as follows, viz, "*When Tennessee furnishes a Caesar who dictates to the people, she will also furnish a Brutus.*" This infamous sentiment was I understand given by *Judge Kennedy* and was loudly cheered by most of those present. Judge Kennedy is the blood-relation of *Mr Bell* (a cousin I believe), and is the same gentleman who a year or two ago applied to Genl. Jackson for the appointment of Federal Judge for the District of West Tennessee. Our community as far as the fact that such a toast was given are most indignant and highly excited. The infatuation, and I may say the desperation of the *White* leaders here, exceeds any thing I have ever witnessed. *Mr Bell's* visit here though intended for my especial benefit, will I think be the death blow to the hopes of himself and his party minions in Tennessee, and is perhaps the most fortunate incident that could have occurred, because it exhibits them in their true character. The *toast*, will be properly noticed in the *Democrat*. We are resolved that the whole affair with all its incidents shall be spread before the public.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. This letter has not been found.
2. John Calhoun, a lawyer from Hardinsburg, served, 1835-39, as a Whig in the House of Representatives. Benjamin Hardin, a veteran of Kentucky

politics, had been in the House of Representatives as early as 1815, and was about to begin his fifth term in that body.

3. John Carr had fought in the Battle of Tippecanoe and for many years ranked high in the Indiana militia. A Jackson presidential elector in 1824, he had been elected to Congress, serving 1831-37 and 1839-41. Jonathan McCarty became an outright Whig and was a Harrison elector in 1840.

4. A Westchester County lawyer, Aaron Ward had long been prominent in the state militia. He served as a Democrat for six nonconsecutive terms in the House of Representatives, 1825-29, 1831-37, and 1841-43.

5. In some way this postscript was separated from the letter. In the Library of Congress it was tentatively given the date September 23, 1836. The account of Judge Kennedy's toast which was given in 1835 makes it clear that the postscript belongs to this letter.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr Sir,

Washington Sept. 24th 1835

I have received your confidential letter stating your suspicions of the source from which Mr. Bell derives a knowledge of what is going on in the Presidents house.¹ You are not alone in those suspicions. The man you name is just fit for such an espionage, but I do not think he can deceive the President any longer, or injure the true friends of his administration. He is understood, and has had his day.

In relation to the Speakers chair all the friends of the administration who have spoken to me, are of the opinion that the will of the majority should be the will of the whole when it is fairly ascertained. No opportunity will be lost to strengthen this as the only resort in the power of our friends to defeat the intrigues of the opposition and insure harmony and good will in our political ranks. Bell will no doubt prefer the election of any one sooner than yours; the more active he is against you the better. Honest men will be the more sure of being right when they ascertain that they are about to disappoint a character so damned with treachery and intrigue as Bell's is. As I stated before you should see that our friends are apprized of the necessity of being here early in the session.

I suspected when Lewis represented [Abram P.] Maury as extreme in his opposition, that the reverse would turn out to be true; and that he was more to be relied on than [Robert] Jet-

Hickman thanking my constituents for what they have done and could not therefore comply with your request to meet you in Nashville. I am anxious to see you & will do so before I go on. My present calculation is to take the stage at Nashville about the 20th of Oct. with Dunlap & Shields. Should you not be in Nashville about that time I will come out to Columbia. I wish to go to Dover tomorrow.

I have already anticipated your wishes & spoken to several of our friends upon the subject & shall write to several others to day. The only fear I have upon the subject is that our friends else where may consider Tennessee lost & be desirous of adding to our strength elsewhere by taking up a different person. The truth is *B* ought to be beaten & *by you* & I shall press that subject as far as I can upon them. It is believed, that Hickman, Humphreys & Dickson will give Van Buren a majority under any circumstances.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. At the Library of Congress this letter was tentatively assigned to 1836. The content, however, indicates 1835 as a more logical guess.

TO FELIX ROBERTSON ET AL.¹

Gentlemen

Nashville September 26th 1835

I have had the honor to receive your letter of yesterday inviting me to partake of a public dinner at Vauxhall, at such time as may suit my convenience.² I cannot but be sensible that I am indebted, more for the distinguished honor you have conferred, to that anxious solicitude which you in common with the Democratic party in other portions of the Union feel, for the continued success of that policy in the future administration of the Federal Government, which we approve, than to any public services it has been in my power to render.

You are kind enough in your note to say that I "have boldly done my duty regardless of consequences to myself." I should have done nothing else. He who is a public agent, must act alone for those he represents, regardless of considerations personal

to himself, or he incurs the danger of jeopardizing the high interests confided to his care. In sustaining, as I hope I have done, with "fidelity" the "leading measures of the present administration," I have only to regret that my ability to do so, has not been equal to my zeal. Not to have "faultered in my political course," was only firmly to discharge a duty, which I owed to my constituents and to the country, and to have been "silent" when it was my "duty to speak," would have been a dereliction of that duty.

You allude in terms far exceeding any humble merit of mine, to the feeble efforts I have made to vindicate the "character and conduct of the present illustrious chief magistrate," when "he has been wantonly assailed by his enemies." As the personal and political friend of that venerable patriot, who has spent a long life of public usefulness in his country's service, I should have esteemed myself recreant as a man, and unfaithful to the trust confided to me, had I permitted the calumnies of his enemies to have passed unrepelled.

You speak of my opposition to "a recharter of the Bank of the United States," and commend the course I have pursued in relation to that institution. My opinion has always been, that the existing Bank was unconstitutional, inexpedient, and dangerous to the liberties of the country; and all the investigations which have taken place, and all the arguments I have heard, have only tended to strengthen and confirm these opinions; nor can I see how a substitute can be provided, which would be free from the like objections. Experience has proved moreover, that such an institution, wielding, as it does, an immense power, in its most dangerous and corrupting form, is neither necessary as a fiscal agent, as a regulator of currency, or as affording those commercial facilities, which may not be otherwise as conveniently, and as cheaply obtained, and that it may therefore be safely and properly dispensed with even though the power of Congress to create such a corporation were conceded.

In having been the "consistent friend of the present administration and its principles," it has given me pleasure to co-incide in opinion, and to act with that political party, which was formed prior to the election of Mr Jefferson, and brought

him into power, and which has existed as a distinct party, through all political changes down to this time. If the principles of this party, which have elevated our country to a degree of prosperity, unparalelled at any other time, or in any other country, are to be abandoned, then the course of those, whether secret or open enemies, of this party who would disband and overthrow it ought to be followed. If however, the fruits of the course of policy pursued by this party are peace, plenty and contentment at home, and a national character abroad, which has secured for our country and Government the respect, if not the admiration of all mankind, then should it be preserved as the safest, if not the only means of sustaining the great principles which have produced such beneficial results.

In all free Government parties must exist. They have existed in all countries and at all times, where freedom of thought and of action were tolerated. They are the natural and necessary consequences of freedom of opinion. In our own country, they commenced prior to the Revolution, and continued through that perilous struggle. They existed under the Confederation, and have continued to exist from the moment the Government was organized under the present Constitution. So long as our system of Government is preserved parties must and will continue to exist. It is only when despotism commences that they can cease to be. It has been the boast and the pride of the people of Republican Tennessee, that our State has at all times since she was admitted into the Union formed a part, and for many years past has been a prominent member, of a great political party, the Republican party, the party who support "the present administration and its principles," the party to which *we* belong. This party is no mere faction, whose highest object is the advancement of favourite political leaders, but is composed of a large majority of the people of the Union, is based upon certain well defined political tenets, and recognizes as its motto "principles not men." To this party, Gentlemen, we belong. And I cannot permit myself to doubt, but that the Republican people of Tennessee, will still continue to be *adhering members of this same great political party*, to which they have so long and so consistently belonged; nor can I believe that they will, in the pending contest for the Presidency,

be found associated with their old political enemies, *Old Federalists, Nationals, Nullifiers & Modern Whigs*, all though discordant with each other, entertaining opinions in direct hostility to *our* principles, and as we believe, to the true interests of the country, in their recent unhallowed efforts to divide to conquer and to overthrow us.

I cannot believe that Tennessee, though she be regarded at a distance as the debateable ground in this contest, (in which is involved the preservation of the integrity of this party) and at this moment may occupy the most exposed position in the Republican ranks, will finally separate herself from her old political friends and principles, for the sake of any man or set of men. We have in this contest, the continuance and united support of the great body of Republicans, in every other State in the Union, and every day furnishes new evidences that the mass of the people of Tennessee, who are known to be sternly Republican, require only to see distinctly the danger consequent on a division in our ranks, to induce them to act out practically, their principles. It cannot be unknown that a portion of the opposition, to the present administration, and to the Republican party, were among the first to suggest, and have been since the most zealous and active in the promotion of those divisions with which we are now threatened. Being unwilling to do any act, which might tend to break up or disturb the integrity of this party, the Republican party, to which we belong, and with a sincere desire to avoid the state of things which now exists, and which I thought I foresaw was likely to be produced, I did not hesitate during the past winter to assume the position I now occupy. It is the position of principle. I am still acting upon my old principles, and with a vast majority of my old political friends with whom I do now, and have ever agreed in opinion. I have not changed my position, or any political opinion upon which I have ever acted. I have compromised no principle, nor can I act with those who have broken off and seceded from the body of the Republican party, and assumed a position which cannot operate otherwise (though by many, that effect is doubtless not intended) than in aid of the adversaries of our principles, who being in a minority are "willing to destroy the landmarks of Republicanism," who seek

to efface the lines which have hitherto separated Federalists and Republicans, and to organize upon the ruins of *the Republican party*, by an unnatural amalgamation of political leaders of discordant principles and opinions, a *New Party*, called by whatever name, whether by that of the "*No-Party*" party, or any other, when the necessary and inevitable consequences must be the destruction of those principles we hold dear. If the object of this amalga[ma]tion & new organization be, as is sometimes professed, to put an end to the existence of and asperity of party, it cannot be attained, for of what avail is it, to break up and destroy our party, the *Republican party* and erect upon its ruins another, the "*No party*" party, which judging from the indications we have seen, from some of the leaders of this *new party*, is likely to be in Tennessee at least, more intolerant than any other party which has ever existed amongst us.

With my opinions, I could have no participation, in any act, which was to operate so disastrously to our cause, and I am happy Gentlemen! to find that your opinions accord with my own; that you approve my "public course," and are resolved to adhere to the old land marks of the Republican party, and to continue to be the "consistent friends of the present administration and its principles." If the present effort could succeed, and a new amalgamation of parties could take place, the immediate result, it is apprehended would be, to place the Government in the hands of our political adversaries, adversaries maintaining wholly different opinions from our own, not only upon every leading measure of the present administration, but upon all those fundamental questions which have heretofore divided our country into parties. This once effected, and the task of wresting the power from them will be much more difficult, than by proper precautions, taken in time, to prevent the disaster. If our political adversaries could succeed in the present contest, it is of little consequence, by what party name they may be called, whether *Federalists*, *Nationals* or *Modern Whigs* (all of which they have at different periods assumed) or by the new name of the "*No Party*," party; their principles will be abiding. Names may be changed, but principles will remain. *Old Federalists* will be *Old Federalists* still. But Gentlemen! there can be no

danger of the overthrow of the great party to which we belong, and with it the principles we cherish. The democracy of the country, the *real people*, as contra distinguished from selfish or interested political leaders who would deceive them, are every where true to themselves and to their principles, and it is only necessary for them to understand the arts and designs of their enemies to guard against them and they will I doubt not, be found to be the consistent friends of the present administration and its principles, and finally in the pending contest, act together as one man in selecting a successor, who will tread in the footsteps of the present illustrious chief magistrate, and perfect and carry out the measures and principles of his administration which he has so gloriously begun.

Deeply impressed by the favourable opinion of my public course, expressed by so respectable a portion of my fellow citizens of Nashville and its vicinity, I have to return to you my sincere acknowledgements, and to assure you, it would give me unfeigned pleasure to accept your invitation to dine, but that I have recently been visited by severe indisposition, and the state of my health (though now much improved) is such as to compel me to decline it.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville. This is a copy, in Polk's handwriting, obviously prepared for publication. It is in The Free Library of Philadelphia.

1. At the bottom of this manuscript appears a list of the names of those for whom it was meant. They are: Felix Robertson, Robert Weakley, George Crockett, George S. Smith, James P. Grundy, and Samuel H. Laughlin. Polk added at the end of this list "&c &c," which indicated that the original list was longer than the one given here.

2. This letter of invitation has not been found.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My dear Sir,

Washington Sept. 29th 1835

I wrote a letter to Mr. Laughlin yesterday intended to be published and which appeared to me to be necessary to put myself *right* in the estimation of those who are really desirous of seeing the cause of truth and justice vindicated. Examine it,

and if it strikes you or Mr. Grundy as unnecessary or injudicious, you are authorised to prevent its publication.¹ I could say more of the Kepps affair² if entirely at liberty, but it is mixed up with other matters which at present I must not touch.

Bell is a great rascal. He is the prompter of these vile attacks upon me. I reserve therefore for him much that is yet unsaid about the Nashville junta.

Let me hear from you. Affairs here are tranquil. The President is well and is in good spirits.

A. J. DONELSON

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private."

1. This letter appeared in the Nashville *Union* on October 16, 1835.

2. On January 25, 1831, James Krepps, a member of the state senate of Pennsylvania, wrote Andrew Jackson Donelson a letter saying that the people of Pennsylvania wanted Jackson to be re-elected and asking whether it might be advisable for the legislature to ask Jackson for his consent to serve a second term. On January 29, 1831, Donelson replied to Krepps, saying that the Washington *Globe* had printed a statement by Jackson clearly indicating that he was already a candidate for re-election. This letter from Donelson to Krepps went out under the President's frank, and at this time the opposition was using this fact as a partial basis for their accusations that both Jackson and Donelson were guilty of misuse of the franking privilege. A copy of Donelson's letter to Krepps, certified as a true copy by Krepps himself, was also published in the *Union* of October 16, 1835.

FROM CHARLES D. McLEAN

Dear Sir,

Near Memphis, Ten. October 2d 1835

Until within a few days, I anticipated the pleasure of seeing you in Columbia before you left for Washington City, but as I cannot do so conveniently, I must, by letter, tender you my congratulations on your re-election to Congress, and the warmest wishes of my heart for the success of our republican friends for President and V.P.

I *discontinued* my Banner some time ago, because I saw that [George C.] Childress would go over to the opposition, which he has done, and with him, I hope the *oscilating* Banner, under which he professes to fight. And as misery loves company, I hope his quandam cotemporary, [Washington] Barrow, will share the same fate.

Our old friend Adam R. Alexander is struggling for Judge White, but it is a death like grapple, for since Harrison is brought out, a re-action is going on among the common people, and before the Election, White will be in the minority in Shelby county. The Col. is to be the *White* candidate for Elector.

Mr. Bell has recently overloaded our Western mail, with his Vaux Hall speech.¹

I want you, Johnson, Dunlap, Grundy and our other friends to keep on the look out, for Whites friends have been furnished with a list of our leading men, and every mail will bring something to prejudice the people.

The *real* Jackson men in this quarter, are unshaken in their confidence in the old Chief, and all that we can do, is to meet the enemy, and war with them to the knife.

I will be happy to hear from you, when at Washington.

I went my whole length for Dunlap, and look for him to give our folks a hearty co-operation in the good cause.

Mrs McLean sends her love to Mrs Polk.

C. D. McLEAN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. In a speech delivered at Vauxhall Gardens, Nashville, on May 23, 1835, John Bell had explained his course of action regarding his relationship with Jackson. He claimed to be a Jackson man but not enough so to have Martin Van Buren forced upon the people of Tennessee, who much preferred Hugh L. White. This speech has been said to mark the real beginning of the anti-Jackson revolt in Tennessee politics.

TO FRANCIS P. BLAIR¹

Dear Sir

Columbia Tenn. Oct 3rd 1835

The Editor of the "*Murfreesborough Tenn. Monitor*"² complained to me the other day that you had declined or failed to send him your paper in exchange. He is a man of some talents, and with some encouragement will be ardent in our cause. Without letting him know that I intended it, I determined to request you to forward to him the *Tri-weekly Globe* in exchange, and I will pay the difference in subscription. His paper is lo-

cated in an important part of the state, and cannot fail to be useful to us.

The truth is, the greatest difficulty with which we have heretofore had to contend, grows out of the fact, that almost every press in the State, has been until recently, in the hands of the opposition, the *new party* which has sprung up amongst us. To correct this has been an object of anxious solicitude with me, for some weeks past. We have already partially succeeded. I am *confidentially* advised that the *Pulaski Beacon*³ (a White-paper which has been lately discontinued for want of patronage) is now in proper hands and will shortly appear under proper colours. Our friends in Bedford are making an effort to induce the "*Western Freeman*" (in my District) to take the proper course, and I hope with good prospects of success. Should they fail they are resolved to establish a new press at that place. The paper at Clarksville (Cave Johnson's residence) I am *confidentially* advised will shortly be right. I have written to confidential friends in other parts of the State upon the same subject. All we want to secure success, are the proper organs through which to convey the truth to the people. It is impossible for any party to fight with any reasonable hope of victory, when all the [. . .] and arms and ammunition are in the hands of the enemy. This we have felt severely during the past summer. I am getting up and will endeavour to bring on with me a handsome list for the *Globe*. Since the establishment of the "*Democrat*" here, astonishing changes have taken place. The *real people* are speaking out. *Mr Bell's* late visit here is operating admirably for our cause. A more fortunate incident could not have happened for us. The *toast*⁴ of his cousin Judge Kennedy is received with great indignation and has produced great excitement. The Judge in his rage entered the "*Democrat*" office attended by his friends a few days since, and attempted to cane the Editor.⁵ He met with a suitable reception and was unceremoniously thrust from the office, without effecting his object. The offense of the Editor seems to have been the *publication of the truth*. It is confidently asserted that the toast as originally published in the "*Democrat*" was the one actually given, but if it was not, the version of it now given by the Judge himself, makes the matter no better.⁶ The Judge is ready to do any of

Bell's work, but is powerless in this quarter. He deserves to be severely handled. We [. . .]' as you can readily imagine highly [. . .] act on principle, and though we will have [. . .] fight, calculate certainly on victory.

I am on the eve of setting out for Nashville, where I will be for several days at the opening of the Session.

This letter is of course intended for yourself and not for the press.

Do not fail to send your paper in exchange to the "*Monitor*" at Murfreesboro. It will encourage the Editor; and rely upon our best exertions in the pending contest. We will I think give a good account of ourselves in the final struggle.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Will you cause a copy of the Journal of the last session of the Senate, to be forwarded to *A. O. P. Nicholson Esqr* at Nashville. He is a member of the Legislature & is right.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private and Confidential." This letter is in the Princeton University Library.

1. Blair was editor of the politically influential *Washington Globe* from 1830 until 1845.

2. Edwin A. Keeble.

3. Alston B. Estes, A. O. P. Nicholson's cousin, was the editor.

4. The version given by the *Columbia Democrat* of the toast proposed by Judge William E. Kennedy was: "When Tennessee furnishes a CAESAR who dictates to the people, she will also furnish a BRUTUS."

5. Although the paper listed Chesley Bynum as editor, the editorials generally were covertly written by James Walker and Andrew C. Hays.

6. Kennedy claimed that the toast he actually offered was: "When a Caesar shall appear in our country, to usurp our liberties, Tennessee will furnish a Brutus to redress her wrongs."

7. A tear in the manuscript at this point has removed a word or two from each of three lines.

FROM FRANKLIN PIERCE¹

Dear Sir Hillsborough, N. Hampshire. October 8th 1835

I had the honor to receive a few days since on my return from the September Session of the Court in this County a copy

of the "Tennessee Democrat" under your frank.² Its perusal afforded me much pleasure. The sentiments which it embodies are spirited and duly patriotic—worthy of a State, which has hitherto stood preeminently high for its talents, its chivalry and its firm adherence to Democratic principles. Your able speech or rather the synopsis of it will be read by your friends & the *real* friends of the Administration throughout the County with unqualified approbation. The result of the elections in Virginia Connecticut and Rhode Island I consider as decisive of a certain coming election, deeply interesting and important to the Country, and more particularly so perhaps to your personal friends. Making generous allowance for that *magnanimity*, which will not permit gentlemen to support their friends, the influence which we have witnessed on more than one occasion making generous allowance for all that class who have made up their minds to desert their late associates and unite themselves with the fragments of all parties; making indeed every reasonable allowance and more, I believe that no calculation can be made, which will not lead to the result which your friends ardently desire; but enough of this, two short months will settle the question & settle it rightly, I doubt not, if every man shall be at his post. There has been no subject, which has deeply agitated the public mind in this section of the Country during the past summer, except *abolitionism*, and in this state I am happy to say, there can hardly be said to be two parties upon this embarrassing question.

I do not believe there is one person out of an hundred, who does not wholly reprobate the course of the few reckless fanatics, who are only able to disturb occasionally the quiet of a Village, without producing any general impression. Have you made any arrangements for "winter quarters." Whether Mrs Pierce will accompany me or not is yet uncertain; her health has been feeble for several weeks past and unless there shall be a decided improvement, before November, she will hardly think of attempting to perform the journey. Give my respects to our mutual friend (I hope I may be permitted to call him so) Cave Johnson when you see him. I shall be glad to learn. that he has recovered perfectly from the malady with which he was so seriously affected last winter and that he has been able to enjoy

the intercourse of Constituents, who have so nobly sustained him on his manly & consistent course. From what was said last Winter, I think the result of the Virginia Election must have been unexpected as it unquestionably was mortifying to Gordon, Moore, Gholson, Taylor etc as for poor "Old York" he will hardly survive it.³ Before this reaches you, you will probably have seen some notice of John Q. Adams letter to Dutee J. Pearce congratulating him upon his reelection and abusing [Tristan] Burgess in good set terms.⁴ Astronomers may [. . .]⁵ with accuracy the return of Comets. What has [. . .] Herschel,⁶ in an ingenious fictitious article relative to his discoveries on the moon, may for ought I know, hereafter become true, but I believe no human being will ever be able to predict, what this same errattick ex President will say or do tomorrow from what he has said or done today or yesterday.⁷ If one could predict any thing, I think it might be, that he will not vote for your colleague for Speaker. Mrs Pierce's best regards to Mrs Polk. . . .

FRANKLIN PIERCE

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Pierce, later President of the United States, was a member of the House of Representatives, 1833-37, and of the Senate, 1837-42.

2. This is probably the issue that contained a synopsis of the speech Polk made in Columbia on June 8, 1835. On September 17, 1835, the *Washington Globe* had printed a synopsis of that speech which had appeared in the *Columbia Observer*. The Columbia papers have not been found, but it is likely that the same synopsis was printed in both.

3. William F. Gordon, Samuel M. Moore, James H. Gholson, and William P. Taylor were antiadministration members of Congress from Virginia who were defeated in efforts to be re-elected. "Old York" is unidentified.

4. Dutee J. Pearce, a Jacksonian, and Tristram Burges, a Whig, had represented Rhode Island in the House of Representatives. In the recent election Pearce had won and Burges had lost.

5. At this point the manuscript is torn away. Each of these two ellipses represents no more than one or two words.

6. Sir John Herschel, an astronomer whose father had argued forty years earlier that there was life on the moon, was at this time on an expedition at the Cape of Good Hope. In August 1835 a reporter perpetrated a hoax by pretending to reveal a discovery by Herschel that men and animals had been sighted on the moon and describing them in detail. Published in the *New York Sun*, the hoax was so successful that a delegation from Yale had the

article circulated in Europe. The reporter, Richard Adams Locke, was a friend of Edgar Allan Poe, who later published the less successful "Balloon Hoax" in the same newspaper.

7. John Quincy Adams, a Whig, not only congratulated Pearce, a Democrat, on his re-election, but in Congress supported Jackson's stand on the French Spoliation question and made a speech favoring passage of Jackson's defense bill.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

Nashville Octr. 10th 1835

You will have seen that the expunging resolutions were promptly introduced into the Legislature by [Josephus C.] *Guild* on the second day of the Session. They produced much sensation at the moment and were instantly laid aside by the majority & the resolution to bring on the election of Senator, was hurried through the House, and the election had even before the message of the Governor was received. *Guild* pressed the immediate consideration of his resolutions. The friends of Judge White moved to postpone them to a distant day, with a view to prevent discussion, (for they evidently dread the effect of discussion upon the public mind) and will I have no doubt stifle debate as far as may be possible. *Guild* moves boldly forward & will be ably sustained in debate by *Nicholson* & others. I heard *Guild's* speech. It was a very creditable effort. He was answered by *Anderson*¹ (a son of the comptroller at Washington) and upon his motion at the conclusion of his speech the resolutions were laid upon the table. My opinion is that the White leaders are resolved not to permit further debate, until after the nomination of *White* shall be acted upon. It is said that the nominating resolutions are to be brought forward very soon. Unfortunately many of the members committed themselves before their constituents, early in the canvass, and some I know will feel themselves now bound by their pledges to sustain the nomination who would not otherwise do so. From what I can learn there will be a considerable majority, including the pledged men in favour of the nomination. Our friends are resolved to debate the question of nomination fully. The most they can probably hope to effect will be to qualify it, by a proviso, such

as Alabama adopted, and there is some prospect that a majority may be had in favour of such a proviso. The nomination in any form can however do us but little injury in Tennessee. It will be designed to operate on the States in the South & South West. Present indications do not authorize the hope that the expunging resolutions will be adopted. In the Senate the division will probably be very nearly equal. In the House the majority against us will probably be greater than in the Senate unless the effect of the discussion shall be to inspire confidence in the timid men, who really think and feel with us, and induce them to take this stand.

The *White* festival of which you will see an account was no doubt gotten up for effect, and with a view to intimidate and alarm the Legislature, by making an apparent show of strength for him. It has I think failed of its object. The crowd assembled here at the meeting of the assembly, the races &c. was considerable, but the parade was a cold affair & by no means imposing. *Johnson* & myself were here, but neither he, *Grundy* or myself were invited. *Carroll* was invited, but was afterwards informed through a member of the committee, that he had better not attend, if he did not wish to be insulted or to have his feelings hurt. He did not attend. *Bell*, *Peyton*, *Luke Lea*, were invited & of course attended & made speeches, the two former as I understand made violent speeches. *Judge White* declined speaking. There was evidently great division of opinion among the crowd assembled before the *Inn*, previous to the dinner and a very large number did not join the procession to Vauxhall. Many of the members of the Legislature were much dissatisfied, and excited, and declined attending. From thirty to fifty of them did not attend. The whole affair as it has gone off, has done them no good but on the contrary has injured their cause. It is manifest that it was intended more to enable *Bell* to make a speech to the Legislature, with the aid of Judge White's personal popularity to sustain him than to do honor to Judge White. Our friends will be nothing daunted by it. The *real people* are becoming excited & every day gives more evidences of our increasing strength. We may be voted down & probably will be by the present Legislature but the moment the offices are all filled & men speak out we will have a different state of things.

In Maury the people in the country are moving in earnest. On yesterday an invitation was forwarded to me to attend a County dinner, before my departure for Washington. I shall accept, will make a speech, call things by their right names & print it. *Grundy, Cave Johnson & Carroll*, will be invited & probably attend it. We will give a good account of it.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Addison A. Anderson represented Jefferson County in the lower house of the state legislature. His father, Joseph Anderson, had served in the convention that drew up Tennessee's first state constitution and was, 1797-1815, in the United States Senate. He served in Washington as First Comptroller of the Treasury from 1815 until his retirement in 1836.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

Nashville Octr 10th 1835

Since writing you this morning, *expunging* resolutions have been introduced into the Senate by *Col. Totten*,¹ the Senator from Gibson Cty. The lead was probably given to him to secure his hearty co-operation. *Mr [Terry H.] Cahal* gave notice of his intention to oppose and *Col. [William] Moore* of Lincoln of his determination to support them. They are postponed until next week. *Cahal* will dig his political grave. To sustain him and to affect me I have no doubt, *Judge White* as I have just learned is to be at a public dinner at Columbia on Tuesday-week next. *Bell, Peyton &c.* will no doubt be with him. I shall be at home but of course not at the dinner. The Circuit Court will be in Session and if any thing occur to make it proper, I will address the people at the Court House. *Why Judge W.* should visit my town and no other for the purpose of making a display, and having speeches made by *Bell & others*, can be accounted for on no other ground than that I am the object to be affected by it, and I shall fearlessly and without hesitation so declare to my people. It is hoped too by his visit to break up the County Dinner in *Maury* of which I made mention in my letter of this morning, and to get up instructions to *Nicholson* to change his course on the expunging resolution. They can affect neither. I

go home tomorrow and will see to it. The sword is now drawn; we are in the midst of the fight and will perish, or maintain our principles.

Since writing you this morning I learn too, that the public dissatisfaction is so great at the manner in which the *White* festival here was constructed, that it has been resolved to have a public dinner here soon, at which *Grundy* & others can be heard. The timid men in the Legislature are already alarmed, and before all is over, if I mistake not, many of them will be in our ranks. The excitement is already great and is increasing daily.

I will leave home for Washington about the first of November; will travel in my own carriage & expect to be at Washington by the 25th November.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. James L. Totten had formerly served as clerk of the Gibson County circuit court, 1825-31, and was at this time serving a single term in the legislature, representing Gibson, Carroll, and Dyer counties.

FROM FRANCIS O. J. SMITH¹

My dear Sir:

Portland [Maine] Oct 10, 1835

On my arrival at home a few days since from an absence of a short period I found upon my table a number of the *Tennessee Democrat* with your frank, containing a synopsis of a late speech delivered by yourself previous to your late elections. Be assured, my dear Sir, that I perused it with great satisfaction & with double satisfaction from the knowledge I have that its sentiments are too religiously truthful to all that I have seen and observed of their author not to be most honest and sincere.

I have received subsequently probably through your kindness also, several numbers of the same paper from which I observe that the political warfare against which you are compelled to defend the friends of the administration in Tennessee is assuming the same malignant and personally vituperative character as we have in Maine been compelled to encounter from the federal party. This is indeed paying a great price, in

the amount of personal comfort and individual happiness sacrificed, for the support of our principles, and that man must indeed be himself a narrow minded and venal creature, who can honestly believe that the mere love of public station and official distinction, with their unimportant perquisites can of themselves furnish an adequate inducement to such a sacrifice. In this State, we have persevered into a full triumph—our friends have been vindicated and our enemies met and repulsed at every turn, and that your people will ultimately be equally successful in perseverance in Tennessee, I believe almost as sanguinely as I hope for it, and that you personally, my dear Sir, may be the chosen symbol of the triumph of our common principles by not only the people of your own State, but also by the Representatives of the people of all the States in the Union, is also a desire with me that lives in every motion of my heart. I have respected Mr. Bell, though I could never see any justification in supporting him, after he repudiated the proposition to have his claims adjudged by our common party. I have venerated Judge White, for his years and seeming uprightness. But flattery from mouths to which he was once accustomed to yield no credence has proved itself too potent for the wisdom and patriotism of the latter, and selfish ambition has converted the former into a political suicide. I think that little else remains for the new adherents of either to do, out of Tennessee, save to compose a pair of epitaphs that shall do justice to their respective political characters.

With most respectful compliments to your lady. . . .

FRANCIS O. J. SMITH

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Smith was a Maine Democrat who served in the United States House of Representatives from 1833 to 1839.

FROM RUSSELL M. WILLIAMSON

Dear Sir, Prairie Hill, Vernon, Miss. October 11, 1835

After an absence of two months to the state of Tennessee, I have returned home and will endeavour to give you some of the prospects on this political Rubicon.

The Whigs and nullifiers have united in organizing and arranging one of the most subtle and efficient plans of defeating the democratic candidates for state and federal offices, which their ingenuity and relentless hatred of that party could possibly devise. The all absorbing inquiry and which seems to be the *sine qua non*, and about which the Whigs are particularly clamorous, is, are you a "White man." This interrogatory answered in the affirmative, regenerates the veriest nullifier and before which the blackest aristocrat stands redeemed, and the vilest opposition our country and our country's interest has endured, become the bleached and holy recommendation to integrity and virtue.

Under these circumstances with scarcely time to apprise the true democrats of the daring and reckless assaults of this combination of the fragments of odious parties, where the antipodes are brought in conjunction and cement, I have commenced the canvass. Good men for a while may be imposed upon by their insidious and nefarious designs but the truth when once developed, is suere of ultimate triumph. We have mercenary electioneerers paid by banks or parties to ride through the state and so far as they are capable, influence, by the most malicious and vindictive falsehoods, the people to vote against the democratic candidates in every county. The people are becoming awakened to a sense of that regard due to themselves and the allegiance due their country and will doff any extraneous influence proposed to be exerted. At the head of these infamous mercenaries and calumniators stands Hon Franklin E. Plummer¹ in supreme and unconditional array. His bold and incessant attacks upon truth, his unparalleled inveteracy to every thing that is honorable or honest, his perpetual mingling with the most loathsome and foul slanders have rendered him an easy prey, to those whom he has assailed and who have torn the mask from the face of this political Janus, and exhibited his duplicities and his deformities, in the most odious and hateful light. He is down—the proper estimate will soon be placed upon his conduct and his character. Mississippi against all the devices of the enemies of human and political liberty will be true to the core.

The main object of their solicitude to defeat is Govr. [Hiram G.] Runnels; his election I think is sure.² Our repre-

sentatives to the lower house I am inclined to think will be Claiborne and Wilkins,³ the former certain. If the latter should succeed I am much inclined to the opinion that he will be an unequivocal supporter of the leading measures of the administration. Knowing a large majority of his constituents to be ardently attached to the old hero and his measures I have that much faith in the man's honesty and devotion to republican principles.

The democratic candidate for a seat in the U.S. Senate will certainly succeed.⁴ The opposition at this time are so well convinced of this fact, that I have no doubt, they will endeavour to produce some ill feeling in our ranks by nominating and supporting Genl. Thomas Hinds for that office. This is a scism which may be produced and our enemies are smart enough to know it. Be our Senator whom he may he will be staunch and unyielding.

My own election I think beyond doubt. In this I must be much mistaken in mankind if I err.

We will certainly have a democratic Legislature, and the excitement produced for this special occasion will not subside but must inevitably react. It "will return to plague the inventors."

You shall hear from me soon after our elections take place on the first of next month.

With sentiments of high regard. . . .

R. M. WILLIAMSON

Let me hear from you at all convenient occasions.

W.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Plummer served 1831-35 in the House of Representatives. Elected as a Democrat, he changed to the opposition and became an object of scorn by Jackson men, who considered him a traitor. Shortly afterward he ran for the Senate but was defeated by Robert J. Walker.

2. Williamson proved to be a poor political prophet: Runnels lost to Charles Lynch.

3. John F. H. Claiborne and James C. Wilkins. Wilkins, however, was not a candidate in this election. Later, although he seems to have made no exertions in his own behalf, he received a significant number of votes for the United States Senate. Wilkins was a wealthy merchant of Natchez and had

been a member of the body that drew up Mississippi's first state constitution. He had been appointed to serve an unfinished term in the Senate in 1832 but declined.

4. This seems to be a reference to Robert J. Walker, the successful candidate in the approaching senatorial election.

FROM ALFRED BALCH

Oct. 13, 1835¹

In 1820 Col Wm. Polk had a controversy with Judge Murphy² about some claims to lands and land warrants. It was compromised and a land warrant of 5000 acres transferred by Col. Polk. It was agreed that Murphy should pay \$4500 in equal payments at 1, 2, 3 years without interest.³ But, Col Polk said that he would hold no paper on *Murphy*; he would take the notes of others if good. M[urphy] applied to [Jenkin] Whiteside & myself and we gave our notes. My. assigned the 5000 acre warrant to Majr Saml Polk for the security of Whiteside & myself as well as of Col Wm Polk & the same was located on Clover Creek in Hardeman County.⁴

After the grant issued, Murphy went to the land & divided it, laying off 800 to the locator, 1500 to me to pay a bill which the Judge owed me on a private account, and left the balance as I thought to pay the \$4500 with some means which he was to get in North Carolina.

When Murphy returned however to Carolina he did *not* pay Col Polk. but he conveyed out of the 5000 acre grant 1000 to Peter Brown, 700 to J. R. Connor, 500 to a Murphy of Alabama, 500 to 2 men whose names I do not recollect, leaving the 1500 acres to me, making in all 4200 acres exclusive of the 800 acres laid off to the Locator.⁵ Murphy had no legal title to the land nor never had, the grant being issued to Samuel Polk.

Brown slipped a tenant on his 1000 acres. He has had 7 years possession and these 1000 acres are totally lost. Connor has 2 tenants on his 700 who have been there 4 years. Some part of Col Polks debt has been paid by *us* but a large sum remains due. Murphy paid not a dollar.

It is indispensable that this business should be proceeded in

instantly and in my opinion the mode of operation should be as follows. The tenants on the land should be sued in Ejectment by the proper representatives of Saml Polk in Hardeman circuit court. The Executrix of Wm Polk should file a Bill against the representatives of Saml Polk, against those of J. Whiteside and myself, praying a divesture of the legal title out of Saml Polks representatives, and a sale of the land or so much as will pay the debt. In the mean time I will arrange the demand with Mrs Polk if required to her satisfaction. By filing a Bill in Hardeman County answers can be put in forthwith & the Bill soon set down for hearing. In my answer as well as in that of Major Polks reprs. a full statement of the matter can be made, & a decree rendered. It will become *me* of course to see to the sale of the land & the payment of the debt.

I wish you to see Mrs Polk & Mr Lucius Polk and send me,

- 1st. An unofficial copy of the grant.
- 2d. An unofficial copy of your Fathers will.
- 3d. The names of the heirs at law of your Father.
- 4th. The names of all the [devisees?] of your Father.
- 5th. The names of the Executors of your Father who have qualified.

My object is to lay a demise in the names of each of these parties for fear of missing fire as the estate is a trust estate. You will perceive that a great loss has been sustained in this affair in Browns 1000 acres. Still greater may be sustained. The Locators 800 are far better than any other part of the tract. For the assumption of the trust Majr Polk was well paid in the location by him of several warrants of my own & Whitesides.

Be so good as to have the grant & will copied & sent me as soon as possible, as well as the other information. I will draw the Bill and send it to Hardeman & will employ [. . .] there. All I want is the proper facts that I may protect myself as an innocent security wishing to pay up immediately what I am bound to pay.

A. BALCH

I merely wish the copy of the grant & the will to bring the Ejectment and file the Bill. The original grant must be left

with Mr Walker that I may take it on to Bolivar at the trial.

As your Fathers will does not dispose of this tract it may be indispensable to know all the heirs at Law.

This is a copy of a letter, presumably addressed to Columbia, in the handwriting of some person unknown, who appended Balch's name and wrote the date immediately below it. The original letter has not been found.

1. The manuscript bore neither the place of origin nor a polite opening. It is not clear whether it was this copy or the original itself that was enclosed by Polk in his letter to James Walker, November 3, 1835.

2. Archibald D. Murphey was a prominent North Carolina jurist who compiled *Reports and Cases in the Supreme Court of North Carolina*. He died in 1832.

3. For some background in this case see Alfred Balch to Polk, January 6, 1831, and James Walker to Polk, November 20, 1832.

4. Clover Creek flows southwesterly into the Hatchie River in the northern part of Hardeman County.

5. Just above the postscript appears a rough sketch showing the relative location of the divisions of the 5000-acre tract. Murphy [*sic*], Peter Brown, and J. R. Connor were listed on the sketch. Brown and Connor are unidentified, but it is possible that the Murphy of Alabama was John Murphy, former governor of that state, who was born in North Carolina.

FROM JOHN F. GILLESPIE¹

Dear Sir

Nashville 13th. Oct 1835

Mr. Hopkins L. Turney² has just this moment informed me, that Maj. Graham³ in a conversation had with him a few minutes since informed him that he was not, and would not be a Candidate. Since this fact has been ascertained I discover Mr. E. H. Foster is very active among the Members; I have no doubt that he and some of his *Hangers on* will make a desperate effort to make Lea⁴ beat me. [William] Hall⁵ I think is out of the question.

There are several considerations arising out of my relations to some of my *political* neighbours that make me particularly solicitous not to be beaten by Mr. Lea. Any assistance you may think proper to give me on this occasion will be most thankfully received and gratefully remembered. It is supposed the Election will be brought on, on Saturday next.

A preamble and resolutions nominating Judge White to the presidency were introduced in both Houses on yesterday, and on yesterday evening there was a very warm and exciting debate on them. They were however on motions [by] Turney, who made a splendid speech on the occasion laid on the Table and ordered to be printed. There is a much stronger opposition to the nomination than I expected, and Turney informs me that it is doubtful whether they will be adopted by the House of Representatives. This however is *inter nos*.

JOHN F. GILLESPY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. For several weeks Gillespy had been an active candidate for secretary of state for Tennessee. See Gillespy to Polk, August 31, 1835.

2. Hopkins L. Turney began the practice of law in Marion County and was elected to the legislature from that county for two terms before he moved to Franklin County. After being elected from that county too, he was being considered for a place in Congress.

3. Daniel Graham of Murfreesboro had served a long time as secretary of state for Tennessee.

4. Luke Lea was finishing his second term in the House of Representatives. He was elected by the legislature to the post sought by Gillespy only after sixteen ballots.

5. Hall stayed in the running until the very last ballot. On the next to the last ballot he had the same number of votes as Lea. Gillespy dropped out of the race after the eighth ballot.

FROM WILLIAM E. KENNEDY, ET AL.¹

Honble Jas K. Polk,

Columbia 13 Oct. 1835

You are respectfully invited to attend a dinner to be given to the Honble. Hugh L. White on Tuesday 20th Inst. at Columbia.²

W. E. Kennedy	S. D. Frierson
M. D. Cooper	P. R. Booker
Robt Mack	P. Maguire
John Littlefield	E. W. Dale

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The names at the close of this letter were those of residents of Maury County all of whom were known to oppose Polk. These were not signatures: all names were in the same handwriting.

2. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, October 18, 1835, for Polk's commentary on this invitation.

TO WILLIAM E. KENNEDY ET AL.¹

Gentlemen

Columbia Oct 14th 1835

I have this moment received your note of invitation to dine on Tuesday the 20th Inst. and have the honor to decline it.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Columbia. This is a copy, in Polk's handwriting, of the letter actually sent, and is so marked by the writer.

1. Below his signature Polk listed the eight names that appeared on the invitation dated October 13, 1835.

FROM WILLIAM J. POLK¹

Dear Sir.

White Hall² Octo. 15, 1835

I design leaving Maury as soon as it may be practicable for the Mississippi, & would be glad to locate my family in comfortable winter quarters previous to my departure as it is more than probable that I shall be absent for the greater part of the winter. You will please to inform me by my Overseer Mr Bailey³ who will hand you this & will return thru Columbia on Tomorrow when it is probable you will leave here for Washington City. This good weather admonishes me that I should be on my journey espying out the fatness of the land & shall set out as soon as I can establish my family.⁴

As it more than probable that I shall not remain in middle Tennessee longer than this winter, I should be glad you would let me have some little of your furniture together with your house, as I should wish to avoid this additional expense of purchasing & having it resold perhaps in the Spring. We find that we shall be in want of Chairs, Shovel & tongs, Andirons, Bed & Bed stead (with out its furniture) Wash stand, Candle stand. I do not recollect any thing else at present but what we can dispense with. It is more than probable that I shall be in want of 50 or 100 Barrels of Corn. I shall visit my plantation on the

other side of the River & if I can dispose of mine there will take yours & let you know in a few days whether I can affect a disposition of mine. Be so good as to let me know upon what terms I can take your house together with its furniture & I will call upon you & give you my note for the rent before your departure for Washington.⁵ You can at any time take possession of your house upon your return from Washington, as it is more than probable that in the event of my purchasing lands, that I shall go down with my family in the Spring.

WILL J. POLK

Addressed to Columbia and delivered by hand.

1. A physician, he was an older half-brother of Lucius and Leonidas Polk. He had recently come to Maury County to settle on a large tract of land given him by his father, Colonel William Polk of Raleigh, North Carolina.

2. This is probably the name of the house in Maury County where the writer was living. After writing "White Hall," he put below it in parentheses, "altho a Webster Man."

3. Not further identified. It was he who brought this letter to Columbia.

4. While the writer seems to have been contemplating a move to another state it is doubtful that he ever moved his family. If so, they returned soon to Maury County. Both William J. Polk and his wife died in that county.

5. See Adlai O. Harris to Polk, November 17, 1835.

FROM GREENVILLE COOK¹

Sir:

Shelbyville, Oct 16 [1835]²

Mr. Chandler,³ the young man to whom you gave those letters, owing to a want of perseverance, or from excessive modesty, timidity, or some other cause, after keeping them a week or two, sent them to me, with a request that I should use them as I thought proper. He sent them to me on Saturday last, and on Sunday I left Nashville for this place, with a fixed determination to accomplish the object for which I came. I deem it unnecessary to give in detail the manner in which I did succeed; but suffice it to say I *did* succeed. We have entered into articles of agreement, in the penalty of two thousand dollars for a faithful performance of the agreement. I left it to Mr. Lard⁴ who should draw the agreement, and he selected *Col. [James] McKissick*, the very man to whom I had just delivered the letters from you!

When interrogated as to the course I should pursue in the approaching presidential election, I said I did not know, but supposed, that any other than a *White paper*, would do a poor business here; and from the manner in which it was said, it seemed to inspire confidence, and I was interrogated no more on that subject.

The price we agreed upon is fifteen hundred dollars, which is a good price, enough at least; and to give possession on the 2d of January, at which time his volume will be out. I bound myself, *on the faith of the party*, in the penalty of two thousand dollars to perform my part of the contract, and should my confidence be misplaced, I will be in a difficulty that I will not get out of soon.

When it suits your convenience, write to *me* at Nashville and let me know how matters will be arranged. The press will be owned, I suppose, by whoever furnishes the means to purchase it, or at least, that would suit me as well, and be an assurance that it would always be *right* in politics.

Col. [Kenneth L.] Anderson left here for Nashville before I had an opportunity of giving him the letters, but left them with Col. McKissick, which will be attended to when the Col. comes back.

GREENVILLE COOK

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Little has been learned about Greenville Cook. It appears that he had previously lived in Nashville, and if so, it seems likely that he had been connected with one of the printing establishments there.

2. The writer did not give the year. The letter is placed at 1832 by the Library of Congress but the content clearly indicates that 1835 is the correct date.

3. Unidentified.

4. This seems an obvious reference to John H. Laird, who had been publishing newspapers in the region for several years, first in Fayetteville and then in Shelbyville.

FROM GEORGE W. JONES¹

Dear Sir

Repr. Hall, Nashville 16th Oct 1835

I address you on a subject about which you probably will not feel much interest owing as I presume to the number of applications with which you are almost every day beset.

But this is a case in which I feel some interest and as one of your original friends and supporters ask you to assist. Wm. F. Mason² of Fayetteville has resigned the appoint[ment] of Post Master at that place and Mr. A. R. Kerr and Matthew Martin are the applicants.³ Mr Kerr has been a clerk in the store of W. F. Mason the whole of the time since Mason has held the appointment and in fact has been the acting post master the whole time and he is one of the best and most accommodating I every saw. His Politics in the present contest are beyond all doubt *right*. Any thing you do must be done immediately as I am informed this morning that the petitions are gone on. Do write and urge his appointment. I am confident that it will give more general satisfaction than that of Martin. Martin is an Irishman; has filed his declaration but I think that he has not completed the requisitions of the law in order to entitle him to citizenship, but of this I am not certain.

This is an appointment of itself of little importance but these circumstances which make me feel deep interest in this matter and what you do must be done forthwith, and be assured that what you may do for my friend Mr. Kerr will be gratefully remembered. . . .

GEORGE W. JONES

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Jones had risen from being an apprentice saddler to joint ownership of a saddlery; later he became president of a Fayetteville bank. He was just beginning a political career that was remarkably successful. At this time he was serving the first of his three terms in the General Assembly; later he was elected to the United States House of Representatives for eight consecutive terms, 1843-59. He also was a member of the Confederate congress.

2. Mason, a merchant in Fayetteville for many years, was postmaster from September 1833 until November 1835.

3. Alexander R. Kerr succeeded Mason as postmaster and served until April 1837. Matthew Martin has not been identified.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

My Dear Sir,

Clarksville Oct 17h 1835

I cannot come; it is utterly impossible.¹ I send an apology & toast.² Look over it, and you will oblige me by altering or

amending or doing any thing that is best. I dont much like the toast but I cannot think of any better.

The shorter the time I have to stay the more business presses on me.

I shall be in Nashville the 24 or 25th.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Johnson was one of several prominent political figures who had been invited to a dinner for Polk to be held October 22 at Mooresville, Maury County.

2. Johnson enclosed a copy of the letter to John Vincent and others at Mooresville. In the letter he praised Polk's political policies and at the end he suggested the following toast: "Tennessee—She will soon understand the *true principles and conduct* of some of her *public men* and will reward according to their merits." This is, of course, an obvious reference to the Bell-White faction.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia Tennessee Oct. 18th 1835

I received two letters from you whilst at Nashville, the latter when I was upon the eve of leaving, and had only a moment to see [Medicus A.] Long (Laughlin was not at home) who told me Mr Grundy had seen your letter and approved its publication. Since it has been published I have read it, and think it all right.¹

My District is now the theater of operations by White & Bell. They have each made a visit here within the last few weeks, and accompanied by [Balie] *Peyton*, [Luke] *Lea*, [Washington] *Barrow* and others, are to be here again on tomorrow, & to be dined, by [William E.] *Kennedy* & my enemies on the next day, the 20th Inst. My friends all understand their chief object to be to reach me, and are also in motion. On Thursday next 22nd. Inst. there will be a County dinner, at which the real people will speak and I doubt not express their approbation of my course. I came out boldly for Van-Buren & for principle & have no fears, but that I will be triumphantly sustained. Finding that the people here understood the object of *White & Bell's*

second visit to Maury, and perceiving that there was likely to be a general revolt among my friends, *as matter of policy, and to blind the public*, the managers gave me an invitation. In a very laconic note in reply I promptly stated to them that "*I had the honor to decline it.*"² They were confounded and knew not what to do, and it is now said Mr *Bell & Peyton*, though invited are not to come out. I will be at my post, and should it be necessary, will address the people at the Court House. They have not yet affected my strength, nor do I believe they can do so. At the County dinner to be given to me at Mooresville, on Thursday next, in token of the approbation of the people of my course, *I shall speak the truth plainly, call things by their right names, & print what I say*. You can have no conception of the state of excitement that now prevails here. *Carroll, Grundy, Cave Johnson & Dunlap* are expected at the Mooresville dinner & will probably address the people.

Since I last wrote you I have received several additional letters from members of Congress, upon the subject of the Speakership, and among others from [Dutee J.] *Pearce* of *R. Island*, [William L.] *May* of *Illinois*, & [Thomas L.] *Hamer*³ of *Ohio*, giving assurances of their friendship &c. *Pearce* writes me that himself & colleague, one member from Massachusetts "good & true" (a fact that I had not before known) and the Connecticut delegation, are all the same way, and will be at their posts in proper season. From all I can learn, *Bell* is becoming desperate & is almost frantic lest I should be taken up by the party. That event he knows would effectively forever prostrate him at home, as he is already prostrated out of the State.

Make the kind respects of Mrs. P. and myself to the President & Mrs. D. and let the President know the present condition of things here. I will leave about 1st of November.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I am happy to state to you in *strictest confidence*, that the *Shelbyville paper*, will shortly be in proper hands.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. This is the letter of which Donelson spoke in his letter to Polk dated

September 29, 1835. In the *Union* version of the letter the name Krepps was consistently spelled Kupps.

2. See Polk to William E. Kennedy, October 14, 1835.

3. See Thomas L. Hamer to Polk, September 26, 1835. The letters from Pearce and May have not been found.

FROM WILLIAM MOORE

D. Sir.

Nashville 18th Oct 1835

You have learned that Col. [William] Trousdale & myself have went the whole against the Preamble & Resolutions nominating H. L. White. They were rotten to the core, i.e. they were intended to do indirectly things that the Tennessee Legislature would not directly do. However the Cockade was much weather beaten before we was done with it. Mr [Willie B.] Johnson of Montgomery offered a suitable Resolution with a preamble highly complimentary. We was debared from argument by the previous question. I begged the Senate to let me say that I wished the opportunity of having the action of the Senate on Mr. Johnsons Resolution. This was denied us. I then observed that I had the whole matter just where I wanted it. If it was the object to place Judge White fairly before the American People I was ready to do so by Mr. Johnsons Amendment, but that I had now found that it was not the nomination that they were for, but the riging as I called it. I said that I was not to be gulled, or duped. I would go against the whole, & did so; & I say let that vote stand as a momento of my integrity in a good cause, the honour of my county.

WILLIAM MOORE

P.S. I do not consider that I am defeated. No, my county & my constituents will sustain me. I know I have a concience that will bear me up & as far as I can hear from my constituents they say well done &c.

You are at liberty to show this to any of my constituents that you may see, as I wish them at all times to know where to find me, & what I am doing.

MOORE

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir, Nashville, Monday night [October 19, 1835]¹

I shall be at Moorsville, without some great accident. Whether I shall come by land or water, by stage or horseback is undecided. I have not heard from Johnson but made his brother write,² pressing him on. I have very encouraging intelligence respecting your distant matter. Should I not get to your house by 2 o'clock on Wednesday, don't wait. I may not set out until Wednesday, on account of some movements here, but I will be at Holts³ Wednesday night, if I travel in the dark.

FELIX GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Grundy put no date on this letter, merely heading it "Monday night." The Library of Congress assigned it to October 19, 1835. The fact that it was written shortly before the Mooresville meeting places it in October 1835. The postmark was October 20. Since October 20 came on Tuesday in 1835 it is obvious that the Library of Congress date is correct.

2. Willie B. Johnson was a member of the state senate then in session in Nashville.

3. Unidentified.

TO SAMUEL W. KILPATRICK ET AL.¹

Gentlemen

Columbia Oct. 19th, 1835

Your letter of this date,² inviting me to "accept of a public dinner in Williamsport on Wednesday the 28th Instant," has just been received. The estimate you have been pleased to place upon my "public services," and the voluntary expression of your approbation of my "public course," would at any time have been highly prized and gratefully received, but is, I assure you particularly so at the present period.

It is gratifying to me to know that there has been at all times a perfect accordance of opinion, between yourselves in common with a large majority of the people of the District I have represented, & myself, in the "strong determination to sustain the present Chief Magistrate, together with the leading measures of

his administration." There has been no period when it was more necessary than at the present, for the friends of the President & of "his administration," to continue united & firm, and it would be deeply to be regretted, if the political excitement which surrounds us, should tend in any degree to weaken that support which the people of Tennessee have ever been proud to extend to him and his administration. With yourselves Gentlemen, and with our fellow citizens generally, I know there can be no faulting whatever may be the efforts or designs of interested or factious politicians to produce such a result.

I accept Gentlemen, your esteemed invitation, and will take much pleasure, in visiting my old friends & constituents in Williamsport & its vicinity before I leave the state to enter again upon the duties they have assigned me. Owing to a previous business arrangement, preparatory to leaving home I fear it will not permit for me to [be] present the day you have named, and if it will be equally convenient for yourselves, would name Tuesday the 27th as a day on which it will give me pleasure to be with you.³

I tender to you Gentlemen, my sincere thanks for this renewed token of your approbation, and beg you to accept assurances of my sincere regard & grateful esteem.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Williamsport, Tennessee, and marked "Copy." In reality it was a draft, rather rough in some places, of the letter actually sent.

1. Below his signature Polk listed seven names, placing the same names on the envelope: Samuel W. Kilpatrick, William W. Coleman, Powhatan Gordon, Augustus Sewell, Robert P. Webster, Jesse Hart, and Joseph Foster.

2. This letter of invitation has not been found.

3. This paragraph has many words crossed out and several interlineations, making it very difficult to decipher.

FROM WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

Nashville. October 20, 1835

In order that a proper toast may be made, Childress asks Polk the subject he will speak on at a public dinner to be given in Nashville.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My dear Col.

Washington Oct 20th 1835

Your letters to the President of the 10th instant reached him this morning. Your previous ones to me as well as to him arrived in due time. You may be assured that we look with solicitude at what is passing in Tennessee, and will omit nothing that is proper to promote the success of the good cause in which you are engaged.

I should say that it is expecting too much to suppose that the present Legislature will adopt Guilds resolutions. Their discussion, however, will open the eyes of the people who in a short time must see that the support of the present Administration is inconsistent with the political principles which Bell is anxious to establish under the Banner of Judge White.

You have a difficult duty to perform in exposing the treachery of those who under the guise of friendship to the President are aiming to take from him all that is valuable in his political life: but you have only to be firm and success will soon crown your exertions. It is in such a crisis as that in which you are now acting that the country finds out the true value of those who are true to its interests.

We have heard from Georgia where the union ticket has proved triumphant.¹ In Pennsylvania the division among our friends has enabled the whigs to get the Governor but all well informed men say that that event renders more certain than ever the union of the Republican party on the electoral ticket for the Presidency.² In the west the same information reaches us. Virginia is as firm as a rock. too much so to allow her delegation to go wrong on any party question. I think you may count safely on Mason's³ acting like a man, and that Mr. Bell's expectations on getting him or some one else to follow his example will be disappointed.

You ought to be here three or four days before the meeting of Congress. We shall be happy to see Mrs. Polk and wish you a safe journey. Laughlin intimated that he might retire from the Union. Should he do so you should see that the paper is con-

tinued in proper hands. I will do what you will say I ought to do towards keeping it up.

A. J. DONELSON

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private."

1. In Georgia the antiadministration political faction was known as the states rights party, while the supporters of the administration came to be known as the union party.

2. The division among the Pennsylvania Democrats in the gubernatorial contest resulted in the loss by Wolf and Muhlenburg to the Whig Joseph Ritner.

3. A rumor had circulated that John Y. Mason would be a candidate for the speakership and that the Bell supporters would vote for Mason as a means of beating Polk. Donelson, of course, did not believe that Mason would allow himself to be used in that way.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

My dear Sir,

Washington Octbr 20th 1835

Your two letters of the 10th instant was received this morning. That Judge White would have turned out electioneerer, is what was not expected by any of his old friends. The course adopted by the managers of the Nashville dinner, is calculated to do judge White & Bell, with Mr Peyton & others, lasting injury. The people have been duped, & are by this outrageous course adopted to insult & inflict a wound on you, Grundy, Johnston¹ & Governor Carroll, which will recoil upon their own heads. It is only necessary that the expunging resolutions should be debated & fairly understood to destroy all who oppose them with the democratic republicans not only in Tennessee but throughout the Union. Mark these *words*, have the yeas & nays taken upon them, and all who votes against them will be taught by the people of Tennessee that they have misrepresented them.²

They are become mad with their strength, and like Webster in his Baltimore Sundry speech,³ think they are carrying the whole world with them when lo & behold it is a few old federalist & bank men, not a drop compared to the real strength of the democratic yeomenry of the State. Let me tell you, I am too well acquainted with human nature not to know when a recoil of

public sentiment begins, it rolls on like the swirling tide, and the course adopted by White Bell & other managers is too glaring not to be seen and felt by the people and you will see before two weeks that there is a majority of the Legislature in favour of the expunging resolutions for I cannot yet believe that the democratic republicans of Tennessee can be so unjust to me as to unite with Clay & the opposition in condemning me for preserving the constitution & putting down that mammoth of corruption, the U. States Bank, when they have lauded me so often for the act, to preserve any apostate from principle for office take from that disgrace that must in the end await all such. But I want the vote by yeas & noes, I fear not the result, and I wish to see, and that the people may also see the apostates from the true republican fold. I hope things will be called by their proper names. If this had been done at first it would have been better but the opposition have by their late conduct opened a [. . .] and as judge White has turned out to electioneer against you, Grundy & Johnston, no language is too severe for such a course. How fearful he was of me, that if I went to the Senate, I would place myself under that imputation. Rouse Grundy & Johnston into action, and I will vouch for the virtue of the people. Write me as soon as you have a full view of the feelings of the people on the late dinner at Nashville. Present me to your lady & all your connections. . . .

ANDREW JACKSON

P.S. As to the East & North for the next Speaker, all things, I am told, *are well* & the Nashville dinner will rivit the So. & West.

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. Jackson frequently misspelled Cave Johnson's name.
2. This seems to be a rather clear indication of the extent to which Jackson had lost touch with Tennessee voters.
3. Unidentified.

FROM ROBERT M. COOPER ET AL.¹

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. October 21, 1835

As a means of expressing approval of Polk's political actions, a committee of Mt. Pleasant citizens invite him to a dinner to be given in his honor and at his convenience.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A merchant, Cooper was postmaster at Mt. Pleasant from 1831 to late 1837. Ten additional names were signed to this letter.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir,

Nashville, Oct. 21, 1835

I am rejoiced that Mr. Grundy will be at Mooresville, but I fear the state of the weather will prevent Gov. Carroll from attending. I will see him this evening and press him to wrap up in stage and go out. I have just seen Mr. Nicholson. He will send out 300 extra copies of his speech for distribution at the dinner.¹ As some have complained of Mr. Grundy for not coming *out* more, as they call it, of which I have always said to them he was the best judge, I do hope he will make one of his Gibraltar efforts.

I have accompanied Nicholson's speech by some remarks which you will see. You will also see that the Albany Argus gives a plain intimation on a certain subject, which I have published with remarks headed with your name.² I have received further letters from Illinois on the same subject—good!

I hope Mr. Johnson will be out at one or the other of your dinners as I learn there will be two or three.

The Shelbyville purchase is dear, but I am satisfied [Greenville] Cook could have done no better. I only hope there will be no room left for quibbles about possession. Possession will do as well, taken just after the commencement of Congress, as now.

I understand, that Mr. Grundy was dissatisfied somewhat at my going to Rutherford. If he knew as much as I do, and he is always indulgent and reasonable, he would not have complained, and as to regret he could not regret it more than myself. I had to go or *refund* several hundred dollars in fees received, besides I was laboring under a forfeited Subpoena and had a suit of my own.³ I also left all the matter ready, by working night and day, which could go into the paper, except legislative proceedings, for ten days; and before the end of the time I was at home issuing out what you have seen. I was only deprived of an opportunity of commenting on Guild's document on its introduction, and one or two other legislative matters which remain still open.

Mr. G. as the author (you know it) of Guild's paper as it appeared, could have commented better than myself or any body else. Besides Mr. G. in being dissatisfied, would depart greatly from his usual generosity and kindness to complain of a man for a little apparent remissness who is working for others and finding⁴ himself, as to any remuneration received or that possibly ever may be received. I do not know, however, that he was or is sensibly dissatisfied, but still these explanations are due both to you and him.

I have started an efficient Agent to-day, to scour the District for subscribers. I got ten or a dozen in my absence. The average increase now is from 7 to 9 pr. day, but a majority dont pay. All are believed to be good.

I have to write to Donelson and others to-day besides doing my other work.

Certain victory will attend our cause next year, just as certain as that you and I now live to hope to see it.

In haste, without time to look over. . . .

S. H. LAUGHLIN

P.S. Present me to Johnson and tell him to forget his rheumatism, and cry aloud and spare not.

S.H.L.

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. This refers to a speech that A. O. P. Nicholson had made in the legislature a few days before. Although he had earlier expressed a preference for White, he now spoke in opposition to White's nomination by the General Assembly.

2. The Albany *Argus* had printed the whole text of a speech that Polk had made in Columbia during June.

3. Laughlin still practiced law on a limited scale. George A. Sublett and John R. Laughlin were suing Samuel H. Laughlin for nonpayment of a note made in 1833 for more than \$300.

4. The word *find* is used in the archaic sense, meaning "to support" or "to provide for."

TO ROBERT M. COOPER ET AL.¹

Gentlemen

Columbia Oct 23rd 1835

I have received the polite invitation you have been pleased to give me in behalf of yourselves, & the "citizens of Mt. Pleas-

ant and the surrounding neighbourhood," to accept of a public dinner at that place, previous to my departure for Washington. I receive it as a valued testimonial of your approbation of my public conduct & "unshaken confidence" in my future course. I cannot be otherwise than highly gratified at the expression of similar opinion to your own, recently and voluntarily given by large and respectable bodies of my fellow-citizens of the Congressional District, whom I have so long represented, and at never more than at that which you have been pleased to express in behalf of yourselves, and the citizens of Mt. Pleasant and its vicinity. "In the present state of political excitement, when men are every day changing sides, and parties are changing ground," it shall be as it has been my aim, to continue to occupy the position I have always done since I have been in public life. I have too long represented you now to change lightly either my political opinions or associations and will adhere the more firmly to both, when I cannot but apprehend that an abandonment of them by any considerable portion of the Republican party, to which I am proud to belong, could only tend to jeopardize, the great principles and that course of public policy which we have cherished and supported. Assuring you Gentlemen, of the deep sense of obligation I feel for the kind terms in which you have been pleased to express your opinion of my former course, and your unshaken confidence in my fidelity to my principles and the public interests, it gives me pleasure to accept your invitation, and I will meet yourselves & others of my old friends and constituents for whom you act "at the festive board" on Monday next, that being the only day left me from other indispensable engagements of private business, before my departure for Washington.

Be pleased Gentlemen, to accept for yourselves & for those you represent assurances, of the regard & esteem. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Mt. Pleasant. While it is marked "Copy," it seems to be a draft from which the final version of the letter was made. It is in Polk's handwriting and bears his signature.

1. At the end of the letter Polk listed others besides Cooper to whom the letter was sent: J. H. Benton, Wesley Nixon, George Nixon, J. J. Goodman,

Samuel A. Howell, Joseph O. Cross, George Lipscomb, Robert W. Wynne, Thomas Whaley, A. H. Buckner. See Robert M. Cooper et al. to Polk, October 21, 1835.

FROM JOHN VINCENT ET AL.¹

Mooresville, Tennessee. October 23, 1835

A committee of Mooresville citizens ask Polk to provide for publication a copy of the speech he gave there the day before. The committee expects the distribution of the speech to have considerable political effect.

Probably addressed to Columbia, but no envelope has been found.

1. Little has been learned about Vincent except that he had lived in Maury County for many years. The letter bore eight signatures in addition to Vincent's.

TO ALFRED FLOURNOY ET AL.¹

Gentlemen:

Columbia Oct 24th 1835

It is with lively sensibility that I have received your letter of the 20th Instant, inviting me "to partake of a public dinner at Pulaski, with my old constituents at such time as may suit my convenience."

This manifestation of regard, proceeding as it does, from so numerous & so respectable a body of my fellow-citizens of the County of Giles, whom I had the honor once to represent, and whose generous confidence repeatedly extended to me, I was ever proud to cherish, is as unexpected as it is unmerited by any poor public services of mine.² To have contributed in any humble degree during the two last sessions of Congress "in sustaining the measures, and repelling the assaults on the present administration," was but to perform a sacred duty which I owed to my immediate constituents and to the country. I am happy to know that the "position which I occupy at present, to our venerable Chief Magistrate, and to the great republican party of the nation," is approved by so respectable a portion of my "old constituents," as I trust it is, also by a large majority of the immediate constituents whom I have now the honor to represent.

I beg to assure you Gentlemen that I duly appreciate the

kind feelings personally and politically towards me which have prompted the flattering expression of approbation of my "exertions" in sustaining the President and his administration, which you have conveyed in your letter. I shall be cheered and animated in my future course to persevere in sustaining the same great cause and the policy & principles with which it is identified, from a knowledge of the fact, that the great body of Republicans, not only in my immediate District, but elsewhere in the Democratic State of Tennessee, as well as throughout the Union, entertain opinions accordant with my own.

Nothing could afford me more pleasure, Gentlemen than to have it in my power to accept your esteemed invitation to dine with my old constituents and friends in Giles, but the shortness of the time I have to remain at home, before I must repair to the Seat of Government, and indispensable engagements, which must occupy the whole time I have to remain, will deprive me of the pleasure, which under other circumstances I would take, in again visiting so many of those between whom & myself there once existed the most intimate political relations. Though compelled to decline the civility you have offered, I shall ever hold in grateful remembrance the firm, steady, and confiding support, I ever received at your hands, and though the immediate political relations formerly existing between us, is now dissolved, we have yet a common interest in the enduring prosperity and happiness of the country, & it shall be my ambition to merit by my public conduct the continuance of your good opinion & confidence.

Be pleased to accept Gentlemen assurances of the high regard and esteem. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Pulaski. This letter is marked "Copy," but in reality seems to be a draft of the letter actually sent. It is in Polk's handwriting and is signed by him.

1. At the end of the letter Polk appended several names of persons for whom this reply was intended in addition to Flournoy: A. M. M. Upshaw, Thomas Martin, Aaron V. Brown, and James Perry.

2. The fact that Polk answered with such care the letters received from outside his congressional district suggests the possibility that he had in mind some political move that would require support from the entire state.

TO A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Dr. Sir

Columbia Oct. 28th 1835

I cannot be at Nashville before Friday-night, perhaps not before Saturday morning. Will you speak to Mr. Edmondson¹ for a room for Mrs. P. & myself.

We have had two glorious days at Mt. Pleasant & Williamsport, and you will be surprized when I tell you, that the people almost without a division are openly with us on the Presidential question. The leading men are talking aloud for Van-Buren. Such a simultaneous moving of the people, such excitement & such a revolution in opinion I have never witnessed. They are become if possible, more unanimous than in the Mooresville country.

Your letter to the Williamsport people was read & enthusiastically received & cheered.² The people both at Mt. Pleasant & Wms Port are highly excited on the expunging resolution. When you see the toasts at both places, you will find almost every other one on that subject & all the same way. You are much stronger than you ever were. Thomas's³ friends are anxious & still hope that he will go with you. Had he been here for the last weeks he could not doubt the public sentiment of the County. I wish him well & hope he may finally vote to expunge.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. There will be a great crowd from this County at Nashville. The Hotels may be crowded, & hope you will not fail to secure me a room.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Nashville. This letter is in the New York Historical Society. It has been published in Joseph H. Parks, editor, "Letters from James K. Polk to Alfred O. P. Nicholson, 1835-49," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, III (1944), 68.

1. At this time James Edmondson was manager of the City Hotel in Nashville.

2. Nicholson had written an open letter to the people of Maury County explaining his recent shift away from support of White. This letter was copied from the *Columbia Democrat* and printed in the *Nashville Union*, October 26, 1835.

3. Jonas E. Thomas and Nicholson were Maury Countians in the lower house of the state legislature. At this time Thomas was believed to be in the political camp of Polk's enemies.

FROM JOHN McKINLEY

My Dear Sir Florence [Alabama] October 29, 1835

Accidents¹ & misfortunes & family distress have deprived me, for a long time, the pleasure of corresponding with you & many of my other friends. I have now a very sore hand, which renders it painful to write; but I can not delay longer to comply with the request of Judge Martin,² who is desirous of travelling with you to Washington. He has just married a young wife & wishes her to have the benefit of Mrs Polks experience. (Between ourselves the judge is considerably infected with Whiteism; & to cure him of it I am anxious he should board with you & judge Grundy.) When I saw the latter gentleman in Nashville, last spring, I suggested to him the propriety of taking Mr. M. & Mr Chapman³ to your mess, in the event of their election, to which he very cordially assented. If you approve of the plan write to me & inform me when you will set out that I may inform Mr Martin. Or you may write directly to him. I regret extremely that we could not have the pleasure of the company of Mrs P & yourself & some of our other Tennessee friends, last summer or this fall. But our family afflictions have been such as to prevent. We are in hopes however that next summer or fall will be more propitious to our wishes.

You may rest satisfied, whatever may be said to the contrary, that judge White has nothing to expect from Alabama. And if you & Grundy play your cards well Bell can get but one vote for Speaker from this State.

Mrs McKinley unites with me in kind respect to Mrs. P.

J. McKINLEY

P.S. Mrs McKinley sends her love more particularly to Mrs P & requests that she will take Mrs. Martin under her protection next winter.

Addressed to Columbia and forwarded to Nashville.

1. In May 1835 McKinley was badly injured in a stagecoach mishap just south of Columbia, Tennessee.

2. Joshua L. Martin, a lawyer and judge, had just been elected to the House of Representatives. He was in the House for two terms. Later he was governor of his state.

3. Reuben Chapman, like Martin, had been elected to the House of Representatives for the first time. He served six consecutive terms and then was elected governor of Alabama.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Murfreesboro Nov. 2nd 1835

I was prevented from attending the Mooresville dinner by sickness and bad weather as I have no doubt you have learned from A. C. Hays. I was not in town last week untill Saturday and did not know there was to be a dinner in Nashville or I should have gone down. I believe no person from this county attended except Col. Ridly.¹ I intimated in my letter to Hays that it was probable [Edwin A.]Keeble would not publish the Monitor any longer. He consulted me about it, showed me his subscription the amt of Job work &c. and upon a fair calculation he would loose 4 or 500 dollars this year besides his own time, and from all the circumstances I advised him to stop publication and sell out if he could. He has since sold the establishment to P. G. Warren,² former proprietor who will publish a White paper. The people of the right politics would not patronise Keeble and those of different opinions used all exertion to put it down. There is not a man in the county of our side that is the least active, and there are neighborhoods of wealthy Van Buren men where not a single copy of the Monitor was taken. Under this state of things there was no prospect that the paper would be useful now or at any time, because no person read it, therefore I advised him to sell rather than make a loosing business of it. I want to see you and Sarah before you go to Washington and had intended all along to go to Columbia, but find it impossible to do so at present. If you will write me what day you will be in Nashville on your way I will meet you there if nothing turns up to prevent it.

I see from the paper and Hays' Letter there have been other meetings of the people in Maury at Williamsport & Mt. Pleasant. I would be glad to hear a particular account of each and the

state of affairs in general in your county. Tell Sarah to write to me.

JNO W CHILDRESS

Addressed to Columbia and forwarded to Washington.

1. Moses Ridley was a cotton planter in Rutherford County, and a firm friend of Jackson. His brother, Henry Ridley, was also a planter in Rutherford, while another brother, James Ridley, lived in Davidson County. See William R. Rucker to Polk, March 29, 1836.

2. Peter G. Warren had been associated with Edwin A. Keeble in publishing the Murfreesboro *Central Monitor*. The paper referred to here is the *Central Periscope*, whose publication was noted in the Nashville *Union* of June 8, 1835. No issues of this paper have survived. Later Warren was associated with Edwin S. King in publishing the Murfreesboro *Tennessee Telegraph*.

FROM CLEMENT C. CLAY

My dear Sir,

Huntsville, Nov. 2d, 1835

Your esteemed favor of the 19th August was duly recd. Be assured the delay of my answer has not been because I failed to appreciate the friendly spirit which dictated it, but because I was continually in hopes of meeting several members of our delegation to Congress, or hearing from them through friends in such manner as to be able to answer you more satisfactorily. I am even now unable to speak with certainty in relation to their sentiments on the Presidential election; I have seen but two of them, and have not heard enough of the sentiments of the others. They all declared in favor of White as their first choice; but my successor Mr. [Reuben] Chapman, and Judge [Joshua L.] Martin the successor of Colo. [John] McKinley, (as I understand them) will support Mr. Van Buren, rather than divide our party, and suffer the election to go into the House of Representatives. Judge Lawler,¹ who succeeds Mr. Mardis, was, during the canvass, a very warm White man. I met with him at one place, the Court house of Pickens County, a few days before the election. It was on court day. I addressed the people assembled very fully on the Presidential election, in substance as I have always spoken, deprecating division, and defeat, and contending

for principles, not men. He followed me, and, I thought, rather reluctantly assented to the propriety of supporting Mr. Van Buren, *if White could not be elected.* Mr. Lyon² professes, I understand (I have not heard him speak in public or private) to be a White man. He also professes to be a Jackson man, but I fear he is rather luke warm. It is my opinion that the two first (Chapman & Martin) will give the administration a cordial support, and Judge Lawler has always been with us. Lyon has been considered equivocal by many of us, but probably will not go decidedly against us. As to [Dixon H.] Lewis, it is unnecessary to speak—you know him.

I have conversed with Chapman & Martin on the subject of the next speaker, and feel confident they will sustain the Candidate who may be run by the friends of the Administration. Indeed, I think Judge Lawler will do the same, though I have had no communication with him. The leading Democratic Journals of our state have come out decidedly against Bell, and in your favour; and one of them has gone so far as to say that no representative will be sustained by his constituents in this state, who may vote for B. Such a course would undoubtedly produce much excitement in any District, and probably result in the defeat of the man who pursued it. He is well understood here; being lauded by the opposition, of every hue and denounced by the Democrats for his apostacy.

You may have seen that every effort was made to break me down on the Presidential question. Every paper that supports Judge White either announced me as the Van Buren Candidate, or as *non-committal*, and not to be trusted by White-men. *I declared my determination to stand, or fall with my principles; refused to give a pledge to support Judge White; and expressed my intention to support Mr. Van Buren,* if, as I believed would be the case, Mr. Webster, Mr. Clay, or any other candidate of their party should be run. I generally found the democrats, or friends of the administration, easily satisfied that I was correct, and ready to support me; and, I have no doubt, that, if I could have gone through the state, my majority would have been much larger, than it is. I am satisfied the people of Alabama will go with their democratic friends, in the other states, when the day of trial arrives. What the Legislature will do on this subject

I cannot positively say; but I do not believe they will confirm the conditional nomination of last winter, if a third Candidate continues in the field, of which I entertain no doubt.

I must refer you to Mr. Caruthers³ for other details. Let me hear from you, *very fully, early in the session*. I will endeavour to let you know how affairs go on here. Mrs. C. unites in assurances of best regards to Mrs. P. and yourself.

C. C. CLAY

P.S. You will find Chapman a very clever fellow. Could you not place him on the Committee of public lands? Or cause it to be done?

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private." The letter is dated November 2, and on the envelope there is a postmark at Columbia dated November 9. It seems likely that the letter was delivered in Columbia by hand, after Polk had left for Washington, and then forwarded to him.

1. Joab Lawler of Mardisville, Alabama, had recently been elected to the seat in the House of Representatives previously held by Samuel W. Mardis.

2. William S. Lyon of Demopolis, Alabama, had been elected to the House seat recently held by John Murphy.

3. This is probably a reference to W. T. Caruthers of the Huntsville stage-coach firm, Caruthers and Kinkle.

FROM CLEMENT C. CLAY

Huntsville, Alabama. November 2, 1835

Clay introduces Reuben Chapman, who will succeed him in the House of Representatives. He identifies him as a supporter of the administration.

Addressed to Washington and delivered by Chapman.

FROM DUTEE J. PEARCE

My dear Sir, Newport [Rhode Island] November 3rd 1835

At this moment I can write you but a few lines, and these in haste, hardly expecting that what I shall write, will reach you, before you will leave home for the city.

We need not despair [. . .]¹ all will, I have no doubt, be right. I cannot leave home before it will be absolutely necessary for me so to do. A journey from this place to Washington will be

but two and half days. At W. please to write me what in your opinion will be necessary for me to do, or what I can do, *pro bono publico*, in addition to what is contained in your former suggestions. I write these few lines, in the midst of the business of a common pleas court, and am truly your friend. . . .

DUTEE J. PEARCE

Addressed to Columbia and forwarded to Washington.

1. This appears to be a Latin phrase but it has not been deciphered.

TO JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Nashville Nov 3rd 1835

Enclosed I send you a letter from Mr Balch¹ to me and request that you will send him by mail, the information he wants.

I have seen him & given him the names of the Heirs of S. Polk decd. Our names will have to be used (as the grant issued to S. Polk) in the suit he wishes to bring. He says he will write & send to you a bond to pay all costs that may be incurred. He wishes you to send him also, a copy of the contract between Col. Wm. Polk, Whiteside & my father, in relation to the 5000 acre warrant. The locaters interest has been laid off & long since sold & there is no dispute about that part.

Balch says you need not send any copy of the will, as I have told him its contents.

I start tomorrow morning.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This refers to the letter from Alfred Balch to Polk, October 13, 1835. The Balch letter explains some of the background to the affair discussed in his letter to Polk, April 3, 1835.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Memorandum for Col. Polk.

Nashville, Nov. 4, 1835

Enclosed you have \$5, which you will please hand to Messrs. Blair and Rives for one year's Subscription to the Semi-Weekly

Globe, to be sent to the address of Maj. H. Trott,¹ Danville, Warren County, Tenn.²

In relation to my affairs, please procure letters of introduction for me to some two or three of Col. [Richard M.] Johnsons confidential friends in the Kentucky Legislature, from Col. J. himself, or some of [his] confidential friends of the Ky. Delegation. Let the letters be general and refer to me for an explanation of the object of my visit to Frankfort. Whether I can be confidentially trusted, the gentlemen must rely on your knowledge. Whether I will go to Frankfort is not certain, but I wish to be prepared. Apart from letters of introduction which you must enclose to me, Col. Johnson or his friends might write confidential letters to Frankfort to their friends preparing them for my visit. Help in Kentucky and an extension of the circulation of the Union there will do great good in many respects; and efficient aid will surely enable us to carry the Col. here on Mr. V. Buren's ticket. It will be essential that Col J's friends in the Ky. Legislature, by way of advanced subscriptions, should do something more than merely subscribe. As I expect to derive no personal pecuniary benefit from it, much as I may need it, I can speak and act freely. For my personal benefit, I will beg nothing of any man; but for the common cause, I can be as importunate as Dr. Coffin³ when begging assistance for his Theological Seminary.

I will give you at least a weekly Report of our progress here. I cannot go to Frankfort until after the Assembly adjourns here, which will be, perhaps, early in January. But procure me the letters earlier.

Success attend you, and let "every man do his duty." I know you will do yours.

S. H. LAUGHLIN.

No envelope for this memorandum has been found. Polk was in Nashville at this time, however, and it is probable that it was merely handed to him.

1. Major Henry Trott was Laughlin's brother-in-law, having married the latter's sister in 1830. He was a farmer and merchant and was a Democrat. He was clerk of the chancery court 1836-43, and then served two terms, 1843-47, in the lower house of the state legislature.

2. Danville was in a part of Warren County that was soon detached and

joined to newly created Cannon County. Its name changed to Woodbury, it became the county seat of Cannon.

3. Charles Coffin, a Presbyterian minister, originally from New England, made quite a reputation for raising funds for Greenville College, of which he served seventeen years as president. Later he was president of East Tennessee College, successor to Blount College.

TO JAMES McKISICK

My Dear Sir:

Nashville, November [4]¹ 1835

I leave for Washington, this morning; I have mislaid my list of names of persons residing in Bedford, and without it shall be at great inconvenience, as I can remember the sur-names of hundreds, whose christian names I do not know. I wish as heretofore to forward public documents to my District, and must ask the favour of you, *to forward to me a complete list of all the Justices of the Peace in the county*, with the Post Office nearest their residence. I wish you to do this immediately & without fail, and forward it to Washington. Give me also all the names of all the Constables, and such others as your convenience will permit. Col. [Kenneth L.] Anderson will assist you. Be sure to send the list of Justices &c. so as to reach Washington before the meeting of Congress.

Mr. [Greenville] Cook of this place tells me he has purchased the Western Freeman, and will take possession on 1st January. You must see [William] Gilchrist, Anderson, [Samuel] Mitchell, and see that he certainly gets possession at that time. The fact that the purchase has been made, I am told has given much uneasiness to some of the politicians here, and from what I learn I have no doubt they would give any reasonable amount to get it back. Cook will he says want to make a loan to make the first payment, and will give security for repayment. Be sure to see our friends and have this part of the matter attended to, for if he fails to comply with his contract a single day after the time, they will take advantage of it. So far as I am concerned you know what to rely on. You have only to write to me and it shall be attended to. Cook will be out, he says at your December court. I have not time this morning to write to Gilchrist or Anderson. Will you see them *confidentially* on the subject, and let me hear from you.

Strange as you may think it, I have no doubt, but Maury is now two to one & and I think three to one for Van Buren. Our people are satisfied that there is not the slightest chance for White, and are dissatisfied with the proscriptive violence of the White leaders in this State & are going for Vanburen as the Republican candidate.

My Mooresville Speech will be printed in the Union in a few days, and I wish you to see the editor of the Freeman and request him from me to republish it in his paper. Tell him if he pleases not to divide it, but to publish the whole of it in one paper. If a part be published one week and a part the next, its full bearing will not be seen. It will afterwards be published at Columbia, in pamphlet form [sic] & several hundreds sent to Bedford.

This letter is of course intended for your own eye, unless you choose to show it to Gilchrist, Anderson & Mitchell confidentially.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Be sure to send the list of magistrates immediately, as I shall want them so soon as I get to Washington.

J.K.P.

N.B. *Bell* you see is married to Mrs. Yeatmen.² Good. He is now the son-in-law of Andrew Erwin and the brother-in-law of Mr. Clay's son-in-law. How will the White cause prosper under such a leader.

J.K.P.

Although the original of this letter has not been found, it was obviously addressed to Shelbyville. The version of the letter used here appeared in the *Nashville Union*, March 28, 1837. Marked "Private," it was accompanied by an editorial which said that it had been taken from papers left by mistake in the clerk's office at Shelbyville by James McKisick when he was preparing to move to Arkansas. It made the comment that if the person finding it had been honest he would have turned the letter over to McKisick's brother, who was still living in Shelbyville.

1. The *Union* did not give the day of the month. The day here was reported to be the date that appeared on another published version, either by a McMinnville or a Shelbyville newspaper. Since it fits in with the date of Bell's marriage to Mrs. Thomas Yeatman, it appears to be correct.

2. On October 25, 1835, John Bell married Jane Erwin Yeatman, widow of Thomas Yeatman. She was a daughter of Andrew Erwin and a sister of James Erwin, who was married to Henry Clay's daughter.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia, Nov. 13th 1835

I am still at home in consequence of waiting for our agent Neville¹ who was compelled to go to White County last week on his own business. I expect to leave for Mi[ssissippi] on Wednesday next. We have not much news. In politics we are still gaining ground. The White party seem to be down in the mouth and in a bad humor. The Democrat is increasing in standing and popularity. They average 3 or 4 new subscribers every day. They are repeatedly called on by their patrons to enlarge their paper. Their subscription price is too low for a large paper, and they cannot well increase the price until the end of the year. If their advertising and job work was equal to their subscription they might enlarge and afford to loose the difference in price for the ballance of their first year. This you know is not the case. I believe, however, they will have to enlarge to satisfy the public. It is every where said that the Democrat is the leading paper of this country, and if Bynum & Cameron can once get out of debt and a fair start their paper will be the source looked to, by this community for correct and sound political views. Many of our influential country friends are beginning to speak out in strong language on the expunging resolutions. They say they will *never vote for any man* for any office whatever who is not decidedly and unequivocally in favor of *expunging*. Nicholson's publication you will see is an ingenious defense—it will take. *The question* will save him from his enemies. He certainly acted foolishly in the commencement of the White affair. But his course now is decided & manly, and he will be sustained. Dr. Kelsey² writes that Van Burenism is overwhelming the whole country of Mooresville, Globe and Fountain³—scarcely a "White" man to be found in that region. He says "Mark my prophecy—Tennessee will vote for Van Buren," as certainly as she is now for Jackson! I am satisfied that this will be the case if East Tennessee does not turn the scale against us. But we labor under great disadvantages. The Press is overwhelming, and a large majority being against us, the people will be much longer in seeing the true questions at issue. I regret that the

[Murfreesboro] Monitor went down. A company ought to have formed & paid the temporary loss, until the people could have been shown the deceptions that are practising on them. If we need any thing in the way of assistance from our friends in other States, it is help in getting up and sustaining true Jackson Republican presses. Tennessee must be saved to the Republican family if possible. It could certainly be done if we had an equal number of newspaper presses, (properly scattered through the state) with the "no party" party. Knoxville & Jackson are important points.

I am very desirous that the *Democrat* should be permanent and as formidable as possible. Their papers ought in this crisis to be freely distributed. I have sometimes thought that it was practicable to get for them the printing of the Post office way bills for this section of country. This might you know be readily given them through an order to Andrew⁴ to have that printing done here, and it would be more convenient to the P M's in this region, and they can do it as well and as cheap as it is done at Louisville. I only mean the way bills for this section of Tennessee, North Alabama & part of Miss. that could be most conveniently supplied from here. If any thing of this kind can be effected, it would help our cause. The Observer you know is in part State printers, and our town will not permanently sustain two presses. If any aid can be given the *Democrat*, to assist them in the competition it ought to be done.

Your Speech has not yet appeared in the Union. It will be republished & circulated here forthwith.

No local news—all well.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Not fully identified. Neville had been a valued employee of Walker and his associates in the operation of their stage lines. See Walker to Polk, February 18, 1834.

2. Henry B. Kelsey was a resident at Mooresville, Maury County, where he practiced medicine. He was also postmaster there for a short time in 1836. Soon thereafter he moved to Texas.

3. These were settlements in the southeastern part of Maury County.

4. Andrew C. Hays, a kinsman of Walker, was at this time postmaster at Columbia.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Gallatin, Nov 15th 1835

Yesterday was the greatest political day ever seen in old Sumner.¹ There was literally a rising of the Clans. The Halls, Lauderdales, Wilsons, Elliotts, Barrs, Blackmons, Cryers, Cages, a part of the Douglass Clan, the Vincents, Davises &c to the number of about 2000, met. They eat freely but drank little, were talked to by Grundy, Balch, Burton & Laughlin. Never was a better spirit manifested; a perfect revolution is going on. The spirit is spreading abroad, that will prostrate every thing. Burton told the people, if they would pardon his late inaction, they should have nothing to complain of in future &c. You will see a full account in the Union in a few days.

I take the stage to night for Washington, shall stop in Baltimore a day or two only on business. But if my presence in Washington can be of any service, to the good cause, drop me a line to that effect to Baltimore and I will be on instantly.

FELIX GRUNDY

P.S. Show this to the president & Maj Donelson & Johnson.

Addressed to Washington.

1. This political rally was called to honor Grundy. Grundy's evaluation was perhaps an exaggeration, but other accounts indicate that it was indeed attended by a large and enthusiastic crowd. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, November 18, 1835, for a corroborative account.

FROM ADLAI O. HARRIS

My Dear Sir

Columbia 17 Nov 1835

Mr Denby¹ has call'd on me to purchase your Royal place & 10 acres of woodlands to attach to it. As I could not know your views about the sale of this place, I prevailed on him to wait until I could write you on the subject. Let me know your price & where you would wish the 10 acres laid off. I think he is anxious to buy; he said that he had understood you would take \$18 p[er] acre for it. I think he will give \$20 willingly.

Dr. Polk declines taking the 72½ Blls Corn of Mitchell & I have instructed him to crib it in the shuck for you. The Corn

that Brown owes you I may have to sell perhaps. Dr P. would prefer taking none however there will be no difficulty in disposing of it if Brown pays it. Dr Polk has given me his note to you for \$250 for the rent of your House.²

Mr James S Walker³ was taken on night before last about 8 oclock with Paralysis which was immediately succeeded by Apoplexy & has not been able to speak since; in fact he has been in such a stupor that he does not seem to be conscious of any thing that has been done for him and have had scarcely a hope of his recovery. Drs Hays, Frierson & Law,⁴ have been almost constantly with him. By the aid of the stomach pump &c they have introduced medicine that has operated pretty well. He is blistered from the crown of his head to his ankles in various places. Yesterday & last night they had no hope of his surviving the attack—this morning, they have some faint hope that he may get over it, but it is a very faint hope. Should he die, it will be a most distressing case to his family and friends, that he has not been able to speak or even to appear concious of his situation & admonishes us to be "always ready" for "in the midst of life we are in death."

All of our other friends are well. My best respects to Mrs Polk.

A O HARRIS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Denby is unidentified. The property he wished to buy was in Maury County and had once been owned jointly by Polk and Samuel H. Laughlin.

2. See William J. Polk to James K. Polk, October 15, 1835.

3. James Simpson Walker was almost always called Simpson Walker. He was a former partner of James Walker; his wife was a sister of A. O. P. Nicholson.

4. John B. Hays, James W. S. Frierson, and John S. Law were all practicing in Columbia at this time. Law had moved to Columbia from Georgia in 1833 and was a highly respected physician and citizen there until his death in 1844.

FROM JOSEPH C. HERNDON¹

Dear Sir

Columbia Nov. 18th '35

J. R. Shelton² & myself wish to take the *Extra* "Globe" (jointly) during the Session of Congress. We find it difficult to

procure a bill of the right size to foward. If you will have it sent on to us from the commencement *I* will hand you the amount on your return.

You have, no doubt, heard of the sudden death of our highly esteemed fellow citizen James S. Walk[er]. He was taken with an appoplectic fit on Sunday night and died on Tuesday night about 10 oclock.

The political excitement has somewhat abated. Nicholsons *last* letter closed the mouths of the *boisterous*, and stiffened the tongues of the *too talkative politicians* of our town. There will be, in my humble opinion, a majority of *Maury* for Van B.

JOSEPH C. HERNDON

Addressed to Washington.

1. A Maury County lawyer. He had rented Polk's home at one time.
2. James R. Shelton was a long-time resident of Columbia. He started his business career as a tailor.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Nov. 18, 1835

Owing to the hard press of all kinds of matters, and my necessary absence at Gallatin during the latter part of last week, we have not been enabled to bring your speech¹ out before yesterday and to-day. We will public [*sic*] a large edition in pamphlet. It is called for. I will forward the Weekly paper containing it, to all the gentlemen marked in the margin of my Congressional Register, to Washington.

We had a glorious day at Gallatin on Saturday last. Mr. Grundy re-delivered his war talk, enlarged and embellished with many additions. I need not say it was well received. Mr. [Alfred] Balch and Mr. [Robert M.] Burton made good speeches. I made a little speech, being called out on a complimentary toast proposed by Robert Holmes Peyton, the brother of Hon Balie. The people seemed to hear me with satisfaction, but I was stinted in time. Mr. Grundy, and Mr. Caruthers (Mr. Walker's partner in Stage contracts) were present and can tell you more than I have time to write. It was a glorious day for Sumner—the Halls, Elliots, Lauderdales &c. were in the field.

You will see that Allen Hall has become Editor of the Banner. Eighteen months ago, yes, one year ago Hunt² would not speak to him, and had denounced him as a liar and puppy in cards published in the Banner in Gibbes Hunt's³ time.

The *Expunging* resolutions grow stronger and stronger. Our friends, who may be too ardent in their calculations, think they will pass.

I received a letter a few days since from Col. Boone⁴ of Indiana, highly friendly to you, and in exact accordance with my prayers and wishes in regard to you and Mr. Bell. Mr. [Adam] Huntsman was still here on yesterday. I have sounded his feelings sufficiently to know that he *goes in*, heart and hand, with the friends of the administration. We enjoyed a hearty laugh over the *saving clause* appended to his letter in answer to the questions propounded to him through the Jackson Truth Teller, on the subject of his support of Judge White and Speaker Bell.

You will see a letter from Bedford, quoted in the Union of Yesterday. It is from Col. Sam Mitchell.⁵

I will attend specially to your directions as to [Greenville] Cooks movements. He is going to Bedford two weeks before the time of obtaining possession. All will be well.

Our friends are going to enlarge the Democrat. I am glad of it.

In a pecuniary way, our folks have extended no accommodation to Long, but I have some confidence that they will partially relieve his embarrassments. I will speak when and where I can find a place to stand on, I will write while I can raise a quill, and while even a sheet of brown paper can be had, Long shall print, while the war continues. Please see what you can do with my scheme of getting some help at Frankfort when the Assembly meets. I can go there in four days, and come home by Louisville and bring stock, if the wind can be raised. Let me hear from you on that subject as early as you can. Col. [Richard M.] Johnson certainly can set his friends to help in so good a cause. The manner of effecting any thing of the kind, I suggested in my memorandum. There are men here who could assist, from whom *now*, I would not accept of a doit to save the establishment from perdition. There are others, who promise to do, and I think will. My present calculation is to quit the establishment in the end,

minus \$500 and two year's work, but with the hope of being ultimately re-embursed from its proceeds. All this, I have long made up my mind to do, and will do, if I live. There are others who must be paid, if any thing can be paid next year, before me. I am personally bound to pay Mr. Donelson by April, and it shall be done.

I have no news, worth communicating. The Railroad Bill has become a law, and the County Court, and Supreme Court Bills will soon be passed. I see no reason why the legislature should sit longer than two or three weeks. Perhaps, however, they may sit here until the first of January or longer. As soon as they adjourn, if deemed expedient, I wish to go to Frankfort. I can take a boat for it all the way, and although the weather will be bad, and the business rather humble and disagreeable, yet I think I can succeed in it to some useful extent. I will write again on Sunday.

Please make my compliments to Mrs Polk. . . .

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Washington.

1. This refers to Polk's speech made at McCoressville, Maury County, on October 22, 1835.

2. H. Hasell Hunt was publisher of the paper which Hall was editing. He was a brother of William Gibbs Hunt.

3. William Gibbs Hunt, who had died recently, was a Nashville newspaper publisher for many years.

4. Ratliff Boon, a former governor of Indiana, was at this time a member of the House of Representatives, where he served 1825-27 and 1829-39. Later he moved to Missouri.

5. In his letter, dated November 3, 1835, Mitchell was critical of those in the legislature who recommended the nomination of Hugh L. White. He said that while some of them claimed to support Jackson they were actually undermining his administration. He claimed that they were supporting a legislative caucus that was far more odious than the Baltimore Convention.

FROM JOHN H. RIVERS

Dear Col,

Giles county¹ Tenn 20th Novbr 1835

I am about engaging in a little speculation in Arkansas at & near Helena 60 miles south of Memphis & the back country & need very much a little information from Washington as a

guide. The general government some years since, ordered two millions of acres of land in Arkansas to be laid off & retained for *military* purposes & those soldiers, as I understand it, who enlisted to serve for 5 years or during the war were & are entitled to bounty land. A part of those lands have been drawn out & a part not, as I have learned, & that some 10 or 12 years have elapsed since any were drawn & that more will not probably be claimed or drawn. May I ask of you to procure for me, 1st a correct list of all the military lands in Arkansas, 2nd what lands have been drawn out by the soldiers entitled, the name of the soldier drawing it, the names of each soldier owning said land or entitled to any of the bounty lands & his residence if known—now or heretofore, the company in which he enlisted & where he enlisted & any other information in regard to the residence of the soldier that can be had. It is thought that the books of the genl. land office will give much information on these subjects. Whatever expense you may be at in procuring this information I will immediately forward you. You will do me a great favour & lay me under lasting & additional obligations by attending if you can do so, without inconvenience, to this matter immediately, as no time is to be lost. If the whole of the information cannot be had any part of it, especially a list of the bounty lands in Arkansas will be thankfully received. Please lay the matter before the land office on the receipt of this. I ask its prompt attention to it.

I feel a lively interest about you, & your political as well as private fortune & hope most ardently that you may be speaker, or if this is not our good fortune, that Col Bell may be beaten by some other person of sound principles, for we feel resolved in this county to sink or swim with you & your views. We shall soon have a paper out "The Trumpet of Liberty" which will *gradually* espouse the cause of the people & Mr Van Buren. There will be no doubt or question of its politics. The course of Mr Nicholson is highly approved here & has I think, effectively made Mr A. B. Estes, who will publish the paper, & is his cousin, a Van B. man. I hope & believe that *our Man*² will Support the Democracy in the election for Speaker.

Present my warmest regards to Mrs Polk & accept for yourself assurances of the Sincerest esteem & respect.

JNO. H. RIVERS

N.B. Please address any information you may be able to collect, to me at *Helena Arkansas Territory*, but at Pulaski in case you write after the 1st February 1836.

J. H. R.

Addressed to Washington.

1. On the envelope Rivers gave Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, as the point of origin of this letter.

2. Ebenezer J. Shields.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Colo.

Murfreesboro, Nov. 20th 1835

I expect this letter will get to Washington nearly as soon as you will and consequently can give you very little information that you have not already heard. Every thing appears to be quiet here now on the subject of the Presidency. The White men are desponding and are now looking out for their second choice which I think will mostly settle upon Van Buren. The large meetings which were lately held in this state to honor you & other distinguished friends of Van buren in this State and to vindicate the character of the Old Chief has nearly ruined the White cause in this state. I would have been greatly gratified to have been at Moorsville & Nashville but was prevented in consequence of the dangerous situation of several of my patients. Brother John W. Ruckers' wife was very like to die at the time of the celebration at Nashville or he and several of my brothers would have been there. John W Childress was in Franklin County on a hunting expedition or he would have been there. I was very much mortified that our county was so badly represented at that *Convention*.

The County Court is now in session in this cty. The Grand Jury took a vote on the succession; 5 voted for Vanburen 4 for White and 3 declared that they had never made up their minds how they should vote. These Jurors were brought from all parts of the county without any regard to their politics and I think they may be considered a fair sample of the whole county. About one fourth of our population from want of information or something else have not yet determined whom they will support & I

have but little doubt when they are well informed on the subject of the intrigues of White & his abettors that they will join with our friends in giving Vanburen a decided majority. I have been exerting myself some to procure a greater circulation of the *Globe* in this county & have enclosed in this letter one to Messrs Blair & Rives containing twenty five dollars for weekly *Globes* & *Extras* to be circulated through the county. If it will not be too much trouble I would be glad you would hand it to him yr. self. I think I will send on a few more subscribers shortly. I think before the close of the session that Ex-Speaker Bell will be looking about for the formation of a new coalition. In fact some have supposed that he has already laid the foundation of one in his late marriage. At any rate he is strongly allied to the Clay faction and has demonstrated that he is not only in favour of *the Bank* but was strongly inclined to *have a Bank* however *unseemly the banking establishment might be*. I expect he will keep an open *Hotell* at Washington. We are all well. Our love to Sarah. Write to me as often as you can and without reserve.

W. R. RUCKER

P.S. Little Allen Hall has lately become the Editor of the [. . .] *Advocate & Journal* alias the *Whig & Banner*. It is said he will be neutral on politics. I suspect they will all soon wish they had been neutral or on the right side.

W. R. R.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Rucker had a full brother who seems to have been commonly called Jack W. Rucker. He married Maria Keeble and later moved to Mississippi. There was also an older half brother named Jonathan, but it is believed that this is a reference to the younger brother.

FROM EDWARD EVERETT

Charlestown, Massachusetts. November 21, 1835

Retiring from Congress after ten years, Everett, though not of Polk's party, wishes him well in his capacity of speaker. He introduces Abbott Lawrence,¹ who is a new member of the House.

Addressed to Washington and delivered by Lawrence.

1. A wealthy merchant and a prominent Whig of Boston.

FROM ANDREW C. HAYS

Dear Sir,

Columbia Ten. Nov. 21st 1835

It becomes my painful duty to inform you of the death of our much esteemed friend J. S. Walker. On Sunday night last, on retiring to bed, in his usual health and good spirits, he was, in about 15 minutes after lying down taken with a fit of Apoplexy. In about 2 minutes after the attack, he became speechless. He lingered in this situation until Tuesday night about 9 o'clock, when he breathed his last, not having spoken one word or opened his eyes from the time of the attack. There were three physicians constantly in attendance day and night, and every exertion that could be made was done for his relief. A more distressed and afflicted family I have never seen; it to them, is a peculiarly heavy loss, for you know he was a kind & affectionate husband & father. His death is much lamented by all who knew him. I do not believe that I have ever seen more persons at a funeral, than attended his tho' the day was unfavorable. He was buried with Masonic honors. The Merchants closed their doors, held a meeting, passed Resolutions deploring his loss, resolved to wear crape for 30 days, and to go to his burial in procession. Mr. Labaree¹ preached his funeral at his dwelling house, before the body was removed. Owing to an unusual warmth about his body for some time, he was kept out of ground some 30 hours longer than common, and was not buried until Thursday evening about 4 o'clock.

Mr. James Walker who expected to leave on Monday last was detained, in consequence of this sore affliction, and did not start until yesterday. He requested me to write to you, and say that he would have written but could not get time to do so. I am now alone, and have the whole responsibility of the Democrat on my shoulders, at least its Editorial Department.² I hope however to work through it, until his return, with prudence & caution. You will regularly receive it and can judge.

You will see from the last numbers that we have determined to enlarge the paper on the first day of January; this course has been determined on at the pressing solicitations of its patrons from all quarters. The change however, must be attended with

some loss. The subscription list is daily increasing. In a political point of view, it is very desirable that it should continue to increase, but this increase is no advantage in a pecuniary point for subscriptions in this country are so difficult of collection, they seldom if ever pay the expense, particularly should the list be long. The Democrat must be sustained at all hazards, and if it can possibly get any patronage by way of public work it is desirable that it be done.

Nicholson who is here, tells me that it has more character than any paper in the state, about Nashville, that he thinks from what he has heard there that an application will probably be made to unite it with the Union office; that the friends of the cause about Nashville want the paper located among them &c. He is opposed to any such arrangement. I told him he need not be uneasy on that subject, that it was as important to have just such a press here, and should any such proposition be made it would be declined.

Laughlin has been much later publishing yr. speech than he ought to have been. The Democrat gives it in their next, and will publish the pamphletts immediately; so soon as printed they shall be distributed. I learn by a letter from M. A. Long that a considerable number of your speech in pamphlett form has been spoken for at that office. I have requested the Editors of the Observer^s to give it a place; whether they will or not I think doubtful. I think it probable that that paper will be out upon you shortly. It is already at open war with Nicholson, (*all of which you will see*) and in its last insinuates an understanding between you and Nicholson, viz. that you are to receive an Executive appointment, and Nicholson is to succeed you in this District &c. (but you can read it for yourself). They have been for some time back making insinuations and covert thrusts at you both in their Editorial & from correspondents (no doubt written by themselves). With regard to your course on the subject of Internal Improvements by the General Government, in your first canvass for Congress they have insinuated that you were for it, but have made no direct charge. The last Democrat calls upon them to make their charges against you, (if they have any to make) *directly* and *explicitly*. Should they

do so I will immediately write you enclosing the article and you can dispose of it as you think proper.

Nicholson is in good spirits; he says all things are moving on well about Nashville—even better than he expected a few weeks since.

The cause is evidently gaining ground every day in this quarter. In this county we have nothing to fear. I however feel great anxiety about Bedford. That press should certainly without delay be got into proper hands.⁴ If this can be accomplished she can be regenerated in 3 months if the paper be conducted with proper energy and spirit.

Your friends and relations are all well at present. My health I think still slowly improving.

Recommend the Democrat to our friends at Washington, and try to procure it some subscriber's.

Present my best respects to Mrs Polk, and receive for your self renewed assurances of my high regard and esteem.

A. C. HAYS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Benjamin Labaree was a minister who had moved from Massachusetts. He was head of the Manual Labor Academy at Spring Hill, and he continued in that capacity when it was moved to Columbia and renamed Jackson College.

2. The Columbia *Democrat* was nominally the newspaper of Chesley P. Bynum and Donald Cameron, but James Walker and Andrew C. Hays had written most of its editorials. They did not sign their articles, but their role with the *Democrat* was probably understood locally.

3. Felix K. Zollicoffer and William Fields Jr. were the two editors referred to here. In February 1835, when Micajah G. Lewis withdrew from the paper, Fields took his place.

4. Efforts to establish a friendly newspaper in Shelbyville were then being made. See Greenville Cook to Polk, October 16, 1835, and Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, October 21, 1835.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Murfreesboro Nov. 22nd 1835

I received yours dated at Harrodsburg [Kentucky] a few days since and was pleased to hear you had progressed so far on

your journey safely. It has been raining here incessantly for the last three weeks and the roads have become almost impassible. Our cotton almost ruined by the frosts will be shortened still more by the wet weather. I would have taken great pleasure in attending the dinner at Nashville on the 31st Ult. and would certainly have done so had I been apprised of it in time. I was not in town during the week untill the day of the dinner, and did not hear of it untill then. I was also anxious to see you and Sarah before your departure for Washington and fully intended to meet you at Nashville, if I had known at what time you would be there.

The fever and ague has at last disappeared from among us, it being about a week since any of the family have been attacked, and we are now for the first time in six months in tolerable health. In consequence of the refusal on the part of my mother to sell the place on which we live I am compelled to abandon the idea of moving this year. I have the place to pay for, which will take all the money I can raise now and I am unwilling to go into the woods with my force and go in debt for the first years supplies, the price of the land and expense of moving. If I could form a partnership with a business man in whom I had confidence I would sell negroes to the amount of \$5000 and take a stock of goods to the Chickasaw nation. James C. Moore¹ who is a good merchant and an honest man has some idea of the business but has not yet determined whether he can make any arrangement as yet. If he does not I am compelled to remain where I am, altho I know I am sacrificing time, property, and happiness.

Nothing of interest has occurred in politics since you left Nashville. Every thing seems to be quiet since the members to Congress set out for Washington. From appearances during our county court which is just over I am induced to believe our county will yet take some interest in the Presidential election. The Grand Jury (of which I was a member) took a vote and we were equally divided, the men living remote from town & town influence voting on our side. And I observed in conversing with people about the Court House, that a large share of those living in the Hills at a distance from town are with us, and it needs but the exertions of some active influential men to give us a

majority in the county. Mr Grundy can effect a great deal in the neighborhood of his kinsfolk the Millers² if he will take the trouble to stir them up. The most of Bradys old friends seem disposed to go with us, and I have no doubt Crockett³ will be warmly sustained for his expunging vote in the Legislature. If we had a talented leader in this county I should not fear the result. I would be pleased to hear the movements at Washington as often as you can write. I intended to pay the money I had of yours before your departure but was not well enough to collect it in time. I think I shall get it at the end of year and you can write me how to apply it when I collect and I will act accordingly. Tell Sarah to write to me frequently as I am always pleased to hear from you and I will try and be a better correspondent, for the future. I learn from the 'Democrat' that Simpson Walker died a few days since of Apoplexy. The loss of the Press in this county is a matter of no concern, its subscription list being not more than 150 and confined to town & neighborhood and not likely to increase. It is perfectly flat in public estimation.

JNO. W. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.

1. James C. Moore was a grocer in Murfreesboro who had married a daughter of Robert Purdy. William S. Moore was also a merchant there and it is probable that they were kin to each other, but this connection has not been established.

2. The exact connection between the Millers and Grundy has not been ascertained. There are other references to the political influence of the Millers, and it is possible that the town of Millersburg was their home. See John W. Childress to Polk, October 10, 1836.

3. Granville S. Crockett was a farmer from Murfreesboro. He was sheriff of the county, 1834-36, and served in the legislature for one term, 1835-37. Later he became clerk and master of the chancery court. He was connected by marriage with Leonard Sims.

FROM GEORGE GAMMON¹

Dear Colo, Mount Pleasant Sullivan Cty, Nov. 22nd 1835

A long time has elapsed since I wrote or received a line from you, but notwithstanding I have been a close and anxious ob-

server of your consistent course in all the political movements of the Nation as well as those of the opposition and of factious intriguers composed of Bell, Crockett & Co, who has been engaged in the dark and infamous plot endeavouring to put down Jackson administration and the principals for which we have so long contended.

Last winter when White was put in nomination by the Imortal Eleven Representatives from Tennessee I then believed and still think I understood the game, and developments confirm me in that opinion. To go into a detail of my views would be too lenthly for the present epistle. Suffice it to say that it was an understand[ing] with Bell and the opposition to break down the Republican party and make Bell Speaker, the interest of both being inseperably connected. But in both I trust in God they will be disappointed. When this Caucus was going on although I had not heard who composed it but was certain you would not give into the measure, therefore knowing Whites popularity in Tennessee the hundreds of offices to fill and the thousands of candidates that would be in the field and all mounted on the White Horse, I trembled for your fate knowing you to be one of the victims the[y] had in view, but I still hoped (but this hope was not without fear) that you with your talents, overwhelming popularity and the good cause you espoused be able to ride triumphantly and victoriously over your enemies and the enemies of our country and present Good Chief Magistrate. In this also I have not been mistaken. The election is over you have been victorious and as I anticipated a reaction is begun. I see with great pleasure the dinners given Messrs Grundy & Polk. The[y] speak of things as the[y] really are. These things all happen at the proper time. Good speed the good work that is begun.

I sir have been raised and always considered myself a Republican. In 1823 I naild myself to the Jackson Mast to which I have adhered ever since. I have been with him in all the measures of his administration and I feel as well assured he is right in the course he has taken in the Presidential election as I do in any measure of his administration. I once had as much confidence in White as I had in almost any man but his course last winter lessens him very much in my estimation. His suffer-

ing the enemies of his party to use his name, his vote on the appropriation bill and his course on the Expunging Resolutions is evidence to me that he is relying on the oposition for his principal support. I am sir a decided Jackson Vanburen man and I am proud to say while the surrounding county are holding White meeting and the current running strong that way, that our county is we say anti White. We are now pretty equally divided. The[y] have spoke of White meeting, we dare them to make the attempt. I regret the course our legislature has taken but hope when the present excitement subsides the common people informed, the[y] will retract these steps & I think and always have said Van will get the vote of Tennessee. In this I may be mistaken.

I have seen with pleasure while Chairman of the Comittee of ways and means the able and efficient manner in which you discharged that duty as well as the able and efficient manner in which you defended Jackson and his administration. May you fill the measure of your countrys glory and I have no doubt you will, that you may contend sucessfully for the principals we have so long advocated, that while the storm continue to rage and the waves of political excitement continue, really it is you & such other true patriots as yourself that we look to for safety & sucess. Present my best respects to my old friend the President whos life is now in the yellow leaf and say in him I have every confidence, while he is at the Helm I consider we are safe, that he may succeed in putting down White as well as Bell Crockett & Co. and when he has finished the good and glorious work that he may retire to the Hermitage amidst the applause of thousands and covered with imperishable glory, and that you yourself may prosper and rise triumphant over all your enimies and after you have fought the good fight of faith we will say enter into the high places prepared for you.

GEO. GAMMON

P.S. Feeling that myself and the Vanburen party have no Representatives in Congress from Tennessee that I know of except yourself, Messrs Grundy & Johnson, I have a little matter I wish you to attend to. It is by no means important to the government. It is alone a personal & party matter. There was a post office established a few years ago by the name of Fall

Branch P.O. Washington County, Tennessee. It was established where I had a mercantile establishment and a man who done business for me was appointed post master, by the name of James. He declined doing business for me and commenced for himself about one mile distant to which place he removed the P. Office about two years ago. I succeeded in getting it back and at this time a man by the name of Josph B. Gilman is Post-master.² I have always been oposed to Colo Carter³ and the last election to [Samuel] Bunch because he was for White & Bell. Therefore I have no doubt they will both use there exertion to have the office removed and James made P. Master. I can assure you it matters not to the people where this little office is. As I before stated it is personal matter. Still I feel considerable in-trest about the matter. I do not know Mr Kendall there. I have to call on my friends as I consider myself unrepresented. Carter has set out and may attempt the removal imediately. I know a word from you & my friend Grundy to Kendall will settle the matter and I hope you will attend to subject imediately. Fail not and you will confer additional favour, for I would dislike my enemies to obtain a victory over me.

GEO. GAMMON

Please write me imediately on the Receipt of this. I am very anxious to know if Bell can be beaten for speaker, as I have that more at heart at present than any matter now before you.⁴

Addressed to Washington. This letter had most words written with capitals, and more than the usual editorial modification has been made.

1. Gammon was a merchant in Blountville at this time. He had served two nonconsecutive terms in the legislature.

2. This post office moved back and forth. When Jesse J. James was postmaster it was called James Cross Roads. When it moved back to Fall Branch, Joseph B. Gilman was postmaster. A few weeks after this letter was written it was again changed from James Cross Roads to Fall Branch and Gilman again succeeded James as postmaster. See Gammon to Polk, January 28 and May 25, 1836; and Abraham McClellan to Polk, February 17, 1836.

3. William B. Carter of Elizabethtown had presided over the constitutional convention in 1834 and was at this time a Whig member of the House of Representatives, serving from 1834 to 1841.

4. The lines placed here after the second signature appeared on the margin of the first page of the letter.

FROM WILLIAM MARTIN¹

Nashville. November 25, 1835

Martin expresses concern over the inability of the agents of the federal government to collect rents from miners leasing lead mines in Illinois.² He asks Polk to present the problem to the Secretary of War with a view toward implementing a more stringent leasing policy.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A resident of Williamson County, Martin served five nonconsecutive terms in the General Assembly between 1817 and 1835. At this time he was Assistant Suprintendent of the United States lead mines at Galena, Illinois.

2. See Martin to Polk, March 25, 1836.

FROM CAMPBELL P. WHITE

New York City. November 25, 1835

White introduces John McKeon, a newly elected Democratic member of the House. From New York City, McKeon is represented as being held in high regard by New York Democrats.

Probably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found.

FROM JAMES M. WAYNE¹

My dear Sir Columbia [South Carolina] November 26, 1835

I wish you to do me a favor whether you should be Speaker or not, though I suppose you will be, as our party cannot but be sensible that your deserving and its true policy correspond in placing you at the head of the House of Representatives, and it is for you to use your influence to have our friend Howard² of Baltimore placed, if not the first, high up on the Committee of Foreign Affairs. I say our friend, because his feelings have always been and are full of the kindest regard for yourself. But apart from his friendship for either of us, his qualifications give him a claim to such a distinction and he has been a true soldier in our cause, throughout General Jacksons administration, both in the Legislative Hall and before. The people of Maryland rejoiced to hear of his success in the last election and well so be-

cause without his active efforts Baltimore would still have been in the hands of the Whigs. I know you will do what you can to aid my wishes to have Col Howard placed in a prominent position, that his talents and attainments may have their due force in the House and to give him the opportunity by obvious services to augment the strength of our party and his own influence at home. I believe his being upon the Foreign Affairs will be very acceptable to the Secretary of State.³ I have written to him upon the subject. I knew it was not necessary for me to write to you or to him to advance Howard in the estimation of others, but our long friendship induces me to suggest to both of you what I am sure from our confidential intercourse would be acceptable to him, without having consulted with him as to what I am now doing.

I am here holding the Circuit Court. I have a great deal of intercourse with the members of the Legislature here in Session and am much indebted to their courtesy, but I have been obliged to learn personally the bitterness of their political hostility to the administration, the personal disregard in which they affect to hold the president, and the conclusion of McDuffies message is the common feeling towards our Candidate for the succession. But one thing, I have also learned, that the nullifiers will in no event take up Judge White and so strong is the feeling in this regard, that it will cost any one of their representatives in Congress his seat who may declare himself in the Judges favor.

With the best wishes and my very sincere remembrances to Mrs Polk. . . .

JAMES M. WAYNE

Addressed to Washington.

1. A member of the House of Representatives from Georgia, 1829-35, Wayne had been considered a likely candidate for the speakership until he resigned early in 1835 to become a member of the United States Supreme Court.

2. Benjamin Chew Howard of Maryland served in the House of Representatives 1829-33 and 1835-39. He was reporter of the decisions of the Supreme Court from 1843 to 1861.

3. John Forsyth.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr. Sir

Columbia No. 27th 1835

I have received a letter from [Claudius C.] Jones and one from [Ephraim] Beanland both a few days since. Beanland give no account of his crop in his; six or seven of the negroes have been sick since I was there but are better. *Elizabeth* he writes came very near dying. *Gilbert* has run away for Tennessee he says. Jones writes he has made 39 Bales, says he has cotton enough picked out to make one or two more, does not say whether he is done picking out or not; 29 of them were shipped from *Randolph* on the 20th.

The White Excitement is not quite so high here as when you left. *Van Buren* is still gaining strength in this County.

There is at this time considerable excitement in *Nashville* in the Legislature about a job of printing. You know [Washington] Barrow & others were elected Publick Printers. A committee of four waited on Barrow to know what he would do a certain job for and also on Old Parson Garrett.¹ It appeared that Barrow asked about double what Garrett proposed doing the same work for. On the next night Mr Garrett was burnt at the court house in *Efigee*. The Legislature has not yet determined which they will give the job of printing to, but of course we may expect the *White* printers will get it. I expect to start below about the 10th of next month.

S. M. CALDWELL

J. S. Walker died on the 17th of Apoplexy.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Lewis Garrett was for a long time a prominent Methodist minister in Nashville. He was presiding elder of the Nashville district several times, the last being in 1831. At this time he was publisher and senior editor of the *Western Methodist*. This publishing firm sometimes did job printing. For more details on the affair here mentioned see Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, December 1, 1835.

FROM BENJAMIN C. HOWARD

Dear Sir

Baltimore Novr. 30th 1835

I see with much pleasure, by the Papers, that you are in Washington, because it is my wish that you should be chosen Speaker of the House. I have expressed this opinion to Mr. McKim verbally and to Mr. Thomas¹ in writing. As far as our small Admn. vote from this State will go, I think you will receive it. The motives which have induced me to form this opinion, as to the selection of yourself, it is unnecessary to recite; and I shall be pleased to learn when I come down on Saturday, that there will be no division amongst the friends of the administration.²

BENJN. C. HOWARD

Addressed to Washington.

1. Isaac McKim and Francis Thomas were members of the House of Representatives from Maryland. McKim served 1823-25 and from 1833 until his death in 1838. Thomas was in the House 1831-41. He then served as governor of his state. He was again elected to the House and served from 1861 to 1869.

2. See James M. Wayne to Polk, November 26, 1835.

FROM CAMPBELL P. WHITE

My Dear Friend

New York 30 Novem 1835

I have delayed acknowledging your very interesting communication until I could address you at Washington being apprehensive that my letter might not reach you safely.

Be assured that all our friends here look with admiration at the moral courage you have displayed in Tennessee, putting to hazard that popularity which is dear to every public man by your adherence to the candidate of the Republican Party without regard to personal predilections, sectional feelings or State pride. And I am greatly mistaken if your noble and independent course in your own State has not made even a deeper impression upon the Party, than even the consummate ability which you

exhibited in the House of Representatives in the eventful crisis through which we have passed, in the defence of the administration as the leader of the Democracy of the Country in the last Congress.

I have said to all our friends, and I am happy to say they all concur with me, that it is due to you and to the State of Tennessee that you should be made Speaker. I say to the State of Tennessee because whatever delusion may now exist or that designing men may have produced I am confident the mass of her people will eventually be right and be found true to General Jackson and to the Country. This course is at once just and politic. My only apprehension is that Bell, finding himself distanced by the Democracy, may direct his efforts to divide the Party by pressing upon the Virginian Delegation the support of John Y. Mason. But I do hope our friends are not to be divided and distracted by such artifices. I shall look with great interest to the organization of the House. And I feel confident our Country has in store for you her highest honors; and no one will rejoice more in your advancement & prosperity. . . .

C. P. WHITE

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private and Confidential."

FROM JOHN McKEON

Gadsby's Saturday 6 PM [Washington]

Dear Sir,

[December 1835]¹

Availing myself of your kind suggestion I take the liberty of expressing to you my desire in regard to the Committee on which I may be placed. I am aware from experience that the comfort of legislative life greatly depends on a members location on committees and while on the one hand there are positions to be desired, on the other there are many to be avoided if possible.

My preference is for the Committee on foreign affairs. The City of New York has a great interest in the questions which will be brought before that Committee. As my colleague Mr. Cambreleng has given me to understand that he should retire

from his place on foreign affairs and would be glad to see me on that committee I hope that I can be gratified without interposing any difficulty in the way of your arrangement of the members.

I have thus candidly given you my views. I am aware of the difficult task which devolves upon you in making out your Committees. Whatever location may be assigned me I shall endeavour to discharge the duties of the place to the best of my ability. I hope I shall not be placed however on either the P. Office committee or that on claims.

I should have had the pleasure of a personal interview with you but in consequence of a severe cold I am compelled to remain in my room.

Trusting that you will pardon this intrusion. . . .

JOHN McKEON

Marked "Private," this letter was delivered by hand.

1. The letter bore no date. The Library of Congress assigned this date. The content of the letter suggests that it was probably written after December 7 when Polk was elected Speaker.

FROM DAVID D. WAGENER

Washington. December 1835¹

A Democratic member of the House from Pennsylvania, Wagener suggests the appointment of Andrew Beaumont and John Banks, also members from Pennsylvania, to certain committees.

Addressed to Washington.

1. The date here was suggested by the Library of Congress. The content of the letter suggests that it was written after December 7 when Polk was elected Speaker.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Tenn. Dec. 1, 1835

We are driving on here as well as we can, and all things considered, as well as we could expect to do. I am sure our cause gathers strength every day. Things have just occurred in relation to the job printing of the Legislature, which has given a new impulse to the current feeling which was running against the Republican and Banner when you left. On being applied to

by Messrs. Robertson, Estill and Turney,¹ to know what he would print an edition of 7000 copies of a pamphlet for, consisting of [Addison A.] Anderson's Report on internal Improvements and Gen. Gaines² letter to the Committee on that subject, Mr. Lewis Garrett, a Rev. Elder in the Methodist Church, gave a statement of what he would and could afford to do the work for, at a rate nearly fifty per cent lower than the price at which a White Whig Committee had agreed to give the Republican for doing the job work of the House, and at the same rate lower than a similar Committee of the Senate had agreed to give [W. Hasell] Hunt for the job work of that body. Robertson reported the fact to the House on the part of himself and Estill as two of the [committee] and [Harvey M.] Waterson and Ready,³ the other two members made a counter report and urged the inviolability of the contract made with the Republican. Mr. Garrett wrote a letter to the House expressly showing the facts reported by Ready and Waterson to be false. He also wrote a letter to Robertson as chairman of the Committee. Nye & Barrow⁴ also wrote a letter to the House; and at the instance of Robertson and others. all these communications have been spread on the journals. This was done on the day after Robertson made his first report. The night after Robertson's report was made, some persons, no doubt connected with the offices whose "craft" was endangered, hung old Mr. Garrett in effigy at the Court House door. Upon this, Mr. Garrett wrote the letters before mentioned, and published the handbill enclosed.⁵ Barrow & Nye wrote their letter to the House, and on the subject of that letter & the two Reports. Turney made the speech for which he has been denounced by the Republican and Banner. Mr. Garrett has to-day memorialized the House, & prayed for Committee of Investigation. His petition has been laid on the table, and the substance of it, by rule. ordered to go on the journal. The petition will be published. I have stood aside from the quarrel, intending to publish the entire journal on the subject, and waiting also for a publication about to be made by Turney, Robertson and Estill on the subject. The whole country is up in arms for Garrett, and the Whites are really in more trouble than they have been before reduced to since the Commencement of the Session. Iredale Wright⁶ made a loud and

strong speech to-day in favor of Mr. Garrett. The handbills enclosed will tell you more of the matter than I have time to write.

The Expunging question grows stronger daily. I hope it will go down.

I see my letter of the 1st. Nov. in the *Globe*, giving an account of our Vauxhall dinner; and another of the 4th, which I take to be yours. [Hinchey] Petway is much enraged at the manner in which a Mr. Quarles,⁷ a fighting man of Bledsoe's Creek, toasted him at the Gallatin dinner. The old scoundrel deserves all that Quarles said of him.

Money is on this day being raised for the relief of Long, and will be the means of setting him just even to the current date, and of refunding to me so as just to reduce my personal responsibility to \$500, aside, however, from one cent of compensation. A paper debt has been created at Louisville, prospective as to time of liquidation. I must therefore hope, if the plan is not improper, that you will arrange the matter of letters from Col. [Richard M.] Johnson's friends as I stated to you. Of any intention of such arrangement no man here, save Mr. [James] Gwin, has the slightest intimation. As I tell and shew him every things, books, bills, payments and liabilities, I have freely asked his advice. He thinks something may be done by going to Frankfort immediately on the adjournment of the Assembly.

A thousand and upwards of your speeches, in pamphlet, have been circulated, and about 500 remain for distribution. You will hear of a number of them at Washington.

I hope before you receive this, that you will have *laid Bell out*.

As usual, I write in a hurry. Great anxiety is felt here about the affair of Mr. [Cave] Johnson and Bailey Peyton.⁸ Johnson's friends hope he will act with discretion. My opinion is that Peyton as a bully, blackguard, and maniac, deserves no notice.

Do pray ask Mr. Johnson, as I will do in a day or two by letter, to send me his Vauxhall Speech. I hope neither he or Mr. Grundy will be displeased at what I said of their speeches in the letter published in the *Globe*. By the by, if I had thought of that letter being made public, I would have dealt in other terms of Bell, Foster & Big Bill.⁹ The letter now haunts the House like a ghost.

Please make my respects acceptable to Mrs. P. and remember me kindly to the President, and to our friends Grundy, Johnson and Donelson. I owe Maj. D. an apology for not answering his last letter.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Washington.

1. Henry Robertson of Lincoln County, Wallace W. Estill of Franklin County, and Hopkins L. Turney. Robertson and Estill were serving their first terms in the legislature.

2. Edmund Pendleton Gaines was the second ranking officer in the United States Army. The committee on internal improvements, of which Anderson was chairman, had asked advice on the feasibility of building a railroad from New Orleans to Nashville, and this was his reply.

3. Charles Ready, a Murfreesboro lawyer, had political ambitions. He was an anti-Jackson man and served, 1853-59, as a Whig in the House of Representatives.

4. Shadrack Nye and Washington Barrow were publisher and editor of the Nashville *Republican*.

5. Three handbills were included. One was an undated sheet on which W. Hasell Hunt & Company, printers for the upper house, explained that a scale of prices had been agreed upon by the printing firms of Nashville in a meeting at which Garrett was present. When the subject of printing for the legislature came up Garrett expressed himself as not being interested and left before any decision was reached. The two factions differed as to whether or not Garrett had said he would agree to whatever prices were decided upon. The second handbill, dated November 30, bore Garrett's name and expressed contempt for the handbill of Hunt, referring to him as a meddler. Garrett said he had not intended to seek printing from the legislature and had merely given his printing rates when asked to do so. He blamed the Typographical Society for branding him as a "rat" for underbidding the rate agreed upon. When Garrett was hanged in effigy most of the community apparently thought that the members of the Typographers' Society were guilty, and Garrett's partisans claimed that Nye and Barrow had suggested the action. The third handbill, also bearing the November 30 date, was another by W. Hasell Hunt & Company. It stated that it was not worthwhile to bandy such epithets as "meddler" and said that Garrett had not, and could not, produce proof of his charges. It closed with the statement, "We bid adieu to the subject."

6. Iredell D. Wright represented Monroe County in the state house of representatives, 1831-37. His speech was a sweeping defense of Garrett as was that of Turney, mentioned above. Turney denounced Nye, Barrow, and Hunt as conspirators trying to rob the taxpayers. The effigy-burning gave the affair much more publicity than it deserved.

7. Three separate toasts to Hinchey Petway were offered by O. P.

Quarles. Not otherwise identified, Quarles used such terms as gambler, scullion, and bottlewasher. Even a thin veil of wit could not obscure obviously insulting statements such as the one when he called Petway a "dirty instrument" in the hands of the leaders of the opposition party.

8. A possible duel was apprehended by a number of people, including one of Cave Johnson's brothers, but no challenge was given. The exact nature of the dispute has not been learned. See Joseph N. Johnson to Polk, December 9, 1835.

9. This is a reference to William E. Anderson, Nashville lawyer. A former partner of Felix Grundy, he became a Whig and later moved to Mississippi.

FROM EDWARD EVERETT

Charlestown, Massachusetts. December 3, 1835

Everett introduces Caleb Cushing,¹ newly elected to Congress, and suggests that Polk appoint him to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A Whig, Cushing served 1835-43 in the House. Later he became a Democrat and was a member of the cabinet of Franklin Pierce. Polk appointed him to the committee here suggested. See Cushing to Polk, December 12, 1835.

FROM JACOB GREER

Bedford County. December 7, 1835

Assuming that an earlier letter has not reached Polk, Greer questions Polk about his attitude toward slavery, abolitionism, and the Constitution.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Greer to Polk, September 8, 1835.

FROM ANDREW C. HAYS

Dear Sir

Columbia Ten Dec 7th 1835

You will doubtless learn with a good deal of surprise and regret that your Speech was not issued in pamphlett form here, until within a few days past. The delay however, is to be attributed altogether to the Union office. It was copied from the Union into the Democrat of week before last, the pamphletts

were then struck off and about 1000, all that could be carried on one horse, I sent up to Shelbyville on yesterday, to have them at Court for distribution on Monday (tomorrow). I had a day or two before received a letter from Col. [Kenneth L.] Anderson, on the subject, and sent them to his *care*. I also sent 50 copies to Mr. Whitthorne,¹ the ballance I will send as soon as I can and will attend to the distribution of those intended for this County &c.

I have thought it entirely useless, at so late a period, to send to the members of Congress as you requested, first because the Speech will have been published in several papers, where they will see it before the pamphlett can possibly reach them, besides, the directory you left is of an old date, and I see many names are there published, who are not in Congress, nor do I know who succeeded such, or what may be their politics. I am further of opinion that they can be more advantageously circulated in Tennessee. I learn from Nashville, that several hundred of them have been printed there to order of sundry gentlemen for distribution.

Mr. Walker is yet absent. and will not return for some weeks. You will receive regularly the Democrat, and can judge how I manage it in his absence. You will also see that it is to be enlarged on the first day of January. There is a Steady increase of the subscription list, and I doubt not but a proportionate decrease of the list of the Observer.

I made application to the Editors of the Observer to publish your speech. They have not yet, nor will they do so. You need look for no favor from that quarter, nor have you any thing to fear. Its patrons, in this county, are almost altogether confined to your old enemies and its character is pretty much gone with the great mass of the people here. I hear the people daily abusing it, and many who take it declaring their determination to discontinue so soon as their time is out.

There is as yet no abatement of the reaction which commenced before you left, and I feel assured that Van Buren is at this moment much the strongest man in this county. Nor have I a doubt but that White's strength will be in November next, but little more than the usual opposition to you heretofore when you had an opponent.

A writer who signs himself *Maury* in the last Democrat calls out Mr. [Jonas E.] Thomas on the Expunging Resolution. It is thought here that he will promptly reply, and will go for expunging. Should he do so, much will be accomplished by it in this county. If he does, the Observer shall abuse him, if the Democrat can manage to make it. The effect will be to make his warm *personal* friends Van Buren men, as the most of them are now White men. Should he however take the other side and go against the Resolution, nothing, in my opinion, can save him before this people.

I want no better evidence of the sinking prospects of the "no party" faction in this quarter than to look at the chop fallen countenances of the leaders here. It is indeed altered times.

I wrote you a few days since to order five or six copies of the Extra Globe. Do not fail to attend to this.

Whenever you can spare the time, a letter from you would be very acceptable.

Your friends and relations are all well. My own health is still bad, but I think slowly improving.

Present my best respects to Mrs Polk and for yourself receive assurances of my high regard. . . .

A. C. HAYS

Addressed to Washington.

1. William J. Whitthorne was a merchant of Farmington, Bedford County.

FROM HENRY HUBBARD

Senate Hall [Washington]

Hon J. K. Polk,

Dec 7, 1835

I think I hazard nothing when I say that our friends to the Eastward would be well pleased to have F. O. J. Smith from Portland placed on the committee of Ways and means in my stead.¹

H. HUBBARD

Marked "Confidential" and delivered by hand.

1. Hubbard, of New Hampshire, had recently been elected to the United States Senate.

FROM HENRY L. ELLSWORTH

Dear Sir [Washington] [December 8, 1835]¹

Pardon me for suggesting a word about our members of Congress.² Mr Toucey is a lawyer of distinction, has been states attorney and would do honor on the *Judiciary* Committee. Mr Ingham is a lawyer of good standing, has been speaker of our house of Representatives & lives in a commercial district & would be gratified and obliged by being on the committee on *commerce*. Mr Judson is a reputable lawyer, stands high in the state & would like a good station on the committee of Ways & means or foreign Relations if practicable. Mr Wildman is a highly reputable manufacturer. Mr Haley [is] a good honest democrat & agriculturist, and very reputable man. Dr Phelps is a physician & also highly reputable gentleman in the interior of the state.

H. L. ELLSWORTH

Marked "Private," this letter was delivered by hand.

1. The letter was undated. This date, assigned by the Library of Congress, seems to be as nearly correct as can be ascertained.

2. Isaac Toucey, Samuel Ingham, Andrew T. Judson, Zalmon Wildman, Elisha Haley, and Lancelot Phelps were members of the House of Representatives from Connecticut. All of them were serving their first terms.

FROM JOSEPH HENDERSON¹

Washington. December 8, 1835

A member of the House from Pennsylvania requests that he be placed on a committee dealing with military or agricultural affairs.

No address is available, but this letter was probably delivered by hand to Polk in Washington.

1. Henderson was a doctor and a farmer and had served as a regimental commander in the War of 1812.

FROM JACOB MILLER¹

Rogersville, Tennessee. December 8, 1835

Miller asks Polk to support his application for the postmastership at Surgoinville and suggests that he enlist the help of Felix Grundy.²

Addressed to Washington.

1. Miller had served two terms, 1819-23, in the General Assembly. He did not receive the appointment at Surgoinville, but curiously, he became postmaster at Yellow Store on March 8, 1837, the same day that the post office at Surgoinville was discontinued.

2. See Miller to Polk, January 18, 1836.

FROM HENRY HORN

Philadelphia. December 9, 1835

Horn desires that Polk remove Joel B. Sutherland¹ from the Committee on Commerce, where he had been an annoyance to the Democrats.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Sutherland was originally elected as a Jacksonian but had shifted to the opposition. Among the faithful Democrats in Philadelphia Sutherland was especially despised as a turncoat.

FROM JOSEPH N. JOHNSON¹

Dear Sir

Clarksville Dec 9th 1835

From the Circumstances which I have heard of the difficulty between my brother Cave and Mr. Payton,² I am induced to believe there will be something serious between them. I have no Idea that I have heard half the truth about it. Will you be so good as to inform me as early as possible the probable issue. I hope Brother Cave will give him a Stansbury Salutation,³ and let the chalenge come from Payton. The people are all getting on the right track. They have for some time been yelping on the backtrack, but now they have turned, the game is up. They all go for Van Burin, except a few puppies, and some ould doggs, who have always bin, and still will be puppies, that yelp uppon the back track. They would turn, but they are aware that they would not be relied uppon, and as their fortunes are desperate, they still howl on the back track, hoping, that fortune may turn the chase in their favour. But seriously I do believe this; a majority of honest farmers of this County are in favour of Mr Van Burin, and will give their votes in next Election.

Be so good as to write me uppon the Reception of this.

J. N. JOHNSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Joseph N. Johnson, a younger brother of Cave Johnson, was a lawyer and farmer in Montgomery County.

2. The exact nature of the difficulty between Johnson and Peyton has not been learned. It probably stemmed from the intemperate language Peyton often used on the floor of the House. Polk partisans had suspected Peyton of trying to lure him into a duel.

3. In April 1832 Sam Houston had caned William Stanbery of Ohio for what Houston considered insulting language by Stanbery on the floor of the House of Representatives.

FROM JAMES S. CANNON¹

New Brunswick, Rutgs. Coll.

[New Jersey] Decr. 10, 1835

Dear Sir

You must permit me to interrupt you amid the arduous duties of your new station with expressing to you, my delight on learning that you now hold the elevated place in the House of Representatives,² which you ought to have occupied during the two years past and wo'd have held, had there been no traitors in our camp. Your success, thro' the unanimity of the Jackson men has afforded me so much joy, that my old wife says, "it has warmed me in very cold weather." My pleasure is doubtless greater than it would otherwise have been from those sentiments of mingled dread & abhorrence with which I regarded the advance of Bell, White & Co in the State of Tennessee. It is trouble eno' to contend with Rattlesnakes in the forest but if one has a "generation of vipers" in the House, it makes him uneasy in his bed. I trust that those masked men are now known thro' the United States, and am free to declare that I would not take the place which Judge White will occupy in the future history of our government were his whole estate to be offered with it. There is a turpitude attached to his present course, which has already led hundreds to say, "that man wo'd betray his country." Bell will be active in Congress as a bank agent—"it is his vocation, That."

May Divine Providence Hon. Sir, aid you in your duties and render you a rich blessing to your country.

JAS. S. CANNON

I perceive you have "a Cannon"³ in Tennessee—but it is ill charged.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A Dutch Reformed minister who was professor of metaphysics and ecclesiastical history at Rutgers College. It is not clear whether or not Polk knew him personally.
2. This refers to Polk's election as Speaker just three days earlier.
3. Newton Cannon had recently been elected governor of the state.

FROM HENRY L. ELLSWORTH

Washington. December 10, 1835¹

Ellsworth suggests the following committee assignments to three recently elected members of the House from Connecticut: Andrew T. Judson, either Ways and Means, Foreign Relations, or Judiciary; Isaac Toucey to Ways and Means or Foreign Relations; and Samuel Ingham to Commerce.

Addressed to Brown's Hotel and marked "Private."

1. The Library of Congress has correctly assigned this letter to 1835.

FROM RALPH I. INGERSOLL

New Haven, Connecticut. December 10, 1835

Ingersoll suggests Samuel Ingham, a newly elected Democratic member of the House, as a good man to appoint to the Committee on Commerce.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOHN M. BASS

Dr Sir

Nashville Decr 11 1835

I take great pleasure in introducing you to my intimate friend Col Geo W Jones¹ who will claim a seat in your house as the delegate from Michigan. I have long known Col Jones; he is a *gentleman* of the very first order & I would be highly gratified to hear of his success. I bespeak for him your friendly offices & commend him to your attention with a hope that you will afford him such aid & assistance in accomplishing his objects as may be consistent with your public duties, and you will oblige personally. . . .

JNO M BASS

Addressed to Washington but not sent through the mails. It was probably delivered by Jones himself.

1. George Wallace Jones, a native of Indiana and a graduate of Transylvania, served first as Delegate from the Michigan Territory and then as Delegate from the Wisconsin Territory upon its creation. Later he was elected as one of Iowa's first senators. He should not be confused with either of the two George Washington Joneses who served in Congress, one from Tennessee and one from Texas.

FROM FREDERICK W. HATCH

Baltimore. December 11, 1835

The Chaplain of the Senate, who has recently moved to Baltimore from Washington, congratulates Polk on his election as speaker and promises to be in Washington as soon as possible to discharge his official duties.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM BENJAMIN C. HOWARD

Washington. December 11, 1835

A member of the House from Maryland, Howard had been appointed as a special emissary in the boundary dispute between Ohio and Michigan. He suggests that Polk not appoint a special committee to deal with the subject until the House has a chance to reconsider the motion calling for appointment of that committee.¹

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.

1. Upon reconsideration the House reversed itself and no special committee was appointed.

FROM JOHN A. THOMAS

Dear Sir

West Point New York Dec 11th 1835

Not having the opportunity of placing my vote in the ballot-box I claim the privilege of reporting to you at least every new Congress. And I take great pleasure in doing so at present as I have to congratulate you on your elevation to the office of Speaker.

I hope you will give us a good and *liberal* Military committee, especially as Genl. Jackson may require us to chastise Johnny Crepeau.¹ Do let us have a chance to show what the

"ruffle shirted Cadets" (as Jeff Porter² calls us) can do. I fancy what the President has said concerning the Academy will silence him.

I have been an assistant Instructor here about a year, & will remain, I don't know how long. Please present my compliments to Mrs. Polk, & next summer I hope you will take West Point in your way to Tennessee.

J. A. THOMAS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Probably a reference to Johnny Crapaud, a derisive term at one time in use for a Frenchman. France and the United States were at odds over the failure of the French to pay the Spoliation Claims.

2. Thomas Jefferson Porter of Columbia. He ran against Polk in the congressional election of 1833. There was serious opposition at this time to appropriating money for the United States Military Academy on the grounds that only the elite were able to obtain appointments there.

FROM CALEB CUSHING

Washington. December 12, 1835

Cushing thanks Polk for assigning him to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Edward Everett to Polk, December 3, 1835.

FROM ANDREW C. HAYS

Dear Sir,

Columbia Ten December 12, 1835

On yesterday I wrote you to forward the *Extra Globe* to Messrs

L[emuel] Phillips
H[artwell] H. Brown
W. W. Josey¹
Harris & Kenedy²
Wm. H. Polk

I now mention it lest my first letter may have miscarried; each paid me & you will send receipt &c. I now send for another

for Mr. *Garrett L. Voorhies*,³ he has also paid me, which amt (\$1.00) I have entered to your credit.

I received a day or two since a letter from Col. K. L. Anderson, in which he says:

"I am obliged for the reception of Col. Polks speeches. I am pleased to have it in my power to inform you that his enemies cannot succeed. I believe I speak the truth when I say, that no living man can successfully compete with him in Bedford. His old enemies make more noise now than ever, but it is certainly worse than idle. I know of no man who has heretofore supported him, that will not again do so with pleasure. We are on tiptoe to see him elected Speaker. You need have no fears for Bedford as she will not desert him until *James Walker* does."

The die is cast as the Speaker, and we are impatiently waiting to hear the result. If you are beaten I fear we will find it hard to bear the rejoicing of your enemies here. I have just heard that some of the most indiscreet among them talk of illuminating their houses. Be it so, nothing they could do would so certainly increase your strength. Your friends will act prudently be the result what it may. I have not however ever witnessed greater solicitude on any subject.

A. C. HAYS

Addressed to Washington.

1. William Walker Jossey was only twenty-one at this time. His father, James Jossey, moved to Maury County from Georgia soon after the county was created. Little has been learned about William Walker Jossey except that he was on the board of trustees of Jackson College in 1849.

2. Unidentified.

3. Garrett L. Voorhies was a prominent Methodist in Columbia. He married the widowed mother of A. O. P. Nicholson. He died in 1859, an apparent suicide.

FROM HUMPHREY H. LEAVITT¹

My dear Sir, Steubenville [Ohio], Dec. 12, 1835

The news, which I had the pleasure to receive last evening, of your triumphant election as Speaker of the H. of Reps.² is so

grateful, that I can not repress the strong desire I feel to tender to you my congratulations on the occasion. In whatever point of view I look upon this cheering result, it affords me unqualified pleasure. As a political event it gives the assurance that the present H. Reps. is sound *to the core*, and affords an earnest that the efforts of the opposition to divide, distract, and defeat, so far as it regards that body, will be unavailing. To you personally it must be peculiarly gratifying and I doubt not, will go far toward turning the political current in Tennessee into the *right channels*.

But I dare not enlarge upon this matter. You have other, and more important avocations, than the perusal of [. . .] letters, even from your best friends. Pardon me for intruding myself even for a moment upon your attention and be assured, that I feel all, and more, than I have expressed, on the occasion of your elevation to the chair of the H. of Reps.

I have just seen the Message³—and must suppose the question of *peace* or *War* hangs upon a slender thread. I hope there will be no occasion for fighting, and yet I say, death before dishonour.

If Mrs P is with you (as I hope she is) you will do me the favour to make my own & Mrs. L's compliments to her, and assure her of our Kind feelings. . . .

H H LEAVITT

Addressed to Washington.

1. Leavitt had been Polk's colleague in the House from 1830 until 1834, when he resigned to become a federal judge.

2. Polk had been elected on December 7.

3. This is an obvious reference to that portion of Jackson's message of December 7, 1835, that dealt with Franco-American relations and the failure of France to honor her promise to make payments on spoliation claims.

FROM ABIJAH MANN JR.¹

My Dear Sir

[Washington] Dec. 13th 1835

After much further anxious consideration I am constrained to entreat of you if you would not ruin me (and I know you could not willingly) to leave me off from the Committee on

Military Affairs under the proposed arrangement.² There is more in this than meets the eye & to which you are a stranger & must at present remain so. I appreciate fully your perplexities and would do any thing short of consenting to annihilation to relieve you.

I am *perfectly & absolutely* certain of *your* good feelings towards me and therefore on this point you will not have a single apprehension. I cannot explain & therefore pray you rather than carry into effect that arrangement to leave me off from every committee or detail me to *any other whatever* as may be most convenient to yourself. Instead of complaining in respect to it I shall deem myself under renewed obligations.

A. MANN JR

Addressed to Brown's Hotel. The letter was marked "Private."

1. Mann was a Jacksonian member of the House of Representatives from upstate New York, 1833-37. Later he moved to New York City, and in the 1850s he joined the new Republican Party.

2. The reason for Mann's desire not to serve on this committee has not been learned.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Dec. 16, 1835

You will see from our papers that the printers have had a falling out, and that the quarrel has necessarily connected itself with our local politics, and also with the Presidential question. Mr. [Hopkins L.] Turney, as you will see by his reply to the Republican, has gone fully into the matter. His publication contains the truth of the whole affair. From his notes and memorandums, I had to *block it out* as we say here, in an evenings sitting. The consequence was as he was gone to Shelbyville, that a material paragraph, the third paragraph I think from the end, was omitted in the tri-Weekly edition, but is inserted in to-day's Weekly Union which I have directed to you. I have also sent a Weekly paper to Mr. Blair, with a memorandum in the margin, requesting him if he shall publish the letter, to use the copy of the Weekly paper as being more full. I have directed a weekly paper to be sent to Messrs. Grundy, Johnson, Huntsman, Dunlap and Shields.¹

There is really and literally nothing doing in the Assembly. Why the session should be spun out for a month or two longer, I know not, unless it be to wait for information and directions from Washington. Our friends are afraid that Judge White will resign his seat, and that a Senator will have to be elected. It is true, that the Gov. would appoint, in case of a vacancy in the recess of the Assembly, just such man as the cabal here shall point out; but then, the next Assembly would not confirm the appointment, and the object is supposed to be, to saddle us with an apostate man for the full remainder of Judge White's time, and thereby take the power of election from the next General Assembly. Some such scheme of uniting the different branches of the opposition on Judge White can be effected, or if Judge White can be made to believe that they will unite hereafter, after his resignation. Mr. Bell may get him out of the way and get himself transferred to the Senate, and then Judge White may "go to the Devil and Shake himself."

I do not know that Bell is beaten, nor do I know that you are Mr. Speaker, but I both believe and hope so. Mr. [Cave] Johnson wrote to Mr. [Stephen C.] Pavatt, that you were likely to be the democratic candidate. If so, you have been elected, and a new light will burst upon our bewildered Whiteites—I mean the honest misled portion of the party. Believing that things have gone prosperously at Washington, and accordingly to our wishes, I congratulate you on your election, and as you will receive this during the Christmas holidays, I also congratulate you on the brightening prospects of the New Year.

Say to Maj. Donelson, that I saw a Rocky Mountain filly landed from a St. Louis boat for him on yesterday morning; a present I think from some friend. The filly is in poor condition, but looks as full of game as was old Gunpower in the Sketch Book.² Mr. T. J. Read took charge of her.

[Willie B.] Johnson's Preamble and Resolutions lie on the table in the House. Guild's Resolutions are also sleeping on the same table; but are daily gaining strength. Hancock of Williamson,³ having sold his farm, and bought a plantation in Mississippi, has come out openly for both Guild's and Johnson's Resolutions, and openly denounces the whole White faction.

Mr. [Greenville] Cook goes this evening to Shelbyville to

take possession. An arrangement is made to start a paper at Winchester, under the control of Dr. [Wallace W.] Estill and Mr. Turney. I am now in search of a young man to take charge of a press at Athens, Alabama, which will be bought for him, the White paper at that place having literally starved out, and same of the citizens there, having requested me to send them a suitable man to take charge on our side. I hope to be able to obtain one.

I have not taken an open part in the printing controversy, except to denounce the indignity offered to Mr. Garrett. The Methodists are in arms every where. I have taken this course, because Garrett, Turney, Robertson &c. are ready to carry the war into Africa under their own names, and except for Mr. Garrett, I have to prepare the articles. This does not make the *Union* a partizan in the matter, as a political affair, and give all the effect of respectable and responsible names for the facts stated. I have managed the matter I have thought best for effect. Much has been, will be, and must be made out of the affair.

Please mention the contents of this letter to our friends Grundy, Johnson &c. and be sure to remember me kindly to Mrs. Polk and the President, not omitting my respects to Maj. Donelson and Col. Earl.⁴

I must write you as I can, and always in a hurry. We expect here, that Clay will be a candidate, and that then the "people's candidate" must take water.

Dont omit the arrangment, if practicable, with Col. [Richard M.] Johnson's folks. We increase in subscribers at a rapid pace, but I find it useless to expect more than a fourth of the subscribers to pay in advance, and therefore, our concern is as poor as a church mouse in money.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."

1. These were members of the Tennessee delegation in Congress that Laughlin considered friendly to Polk.

2. Ichabod Crane's horse in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

3. A practicing physician, Richard C. Hancock was elected to one term in the state legislature but resigned and moved to Mississippi. He continued his interest in politics, however, and in 1847 he was elected to the legislature of his adopted state.

4. Ralph E. W. Earl, an artist, had married a niece of Rachel Jackson. After his wife's early death, Earl became a member of the Jackson household, living at the Hermitage and at the White House. He was a traveling companion of Jackson, of whom he painted several portraits.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Dear Col.

Nashville Dec. 20 1835

The Message and the Speaker's election reached here last evening; the sensation produced by the defeat of Bell cannot be imagined. It was one glorious triumph to the Van Buren men here and you may rest assured that we enjoyed it in a manner that was agonizing to the Bell-White Whigs. After getting the news, a goodly number of the good and true Jackson boys, such as Tom Read, McIntosh, Brown, Grundy, Guild¹ &c. repaired to Vauxhall, where we screwed the necks off of a few dozen of champagne, under the roar of 48 rounds of cannon. After the 48 rounds and an immense deal of first rate enjoyment, the drum and fife arrived and soon collected several hundred men, who marched down town in regular order and after having passed round the square under constant discharges of muskets, the bells commenced ringing simultaneously at eleven o'clock, and such another scene was never witnessed. Such shouting for Polk, Van Buren, Jackson I never heard; the good people of the City who were not in the secret, supposed the whole town was on fire. Every body was assured, some vexed to distraction but mostly rejoiced at the triumph. In this grand spree, you would naturally suppose, that some would become "how come you so,"² and so they did, but it all passed off gloriously. The effect of the news upon the White Cause has been blighting. The red-hot White men are perfectly dumb; they cant bear to talk about it; the moderate White men admit that it is time for the Judge to withdraw; that his case is hopeless; and several are ready to hoist the V.B. flag. The rescinding resolution of Alabama,³ the Speaker's election & the election of Blair⁴ have cast a distressing gloom over the Whig cause. If the Harrisburg Convention should nominate Clay or not nominate White, the cause is dissolved.⁵ I have strong hopes of rescinding the White nomination made by our Legislature and passing the

expunging resolutions. Our cause is in the ascendant and every day renders it more certain, that Tennessee will go for V.B.

I was in Columbia last week at the County Court; the people are right, the White cause is perfectly flat in Maury. The V.B. papers in Shelbyville and Pulaski commence very soon; there is to be a new Editor of the Union.

I have read the Message with supreme pleasure.⁶ I conceive it to be the fittest document for the times that could have been penned. It is recd. with entire satisfaction here by all sides. I believe it is universally regarded as the ablest message the Old Hero has ever given.

I assure you that your success over Mr. Bell is hailed here by all good Jackson men with enthusiastic delight, and I beg leave most sincerely to congratulate you upon your signal triumph. Express to Gen. Jackson my thanks for a copy of his Message, and also to Mr. Grundy and accept the same yourself. I have been expecting to hear from you.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Thomas J. Read, John McIntosh, William T. Brown, James P. Grundy, and Josephus C. Guild. John McIntosh was at this time keeper of the Tennessee state prison.

2. A current expression of the time, meaning intoxicated.

3. On December 9, 1835, the lower house of the Alabama legislature voted 48 to 36 in favor of rescinding the earlier nomination of White by that body.

4. Blair and Rives were elected printers for the House of Representatives over Gales and Seaton by a margin of more than two to one.

5. The Harrisburg Convention actually nominated William H. Harrison.

6. The presidential message, among other things, reviewed the negotiations with France regarding the Spoliation Claims. A few people thought Jackson was guilty of sabre rattling and that his message might lead to war.

FROM LAURA T. POLK¹

Morganton [North Carolina]

My dear brother.

December 20, 1835

Your letter was received for which I thank you. My manner of living is so dull and there is so much sameness in every thing that I do, that it is impossible for me to write a letter my friends

will be much interested in reading. The only pleasure that I receive is from looking at and converseing with my children. Eunice is now a large girl, and I think will be beautiful. She certainly has intellectual beauty. I intend that she shall be very accomplished. She has just commenced studying latin, and I hope that when you see her next she will be a tolerable schollar. Marshall, what shall I say about him. Their is beauty in the face of my lovely boy that is indescribleable. He is evry thing that my heart can wish. I believe that God has spared his life for some good and wise end. Don't think that I am crazy about Marshall. If you could see him I know you would forgive my extravagance. When he is of a proper age for you to take him under your care, I hope he will even then be an honor to the uncle his father so devotedly loved. If my own dear Marshall was only liveing how *much* happiness I could enjoy in this life, but God's will be done. Give my love to Sister Sarah and tell her that I will write to her next week if I live. I do not know why it is that I have not written before. I do not like to write letters, but their is one thing that I do like and that is to receive letters from my friends.

L T POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. Laura T. Polk was the widow of Marshall T. Polk (1805-1831), a brother of James K. Polk. Her two children were named Eunice and Marshall.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother Columbia Tenn. December 21st 1835

We received last evening, by the mail the news of your triumphant victory over Mr. Bell. I cannot say that joy pervades the Town, and do justice to the disconsolate and haggard appearance of the *poor devils* that are lingering about the corners, in groups, each one endeavouring to administer consolation to the wounded feelings, and rouse the drooping spirits, of his companions in disappointment and grief. Though, notwithstanding this gloomy aspect, which would impress upon a stranger, one altogether unacquainted with the people, the erroneous opinion that a large majority of the citizens deeply

lamented your success, which reflects an honor upon the people you represent, in the elevation of their public servant to the third office in the government. But I can assure you that a large portion of the people in Town and *all*, I will venture to say, in the country are highly gratified at your election. Permit me to retract that word *all*, and except [Peter R.] Booker and [William E.] Kenedy, their understrickers and menials.

Mr. Bell anticipated his defeat, as I understand he wrote to *Judge* Kenedy informing him that the chances were against him, and that he thought you would beat him. This letter which I seen in the office myself was dated the day before Congress convened. The *Judge* has not been in Town since, and I have been informed that he is in bed sick, was taken immediately after he received Mr Bells letter, which was sent to him by express. Poor fellow I pity him when he receives the intelligence of his actual defeat, as he is truly a pitiable object at best. So confidently did some our Citizens expect that you would be beat, that they had made all the preliminary arraignments to illuminate the Town; but I think they will find a better use for their candles. We also received the Presidents Message, which is one of the ablest documents I have ever read. It is characteristic of the old Hero. He seems determined to have blood or money.

You will not neglect to send me the *Globe*. It is probable that I will come on with Saml Walker about the middle of February, and perhaps sooner, though you need not look for me in Washington before the first of March, which will be about the right time. Give my love to Sister Sarah. All are well and in fine spirits.

BILL POLK

Addressed to Washington.

FROM HARVEY M. WATTERSON

Dear Sir

Nashville Dec. 21, 1835

The news has just arrived of your election as Speaker of the House of Representatives. You are well aware that I am as much in favor of Judge White, as any member of the Legislature of Tennessee, and that I would use every honorable mean in my

power to secure his success. But suffer me to assure you, that I will never proscribe my friends merely because they happen to prefer a different individual for a particular office. I would therefore beg leave to congratulate you upon your most triumphant victory. The friends of the late Speaker about Nashville are truly mortified. They, it is true, did not calculate upon his election, but at the same time they calculated upon a much smaller majority for his opponent. They attribute Mr. Bells defeat to the influence of the President. Last night your friends had a most tremendous frolic in this City. I was very much amused at the expressions of an old gentleman out upon the street. Said he, "I am now just fifty three years of age, weigh just one hundred and sixty three pounds, and can whip any man opposed to James K. Polk." In your district, let the preferences of the people in regard to White & Van Buren be what they may, you have nothing to fear. Of this fact you may be well assured. Do not consider it as flattery when I say, that I have every reason to believe, that you are much stronger with your constituents than either White or Van Buren. But it is needless to dwell any longer upon this subject.

We are getting along slowly with business in the Legislature, and judging from what we have done and what is yet to do, I would not be at all surprised if we did not adjourn before the 1st of March. This session, unless my mind greatly alters, terminates my political career. I am determined never to be a candidate again for any thing, and therefore will be left entirely free to go it "*whole hog*" for my friends.

H. M. WATTERSON

N.B. I have made a bet upon [Ebenezer J.] Shield's vote. Did he not support you? You will confer a considerable favor upon me by letting me know.

H M W

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOHN W. FORD

Dear Sir

McMinnville Ten. Decr. 22 1835

I received a letter from the P.O. Department this morning under date of the 11th inst. informing me that this Department was not apprised of the fact of my being the Editor of a po-

litical paper, at the time the appointment of Post Master at this place was conferred upon me, that fact not having been stated in my petitions. When my petitions were forwarded on I addressed a letter to the P.M. Genl. referring him to the President of the U S. as to who I was, and what I was. I at the same time addressed a letter to the President informing him that I had referred Mr. Kendall to him for information.

Why my case should be made an exception I am unable to say. I know of several Editors who are Post Masters, who *have not* been requested to surrender their connexions with their papers. I will scite three—The Grand Gulph Adv. Miss, Warrenton Reporter N.C., Georgetown Sentinel Ky. They are within my knowledge. I know that Mr. Kendall has too much firmness to be drawn to this course by the slang of the opposition, more especially when knowing he conferred my appointment on me in conformity to the wishes of a majority of petitioners. I wish you to see Mr Kendall on this subject and write me the result of your conference.

JOHN W. FORD

Addressed to Washington.

FROM BOLING GORDON

Dear Sir,

Nashville, Dec. 22, 1835

In congratulating you on your elevation to the Speakers chair by the Representatives of the nation, I do so the more cordially, when I consider that it has been on account of a well earned merit on your part, which has received the approbation of that political party to which you and I belong.

I assure you sir, it was received here with aclamation and delight by a large portion of the Citizens; and in addition to the gratification your friends experience on your account, they view it at the same time as the harbinger of a better state of things than existed when you left here.

The news from Alabama, Virginia and Washington,¹ has had an appalling effect on the friends of Judge White in Tennessee, and unless something soon occurs to revive their drooping spirits, his prospects will be hopeless indeed.

The knowing ones here think Gen [Washington] Barrow is

preparing to strike his flag, not for the purpose of falling in to the Van Buren ranks, but to let the press fall into other hands for the purpose of espousing the cause of some other Candidate, believing that his favorite the Judge, has been thrown so far into the background as to be unable to recover.

I have no hesitation in saying that Van Buren is doubly as strong in Tennessee as when you left here. The Presidents Message has been received; it is highly extolled by all parties. I have not seen the first person who objects to a single sentence. It exhibits our Country in a prosperous, and a happy condition, and is one calculated to add an additional laurel to the brow of the first man of this, or any other age.

Nicholson has just received a letter from A. C. Hays who says the news of your election was received in Columbia with a high degree of satisfaction by your friends, and the deepest mortification by your enemies, amounting almost to despair. Many of the citizens of the county were in Columbia on yesterday and all participated in the general joy.

When you may occasionally have leisure, I shall be happy to hear from you.

B. GORDON

N.B. I learn our friend Pinkard² of Williamsport had his Store burnt a few evenings since, and every thing whatever embracing Books &c were consumed.

Addressed to Washington.

1. In Alabama the legislature had rescinded the nomination of Hugh L. White that had been voted earlier. In Virginia a convention of Democrats composed of members of the legislature had unanimously favored nomination of Martin Van Buren for president. The action in Washington to which Gordon refers was probably the election of Polk over Bell as Speaker of the House.

2. Probably Marshall P. Pinkard, one of the first merchants to do business in Williamsport.

FROM ANDREW C. HAYS

Dear Sir

Columbia Tenn Dec. 23rd 1835

I send you four more names, for which you will send four Extra Globes commencing at first Session. They have paid me *one Dollar* each, and I have entered same to your credit on my

books & request you to pay the money there, for the reason I have before mentioned.

James Webb¹

Jos. A. Walker²

Saml. P. Walker

M. Helm³

We received the information of your election on Sunday evening last. Your best friends here thought it most advisable to do nothing that would irritate the already exasperated feelings of your enemies, and advised the most unthinking to act prudently and calmly. Had it not been Sunday however, they could not have succeeded, for a more rejoiced people I have never seen. They on Monday morning about day break fired a few guns. They would have illuminated the Town had it not been Sunday. I want words to describe the joy of your friends and the deep mortification of your enemies. The people from the country are coming to town Daily to hear the news, and with but few exceptions, they are greatly rejoiced. In short it has produced a greater effect upon the politics of this County than any election we have ever had. Some of the most candid White men give it up. In truth there is but one side here now. Candidates coming out for County offices, are anxious to be understood as Van Buren men, and in favor of the Expunging Resolution, as the people swear they will vote for no man who is opposed to it. It is understood [Jonas E.] Thomas will go for it. It have seen within the last three days nearly all the leading men from every part of the County; all wear a smile. Yesterday Whitthorne was here from Bedford. He says that your Speeches are creating a great revolution in that County. I sent several to him for distribution. He also informs me that when he left Shelbyville they talked of illuminating the Town. He believes they have done it. I learn from Col. [William K.] Hill just from Nashville that on the reception of the news there, they commenced firing the Cannon, & continued until they had fired about 100 rounds. About 500 persons attended at Vauxhall &c. illuminated the establishment, and had the most complete *blow-out*, ever before witnessed in Nashville. *Van Buren will get the State!!!*—bets are already made on it!

I understand that it is contemplated to give you and Nicholson a dinner on Carters Creek⁴ on your return home.

Mr Vincent Ridley⁵ was in Town yesterday. The old man was in extacies. He said he expected you to write to him—that you had promised. Write him if you have not done so, as it will give the old gentleman great pleasure.

Amidst the general joy the Democrat comes in for its part of victory; the people are hourly calling to congratulate the proprietors. It has high standing in the county, &c.

I would Say much more but have not time. My health is yet bad enough. Mr. [James] Walker has not returned, but is expected in a few days. Dr. [Silas M.] Caldwell is gone to your plantation.

Present my best respects to Mrs Polk, and tell her "*I wish her much joy.*"

A. C. HAYS

Osburn⁶ is here; he cannot set still one minute at a time. Old [Thomas J.] Mahon burnt his wifes cap on hearing the news of your election.

Addressed to Washington.

1. An obscure resident of Maury County at this time, James Webb later became a prominent merchant in Lewisburg, Marshall County.

2. Joseph A. Walker, a merchant in Columbia, was a son of Simpson Walker. He became county clerk in 1836 and in 1865 was mayor of the town.

3. Meredith Helm was an early settler in Maury County and established a tannery in Columbia in 1820. He served two terms as mayor and later served two more terms in that post. He was a loyal supporter of Polk and named two sons for him.

4. This is a tributary of the Duck River on the north side. The village by the same name was not far from Spring Hill.

5. A longtime resident of Maury County, Vincent Ridley seems to have been a highly respected citizen. In 1814 he had been wounded while in military service under Jackson.

6. Probably James Osburn, who had obtained a copy of the notorious Charles Cassedy letter and had forwarded it to Samuel H. Laughlin for publication.

FROM HENRY B. KELSEY

Dear Col.

Mooresville Ten Dec 23rd 1835

We received the cheering news of your elevation to the Speaker's chair on Monday last. Small as is our village we made

a pretty large effort to celebrate your triumph. At night we illuminated the place, paraded the principal street, fired small arms and frequently rent the air with our huzzas "*Polk and Van Buren forever*". About 8 O'clock a small company collected at Marsh's Store and drank numerous toasts. I send you a few by way of a sample.

By Maj. Calvert.¹ The signs of the times in late events in Alabama and at Washington are ominous of the success of Democracy.

By Doct Myrick.² Andrew Jackson, notwithstanding the many false allegations of his pretended friends and open enemies he will yet retire from public life in a blaze of glory.

By H.B.K. The Sun³ at Washington totally eclipsed by the Globe.

By J. M. Smith.⁴ (*White*) Hu L. White, equal to Martin Van Buren and second only to Andrew Jackson.

By H.B.K. (quickly) Martin Van Buren equal to Andrew Jackson and second to nobody (tremendous cheering).

By H.B.K. Tennessee, Her first son president, her second Speaker of the House. May she herself act out *their* principles.

Great were the hilarity and rejoicing on the occasion; it was a perfect Van Buren Democratic Jubilee on rather a small scale. The company dispersed at a proper hour, no lives lost and only a few wounded (not mortally) by the kicking of their pistols. We regard your election and that of the Public Printer⁵ as perfect Waterloo affairs. You can tell a White Whig any where in Maury by the *unusual longitudinal attenuation of his phiz*. They have held Quaker Meeting in politics ever since the news arrived from Washington. Poor fellows! I fear it is all over with them. I was at Columbia last Monday; several hitherto boisterous White men squeezed my hand much longer and more affectionately than they were wont to do. They said nothing of the elections but their countenance and manner seemed to say "We are fairly defeated. Don't wound us too deeply by exulting over a fallen foe." A few days ago I understood a false report reached Columbia that Bell had beat you. The *anties* were up to their eyebrows in joy and exstasy, and began to think about illuminating the place, but before night the report was contradicted which spoiled their fun. What a pity!!!

The few enemies you have in this district are more open and bitter in their opposition to you than ever they have been heretofore, but they cant injure you for their opposition only serves to arouse the spirit of your very numerous friends who rally around your character as a public servant determined to sustain it. The manifest *anti Jacksonism* of the White faction is becoming every day more apparent in Tennessee, and in proportion to its appearance the cause of White declines and that of Van Buren advances. Nicholson writes me that continual changes occur among the members of the Assembly and he has some hope yet to pass the Expunging resolution somewhat modified. If White gets the state at all it will be by a mere majority.

As an individual I hail your election as the triumph of principle over corruption and of merit over worthlessness. Accept my sincere congratulations upon your success as those of a friend. Give my best respects, especially, to Mrs. *Speaker* Polk. . . .

H B. KELSEY

NB. Cause Maj. Calvert's Globe to be sent to Columbia instead of Mooresville. Esqr Holt^e expects you to forward him the Globe.

H.B.K.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Unidentified.
2. John Myrick was one of the early settlers in Maury County. He practiced medicine in the southeastern part of the county and was a prominent Methodist.
3. The *Washington Sun* appeared first in 1835. It supported White and Bell and featured speeches made by Henry A. Wise and Balie Peyton. Polk once strongly hinted that Wise and Peyton were the real editors of the paper.
4. Several persons named J. M. Smith were found in this area, but the one intended here has not been determined.
5. Blair and Rives were elected public printers by the House of Representatives over Gales and Seaton, 133 to 59. Polk won over Bell by a vote of 132 to 84.
6. This man's name was William Holt but there were two William Holts living in the same part of the county, and it is not known which of the two this intends.

FROM JAMES McKISICK

Dear Sir

Shelbyville 23rd December 1835

We were waiting with fearful apprehension to hear the news from the City in relation to the Speakers election. I was perfectly & essentially in the Blues. The result of the best calculations I could make, I thought put us into the *vocative* but I did not so express myself publicly. I was determined to keep up appearances untill the bad news did come. You can scarcely imagine the state of my feelings & the anxiety of mind I was relieved from on receiving the intelligence which so agreeably disappointed me, & sir some of our young politicians in Shelbyville was as sadly & unpleasantly disappointed as I was pleasingly. The Licurgus of the Freeman (W) & the two imaginary Timoleans among the people (H. & W.)¹ were struck dumb. The subject of politics upon which they considered themselves eloquent, & upon which they were frequently intrusive seemed by some talisman agency instantly to have lost all its charms: their *Big Bell* had lost the clapper shure enough. Yes sir to use a vulgar Tennessee phrase his "Tail was stove up." I hope you will excuse me for indulging at this time in expressions which are not very compatable with the dignity of the Speaker or the age of the writer, but on this occasion I feel constrained to give way in some degree to the efusions of my feelings.

I hope the list of names got on in due time. Our Court was sitting when I received your communication, but I made out the list forthwith. To conclude I really felt more interest in the subject of the Speakers election than that of the president & I am induced to believe it will have a powerful influence on matters & things in general. A line or two from you as soon as convenient would be verry acceptable. I am preparing as well as I can to remove to the far West, Washington County Arkansas Ty, & if I should never see you again, if we should both live I hope I will hear from [you] sometimes.² I wish to set out with my family about the 1st of May. My route will be through the lower part of Kentucky, Illinois & Missouri.

JAS. McKISICK

P S I hope the old *Cock of the walk* is in good health. I know the event of the late election would resussitate his spirits, & if I had been where he was at the time, I would have tendered him a hearty shake of the hand, which on that occasion I [am] shure he would have reciprocated.

J.M.

Presumably addressed to Washington but no envelope has been found. At the top of the letter in large letters appears "A Waterloo defeat."

1. This reference remains somewhat obscure because of the uncertainty concerning the identity of the persons involved. The "Licurgus of the Freeman" was probably William H. Wisener, but the two initials given for the Timoleons are not sufficient for even an intelligent guess as to their actual identity.

2. McKisick was well above sixty years old at this time, but with the true spirit of the pioneer he was moving far away, joining close friends, Archibald Yell, Abraham Whinnery, John B. Dickson, and many other former residents of Bedford County who were at this time established in northwest Arkansas. See Archibald Yell to Polk, June 29, 1835.

FROM ISAAC J. THOMAS

My dear Sir [Columbia] Christmas Day¹ 1835

The prayers of your sincere friend is answered.² I congratulate you on your promotion to the Speakers chair & my ardent desire is that the infinite wisdom that has brought you to your present seat will direct & suport you through the labour & duties of that important station. You will see from every source of information that the White foam in Tennessee has blown off; the Tempest of the Tea Kettle is over. I could say much of the knowing ones about Columbia but from your personal knowledge I know you cannot be far mistaken in your conclusions. There a great calm effected, ignorance & absence of mind &c. Very little said by either side. Let reformation & repentance be encouraged. I will expect to receive from you such communications as you may think would be satisfactory, but let it be perfectly convenient. I know the duties of your office must [be] labourious. I would like to serve my country in any way that I could do good. The character of a doer of good is what I desire.

Perhaps a visit to West Point would give me an opportunity to see the great men of the nation and open the way by which I might be able to obtain some appointment by which I could do higher service.³ Please let me hear from you as your time will permit.

ISAAC J. THOMAS

P.S. There is a Mr. McCrab,⁴ one of the corps of topographical Engineers. He is formerly of east Tennessee, an old associate of my son Jno A. Thomas. He will be a candidate for promotion in that corps. I am solicited to mention his name to you & request you to favour his claims. That I know you will do so far as worthy.

I. J. THOMAS

Addressed to Washington.

1. In spite of two clear indications that this was written on December 25, the date of December 26 is suggested by the Library of Congress notation.

2. Isaac Thomas began so many words with capital letters that for the sake of clarity the editors have made more than the usual number of changes in the text.

3. The writer had tried to get himself appointed as a visitor to the Military Academy while his son was a cadet there. The son, John A. Thomas, had now returned to West Point as an instructor. See John A. Thomas to Polk, December 11, 1835.

4. John W. McCrabb had finished at West Point in the same class with John A. Thomas.

FROM HENRY L. ELLSWORTH

Washington. December 27, 1835¹

The Commissioner of Patents suggests the names of members of the House he thinks should serve on a committee to study possible reform of the Patent Office.

Addressed to Washington and probably delivered by hand.

1. The letter bears no place of origin but was probably written in Washington. The date of 1835 was provided by the Library of Congress and is supported by internal evidence in the letter.

FROM JOEL R. SMITH

Dear Friend

Huntingdon Ten. 27th Decr. 1835

It is some time since I have had a direct communication from you & judge that you may perhaps have almost forgotten me, but I'll try to renew old acquaintance.

We have here just received the Presidents Message & the first days sitting of the two houses of congress through the paper of the day. I do most sincerely congratulate you on your new promotion to the Speakership of the House. You may think that I flatter you but I will say with truth that there is no man in or out of Congress who I would prefer to that appointment over James K. Polk. Please say to A. Huntsman, did he do as I instructed him soon after his Election, to wit, to vote for you for speaker.

The Presidents Message is one of the best documents of the kind that has ever emanated from from the old Hero. It is plain honest & dignified & to my mind carries conviction upon its own face. The people seem much pleased with it & I have not heard the first person yet wishing to detract from its just merits.

I have but just returned from a tour in Mississippi. There I have been since the first of Octr last. I am much pleased with that State (Miss.) in some points & in others quite the contrary. Upon the whole it a place that a man can make the one thing needfull, but he must live almost like a hog particularly in the newly settled parts of the State.

If you recollect a right I committed to your & Col Dunlaps care, a recommendation to favour an appointment,¹ I'll therefore renew the request to see what are my prospects for a station under the president or one of the departments. I am willing to go to Miss. or Arkansas Territory. You are sufficiently acquainted with me to give the appointing powers true information of my qualifications & my caracter for honesty & capacity, as also Col Dunlap, my own immediate representative, H. Huntsman, as also my former table mate in the legislature Mr Shields & the Hon. F. Grundy. Please give my respects to the Honb. Gentlemen above named & say to them that if they are willing

to do me a favour that I shall be much gratified if they will try to assist me in the way above specified. Col. Dunlap I know is willing & has done what he could for me & Huntsman I think wont withhold it from me. Please let me hear from you shortly if you have time to spare. Both privately & in your publick capacity you have heretofore been so kind as to forward to me many public documents for which I do most truly thank you & hope a continuance of your favours.

Write soon at any rate & let me know how matters & things stand.

JOEL R. SMITH

N.B. I think it probable that I'll be in Miss. before you can answer me but you must direct your letter to this place (Huntingdon).

J. R. SMITH

Addressed to Washington.

1. This refers to a letter from Smith to Polk and William C. Dunlap, December 12, 1833. Smith was seeking a federal appointment in Mississippi or Arkansas.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Sir Waxhaws [Arkansas] Decr the 28th 1835

I hope you are the *speaker* here next Sundy. I write you on business. I left last spring in Nashville my note in the Union Bank for 5 or 600\$ and wrote to the Secty of the Treasury¹ to forward to *Andrew Erwin Jr*² at Nashville my 1 & 2d [. . .]³ up to the 1st of Oct. He wrote me he would do so. Erwin writes me they have not been forwarded. Will you go to the office and see about it for me. He has only sent me \$116, a fraction of the [. . .] leaving the 2 & 3d [. . .] yet to be forwarded to Nashville. My last [. . .] I wanted the *Secty* to send me to this place. Somphing is wrong some where. Will you write it for me. I feel grate solicitude that the Drafts Would be sent to Erwin forthwith. Write me immediately on the subject if you can spare a moments time!

We are going to form a Constitution & try to get into the

Union time enough to vote for Van B. & I believe we shall send you Col [Ambrose H.] Sevier as one of our Senators. Cant tell the other, probably Judge [Edward] Cross, both "good men & true." Cant tell who will be Govr until after the election or member to the H.R. I have only a moment to write you. I leave hear in a few days for the Rock S. Court.⁴ Will return to this place by the 2d of July. Write me &c.

YELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. Levi Woodbury.

2. Formerly a resident of Bedford County, where he had served as post-master at Mount Reserve, Erwin was at this time a director of the Nashville Branch of the Bank of the United States.

3. This word, which appears at three other places in the letter, has not been deciphered. It is clear that Yell is writing about payment of his salary and the word may be some abbreviation of "payment." On the envelope Polk uses the word "warrant" and this could be Yell's abbreviation of "warrant." Below Yell uses the word "draft," but the abbreviation here bears no resemblance to that word.

4. This is probably a reference to the session of the supreme court at Little Rock.

FROM HARTWELL H. BROWN

Dear Sir

Columbia Dec. 29th 1835

I am requested by a particular friend, the Gentleman whom we have employed to do the brick work of our Church, to know of you whether he can obtain a Brick yard on your land, near the road & convenient to a pond of water which you no doubt recollect. I am instructed by him to say that it is wished to be placed at the edge of the field, so as to be least in the way. It will be dug out 30 or 40 feet across & for the priviledge he is willing to give a fair price. He does not want wood or any other priviledge but those mentioned above. I will only add that he is a particular friend and has agreed to do the work quite low.

I take it for granted that you have the news good & bad from our place, and will only trespass on your time to say, that your election to the Speakers Chair, caused some long faces, & hard sayings amongst your old Enemies. The author of the

Brutus Toast,¹ has not I am told recovered his common appearance & Genl. B.² observed very gravely, that Genl Jackson could set the *world on fire*.

The Editor of the Observer³ has become quite a Bully. On Christmas day he attacked [Chesley P.] Bynum & McKay W. Campbell, the first for publishing a piece headed "Facts of the Observer," the latter for withdrawing his subscription from his paper. These are his reasons as assigned by himself. The people think he intends fighting out his cause which he must now see is tottering to its fall. These things I should think too trifling to mention but for the comment they give on the cause of White Whigism.

Every day confirms the growing prospects of Mr. Van Buren, in this quarter. Converts are being made daily and I shall be much disappointed if he can not get a majority in this County at the coming election. Although I am no Prophet I venture here to say that your enemies are looking to the appointment of committees as the next rallying point. If Bell should be placed at the head of some important committee they will cry out fear, if otherwise they will say mean & low so you can see you cannot please them.

I will say one word in character before I close. "In the midst of life we are in death." A proper regard therefore should be had to our eternal interests at all times and in every situation.

My sincere regards & best wishes for present and eternal happiness I beg may be given to Mrs. Polk, & for yourself Dear Sir I pray the like blessings and congratulate you on your success which I honestly believe to be the success of the great republican party.

H. H. BROWN

P.S. The piece of ground intended is in the field on the Florence road.

H H BROWN

Be so good as to answer immediately.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Judge William E. Kennedy. See Polk to Francis P. Blair, October 3.
2. Unidentified; possibly a reference to General Washington Barrow.
3. Neither Zollicoffer nor Fields was designated as editor. Since Zollicoffer had made threats on Bynum, it is probably to him that the writer refers.

FROM JOEL YANCEY

Seminole Agency, East Florida. December 30, 1835

An ardent Jacksonian who formerly was a member of Congress from Kentucky seeks Polk's assistance in obtaining appointment as Indian Agent to replace a man recently slain by the Seminoles. He is assistant agent and feels confident of his ability to fill that post.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Yancey to Polk, December 29, 1836.

FROM JOHN ANDERSON¹

Dear Sir

Portland [Maine] Decr 31st 1835

Presuming on our old acquaintance I have taken the liberty to introduce to you the bearer of this letter, Maj. Smith² of this City, who is, I assure you, a specimen of the genuine Democracy of Maine. Maj. Smith visits Washington solely to see our venerable President & his prominent friends of whom Mr Smith has been an unwavering & most efficient supporter, & any attention you may be enabled conveniently to show him, & without encroaching on your time, which I am aware must now be most occupied, will be highly gratifying to him & ever cordially acknowledged by myself. With my whole heart I rejoice to see you My Dear Sir, in the elevated station you so justly occupy. Having for eight years served with you, I hope honorably & I know sincerely, & witnessed your course through many & very hard fought battles, I felt a deep interest in your success personally as well as nationally, for the devotion of an old comrad cant but be received as a sort of reward to all who honestly had served with him. How much I have been mistaken in the principles & firmness of Judge White & of Bell. Who could have believed that either of them, & especially Judge White, would ever become allied to men who would forswear their Country, if they could not rule it? I have had the charity to believe that Judge W. was carried away by the vanity of his new wife & that he was more to be pitied than blamed, tho' it shows a lamentable

want of that firmness we ever attributed to his character. As to Bell he must have been rotten to the core long, long ago, or he never could have taken the course he has & is yet pursuing. Indeed the whole opposition must receive both White & Bell as incumbrances rather than aids to their cause, for they claim the support of their new allies, while their desertion has not weakened our ranks, is added strength to our enemies. Depend on it all will go sure & true here & unless the opposition nominate Webster in some of the western States Massachusetts will yet go for Van Buren. I trust our friends in Congress will go on harmoniously & allow of no divisions in their ranks; this observed & Van Buren must come in by as large a vote as his most popular predecessor.

You will no doubt have a long session & yourself a most laborious one, at the end of which you will need relaxation & diversion, and as you have never seen this part of the Union, would it not comport with your arrangements to come North in the Summer. God knows I would give you a hearty welcome & all else in my power to render your visit agreeable, if you will but give us the pleasure of seeing you in Maine.

Should you have leisure & a wish to learn more particularly of our political concerns in this State, you will find Maj. Smith perfectly conversant with the whole subject & as a political & well tried personal friend I commend his opinions of coming events as worthy of consideration & attention.

Be pleased Dear Sir, to present my best respects to Mrs Polk. . . .

JOHN ANDERSON

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.

1. A Portland lawyer who served, 1825-33, in the House of Representatives. He did not run for re-election, but instead became mayor of Portland in 1833, serving until 1836 and again in 1842. He was United States attorney for Maine, 1833-36, and collector of customs for Portland, 1837-41 and 1843-48.

2. This is almost certainly Albert Smith, who had begun law practice in Portland at almost the same time as John Anderson. He was United States Marshal for Maine, 1830-38, and then was elected to the House of Representatives, where he served only one term, 1839-41.

1836

FROM BENJAMIN F. ALLEN

Knoxville. January 1, 1836

A resident of Maury County currently a student at East Tennessee College, Allen seeks Polk's aid in obtaining appointment to the United States Military Academy.¹ He reports that recently in a Knoxville speech Balie Peyton has harshly criticized Polk.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Allen was appointed to the class of 1840, but was never graduated.

FROM GREENVILLE COOK

Dr. Sir

Shelbyville Jan. 1, 1836

On to-morrow I take possession of the press in this place. If you find it convenient to render me assistance in any way, it will be thankfully received. The Bell men here are so disappointed in your election to the Speaker's chair, that they seem to have lost all hopes of Judge White's election. Still they persist in holding him up to the people, as "*the people's candidate, in opposition to the caucus candidate.*"

There is one favor I would request of you, which is, to get an exchange for the Globe.

You will perceive I have adopted your Mooresville Toast as my Motto.¹

GREENVILLE COOK

Addressed to Washington.

1. Polk's toast was: "The unity of the Republican Party—it must be preserved."

FROM ISAAC J. THOMAS

Columbia. January 2, 1836

Thomas seeks an appointment as midshipman for his son, Isaac Jr.,¹ and as a visitor to the Military Academy at West Point for himself. He inquires about rumors that Polk will soon become a member of the cabinet.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Young Thomas did not receive appointment as a midshipman.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, January 4, 1836

Mr. Brown, of Wayne, a member of the House, received a letter from the President a few days since, of which he is permitting others to make an improper use.¹ He has allowed it to be handed about from member to member with leave to take copies. I have just seen a member busily employed in copying it at his table. It is understood that A. L. Martin,² [Charles] Ready, and others, have been endeavoring to induce old Brown to have the letter published. To this course, if he ventures to adopt it without authority, we have no objection. The letter, like all the President's letters, is just such as he would willingly see read by every man in the nation. Brown is committed to the White-Whigs beyond the hope of redemption, and against the known wishes of a large majority of his constituents. He is as far gone in Opposition as Fowlkes of Hickman, whose case you will see stated, by "A Voter of Hickman County," (Jas. M. Howry) in the Union of the 2nd. instant.³ Brown has permitted a copy of the letter of the President to be taken, which I know is intended for Knoxville use; and I have no doubt, copies have been, ere this, transmitted to Washington. Copies have no doubt been enclosed to various parts of the State, accompanied by the most villainous comments. In this way, its manly and liberal purport and object, will be perverted, and its laudable aim defeated. Mr. [A. O. P.] Nicholson has a confidential copy of the letter, which he is authorized to use in the President's just defence. We have carefully watched the course of the enemy, and finding it to be as above detailed, we are to have a meeting at my office this evening, to consult upon the propriety of publishing Mr. Nicholson's copy of the letter. Col. [Josephus C.] Guild, Col. [William] Moore, Mr. [James] Gwin, T. J. Read &c. are to attend our meeting. My own opinion is, that the publication will be proper and necessary. Mr. Nicholson is of the same opinion; but we will be governed by the

opinion of a majority of our friends. It is astonishing to witness the base devices to which our adversaries resort, in order to defeat the Expunging Resolutions, as well as all other measures indicating a support of the Administration. The people in due time, will reward the leaders of this new Opposition according to their deserts.

The Union is rapidly extending in circulation. As evidence of its growing utility in our cause, I would refer you to the extracts of letters which you will occasionally find in its columns. Let me hear from you in relation to our Kentucky friends.

You will see that Barrow has acted in such a way towards you, as to call for a defence from me, accompanied by a just retaliation on his master, the late Speaker. This is a subject which I will not drop until I have overrun the enemies country.

[Greenville] Cook has gotten possession of the Freeman, and published his introductory address, which I prepared for him, and will issue his first paper this week. Our Bedford friends stood up to him like men in regard to Ways and Means.

A Mr. Carden⁴ will commence a paper in a few days at Winchester. Through my agency, Dr. [Wallace W.] Estill and Mr. [Hopkins L.] Turney have stood by him in endorsements and means, to go ahead. He is a steady young man, a Virginian, who formerly worked in our Office. Maj. [Thomas] Dean was among the foremost to assist Cook. So we go. I am now looking out for a young man of capacity and respectability, to purchase out the North Alabamian, at Athens, and change the character of that paper, it having been literally starved out in the White cause.

Tell Mr. Grundy that I received his letter of the 23rd. ultimo, last night, and will attend forthwith to his advice in relation to Mr. Mann's Speech.⁵

The Republican of Saturday last, contains what purports to be a nomination of Judge White, made by the Senate of Illinois. I am fully persuaded that it is a hoax. It appears to have been made on the 19th. ultimo. I have letters from Vandalia to the 9th. and they mention no such project as having been on the tapis⁶ at that time; and mention expressly, that Judge White, in no state of the canvass, whatever changes might be made among the Whig candidates, could command more than five or six friends in the Senate of that State. I understand further, that

the whole proceedings, published by the Republican, were received in *manuscript*, and purported to have been enclosed by somebody named Dawson. All these things taken together, induces me to believe the whole affair to be nothing more than a cunningly devised hoax. If so, which God send, I will roast Barrow for his credulity to his heart's content.⁷

You will see the manner in which we greet your election in these parts. From all I can learn, the general satisfaction expressed throughout the state, is greater than we had reason to expect; it is as great as you could wish it to be.

Please to present my compliments of the New Year to Mrs. P. and in informing the President of our intentions in regard to his letter, say to him, according his own translation of a line of Homer, that I "hate the Greeks and despise their gifts," and only regret my inability to render a more efficient support to his measures and principles than I am now doing. Remember me respectfully to Messrs. Grundy and Johnson.

S. H. LAUGHLIN.

P.S. My friend Maj. Lott⁸ writes me that he has not received the Globe according to the memorandum I gave you, accompanied by a year's subscription. His address is Danville, Warren Co. Tenn.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."

1. Andrew Brown was a farmer who served four consecutive terms, 1835-43, in the General Assembly. In the letter Jackson gave his justification for using his frank to circulate the speeches of Thomas Hart Benton on the Expunging Resolutions.

2. Andrew L. Martin was a criminal lawyer of Jackson, Tennessee, where he was counsel for the prosecution in the trial at Jackson of the outlaw John A. Murrell. He served three nonconsecutive terms in the General Assembly and eventually moved to Mississippi.

3. Gabriel B. Fowlkes, a wealthy planter, was elected from Hickman County to a single term in the General Assembly. James M. Howry of Hickman County was engrossing clerk of the state senate. In spite of the fact that Laughlin wrote the name James W. Howry, it is believed that he simply used an incorrect initial. The article appearing in the *Union* chided Fowlkes for circulating a handbill opposing expunging that was nearly identical with one previously circulated by Edward D. Tarver in Hardeman County. It charged plagiarism and indicated that Fowlkes was probably the guilty party.

4. The prospectus of this newspaper bore the name of A. J. Carden, but he is not otherwise identified.

5. On December 21, 1835, Abijah Mann Jr. of New York, a friend of Van Buren, stated that he was not in favor of abolition and that he did not believe that many of his constituents were. He said that a bargain had been made with the states of the South and that he was willing to live up to it.

6. *Tapis* literally means the cover on a council table. "On the tapis" means "under consideration."

7. Shortly after this letter was written the *Union* carried an article charging that the whole affair was a hoax. Noting that the name of the purported writer of the letter was John Dawson, the *Union* questioned the existence of such a person. News from Illinois eventually confirmed that action by the Illinois senate was taken while most of the members were absent, and a later issue of the *Union* used the following as a filler:

"John Dawson he dreamed that his daddy was dead;

His daddy he dreamed that John Dawson was dead.

Old Song"

8. Unidentified. No person named Lott appeared on the 1830 census of Warren County. This postscript appears on the left margin of the last page of the letter.

FROM WILLIAM J. POLK

Columbia. January 5, 1836¹

Polk's cousin reminds him that he has paid for a subscription to the *National Intelligencer* and says that he has not received the paper.² Although he differs with Polk in politics he congratulates him on his election as speaker and rejoices that he has beaten Bell.

Addressed to Washington.

1. This letter was dated 1835, but the reference to Polk's election as speaker indicates an obvious error in dating.

2. Polk noted on the envelope that on January 17, 1836, he forwarded to the writer a receipt from Gales and Seaton for subscription from December 7, 1835.

FROM WILLIAM MONTGOMERY¹

Washington. January 6, 1836

Montgomery, recently elected to the House from North Carolina, brings greetings from William D. Moseley² and predicts that he will be the next governor of that state.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Montgomery was a physician from Orange County and was a Democrat.

2. Moseley had been Polk's roommate at Chapel Hill. He was a lawyer

and achieved some success in North Carolina politics. Later he moved to Florida and became that state's first governor. See Moseley to Polk, April 25, 1836.

FROM WILLIAM MOORE

Dear Col.

Nashville 6th Jany 1836

I wrote you a short line a few days before we heard from the Election of Speaker, a matter in which no one in this State felt a more lively interest than myself, & none took so active a part in the cheering of the news at Nashville, for which the opposition say I am not guiltless. However I ask them no favours, they shew me none; a continued effort is going on to operate against me particularly in my District, but all is unavailing, our news is right, our progress is rappid. You will see the course we thought was proper to take with the Presidents letter, in relation to his frank. I have no doubt but the letter will have a good effect, & I hope we will hear the people respond to it before we act on the Expunging Resolutions, when nothing will prevent their adoption but that bitter rankling created by Bell & his party, who you know have triumphantly carried all matters here before them, shamefully, except our Resolve that was passed by the Senate before the drill sergeants could operate, i e the Resolution approving of the course pursued by the president.

Please present me Respectfully to the President. Tell him Tennessee will get right in spite of the opposition.

W. MOORE

Write me shortly

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOSEPH B. BOYD

West Point, New York. January 7, 1836

Fulfilling a promise made at the time of his appointment as a cadet, Boyd reports on his progress at the Military Academy. He is doing well in his classes and enjoys the life of a cadet. He congratulates Polk on his election as speaker and again thanks him for helping him get his cadet appointment.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JAMES McKISICK

Dear Col.

Shelbyville 7th January 1836

The voters is troubled here. The idea of the Press going out of the controls of certain individuals in & about this place is more than they can stand. The first No. of Mr [Greenville] Cooks paper is to issue this week & for fear of loosing some hold the oposition here have made arangements to start a White paper in a few weeks. Their Prospectus is already out; I am informed Mr [Theodorick F.] Bradford went on to Murphreesboro & got it printed. Bradford, [Joseph A.] Kincaid, Campbell Coldwell, Sam Phillips¹ &c appear to be the prominent Men in this undertaking. For instance they have employed *Laird*² to print & retain *Wisener*³ as Editor. The ostensible object is to sustain the pretentions of Judge White, yes Judge White. You know these people care nothing about White distinct from their own interest but as old *Hughy* has deservedly been a favorite in Tennessee it is necessary to hoaver under his wing with a view to give some character to their pretensions. My own opinion is (& in this I am sustained by others) that its real object & great desire is to prejudice a certain *James Knox Polk*. The object is so closely connected with the feelings & desires of Bradford & Kincaid, & they both having an inclination to write when ever it may seem to conduce to their interest, that I calculate on their giving their man Wisener constant aid & attention. I have not understood what arrangements are made in relation to the Editorial part of Cooks paper & as I am entirely unacquainted with the quallifications of Mr. Cook, I do not know whether he is entirely competant or not. We would like to see some fellow manage the quill, who is as sharp as a brier & as keen as Hawk. I confidently anticipate that the forces above mentioned will be put in [. . .] against him. Your friend James R. White⁴ died about five weeks ago, & Mrs White his relict died at my house on last Saturday night. I would like to hear from you as soon as convenient.

JAS. MCKISICK

Addressed to Washington.

1. Campbell Coldwell, a son of Ballard Coldwell, was a brother of Thomas Coldwell, a Shelbyville lawyer. Nothing else has been learned of Campbell

Coldwell. Samuel Phillips had been active in politics at the local level for several years. Archibald Yell's first wife was Phillips's sister.

2. John H. Laird had published the paper recently acquired by Greenville Cook and his associates.

3. William H. Wisener, a young lawyer, edited papers in Shelbyville for several years. Later he served numerous terms in the General Assembly, and in 1870 he was a candidate for governor.

4. A longtime resident of Shelbyville, where he kept the Globe Tavern. He had been a loyal Polk supporter.

FROM JOHN CATRON

Dear Sir:

Nashville 8 Jan 1835 [1836]¹

You'll believe me when I say many were *mighty* gratified at your election as speaker. No occurrence could have had an equal influence in this state. That only certain test, the result has proved it. Your committees are satisfactory; some of Mr. Bell's were not. Many of Judge White's frds openly admit he has been deceived by others, and *all* so far as my knowledge extends, & I've not been idle, say the Judge cannot be successful, that the Harrison nominations are conclusive of this. The party is eating itself up, in contests for office. When the Supreme Judges were elected a caucus was had, & determined that only one, (the strongest with the party) shd. run on the White side. This ruled out Peck, Lea (Pryor) & McKenney² in E. Ten. In the middle it put de hors several. They did not get out, as the bill was passed one day, & the election made next. So of the west.³ So it is to be, as now arranged, in the other appointments. That active passion envy, is at work more effectually than I had supposed, or than it would have been, but for the blight now resting on Judge Whites prospects. This I am in an attitude to learn from the numerous personal frds who voted against me to save their strength & their own friends before the legislature. They were *forced* into the arrangement to save brothers, fathers in law &c. The bar here is prostrated by the petty men of elsewhere, to an extent that leaves them not the least influence within the legislature, and yr. servt. is amongst the least repining.

I believe confidently that the spring elections for sheriffs &c. if placed on party ground will go against the White party in most of the counties. & my desire is the general ticket system be

retained. It is declared every day & by the leaders that to Mr. Van B.'s personal character they do not object, but their great objection is, to Presdt. Jackson nominating his successor. That *He* is not authorized to indicate *openly* his preference. Since Viga. Myld. Penn &c. have been Conventioning, this hobby is cutup, & they attack Jackson, they attack his nominations, as Mr. Hall's paper⁴ (the last) shows you, & the gnl. friends that the Senate is to reject the frds of the Administration. Let them. Let Judge White if he will, but I think he will not so far err. This is changing the issue, & on this there is now a war of words, daily betraying the bitterness to Gnl. Jackson within. Administration, & Anti admtn, is most assuredly to be the issue the ballot box of next fall will try. Anti dictation, is now the text. To this there is a ready and true answer. Gnl. J. is above the hypocrisy of concealing his thoughts. He always has been above it, & would be disgraced were he to pretend political friendship for those that are maring his fame, and sapping his administration. It is his right to desire the continuance of the policy pursued by him, & to support those friendly to that policy. The country understands that the Gnl. has the right to be "above bord" & on this Judge White's frds are pressing a verdict! I had wagered a drinking of wine with a townsman that Judge White did not get 45 votes on a time past. The other day we were counting chances. He could not deny the aspect of the shadows before, but said the wine will not perhaps be drank. Unless the prospects exceed 45 in the college Judge White will not run. You may rest assured of that. The tone of feeling does not exceed this much with the intelligent of the party. They are perfectly prepared for such a result. They are exceedingly depressed and very silent; nor does there now seem to be much temper brought into the contest. The election of Speaker had an uncommonly great effect on the country people. They had been led to believe great strength existed elsewhere. This is now admitted to be a mistake, and what must follow is certain, as I believe. You cannot imagine the change since you left, an alteration from a fierce partizanship, to a dead dispondency. I've endeavoured to describe a present State of *feeling*, but so ramblingly that I fear you'l not "mark me."

J. CATRON

Addressed to Washington.

1. While the date is written clearly, the mention of Polk's being elected Speaker of the House assures that it was 1836 instead of 1835. His election as Speaker came in December 1835, and Catron was guilty of a common error in dating letters written early in a new year.

2. Jacob Peck, Pryor Lea, and Robert J. McKinney were outstanding lawyers in East Tennessee. Peck had been a member of the outgoing supreme court, as had John Catron.

3. This was the first election of state supreme court judges to be held under the new constitution. Actually no contest developed in East Tennessee or West Tennessee, but Catron was defeated in Middle Tennessee by Nathan Green, 71 to 27.

4. During November 1835, Allen A. Hall had succeeded George C. Childress as editor of the Nashville *National Banner*.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My Dear Sir Washington City Jany. 8th 1835 [1836]¹

I have received several letters from you, and feel that you have but too much reason to complain that I have not written you earlier. My only apology is, that my health has not been very good, and I have found myself much more busily engaged in discharging the duties of my station than I had anticipated. Still however I could have written, but nothing of moment has occurred but what you had an opportunity of seeing through the public papers.

Col. [Richard M.] Johnson did not give me the letter which I enclose² until yesterday. He will write to his friends in Kentucky on the subject of your wishes. I wish you much success, should you visit Frankfort, but cannot say that I am very sanguine. Col. Johnson will stimulate his friends to aid you I have no doubt, and they ought to do so, but they have been for years so hardly pressed, and such an amount of means has been required, in conducting their own political contests at home, that I should fear, a great deal could not be calculated on.

All things are looking well here. Our majority in the House, is not only large, but we have I think the finest, and best initial House so far as all political questions are involved that I have ever seen. Van-Buren's strength is the vote given for Speaker and Printer.³ White can scarcely be said to have any party. The 26 votes given to the Editors of the *Sun*, include his Tennessee

supporters, and the *Nullifiers*, all total, the latter of whom would prefer Calhoun or Poindexter if they could get them. The other wing of opposition as indicated by the 59 votes to Gales & Seaton are the *Webster* or *Harrison* or *Clay men*, or any man's men who can be most "*available*" in defeating the democratic nomination.

Every effort will be made to distract and divide us in Congress, as well as in the country, and hence the great anxiety even this early in the Session, on the part of the *ultras* North and South, to agitate the Slave question, evidently with a view to make it bear on the Presidential election. There is too much reason to believe that there are some at least, who do not so much fear the effects of the miserable handful of abolitionists & fanatics in the North, as they desire to get up a grave discussion in Congress, which they hope may agitate and excite the country, and array its different parts into sectional parties. In this they will be disappointed. I speak advisedly when I say, that whensoever a direct vote can be had, there will be at least 3 to 1 in the Ho. Repr. against entertaining the subject in any form, or giving the slightest countenance to the schemes of the abolitionists, either in the States or the District of Columbia. And of this majority will be our whole political party, North & South. Those who would disturb the question will be found to be exclusively opposition-men. The country cannot fail to see that this object is wholly political, and public opinion will place upon this course, that reprobation which it deserves. Both Van-Buren & his friends in the North, entertain correct opinions upon this subject, and will be found not only with the South, but with the friends of the harmony and union of the States in every part of the country, in refusing to entertain or act upon the subject, in any form in Congress. In the course of a few days, the House will probably, upon a direct vote upon resolutions properly proposed, settle the question once for all.

I can see nothing but a Presidential interposition which can prevent Van-Buren from being made President, and probably by an overwhelming majority. The game of the *Whigs* is now every where understood. *White* is the weakest of their men, and under present prospects cannot be "*available*" to take off the vote of a single state from the Democratic strength. *I have*

good reason to believe that three of the Alabama Representatives are now distinctly with us in all things. Two of them acted with us at the opening of the Session & the third would probably have done so, but for some previous commitments at home. [Joab] *Lawler* and [Dixon H.] *Lewis* will act with the opposition. I have now no doubt but Alabama will support Van-Buren.

I shall never believe that Tennessee will suffer herself to be transfered to the list of opposition States. My information from various parts of the State, since I left is most cheering. I have from some of the strongest men in East Tennessee, (such as *Jacob Miller* of Hawkins & *George Gammon* of Sullivan) that even there, there will be rebellion in the camp. All that is necessary, is for a few bold men to speak out, to produce a perfect revolution even in East Tennessee, which is our weakest point. In the West, from all we hear, things are certainly going well. My letters all inform me that the re-action is tremendous, and speak in a tone of great confidence, that the victory will be ours. A great effort should be made before the Legislature adjourns to pass the *expunging Resolutions*. Though the effort should fail of success, it should be made & the discussion & the vote extensively circulated among the people.

Col. [Thomas H.] Benton has not yet moved his *expunging Resolutions*, but will shortly. He has probably been waiting for the instructions from Virginia, which are now looked for every day. Benton's opening speech, which will doubtless be able, shall have an extensive circulation in our quarter. He is, I understand, prepared to answer irrefutably, all the grounds heretofore taken in opposition. The old chief is undaunted as ever, & is in high spirits and is confident that old Democratic Tennessee, will yet be firm.

I have been gratified & not a little amused at some accounts I have had of your frolic on seeing the news of the organization here at the opening of the Session. The accounts from my own district (and especially from Mooresville) are of the most gratifying character. If we had a press in East Tennessee, and one at Jackson, they would be great [. . .] in conveying true information to the people. Cannot our friends make some arrangement of the kind.

Andrew Hays is I have just learned in the City. Write me frequently, and I will endeavour for the future, to answer promptly. This letter is not for the press, but for your own eye, and that of particular friends. It is written in haste.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private." This letter is in the University of Chicago Library.

1. This is another example of letters written early in a new year incorrectly bearing the date of the preceding year.

2. This enclosure has not been found. Obviously it concerns Laughlin's approaching visit to Kentucky to solicit financial support for his newspaper.

3. Polk won the speakership over Bell, 132 to 84, with 9 scattered; Blair and Rives were chosen printers for the House, 133 to 59 for Gales and Seaton, with 33 votes scattered. As indicated below, 26 of the scattered votes went to the *Washington Sun*.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir Nashville, Evening. January 9, 1836

I wrote to Mr. Grundy on yesterday, and now avail myself of a moments leisure to write you a few hasty lines. Owing to some little want of concert among a few of our friends, I did not get the whole of the correspondence which you will find in to-day's Union, accompanying the President's letter to Mr Nicholson¹ until the forenoon of to-day. By want of concert, I do not mean that there was any disagreement about the main object, the publication of the President's letter and the necessity which existed for adopting that course, but about the best way to bring it out. Mr. Nicholson at last obviated nearly every difficulty by demanding the letter of [Andrew] Brown as he has stated in his letter as you will be [see].² Nicholson has gone home to-day.

You will see the article I have been obliged hastily to prefix to it. I had no copy of the Senate's Journal; but by the mail last night, Guild got a copy, and I procured it and have used it as you will see. I will make much out of this Journal, and as Guild will have to use his copy, and will carry it away soon, I must beg that a copy be sent me.

As I have undertaken to examine Bells career and will do it fully as I can find room, I stand greatly in need of Gale's Debates.⁸ I have the first volume. Can I get the subsequent volumes sent to me, or can you tell me where I can find them here. I have the 1st. Vol. in full.

I hope the President's letter will have an excellent effect. Ever since the paper came out two hours ago, the Union Office has been crowded with members and citizens. I expect to have to direct Long to put it in pamphlet as an Extra-Union, with a preface containing a copy of the Senate's Journal of March 3d. 1835, so as to give the subject and letter its proper bearing.

I stated fully to Mr. Grundy our condition of "Ways and Means." The establishment needs help, and I imagine no help from Ky. need be counted on. My private affairs are as stated. Although in want, or likely to be so, I should have been silent on that subject, but for the propriety of letting my friends know that without ruin, I cannot individually sacrifice any more that I have done and am doing in our common cause. In doing that, I sacrifice my time, my days and nights freely, but I cannot impoverish my family by doing more. There are men here for whom I might sacrifice my sleep, and spin my brains, without bread or decent apparel for three hundred and sixty-four days, and then if I neglected or refused to serve the remaining one day and six hours of the year, would kick me aside as a worthless thing. A large majority of our friends however are of a different grit. But to no men will I stand, under any state of things, in the relation of a dependent. I cannot involve myself in pecuniary obligations beyond my means of honestly paying and honestly earning.

If you know of any hint you can give me for raising means to carry on the war, let me know it. In personal service I will carry it on while a button remains on my coat, if I have to do it with a sheriff or constable at my elbow.

Please present mine and Mrs. L's respects to Mrs. P. Everybody is well here, and the small pox has wholly disappeared.

I have just seen Mr. J. Walker. All goes on well in Maury. On next publication day, I will give a goodly number of extracts from encouraging letters. Why do I not hear from you?

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Presumably addressed to Washington, although no envelope has been found.

1. This letter was dated December 18, 1835, and contained Jackson's justification for using his frank to circulate Benton's speeches favoring expunging. The President said that Clay's resolutions were unconstitutional in that they were an impeachment and therefore violated the rights of the House of Representatives. Further, the approval of the resolutions by the Senate denied Jackson his right to be heard in his own defense. He therefore contended that use of the franking privilege to circulate his defense was justified.

2. In a statement in the *Nashville Union* of January 9, 1836, just preceding Jackson's letter, Nicholson explained that he had tried to obtain a copy of Jackson's letter to Andrew Brown for the purpose of publishing it. When Brown refused to permit publication Nicholson claimed that he was justified in publishing Jackson's letter to him which covered much the same ground. Nicholson's explanation was contained in a letter replying to twenty-five members of the General Assembly who said they were friends of the President and had seen copies of the letter that Brown had been circulating. See Laughlin to Polk, January 4, 1836.

3. Joseph Gales and his son of the same name had been publishing the proceedings of Congress since 1807, and the son published the *Annals of Congress* from 1834 to 1856.

FROM ORPHA CONANT

Rochester, Ohio. January 11, 1836¹

Because there is little hope that petitions on the subject of slavery will be heard by Congress, an unidentified antislavery man writes to Polk demanding that the institution of slavery be abolished.

Addressed to Washington.

1. No year appeared on the letter. The Library of Congress tentatively assigned it to 1835, but internal evidence relating to the petition fight in Congress suggests 1836.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

Dear Sir;

Yale College Jan. 13, 1836

I have been directed by Mr Jas. Walker, to make application to you whenever funds become necessary for your brother S. W. Polk. After the bills which accrue here at the present period are all paid there will be a balance against him. I am

accustomed at the close of every Session to render a detailed account of the expenditures of wards but omit doing it just now on account of a serious indisposition which almost prevents my attention to business. I will remark in general, that your brother is economical in his habits and correct in his deportment. I hope that nothing will prevent my submitting to your inspection a full statement of his accounts at the close of the next Session, when you will probably have more leisure to peruse them than you can have in your present arduous but honorable post.

D. OLMSTED

P.S. If you please, either remit or authorise me to draw on you through the banks for \$200.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. On the envelope Polk noted that he enclosed two hundred dollars to Olmsted on January 22, 1836.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

My Dear Sir Little Rock [Arkansas] Jany the 13th 1836

No man in this nation was more gratified to hear of your triumph over *Bell & Co* than your old friend. To you and Genl Jackson I am indebted for all that I am or may be. You know my feelings & therefore I need not further express them. The Convention of Ark. is now in Session, and I hope will be able to frame a Constitution in a few weeks, tho we have so many interests in Ark. that I have sometimes my fears we shall brake up in a row.

Your old and true friend [Abraham] Whinery is a member from my County (Washington). Judge [Thomas J.] Lacy is also a member. Arrangements for the coming elections is all the go here. We are sound to the core and will beyond a reasonable doubt give our Electoral vote for *Van & Johnson*. Friend *Sevier* will be one of our Senators, I think without doubt, for the other I fear there will be a scramble among our own friends. Lacy & Judge [Edward] Cross will be the candidates and the result doubtful both "good men & true." We have not as yet formed our ticket for Govr & Congress. I hope we shall be able

to act in concert and harmony. If not defeat awaits us. The opposition here are formadable & pretty talented and has succeeded in stealing from our ranks a few *White & Bell* men, Tennesseans who believe in *White* and cant be made to see the result of dividing the party. As for myself I attend to my Judicial business & let others bear the honors and offices.

I have Just learned that old Capt Veshone¹ the Cherokee agent died a few weeks since. Your old friend John B. Dickson² formerly of Bedford County Ten would accept the office if he could procure it. He resides in my County, Washington A.T. and stands high, has been once elected to the Legislature and is now a doing well. He [is] industrious sober & discreet. He is well known to Col Sevier who is his friend. If there is any chance for him I wish you would present him to the departmt. At all events write me what can be done!! *Confidential*.

So soon as we go into a state government there will be a vacancy in the land office at Fayetteville. The Register of that office will not be an applicant & will most likely be provided for under the state government. I therefore wish you forthwith to apply for that office for Col A. Whinery your old friend. No man in Ark stands higher and when necessary can have any sort of a recommendation. This matter I dont care about being made known to any other than the President.

I should like to hear from you as often as your business will permit. Be so good as to present me to my friend Col A H Sevier and to your good Lady. . . .

A. YELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. George Vashon had been an agent with the Cherokees for several years. He was frequently involved in controversies with traders because he tried to keep them from selling whiskey to the Indians.

2. Little has been learned about Dickson other than the information given here.

FROM PORTLAND J. CURLE

Winchester, Tennessee. January 15, 1836

Curle states that he has been falsely accused of being an opponent of Jackson and Polk, and that his political enemies have used this to have him removed as postmaster.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. Curle served for a few weeks as postmaster at Winchester. He had been replaced by William Estill, the man Curle believed was maligning him. See John B. Forester to Polk, March 2, 1835.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr. Sir

Somerville¹ Jany 16th 1836

I arrived here last night from Mississippi. I have not employed Beanland. I have got a man by the name of Mayo,² from the district. Beanland done very little good after I was there in the fall. He had not got out half of the cotton and we will make a light crop there, I think fifteen or 20 Bales. After I left there he run off three of the Negroes which cost between 50 and 60 Dollars to get them. The worst loss was your Boy Abram. He started him the Post office with some letters. The mule he rode threw him against a tree and killed him. He lived but a few hours after he was thrown. I have sold the smith tools. We made 43 Bales in Haywood. Our expences in Missi. are very heavy indeed. Much greater than I antisipated. I am going from here to Glass's.³ I expect to be at Columbia by the first of next month. Then I will give you all the particulars.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, 89.

1. Bassett said that this letter was dated at Yalobusha but it is clearly headed at Somerville.

2. Nothing has been learned about this overseer.

3. See Caldwell to Polk, September 16, 1835, and January 31, 1836.

FROM WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

Dr Sir

Nashville Jany 17, 1836

I am again under the necessity of calling upon you to attend to my newspaper negotiation. I wish you to have the *Intelligencer* discontinued & have the *Globe* forwarded to me at this place until the Legislature rises & then have it directed to the

Good Spring¹ post office in Williamson County. Enclosed is ten dollars. You paid for me last year for the *Intelligencer* up to the first of this year. You will please pay for the time since the year expired altho I have not seen or heard of a solitary paper. Also pay for the *Globe*. I owe you a dollar on acct of your last payment for me.

The Legislature is progressing slowly. We have completed the courtbills with the exception of the circuit court bill that has pass[ed] three readings in the Senate & two in the house, in the shape of the old system except three terms, & the return term is the trial for actions of debt & [. . .]. Chancery Courts are continued, Jury trial in the County court abolished. Revenue law now under consideration and nearly through.

Last night we received news from Mississippi that Walker² was elected Senator. It is not authentic but believed to be true. I am satisfied it is so. Hickman & Sullivan Counties have instructed their members to go for expunging yet I am of opinion it will not carry, at least in the shape that Guild has it in the House. It may be possible to pass the amendment in the Senate which leaves out the cabalistic terms and are sufficiently strong. I regret verry much that the resolutions adopted by the Senate approving the principles of Jacksons administration yet sleep on the table in the House & I fear will continue to sleep. You are aware of the fact that a great many of the opposition last Summer took advantage of the White excitement & rode into the Legislature.

Your triumph over the immortal John [Bell] was recd. by his friends with great astonishment. They relied so much upon his cunning & duplici[t]y. They looked upon him as invincible and hence the shock was greater than that of electricity, stood perfectly amazed & in a kind of stupor.

I shall be glad to hear from you. How does the Peyton & Johnson controversy³ stand. I fear our friend Johnson will suffer if it remains in status quo.

W. G. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Good Spring was in Williamson County, slightly northeast of Franklin and on the main Franklin-Nashville road.

2. The election of Robert J. Walker was soon confirmed. A lawyer and land speculator, Walker was a firm supporter of Jackson. His election, therefore, was considered a major turning point in Mississippi politics. Walker had a long and varied political career, serving in Polk's cabinet and as territorial governor of Kansas.

3. The nature of this dispute as well as its final resolution remains obscure. Although a duel seemed probable at one time, none took place.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My Dear Sir

Washington City Jan'y 17th 1836

I received this morning your favour of the 4th Instant, and am much gratified to hear from yourself as well as others, that the "prospect before us" in our quarter, is still not only good but becoming more and more cheering, as light and truth make their way to the people. I am with you "astonished to witness the base devices to which our adversaries resort," in keeping up the delusion they have much too long successfully practiced upon the people in regard to Judge *White's* true position; and in concealing from the public their own covert hostility to the administration, and the principles it maintains. They underrate the public intelligence, and cannot much longer deceive our people.

I have not had an opportunity to see the President to day in relation to his letter to Mr [Andrew] Brown, but will do so in the morning. I have no fears that any thing he has written, should it come before the public, can do either him or our cause any injury; still *that* cannot justify Brown and his counsellors in making the improper use of a private letter which you suspect. I have but little doubt that a copy of it as you suspect, has ere this been transmitted to Washington, though I have heard nothing of it. Should such be the fact, and any use be attempted to be made of it here, it will receive proper & prompt attention; and I have full confidence that yourself and the other friends with whom you inform me you would consult, will (being upon the spot) prevent any misrepresentations, or any mischievous use from being made of it in Tennessee. The little knot of *White-men* here confined as it is almost exclusively to those from our own state & to *Wise*¹ of Va. (who lives in the same

boarding house with the Judge & Peyton) and to the few nullifiers from the South, are becoming not only desperate, but reckless. It is perfectly apparent that the deadly hostility of some of the White-men from Tennessee towards the President, cannot be much longer repressed or concealed, and the sooner they are unveiled and exposed to the public view the better.

You have witnessed the violent course of Mr Wise towards the administration. He is one of the champions in the White-cause, and when it is known that he lives under the same roof with Judge White and Peyton, eats at the same board & is in daily communion with them, it is scarcely possible to suppose that he does not express their opinions & feelings as well as his own towards the President & the administration. Indeed Peyton himself, almost [. . .] to break ground with the President a few days ago, by attempting in a sarcastic manner to hold up to public ridicule, the President's doctrines in relation to improvements, upon a resolution offered by him to establish a Port of Entry at the mouth of Laurel;² to the end that his constituents might not, as he (wittily as he supposed) expressed it, *live above the Constitution*.

The course of that miserable & contemptible paper, *The Sun*³ too, which it is notorious, is controlled by the leaders here, goes conclusively to prove the rankling hostility which lies but half smothered & concealed within their bosoms. In the Sun of the 12th Inst you may have noticed, if you ever see the paper, a long, laboured, vulgar, and basely false attack on myself and others. I knew nothing of it, (for I never see the paper unless by accident) until Bradford⁴ one of the Editors came to Johnson & myself to disavow the authorship of so base and low a tirade of falsehood & abuse, and to say that he had withdrawn from the paper. The other Editor is a "cashiered" and disgraced officer⁵ during last war, and is a fit instrument to do any dirty work that may be assigned him. You must not suppose that the article has at all disturbed my equanimity or that I have the slightest feeling, except that of contempt, in relation to it. I have none, and only bring it to your notice because it may have been intended by its authors, for the Tennessee market. Being defeated & deeply chagrined they would have nothing to loose but everything to gain by a quarrel with me, and it is their purpose I suspect to provoke me. Grundy & Johnson concur with me in

opinion that it does not deserve to be noticed, through the newspapers or otherwise, further than in general terms, to put the mark of indignant reprobation upon the *low* and *vulgar means* to which the authors of the article have resorted, and to let the public know who the Editor of the *Sun* is.

It may be thought *now* to be the policy of Mr Bell & his friends to produce a controversy about the former speaker's election, and by all sorts of defamation and misrepresentation, it may be thought, that they may be in some degree profitted by it. On the other hand I am now successful, having received the highest evidence any man could have, of the individual confidence of my political friends, and can in no possible event (though the light of truth should drive my assailants in disgrace from the contest, as I know it would) gain any thing by a quarrel through the newspapers, such as they seek to produce. My opinion is therefore that it deserves and ought to receive no sort of notice at your hands, (should they republish in the Nashville papers & attempt to use it to my prejudice) further than some general exposure of its *baseness* and *falsehood*. In doing this should it in your judgment become necessary, you will find in the *Globe* of yesterday, the official sentence of the Court-Martial, to which I have before alluded, convicting the Editor of the *Sun* of base charges, which it might be well to publish for the purpose of showing who the ostensible author of the article is, and also that he is the conductor of the Press which is the organ of the *pure White*. I have taken the liberty to make these suggestions, after consultation with Grundy, lest you might be drawn into the worse than useless controversy which they seek to provoke. *Grundy* thinks the article wholly unworthy of any sort of notice.

I thank you for the notice you have taken of Barrow's article. It is well done. I am rejoiced to learn that *The Union* is rapidly extending its circulation. I suppose ere this, you will have received the official notification of your appointment as publisher of the laws of the U. States. The newspapers at Shelbyville & Winchester, cannot fail to do much good. A few more such, one for instance at Jackson and one in E. Tennessee, are much wanted. Cannot our friends so arrange it?

I have seen Col. [Richard M.] Johnson again. He says that our friends have been so long and hard pressed, that he fears you

cannot hope for much aid at Frankfort. Our friends at home must stand up to the good cause & do what they can. For one I have not & *will not* flinch. I sent Majr Trott's paper to Danville as you directed some weeks ago.⁶

A special message is expected from the President tomorrow on the subject of our French affairs. It is looked for with much interest. I have no other news. All things are looking well here. I can see nothing to prevent *Van* from being the successor of the *Old Chief*, unless it be some providential occurrence.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. This letter of course intended for your own eye alone.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private and Confidential."

1. Henry A. Wise was a member of the House of Representatives. He began his law practice in Nashville, where he was a partner of Balie Peyton, who was Hugh L. White's nephew. He became one of the most caustic of Polk's critics in the House, and he finally became a Whig. Later he shifted back to the Democrats.

2. After President Jackson advanced the theory that it was not constitutional for the federal government to improve a stream above a port of entry, Balie Peyton, with full irony, introduced a resolution to explore the expediency of establishing a port of entry at the mouth of the Laurel, a small tributary of the Cumberland River near its source in eastern Kentucky. Peyton said that he lived near the Cumberland above Nashville and wished to "extend the constitution" so that he could enjoy its benefits.

3. The *Washington Sun*, strongly anti-Jackson, was established during 1835.

4. Thomas G. Bradford engaged in newspaper publication in Nashville for more than twenty years. He then published a paper in Warrenton, Virginia, for about three years, beginning in 1826. He worked for some years thereafter as a clerk in the office of the Secretary of the Treasury.

5. Joseph D. Learned, while a colonel in the army, was in 1814 court-martialed and cashiered for defrauding the government and for conduct unbecoming an officer.

6. See Laughlin to Polk, November 4, 1835.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Bolivar, Tennessee. January 17, 1836

Polk's first cousin protests the planned elimination of Bolivar from the mail route between Nashville and Memphis and asks Polk to intervene with the Postmaster General.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Colo.

Murfreesboro Jan'y 17th 1836

I expect the multiplicity of your engagements growing upon yr. accession to the Speakers Chair has prevented you from answering my letter written some time since. I should be glad to hear from you occasionally. I get all the news that is published in the papers, but the key to a correct understanding of passing events is some times locked up and is only entrusted to a few. What is likely to grow out of the discussion on the subject of Abolition Petitions? Is not the whole design to prejudice Vanburen with the people of the South? Your election to the Speakers Chair was hailed by our friends and the supporters of the President as ominous of the prostration of White Whigery as well as every branch of the opposition. The news operated here like wormwood & gaul upon Colo. Bells friends & supporters. They were completely chop fallen. A great many have admitted that it is conclusive evidence of the utter hopelessness of Judge White's prospects of success in the Presidential canvass, and are coming round to the support of Vanburen. The course of our State Legislature in consuming the publick time and money in nominating Judge White once again has produced great dissatisfaction even among those who were in favor of Judge White. They say that the Judge's prospects are injured by it because, say they, the White people had before that time pledged themselves to be opposed to all conventions & caucuses, and Judge White being the People's candidate none but the people ought to act in his election. They object to the legislative caucus in most bitter terms: that it was perfectly unauthorized & that it was done at the publick expense, an expense not less than 10 or 12 thousand Dollars, and when likewise it has been done to the prejudice of nearly all the legislation and appointments of the State. They have not yet acted upon the Expunging Resolutions & I am fearful they will not this session. Some who pledged themselves before they were elected will not vote for it. Mr [Charles] Ready who I am informed pledged himself in the

canvass will most likely vote against them. Tennessee ought to be ashamed to let the foul blot of dirt (Clay) remain upon the fair page of Jackson's character when all the other republican states are voting sponges to wipe it off.

We are all well. Mrs Childress has moved to her residence in town but is still dissatisfied. Some of her negroes have been sick.

Your old friend Daniel Bowman¹ has got me to forward to you five dollars which he wishes you to pay to Mrs Ann Royal for her paper² for which he wishes you to get a receipt & ascertain how much more is due.

I would be glad you would tell the editors of the *Globe* to send me the semiweekly in stead of the weekly *Globe*. And Mr Peter Campbell³ wants the Congressional *Globe* instead of the Appendix. There is some great fault in the [. . .] or carrying of the *Globe*.⁴ While most of the other papers of the *district* arrive here regularly the *Globe* hardly ever comes. I have gotten only 2 papers yet. I am sorry to have to trouble you. I would have gotten a good many other subscribers to the *Globe* but have been so closely engaged in my profession that I have not had leisure.

W. R. RUCKER

We have just learned that Walker of Mississippi is elected Senator.

I enclose some subscribers to Blair & Rives with five Dollars.

W R R

Addressed to Washington.

1. Daniel Bowman was a justice of the peace in Rutherford County and had been a Jackson elector in 1832.

2. Ann Royal published two papers in Washington, *Paul Pry*, 1831-36, and *The Huntress*, 1836-54. She was a sharp critic of many public figures. This is probably a reference to *Paul Pry*.

3. Unidentified. No person of this name appeared in the 1830 census of Rutherford County. It is likely, however, that he was a resident of that county and that his name did not appear because he was not the head of a family.

4. There had been some complaint by Polk's friends that Blair's *Globe* was indifferent to Polk's political fortunes. There seems to have been a concerted effort to get wider circulation of the *Globe* in Middle Tennessee, perhaps as a means of persuading Blair to pay more attention to Polk.

FROM JACOB MILLER

Yellow Store,¹ Tennessee. January 18, 1836

Miller expresses surprise that Polk did not know that the postmaster at Surgoinville had resigned, saying that he had written the news to Felix Grundy on December 15, 1835. He asks Polk to consult with Grundy on the matter. Miller also expresses surprise at White's candidacy, but believes that Van Buren will carry Hawkins County.

Addressed to Washington.

1. This was not a post office at this time although it became one in 1837. See Miller to Polk, December 8, 1835.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia Jan'y 18, 1836

I have been at home about two weeks from Miss. I have since been so much engaged that I have written no letters, but such as were particularly necessary.

There is at present rather a calm in politics. The White party shew that their hopes are nearly extinct. I cannot tell how they reasoned themselves into the belief, but they certainly were disappointed, and much mortified when the result of the Speaker's election was known. They had hoped that if Mr Bell could not be elected, that he could manage to have you defeated by Mason of Virginia, and thus damp the ardour of the Van Buren people in this quarter. The result of that election has had a good effect, not only here but throughout the state. I am perfectly satisfied that the Van Buren party are gaining strength every day, and I am sanguine in the opinion that middle Tennessee and the District will give a majority to the Republican Ticket. If East Tennessee does not give too much might against us, the chances are good for the state. I would however now prefer the District System. Maury would give such a majority that I should count this district certain. You know that Columbia has been by great odds the strongest part of our county for the Bell-White faction. Jo. Walker & L. B. Jones¹ a few days since counted up the town and agreed as to the politics of each of our citizens; the result was a

majority of 24 in favor of Van Buren. I think they will give it up.

The proprietor of the Bolivar Free Press² is willing to sell out for \$750. [John H.] Bills & others I think will purchase if they can get a practiced printer to take charge of the office. There would be no difficulty as to Editorials. Bills, Barton³ Fentress⁴ &c. could & would attend to this part of the matter. The opportunity would be a good one for a young man of good habits & the right politics. I made enquiry at Nashville a few days since, without hearing of any one that would do. Perhaps there may be some Journeyman at the Globe office that would do & would be willing to take the offer. Bolivar is an important point, and the people are inclined to think right. Jackson is also an important point and I think a Republican paper ought to be printed there. The Democrat is still gaining subscribers, and exercising a powerful influence. They however do not do much job work, and subscriptions alone are not profitable to the proprietors. Bynum & Cameron have risked every thing for the cause & I wish their business could be more to give them a fair reward for their labor. You will see that the Observer wishes to make the impression that they are borne down by wealth & influence, and point so personally to me as to be distinctly understood in this community. I have corrected the false impression intended, over a fictitious signature, and shall not engage in a controversy with them if I can help it.

What has become of [W. T.] Caruthers? I have not heard from him since he left Nashville. I have written him several letters to which I expected replies. Our mail business requires some attention at the Dept. The increased prices of supplies, and expenses in Mi. is operating severely on us. This however is fairly our misfortune. The extraordinary increase of the mail, I think we are entitled to compensation for, upon the pro-rated principle, upon the principles of common justice, and by the practice of the Department under all former Post Master Generals. Some remedy must be applied to the difficulty that exists. No Triweekly line can convey the present sized mail, and take any passengers of consequence. The *mail pay*, does a little if any more than half our expenses. To be thrown into an actual loss by the transportation of so much increase mail is a case of pe-

culiar hardship & injustice. The trips down to Jackson must be doubled, but the additional trips will have to be made for the *mail alone*, as that will require as many horses as can be sustained on the road. Unless the Department will pay some attention to this matter, and do us common plain justice, I should prefer giving up the contract. The whole mail arrangements of Miss. are inadequate. I believe there is not a single cross horse Route, from our lines, but ought to be doubled and some of them tribbled in number of trips. As I went down, there was at Columbus 5 or 600 wt of mail for Cotton Gin, Pontitoc &c. that the carrier could not take off by the regular trips, more than this at Doaks Stand,⁵ and at Jackson belonging to the cross-horse Routes. These circumstances cause much complaint, and as we are the largest contractors & Van Buren, the whole blame unjustly falls upon us. I am tired of the business unless more adequate arrangements can be made, and our mail is either lightened or our compensation increased in proportion to the service understood at the time our contract was made.

I should like to hear from you & from Caruthers if he is still in Washington.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Joseph H. Walker was a son of Simpson Walker, recently deceased. Jones is unidentified.

2. The Bolivar *Free Press* was published from the spring of 1834 for several years by James B. Walker. It is not known whether or not he was a relative of the Columbia Walkers.

3. This name is unclear but is probably Barton. He is unidentified.

4. Probably David Fentress, a resident of Hardeman County who actively promoted the building of a railroad from Memphis to the Tennessee River.

5. These were points along Walker's mail routes in Mississippi. Cotton Gin Port and Pontotoc were in the northeastern part of the state and Doak's Stand was in central Mississippi.

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FROM JOAB H. BANTON²

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. January 19, 1836

A resident of Mt. Pleasant, Banton is about to move to Mississippi and asks for assistance in obtaining appointment as register of public lands for Mississippi.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Banton had recently moved from Rutherford County. He did not get the appointment he sought.

FROM JOHN H. RIVERS

My Dear Sir,

Pulaski Tenn 19th Jany 1836

Though it is late, permit me to congratulate you on the Speaker triumph which the republicans of the country, have so gloriously achieved in your person, & upon the high honor you now enjoy (after having been so lately dead *in Tennessee*) of holding the third office in the government if not in the world. I was, my Dear Sir, at the point of death with my friends around my bed when I heard the news & let me assure you, it animated & revived me. We are high up here, our cause is gaining rapidly & the other dying as fast. Indeed it is astonishing what a change is wrought & what immense numbers are thrown with us, in this state, by the sinking prospects of the Judge. I was glad to learn that my friend Mr Shields supported your election. Nothing else would have done here where we intend to stand firm & true to the cause if all Tennessee gives way. But I must not occupy more of the time of one who is always so industriously & honourably engaged in the high service of his country. A little private matter of business & I shall have done.

My friend Mr W. S. Woods,¹ whom we had with us at the Springs² is now residing at Helena, Arkansas Territory. I am informed that the office of Register of the Land office at that place has or will shortly become vacant; he writes me that he is an applicant for it. I am exceedingly anxious for his success & welfare, & incidentally much interested in it in a pecuniary point of view. He is to be sure not of our politics though very much moderated. He is unquestionably well qualified for the office in point of ability & integrity & has bought land & settled his hands in 7 miles of Helena. He is in moderate circumstances, though possessed of some property, I must think that his qualifications are superior to those of most men. May I ask my Dear Sir, that you will present & favour his application & pretensions in case he is known to the president as an applicant of which there is no

ministration star in the ascendant. He is unusually qualified for the station and his appointment would give unusual satisfaction to the friends of the president. Will you, my dear sir, urge his claims.

G. R. FALL

Addressed to Washington.

1. A prominent newspaperman, Fall was at this time editor of the *Jackson Mississippian*.

2. Charles Lynch, a Whig who had recently been elected governor of Mississippi.

3. Samuel Gwin, a son of Jackson's old friend James Gwin, had been appointed to a land office in Mississippi. He hissed Poindexter as the latter made a furious attack upon Jackson at the Lynch inaugural ball. Apparently intoxicated, Poindexter also ridiculed Gwin in his speech.

4. Isaac Caldwell, friend and former law partner of Poindexter, challenged Samuel Gwin to a duel as a result of the events at the inaugural party, and in the conflict both were wounded. Caldwell died the same day and Gwin died a year later after much suffering.

5. Henry S. Foote had founded the newspaper that Fall was editing. He practiced law in several towns of Mississippi and later became a United States senator and also governor of Mississippi.

6. Powhatan Ellis, formerly a United States senator, had just resigned a federal judgeship to go on a mission to Mexico. Ellis was a strong political opponent of Poindexter.

7. From the beginning.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My Dear Sir

Washington City Jany 22nd 1836

I have received your letter of the 9th and also *The Union* of that date. The course pursued in publishing the President's letter,¹ is as far as I have learned, approved by our friends here. The indications of every day make it more and more probable, that Judge White and his supporters here from our quarter, will soon be in open opposition to the President and his administration, if they are not now so. We have long known the half concealed feelings of some of them at least, towards the President, and one of our great difficulties heretofore has been, that they have not had the boldness to avow their real opinions and feelings. One of the indications, in addition to the course of *White*,

Peyton, Wise, and others in Congress, is that the *Sun* which (inter nos it is shrewdly suspected, though I have no positive proof of the fact) is edited by *Peyton and Wise*, has of late become more undisguised & is indeed out in open opposition. A few days since, on the 12th I believe, it was announced in that paper that *Judge White*, *Bell* & their associates, would thrust as well as defend against the giant arm which was upon them. Since then, its course has been in open opposition; and in low vulgar, tirades, attempts are made to blacken and defame the President and many of his friends. Deeply chagrined at my late success, I have come in for an unusual share of their vituperation, slander and abuse, and I have no doubt that it is deliberately determined that I am to be misrepresented and abused. You have seen *Ritchie's*² notice of their low stuff, & perhaps his is the better style in which to treat them. *Mason, Stevenson, P. P. Barbour*³ and many others have come in too for their share of abuse. So far as I am concerned I have no doubt they intend their articles for circulation in Tennessee. I rely on your judgment & discretion to treat them in the manner you think best. Where truth can reach I regard them not.

Judge *White's* speech as published in the *Sun* and *Telegraph*,⁴ (evidently written out by himself) does not I am told by those who heard it, exhibit in any degree the violence and bitterness which characterized it as delivered. *Blair* will probably publish it in a day or two, from the notes of his reporters, with suitable comments & a statement of facts. Still however enough appears in the speech as published to shew that it is as clearly in opposition, as the speeches daily made by *Calhoun* & others; and you should not fail to expose the fact to the public.

His remarks in relation to yourself and your paper,⁵ I have every reason to think, indeed I know, is wholly incorrect; and were I in your place I would demand of him the proof of your having received five or six thousand dollars here. From conversations with you I know the fact was not so, and I would so state in your paper in strong and bold terms. I would state the further fact too, that long before you visited this City last winter, you had resolved to establish a sound *Jackson paper* at Nashville; one that would support his administration in good faith, and would not as others were doing, *falsely profess* to sup-

port him, and at the same time covertly oppose all his measures and all his friends; that in pursuance of that original design you did establish the paper, and I would deny (for I have no doubt the fact is so) that a *donation* of a single dollar had ever been given for the establishment of the paper, and demand of him the proof. When a candidate for the Presidency makes stump speeches in the Senate chamber,⁶ and gives utterance there to malicious or idle and unfounded rumours, he ought to be prepared with his evidence. With what an ill grace too, do such charges (even if the facts charged had been true) come from one whose friends (*the caucus of eleven*) admit under their own signatures, in the letter published originally in the McMinnville Gazette last summer,⁷ that they were to *pay for and set up a paper* here to support him? I would *carry the war into Africa*. The *Sun* now the *White organ*, you can safely charge has been and is supported by money raised & paid by his friends.

Grundy's reply as published by the *Sun & Telegraph* is I learn a mere caricature of what he did say. I hope he will correct it for the *Globe*. I have thought it not amiss to make these suggestions *confidentially* to you, that you may the better understand the facts as they exist here.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I will send you the *Journal* as requested and by applying to Mr A. O. Harris or James Walker of⁸

Presumably addressed to Nashville, although no envelope has been found. The letter is marked "Private and Confidential."

1. This refers to Jackson's letter of December 18, 1835, to A. O. P. Nicholson. When Andrew Brown refused to publish Jackson's letter to him, Nicholson released his letter in order to counteract any damage that might be done Jackson by distorting or misquoting his letter to Brown. See Laughlin to Polk, January 4, 9, 1836; and Polk to Laughlin, January 17, 1836.

2. Thomas Ritchie for many years edited the politically influential Richmond *Enquirer*.

3. John Y. Mason, Andrew Stevenson, and Philip P. Barbour were leading Virginia Democrats. Andrew Stevenson had been Speaker of the House prior to the election of John Bell.

4. The *United States Telegraph* was edited by Duff Green, who had hoped to establish a *White organ* in Washington over which he would have some control. Bell, however, was not willing to bow to the will of nullifiers, and the *Washington Sun* was established without Green's help and attacked nullifiers along with administration Democrats.

5. Bell said that money provided Laughlin from Washington had enabled him to establish the Nashville *Union*.

6. On January 18, 1836, White presented a motion calling for the investigation of Benjamin F. Currey, an agent to the Cherokee Indians. After scoring this rather insignificant but well-liked person, White digressed into a sweeping partisan diatribe in which, among many other charges, he said that Laughlin had received five or six thousand dollars in Washington to help him establish the *Union*. This speech by White was considered somewhat petty and in poor taste, even by some of his political allies.

7. The issue of the McMinnville *Gazette* which contains this letter has not been found.

8. The letter ends abruptly at this point. Since this is at the bottom of a page it is believed that the remainder was written on the missing envelope.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Dear Sir:

Nashville January 22 1836

The session of the Legislature is rapidly coming to a close, having matured most of the matters necessary to be acted upon. There are however two important questions yet to be acted on. I alluded to the electoral law and the expunging resolutions. The White men have held back on the electoral law on account of the danger of adopting the District System, which many of them have pledged themselves to support. They have waited however until they discover that there is great danger now to their cause in adopting the General District system. They now see the danger of their dilemma, and are extremely reluctant to act at all. I cannot anticipate the result with certainty, but I am disposed to think the General Ticket will prevail.¹ The Van Buren men have very little choice about it; they will most probably vote for the District System; they believe with confidence however that they will carry the state under either system. The White cause is wofully flat. The evidences of the strength of the V.B. cause are so numerous and they come upon us in such quick succession, that the White men have nothing to console them. The re-action going on in this state is unprecedented, and is so apparent that none pretend to dispute it. All excitement here has subsided, and the election of V.B. is given up by all but Gen. [Washington] Barrow. A few days since a motion was made to call up the Expunging resolutions; there was no debating but a good [deal] of

sensation was apparent. The vote was taken, on the ayes and noes and the motion failed by a vote of 38 to 37. It was very nearly a test vote. On the next morning the enemies of Expunging were anxious to take up the matter, but upon consultation we deferred it, on account of instructions which are looked for in a few days from Wayne, Hawkins, and Davidson. When the subject is taken up I will propose as an amendment the resolutions of the Virginia Legislature;² they will be accepted by Col. Guild, and *I am confident they will be adopted.* [Jonas E.] Thomas voted with us on taking up the resolution and will go with us for the amendment. You may say to Gen. Jackson that the people of Tennessee are rising to rescue his fame; they are in motion and will not stop until the Senators who voted Mr. Clay's resolution are marked with disgrace. His letter to me which was published³ as you have seen, has produced a happy effect; the publication of it called down upon me the vengeance of the White Whigs anew, but this was a small matter to me who has been abused as I have been.

I have a few words to say to you on another matter which concerns myself alone. You are aware that Mr. Brown⁴ the District Attorney for West Tennessee is a candidate for Circuit Judge. He is running with fair prospects of success and if he should succeed I should be glad to succeed him. You know my situation as to property so well that I need not say to you that the office would be acceptable in a pecuniary point of view. I am aware that there may be objections to my application on the score of my support of Mr. Van Buren. But the truth is, in my situation, with an increasing family and but little property & that having been on the decrease rather on account of my political engagements for several years past. I feel that my duty to my family requires me to give a close attention to pecuniary matters. You need not suppose from these [. . .]⁵ that I am at all disheartened in the cause of democracy, nor have I any idea of withdrawing what little influence I may be able to exert in that cause. Whenever my friends shall deem it proper for the good of the cause that I should again engage in political life, I shall assuredly not refuse to do it. I would feel myself under lasting obligations to you, if you will mention this matter to Gen. Jackson, and if any considerations suggest themselves to your

mind that induce you to think that my application would be impolitic, or if Gen. Jackson should deem it impolitic, I wish you act upon such view of the matter; it will make no difference with me.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

P.S. You may show this to Gen. Jackson.

Addressed to Washington.

1. The recently adopted constitution left to the legislature the method of choosing electors. The method finally chosen provided that the electors would be chosen by the people from the whole state, but that one elector must reside in each of the fifteen districts. See Nicholson to Polk, January 31, 1836.

2. The Virginia legislature had passed resolutions instructing the senators of that state to vote for expunging and also passed resolutions reaffirming their right to instruct these senators.

3. In a letter from Washington, dated December 18, 1835, Jackson explained to Nicholson his reasons for franking to his constituents copies of the Washington *Globe* containing Thomas H. Benton's speeches in defense of expunging.

4. William T. Brown, a Nashville lawyer, was the successful candidate for circuit judge of the sixth district. He had become district attorney for West Tennessee a year earlier, a position which he seems to have held until a more propitious time for James P. Grundy to take it.

5. At this point a tear in the manuscript renders one word illegible.

FROM EPHRAIM BEANLAND

Dear Sir [La Grange, Tennessee] January the 23th 1836

Since I have seen you I have had a serious spell of the fever but we are all well at this time. Doct Caldwell has bin down and we made a settlement with every thinge¹ only the Shuger and coffy and he Says that they is a misunderstanding between myself and you, but I think diffirently, for I well [k]now that you was to finde² me and to moove [me] and family to the Missisippi and also to finde me and family and you was to give me \$400 and finde me and family and pay me the hire of 1 hand the yousial [usual] price. The doctor gave \$75 for 8 monts and I throwed in 1 month for the time I was Sicke and I also bought 200 pounds of beaf and which the docter was verry willinge for

me to pay but as for shugar and coffy he left it to stand untill you wold come downe. And I will say that it is not rite for me to finde the shugar and cofy for the youse of the plantation. We have had [. . .] 6 or 7 hands sick as long as 3 months and I must finde them. [. . .] that is out of the question. The shugar and coffy caust 26 dollars and if it was my bargin to of payed it I wold of don it. And also I bought 1 barel and a half of flower which you will have to pay. I well recolect that you tolde me that you was a goinge to Materson [Madison] county and I wanted you and my self to drawe [. . .] and you [said] we wold put if olf untill another time. You said as for a bariel of flower and you was willinge to by and as for the worke me[n] that was bildinge the gin and the well digger, I was to finde them and consider that you will have it to pay for. And further more I payed 29 dollares and sum sence in the deastrict for you and the doctor promised to pay me last Cristmust and he faild in so doinge. Dear sir, I want nothinge but what is rite.

E. BEANLAND

You will please to rite to the doctor or let this matter ly over untill you come home.

E. BEANLAND

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, 90-91.

1. On January 1, 1836, Beanland signed a receipt for \$590 to cover his wages as overseer and for the hire of one Negro woman "& articles Bot for the use of the Plantation in Mississippi." No record has been found of additional payment to Beanland.

2. The use of "to find," meaning "to supply" or "to provide," is now rare, but was common in the first half of the nineteenth century.

FROM THOMAS DEAN

Dear friend Nashville House Reps. Jany 24th 1836

Your letter bearing date the 11th Inst was thankfully recd. and I now take my seat for the purpose of complying with your request. First to *Home* affairs. I was a few days in Bedford Christmas week. I found that I had some strong enemies, *pre-*

tending to be made so by my course on the preamble and resolutions nominating Judge White for the presidency. I also found as bad or worse objections to your course, which has been misrepresented by your enemies. Notwithstanding all this, you could have nothing to fear in Bedford when the sovereigns speak. My own opinion is that you could more than double any man in Bedford, though I heard it said that they wished you once more to run for congress, for the purpose *alone* of shewing your friends how bad you could be beat; (understand me) these assertions was made by those that has *professed* friendship for Andrew Jackson, and all their acts proves to the contrary. The printing press in Shelbyvill has changed hands & politicks. The old Editor (or *Bradford* through him)¹ has started another press in Shelbyvill, proposing, and binding them selves, to support the clames of Judg White, which is a kicking up a dust in Shelbyvill & Bedford County. Changes are made daily for Van Buren. While in Bedford, I ascertained that that the lower end of Bedford south of Duck river, were allmost united for Van Buren, also the following:² *Colns.* Blackwell, Gambrell, Bobo, Parker, Coffee, Anderson, Burdit, Mitchel, McKisick Boyd, Warner, and several others of influence scattered over the county, say Majrs Blackwell, Cunningham, Murphy &c. are all strong Van Buren men.

In relation to the Expunging Resolutions they were at an early part of the session introduced and voted to the table by a large majority. In a few days after a motion was made to take them up which failed by a very large majority. Last week a motion was made to take them up, for the purpose of making them the order of the day on Friday next, which failed by one vote. I now believe that they will be taken up & I have some hope of their passing. My Coleague³ will (or says that he will) vote against them, although has been recently notifide by some of his constituents that when canvassing before the people for a seat, pledged himself to go for Expunging. I have no doubt but a majority of the people of this state would say expunge. Several of the representatives, say that they cannot vote for the word expunge, alledging that it would be an indirect request to Judg White to resign his seat. For one I have no scruples on that

s[c]ore. I do not believe the expunging resolution offered by Benton is a matter of difference between Judg White & Genl. Jackson. It is in my view an issue between a corrupt Senate & the peoples president, consequently I could have no [. . .]⁴ voting for a resolution instructing our Senators in congress to expunge from their journal that foul charge against the president made by that body. I am of opinion that three or four weeks moor will conclude the business of this legislature. I must conclude with a request that you will present my respects to Mr. Grundy & Maj B. F. Perry⁵ and accept for your self my undivided prair for your happiness & prosperity.

THOS. DEAN

Addressed to Washington.

1. The Shelbyville *Western Freeman* had been published by John H. Laird, with editorial control by Theodorick F. Bradford. When administration forces acquired this newspaper and installed Greenville Cook as publisher, its name was changed to *Western Star*. In spite of an agreement that he had allegedly made not to publish another paper in the county as a rival of the *Western Star*, John H. Laird became publisher of the Shelbyville *Peoples Advocate*, also under control of Bradford.

2. As these were all persons of some prominence, many of whom have been identified already, no effort has been made to identify others individually.

3. Harvey M. Watterson.

4. At this point a small part of the manuscript is torn away.

5. Unidentified.

FROM WILLIAM S. FULTON¹

Little Rock, Arkansas. January 25, 1836

Fulton introduces his brother-in-law, Edward W. B. Nowland,² the sutler at Fort Gibson who hopes to find in Washington financial backing for his land speculation.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Fulton had lived in both Tennessee and Alabama before moving to Arkansas. At this time he was territorial governor; later he was United States senator from the state.

2. Fulton had married Matilda F. Nowland while living in Florence, Alabama.

FROM GRANVILLE S. CROCKETT

Dr Sir

Nashville Jany 26th 1836

This day at 10 oClock the Senate met the H. Reps. in their Hall for the purpose of electing three Chancellors, eleven Circuit Judges and eleven Solicitors for this State.¹ For Chancellor in the Eastern Division, Tho[mas] L. Williams 52, and Pryor Lea 42 votes. Middle Division [Lunsford M.] Bramblett, no opposition. Western Division, Pleasant M. Miller had 54, P[arry] W. Humphreys 27, And[re]w McCampbell 18 votes. Circuit Judges, First Circuit, Sam'l Powell, no opposition. Second Circuit, Ed[ward] Scott 57, Jno. F. Gillispie 32, and [James P. H.] Porter 11 votes. Third Circuit, [Charles F.] Keith, no opposition. Fourth Circuit, A[bram] Caruthers, no opposition. Fifth Circuit, Sam'l Anderson, no opposition. Sixth Circuit, Wm. T. Brown 60, [Oliver] B. Hayes 32 & Thomas Stewart 6. Second voting. Seventh Circuit, Mortimer A. Martin 52, Alex. M. Clayton 46. Eighth Circuit, Ed[mund] Dilehunty, no opposition. Ninth Circuit, Jno. W. Cook, no opposition. Tenth Circuit, John Read, no opposition. Eleventh Circuit, Austin Miller 64, Jno. Brown 35, David Fentress, withdrawn, two trials.

The Genl Assembly then went into the election of Attorneys General, and got along very well until we arrived at the foot of the Short Mountain² and after making four hard struggles to get over without much success adjourned in the 4th District.

Thus in one day we made three Chancellors, eleven Circuit Judges, three Solicitors, and voted four times for a fourth. The election of Bramblett as Chancellor, and Brown in the Nashville Circuit has made some of the great folks about here look quite sour, as it was *said* they were not V.B. Men. Tell Col Johnson I am sorry Clayton got beat and done all I could for him. He would have been an ornament to the bench.

The political aspect of affairs is changing here daily and many assert boldly that Judge White could not obtain the vote of this State *now*. The people (and you know I see many of the real people) say they will stand by Old Hickory, and they are not so sure they can do that and support any man who cant *ex-punge*, or who can tamely stand by and see him tried. convicted

and executed *politically* without even making a single exertion to stay the hand of his accusers. It is a libel on the State in my opinion, for any man to say that the people of this State would not expunge if it were *left* to the people. No matter what their representatives may think proper to do, this is not a White and Van Buren question as some would wish to make it. It is an act of sheer justice to the peoples President and one that will sooner or later be done, and what a ridiculous position will the present representatives of the patriotic State of Tennessee occupy should it be done without her aid, and I am truly affraid this will be the case. The very moment the democracy of this great nation are aroused on this expunging question they will rally around their chief, and the enemies of equal rights will be told in language too strong to be misunderstood to stay at home. Our nation has been abused, our President has been slandered, he has been tried and condemned by his enemies, and the condemnatory sentence *shall* be expunged from the records of the nation. I do believe in my soul that *three fourths* of the *people* would burn up the whole journal rather than that foul blot should remain there on the political character of our Venerable President, and I tell you Mr Benton will not have to labor the half of fourteen years in this cause; it will be done.

I had as soon undertake to confine a cork at the bottom of the Cumberland as to keep Genl Jackson out of his just rights before the people of this nation; designing men may by artifice and duplicity deceive them for a time but such duplicity will always meet a just reward in the end, *as has already been the case in some instances*. Tennessee may be deceived and imposed upon, but I am unwilling to believe that such deception can be long practiced upon her. She will not I am sure suffer the character of her favourite son to be placed in the care and keeping of those who brand him with the name of tyrant and usurper. Such epithets fall with very unbecoming grace from those who recd. their common liberties at the very hands of him who they denounce as a tyrant.

I never did nor never will act the sycophant, but if it is the last public act of my life I will vote for *expunging* upon no other score than the score of justice, and like the Old General I never will believe until I see it but that a virtuous and inteligent peo-

ple will not only approve but applaud the act, and altho the work may not be done here at this time, *it will be done* at Washington and those who are there from Tennessee and take no part in it, will occupy no enviable position. These are my simple opinions on the subject; time will prove their correctness.

I do not write for the purpose of drawing you into a correspondence. I know your official duties will not admit of it. I acknowledge with pleasure the receipt of your much esteemed favor of the 9th in answer to which fear I have troubled you unnecessarily, for I only intended at the commencement to give you the result of our judicial elections, as the only news we had. You will be so good as to show this to Judge Grundy & Col Johnson with my respects, and if you think the old General will take time to read it show it to him. Tennessee *may* desert him, but he must do something worse than remove the deposits before I can.

G. S. CROCKETT

Addressed to Washington.

1. At this first session of the General Assembly since the ratification of the new state constitution, that body had to devise a new court system and choose officials of that system. The actual changes, however, were not radical. There was some difference in the composition of the eleven circuits but the total number remained unchanged. Of the fourteen contests here reported, moreover, eight of the candidates had no opposition, and of the eleven circuit judges chosen, five were incumbents.

2. This ridge, some twenty miles east of Woodbury, lay athwart the normal transportation route from Knoxville to Nashville. As usual, numbering of districts or circuits moved from east to west.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Murfreesboro. January 27, 1836¹

Childress suggests the appointment of Edwin A. Keeble as United States District Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee.²

Addressed to Washington.

1. The year has been supplied on the basis of an endorsement on the envelope.

2. See Edwin A. Keeble to Polk, January 27, 1836, and A. O. P. Nicholson to Polk, January 22 and 31, 1836.

FROM EDWIN A. KEEBLE

Murfreesboro. January 27, 1836

Keeble asks Polk to present his name to the President as an applicant for the position of United States District Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See John W. Childress to Polk, January 27, 1836.

FROM WILLIAMSON SMITH

Dear Sir

Maury Cty T. 27th January 1836

I enclose you a petition from the citizens of our neighbourhood for the establishment of a Post Office in our vicinity. You will see by the petition we wish Col. John Webb,¹ appointed P. Master. He has settled on his land joining my Fathers land, and immediately on the Post road, leading from Hurts Cross Roads to Berlin.²

Col. Webb is doubtless well qualified to discharge the duties of Post Master, & acted in that capacity for upwards of twenty years in Stokes County N. Carolina, before he left there. He kept the P. O. known by Webbs P. Office. He has just moved into our neighbourhood, he dabbles a good deal in Politics & is much devoted to you & your Politics; in him you have a warm supporter.

A few words on the Politics of the Country, and this I would not intrude upon you, but living as I do in rather an obscure part of your district am of opinion that a few words from this part might not be uninteresting you. So far as my knowledge extends things are all straight; it seems now admitted by very many who were so devoted to the White cause that it was all a humbug of Mr. Bell and his little Junto about Nashville & Columbia.

Since the Election for speaker, for public printer, for Senator to Congress from Mississippi, the course the Legislature of Ala. has taken, and many other occurrences of similar kind have taken place. the great excitement about Columbia has entirely subsided and Politics are scarcely named in town at all. Many I

have talked acknowledge their error, and say the course you have taken is the true policy of the great Republican party. I have no doubt but that Vanburen would get the majority of your district at this time, and there is still a most rapid change going on. I was in the vicinity of Williams Port³ a few days ago. The people there seem to be more unanimously for Van Buren than any part of the County I have been in. The best evidence of the state of the parties in Maury is that there are many candidates out for the different offices and none pretend to run on the White Question, but prefer the other side. In conclusion I will give you a sketch of this neighbourhood & its Politics: for Van Buren, Joseph Wallan Esqr. David Chadwell old James Russell, William Hughes Esqr. Capt. Jonathan Carthel, James L. Crofford Esqr. Col. Webb. all the Hardisans, Esqr. Field, Capt. Leggett & all his boys.⁴ Suffice it to say I dont know but one man that has turned against you & that is Matthew Moore Esqr. and that no doubt has been done by his Uncle Gabriel of Ala. I have no doubt he will come write again.

For fear I shall exhaust your patience in so lengthy an epistle permit [me] to congratulate you at this late hour upon your Election to the Speakers Chair.

WILLIAMSON SMITH

Addressed to Washington.

1. The post office requested was not created. Aside from what is revealed here about Webb, nothing has been learned.

2. Hurt's Crossroads was in the extreme northeast corner of Maury County, and Berlin was in the eastern part of the county, a few miles south of the Duck River.

3. Williamsport was on the Duck River, near the western border of Maury County.

4. A list of names on the envelope of this letter included David Chadwell, William Hughes, Jonathan Carthel, John Webb, Matthew Moore, plus several others not mentioned in this letter. The list was in Polk's handwriting and perhaps represents a potential mailing list for that part of his county.

FROM GEORGE GAMMON

Dr Sir

Hiltons P. Office¹ Jany 28th 1836

Your favour of ____ ultimo² came to hand in due time and like every communication from you it afforded me much pleas-

ure and information and for which I feel under renewed obligations. Permit me now to congratulate you on the result of your election for Speaker. It was a subject I had very much at heart both as respected your personal success and the victory that is gained for the republican party over Whiteism, Bellism or the no party Party, and in fact over the whole combined forces arrayed against the present Administration. Sir, language fails to express my feelings when I heard the result of your election and particularly your triumph over your deadly enemy John Bell, who has for the last two years been intriguing and planning to sustain himself and prostrate you. He has been a wolf in sheeps cloathing. He never was a sound Republican or what we call a good Jackson man. He is, Sir, an instrument in the hands of the opposition that has and did bring about Whites nomination, for divers reasons: 1st he desired the overthrow of the Republican Party; 2nd he thought on Whites popularity he could rise & stand at the head of the White cause and thereby be the greatest man in Tennessee, and furthermore it give him additionall strength for Speaker which it did, as probably every man in Congress for White voted for Bell for Speaker; & 3rd. in this caucus of the imortal eleven he knew from your Republican course you would not go into the caucus and of course it would be said in Tennessee you was opposed to White and consequently you could not be able to resist the White current, and of course fall a victim to the deep design of this traitor to his country and principals, but in all these plans and expectations he is disappointed and defeated, and beat by the little man in the West as he is pleasd. to call him. When the result of your election reachd. Blountville the little village resounded with Huza Huza for Polk. We had no cannon to fire.

On the 8th instant after upwards of thirty notices being given out and put up at the most public places in the county near a month previous to the meeting, there was a large and respectable number of the citizens of Sullivan County assembled at the Court House in Blountville. Although the day was rainey, and unfavourable, there was at least from five to six hundred persons present. After the meeting was organized and gone through the usual rules of such meetings, a committee was appointed to draw up some resolutions which was done. They was

in favour of Bentons Expungeing Resolution &c (the proceedings you have no doubt seen before now as the[y] were forwarded to the Globe for publication). These resolutions all passed by overwhelming majoritys. There could not have been more than 75 men for White and I never have seen so much feeling manifested as was on that day in favour of Vanburen. Sir, when White was first nominated there was only a few & very few indeed in this county who would dare to lisp the name of Van but now sir I am proud to say Sullivan is redeemed. She is safe for Van and redeemed from Whitism, Bellism, Nullification and the whole piebald party.

We are now endeavouring to produce a reaction in some of the adjoining counties. We are laying out plans (sometimes a small spark kindles a great fire) and if necessary we will call on you & our friend Grundy on your way home next summer to call at a few of our villages, partake of a dinner and give us a speech. This plan I have suggested and very few are knowing to the arrangement. The people in these countys know you from character and have great confidence in you, and we seldom hear great men speak, and I think the plan would have the desired affect. For my own part I speak my sentiments regardless of consequence. I care nothing for popularity when principal is concerned.

This little Post office I wrote you about has lately been removed. and Jesse J. James appointed Postmaster.^a I know there is no good reasons for the removal and can assert that a majority of the people in the vicinity of the office was opposed to the removal. There might have been a petition setting forth reasons which was not correct, and why the Postmaster General thought proper to remove it I cannot conceive, but presume I know how the matter has been brought about. It is through Genl Carters and perhaps Colo Bunches influence (if the Postmaster knew Carter as long and as well as I do he would know he should not have much influence any where). I have always been opposed to Carter on account of his political principals. At the last election I was opposed to Bunch because he was one of the imortal eleven that brought out White, thereby I knew he would have to vote for Bell to be speaker and I will support no man who cannot keep out of such difficulties. And one other rea-

son; I am a decided independant Jackson Vanburen man and I speak boldly out for this reason and others named above. Both Carter and perhaps Bunch together with all the White and whig influence combined has aided in having this little Post office removed, not because it is profitable either to the Government or Post Master, for it is not worth more than \$15 or 20 to the P Master and perhaps not more than double that sum to the Government, but because I am a Van man and Gilman the former P. Master was to; and was doing the cause some good by getting subscribers to the Extra Globe &c. & because the[y] think it will do the White folks to exult over, for a small matter answer them a great purpose. I will never ask any thing but what is right and do not wish to submit to any thing wrong. I have stated the reasons why this Post office has been removed. I again alledge a majority of the people wish it to continue at the former place. Now I want the office removed back & Gilman reappointed. I shall think strange if I can be proscribed because I am in favour of Republican men & measures. I have wrote my friend Grundy on this subject and if possible I wish you to endeavour to have this matter set right. I think if my statements can be relied on you can have it done. The Vanites in this country are unrepresented, therefore have to rely on our friends from other districts. Write me on the recpt of this scrawl. Give me your views about Vanburens prospects and all other matters in which I may be intrested.

GEO. GAMMON

P.S. Sir, although I am a poor letter wrighter still I keep spinning out this to unusual length. Could I see you I could say much and could hear many things that would be gratifing. I have not forgotten days gone by; from what I hear my friends in your own county are hot for White and opposed to you. There has been some pretty sharp shooting in our corresponding but all without producing any change either in your favour or Vanburens, and I go for principals against the world, and if Judge White was my father I should oppose him. I must again name the little P. office. You can perceve it is not the profits that I care about, but I dislike to be defeated by my political enemies.

Therefore do have it removed back. I think when the P. M. General understands the game he will not hesitate to reappoint Gilman &c. Present my best respects to the Old Chief. Say to him I have and will be with him. I am not amongst his most talented and influential friends but am among his most sincere. Say to him I want this little Post office restored. This Gilman is a cousin of Gov. Cass⁴ who knows something of this matter.

You have some thorough going friends in Blountville, both male and female. The ladies have become inlisted in your success. About the time the result of the Speakers election was known in Blountville there was a lady had a fine son & whos. husband was a decided Whig, but notwithstanding she named her son J. K. Polk. So much for female Republicanism. Send the people of this county some documents. The[y] [are] your friends through good & through evil report. Write me how Bunch voted in the Speakers election. A line from you at any time would be very exceptable.

GEO. GAMMON

Addressed to Washington.

1. This post office was in Sullivan County, near the boundary of Washington County. It lay about seven miles southwest of Blountville and some twelve miles north of Jonesboro.

2. The writer left a blank here, apparently expecting to supply the date.

3. James became postmaster on January 4, 1836, and was superseded by Gilman on May 25, 1836.

4. This probably refers to Lewis Cass, formerly governor of Michigan Territory. The connection between Gilman and Cass has not been ascertained.

FROM JOHN A. THOMAS

Dear Sir

West Point New York Jan'y 29th 1836

Allow me to trouble you for information concerning the Topographical Bill which I perceive has been engrossed in the Senate for a third reading. I wish to know whether it will pass the House as it is my *present* intention to apply for that corps, and I wish to do so, as early as necessary.

It is encouraging to learn that you have adopted a rule which will soon carry through the Army & Navy appropriation. Now

is a fine opportunity to increase the Peace establishment of the army. The situation of the country certainly demands it. It must be apparent to every member of Congress that six thousand men cannot garrison two thousand miles of coast, about the same length of frontier, & protect the inhabitants against the Indians. The late scenes in Florida however evince that courage is not wanting, but that it is the lack of numbers. I hope Mr. Hawes¹ & Mr. Abijah Mann have remarked that in the late lamentable butchery by the Seminoles,² the graduates of the Military Academy stood & received fifteen rounds before they saw their enemy; and when he did appear they stood their ground until they were every one cut down. Mr. Mann has remarked on the floor of Congress, that a military education does not give a man courage. I would like him to point out an instance of men who have not received a military education standing by each other like these gallant souls.

It is astonishing to me that men in the national Legislature will oppose every thing military or that is intended for the defense of our country, when the savages are butchering our inhabitants & we are threatened with invasion by one of the strongest powers in the world.³ Such a course shows either a want of patriotism or an ignorance of duty.

I hope you will attribute these remarks to the interest I take in the affairs of my country rather than to a disposition to speak ill of the public servants.

The company to which I am attached has not been ordered to Florida. I imagine therefore that I shall be kept where I am, and be ready to make my debut with the French. Give us the *necessary* means, & then let them come. All the glory they can get upon our soil they are welcome to.

J. A. THOMAS

P.S. Will the army be increased? I mean the line.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Albert G. Hawes of Kentucky served, 1831-37, in the House of Representatives. He was a Jackson man, but his brother, Richard Hawes, who served in the House from 1837 to 1841 was a Whig. Albert G. Hawes thought that the Military Academy served only a privileged class and that it was not necessary. On January 7, 1836, he had introduced a resolution for an investigation of the institution with a possible view to abolishing it. In the

spring of 1836 he tried to limit the number of West Point-trained officers placed over volunteers, claiming that they were not trained to fight against Indians.

2. This refers to the massacre of more than a hundred American troops late in December 1835 by the Seminoles. This action came to be known as the Dade massacre, and it is generally accepted as the beginning of the Seminole War that was to last for about ten years.

3. This refers to the strained relations between the United States and France over the unpaid Spoliation Claims.

FROM ROBERT W. BRAHAN¹

Tuscumbia, Alabama. January 30, 1836

Brahan asks Polk to assist in the passage of legislation to relieve the heirs of his father, General John Brahan.² He explains that without relief from the federal government his family will face destitution.³

Addressed to Washington.

1. Robert Weakley Brahan was a grandson of Robert Weakley of Nashville, and he was also a nephew of John P. Hickman. He married a daughter of John Haywood Jr. of North Carolina. He moved first to Mississippi and then to Texas.

2. As receiver of public moneys at Huntsville, Brahan and two other men sought to prevent the sale of public lands to a group of speculators by purchasing the land themselves. During the panic of 1819, however, the government demanded payment in cash, forcing the partners to default. When Brahan died the government attempted to claim his estate.

3. On April 29, 1836, Congress passed legislation relieving the heirs of John Brahan.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My Dear Sir

Washington City Jany 30th 1836

I send you herewith the daily *Globe* of this morning containing a Report of a debate in the House on the 26th on a resolution opposed by Mr. *Mason* from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the object of which as you will see was to give *precedence* in the order of business, to the appropriation bills, the speedy action upon which is now so much demanded by the critical position in which the country is placed. It had been apparent, that

every obstacle would be thrown in the way of the speedy consideration of these important measures, by the greater portion of the opposition, and especially by the Nullifying & White part of the opposition, and hence the necessity of the order proposed by the Committee of Foreign Affairs. Mr Bell you will see, participated largely in the debate, and though cautious as he always is, played out his hand with sufficient distinctness to be perfectly understood. He deprecates the influence of the President's name, and in the concluding paragraph of his reported speech, to which I call your attention, insinuates that our present difficulties with France are to be attributed to the "*blunders & follies*" of our own Government, and declares that he will "hold the political agents who may have brought on the war responsible to the country", and that "They shall not escape their due responsibility." He was severely rebuked in reply as you will see, by *Mason, Sutherland* & others, and on the final vote found himself in a minority of 59 to 159, every administration man (with the two exceptions I will presently mention) voting in the affirmative, and some of the opposition seeing the imperious necessity of the measure voting with them, whilst on the other hand every man who voted in the negative making up the 59 (with the two exceptions above alluded to) were opposition men, including in this number every nullifier in the House. The result was a round majority of 100 votes against him. The two votes alluded to, were given by our friends *Dunlap & Shields*,¹ who are every way well disposed and generally vote with the administration & its friends. They probably voted without reflecting upon the importance of the vote, or possibly under the impression that the adoption of the measure might delay the consideration of the Tennessee Land Bill.² These are however my own conjectures, for I have conversed with neither of them. Their votes, constitute the only circumstance which will make any notice you may take of the proceedings embarrassing to us. They doubtless voted from far different considerations from those which influenced Bell & others. If in your notice, you find yourself compelled to notice their votes, you must treat them kindly. *Huntsman* voted with our friends. You can probably notice it, without saying any thing about *Dunlap & Shields*; at all events nothing to their prejudice.

Judge White has made another speech in the Senate, in relation to the *three-million* [defense] appropriation, in which he unites with the opposition, Senators *Southard*³ & others, censuring the President, & endeavouring to explain his vote.

In the House you will see, *Mr Wise* was set on to assail me. You will see my statement of facts in the reported proceedings of the House published in the *Globe* some days since, in which my whole offense consists in giving *Lea & Bunch*,⁴ information when they asked it at the last session. When I gave them the information they asked, the Senate had not voted upon the *three millions*, and when no one as far as I knew had the most distant idea that Judge White would separate from the friends of the administration & vote with its enemies against it. Yet out of my information given to *Lea*, before White had voted, they now attempt falsely to make out a conspiracy between the President and myself, to procure the appropriation, and I understand White himself has gravely referred to it in his speech in the Senate, the report of which I have not yet seen.

All this is mainly intended, no doubt for the Tennessee market. It is now apparent that I am to be the object of virulent attacks, not only through their paper "*The Sun*," but by the leaders of the little band, *Bell, Peyton, Wise*⁵ & Co. in the House, and by *White* himself in the Senate, if my account of his late speech, in which he had allusion to me, is correct. *The war cannot be too soon carried into Africa*. Their real position in opposition, and their object should be laid bare to our people. They should not be suffered any longer to fight under false colours.

In regard to my knowledge of the executive's wishes in relation to the *three millions*, it was precisely that which every one could have had by taking the trouble to go to the President. The President was that evening in one of the rooms of the Capitol, signing bills, not 40 feet from the Senate chamber & if Judge White had doubted the President's wishes, he could by stepping to him, at once have learned them.

Whilst chairman of the Comt. of W & Means, it was my duty to have constant intercourse with the Executive Departments, in regard to the various appropriations which passed through that Committee, and I cannot be mistaken when I state, that I must have been applied to, hundreds of times, by different mem-

bers of the House for information in regard to different appropriations, and I always freely gave the information I possessed, when asked for it, as I did to *Lea & Bunch*, when they asked it in relation to *three millions*. I had often given inquiries [*sic*] to *Lea & Bunch* (who sat in seats immediately in my rear) in regard to other appropriations, when they asked it, as I did in the case of *three millions*. Yet now, after the lapse of a year, it is attempted to make a matter of importance, and to give a false colouring to information which I gave them, upon their own request, in regard to the *three millions*. They go so far as to give a private certificate of their conversation with me, place it in the hands of *Wise* who boards with them & Judge White, (without notifying me of it) to be used in an attack upon me, whilst in the chair & in a situation not to permit me to get into any collision with any member upon the floor. Fortunately I remembered the conversation & promptly stated it to the House, and *Lea* himself in his place was compelled to admit that my statement was correct. Notwithstanding all this, *Wise* in the House & *White & Southard* in the Senate, attempt to make out of it, what is false, a conspiracy between the President and myself to get the appropriation through and at the same time conceal the President's wishes from Judge White & thus entrap him. The absurdity of this is apparent & they are driven to hard shifts, when they have nothing better to resort to, to defend the Judge's vote against the *three millions*. It is an afterthought altogether. How absurd! That the President's wishes were to be concealed from Judge White, and yet that I should have communicated these very wishes to *Lea & Bunch*, who were his neighbours & particular friends at home, and who then as well as now lived in the same boarding House with him. The truth is, this poor shift cannot be availing, and if the Tennessee White papers make it necessary, I have given you the facts to enable you to expose it. *This letter is for your own eyes, and not for publication*. I thought it might be useful to you, however to make the suggestions I have. I have no doubt, you will do both myself & the cause of truth justice should it become necessary.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private and Confidential." This letter has been published in Parks, editor, "Polk-Laughlin Letters," The East Tennessee Historical Society's *Publications*, No. 18, 152-154.

1. William C. Dunlap and Ebenezer J. Shields, members of the House of Representatives from Tennessee, had supported Polk in his contest for the speakership. He was, therefore, concerned lest anything happen to offend them, fearing that they might join the majority of the Tennessee delegation in support of White and Bell.

2. This was another attempt to have the residue of public lands in Tennessee ceded to the state for educational purposes.

3. Samuel L. Southard, a Whig senator from New Jersey, had served in the cabinets of both Monroe and Adams and was in the senate from 1833 until his death in 1842.

4. Luke Lea and Samuel Bunch were from East Tennessee and were White supporters.

5. Henry A. Wise of Virginia was particularly offensive in his attacks on Polk, leading Polk's friends to believe that he was trying to draw Polk into a duel.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dear Sir

Columbia Jany. 31st, 1836

I got home yesterday after a long and Laborious trip of trouble & expense. The expenses of the plantation in Mississippi are indeed very great. I have paid out at the two places not less than \$1600. Our cotton crop will not make the payment on the land and other expenses. I have Recd account of the sale of 25 Bales at $15\frac{1}{4}$ and 15 cts. The balance will not sell for that, being of inferior quality. 43 bales we made in Haywood. I can form no idea what we will make at the other place. Beanland had not got out half the crop. He had done very little after I was there in the fall. Three of the Negroes ran away which cost between fifty and sixty dollars. He was very extravagant in his expenditures. I give the man I employed there \$325. The one in Haywood \$250.

I killed 95 Hogs at the two places which will I expect make our meat. We had made but three bales of cotton when I left Missi. Our crop from there will be late getting to market. They will not get it out before the first of March. I dont think we will make more than 20 or 25 bales. We owe Caruthers & Harris \$4100. Both crops will not pay the debt. I collected the money of Glass \$299,¹ paid him \$20 for charges. I came home by the way of Memphis, found an account against you of \$44⁸⁶/₁₀₀ for Bagging Rope &c with Lawrence & Davis, also one at Somerville

for \$6 50 ct. at A L & Smiths,² both of which I settled. I collected \$420 of my own which I was compelled to use. Besides the \$2900 \$2933 $3\frac{3}{100}$ for the land I borrowed of Harris \$1200 on account of our crop, which sums the crop will not near pay. I wrote in the other letter that your boy Abram got *killed*. I sold the smith tools calculating we would not need them. We have made corn enough in Mississippi and Haywood to do.

I gave the two notes on Durham³ to John T. Brown⁴ to collect. Durham lives in Lexington about 45 miles from Brown. He says it is doubtful about the collection of the Notes but that he will make the effort. You gave me a Note of \$166 on Cook Mc-Mean Frazier⁵ &c. You will write to me where they live. I could [not] find out when I was down. It will be necessary for me to have some money to pay Caruthers & Harris. The crop will not do it and I have furnished more than my proportion. You will write to me on that subject soon. Your boy Reuben has been in bad health all this fall. Was some better when I left. I[t] would have [been] well for us that we never had any thing to do with *Beanland*. I expect to plant at the two places 250 acres in cotton.

Write me on the receipt of this. I am gratified at your success.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, 94-95.

1. See Caldwell to Polk, September 16, 1835, and January 16, 1836.
2. Armour, Lake and Smith.
3. Thomas Durham had bought some land from Polk. See Caldwell to Polk, March 18, April 11, and November 25, 1834.
4. Unidentified.
5. Unidentified.

FROM WILLIAM C. CAMPBELL¹

Bolivar,² Missouri. January 31, 1836

Identifying himself as a cousin, Campbell asks Polk to support him in his efforts to obtain the contract for operating a mail line between Jefferson City, Missouri, and Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Campbell was a son of Matilda Polk Campbell and John Campbell and was thus Polk's first cousin.
2. This town, probably named for Bolivar, Tennessee, was the county seat of Polk County.

FROM MEDICUS A. LONG

Dear Sir

Nashville, Jan. 31, 1836

Col. Laughlin has been absent from this city more than two weeks, as I presume you have learned from him before this time. Under this impression, I need not detail the objects of his visit to the South, but only add hope that they may be accomplished.

I have, in the absence of Col. L. not only had to officiate in his stead, but by his general instructions to that effect, have had to open, examine and act upon all *his* letters, not excepting those of a private or confidential character if at all relating to *politics*. You will therefore understand that all the letters which you see fit to address to Col. L. will be seen by me, under the same necessary injunctions that they are given to him.

After premising the above, I have a few observations to make, relative to the Union and its prospects. The list of subscribers has nearly doubled, within the last two months, and is increasing now faster than at any former period. But this increase of subscribers and consequent expense has not been accompanied by a corresponding increase of *cash*. The office is doing an excellent business; but as cash must every day be *paid* for *workmen*, firewood "*bread and meat*" &c. I find the cash receipts too limited, at present, to pay for paper. The paper used every week costs but little short of *fifty* dollars; at least that sum must be paid each week to workmen, and other minor cash expenses make more than a hundred dollars in cash actually indispensable every week. The plain truth is, that the actual receipts of the office are but little more than half this amount on an average. Hence I am continually falling deeper and deeper in debt, while the business is increasing in the most flattering manner, and the profits nominally, on the books, very handsome. I am in danger, continually of being protested and consequently losing what little credit I have acquired. This is so discouraging, that when Col. L. shall return, if he should have

failed to bring pecuniary relief, I have determined to propose some mode of *getting out of the scrape*. I solemnly declare to you, that I believe, from a perfect knowledge of the subject, that had I now the means of upholding the establishment, a fortune could be made in a few years. My present condition is, that I owe, in *bank*, at this moment *five hundred dollars* and upwards, for paper, am nearly out now, and neither have a dollar to pay the notes with nor to purchase more paper. The quantity of paper necessary increases every day, and yet no more money comes in than formerly.

I have troubled you with an account of my private affairs, not for the purpose or in the expectation either of receiving advise or assistance, but solely with the view of letting you know, as one of the most zealous and prominent friends of the establishment, why it falls, if fall it must, and that I may not stand accused either of inefficiency or negligence. In pursuance of this desire, I subjoin a partail estimate of the cash expenses which have already incurred at [*sic*] met:

Paper has cost more than	\$1500.00
Workmen's wages (besides the support of from 3 to 5 apprentices for nearly a year, more than	1800.00
Office rent	200.00
Clerk hire about	200.00
	<u>\$3700.00</u>

This is a moderate estimate of these four items, actually paid in cash, exclusive of the numerous contingent expenses, among which the support of apprentices and the cost of stoves and firewood are by no means small, not to mention wrapping paper, twine, oil, candles &c. amounting in all to little less than *five thousand dollars* actually expended, since the office has been paid for. The *books* show a hunderd per cent. perhaps upon this amount. But notes in bank cannot be paid by three dollar accounts scattered all over the nation, however good they may be.

Such is the state of *reaction* in Tennessee, that I have not the shadow of a doubt, that she will give her vote to Van Buren. East Tennessee, as you have seen is beginning to move; and no rational man can fail to believe that a thorough regeneration from White-Whiggery is now on the eve of transpiring.

You mention in your letter to Col L. that we had been appointed *public printers*, &c. We have received no information of that fact; but on the contrary, I see new advertisements in the Republican, two or three days ago, which induces me to suppose that your valuable efforts in our behalf have proved ineffectual.

If you could send some man here with a few thousand dollar, to buy the whole establishment, so as to enable me to discharge my outstanding engagements, the Union could yet flourish, and continue to advocate the "unity of the Republican party." If not, I fear I shall be forever ruined, and the *Union* fail to "be preserved," from the ruin which the illiberality of its Nashville friends is speedily hinging upon it. *My own ruin* is of small consequence, but I would not have the Union go down *now*, for ten years of my life. Write to *me*, as often as convenient.

M. A. LONG

Presumably addressed to Washington, although no envelope has been found.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Dear Sir:

Nashville Jan'y 31, 1836

I recd. a letter yesterday from our friend Edwin A. Keeble, with a request that I would recommend him to Gen. Jackson for the office of District Attorney. I am very delicately situated in this matter. I was applied to by Hop. L. Turney to recommend him, just as I was concluding a letter to the President on the subject of my own application. I wrote a P.S. to my letter, stating to the President Mr. Turney's desire to have the office and expressing my opinion as to his qualifications. Mr. Keeble is also qualified and if he had applied in time I should have taken great pleasure in recommending him, in the same manner that I did Mr. Turney. Standing as I do I hope you will inform the President of Mr Keeble's application and as you know all about him, you can lay his case fully before him. I am delicately situated also, from having made a conditional application myself. I leave the matter with you however, and shall be entirely satisfied with any thing that is done.¹ You know my situation in life,

you know the condition of things in our county, you know that political life is wholly destructive to private interests. Actuated and impelled by this last consideration I am strongly inclined to seek my own interests and abandon politics. In that event I should like to have the office, small as it is, but I confess, when I look to the condition of things of our county and think of the efforts that have been made of late to prostrate me, and the necessity that seems to exist for energetic action there in our cause, I feel some compunctions at leaving the field to my enemies.

If I knew of any man there who would step forward and bear the humble post I seem destined to bear in sustaining our cause, I would gladly resign to him all the honors that the station would secure. But to see an enemy taking my place and probably riding into place by abusing my cause would be more than I could bear with calmness. I shall not procure any recommendations to the President, altho they have been voluntarily tendered to me by many on both sides of politics. I do not wish to be considered in any body's way for the appointment. If my application would embarrass the President in any respect; if there are other applicants between whom and myself he may feel any delicacy in making a selection, I wish it distinctly understood, that I have no feeling on the subject, that would not freely yield to the pleasure of the President. Indeed I am so well aware of the delicacy of the President in being required frequently to choose among friends, that I cannot but feel extreme reluctance in making the application, lest I might be the means of creating such a state of things.

The accounts which I receive daily from Maury are of the most flattering character. Our cause is completely triumphant in Maury. In Bedford I am happy to learn that the Ball is in motion. The people are patronising the [Shelbyville] "Western Star" liberally, and I have no doubt, but that the county will be easily revolutionised. There can be no mistaking the re-action which is rapidly going on; the evidences are as palpable as day.

Our session is rapidly closing. I think we will adjourn by the 20th of Feby. We have not yet passed the electoral law; our White friends dont know what system to take; they are afraid of either.

The papers come very irregularly from Washington. We [receive] them about once a week.

I heard from Columbia to-night; all are well.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

P.S. I have just seen your letter to Laughlin in which you refer to one to myself. Mine has not arrived. I am anxious to see it, as I suppose it is a reference to a matter which has created a good deal of vague conjecture here. There are reports here that Judge White had broken ground in strong terms against Jackson. I expect it will arrive to-night.

Our friends here are very anxious that I should take the editorial charge of the Union.² I cannot do it. They make me a liberal offer, but no inducement would do; I am bound to attend to the estate of J. S. Walker. You will be surprised to learn, that his estate is a good deal embarrassed; far more so than we had calculate[d]. It will [be] very troublesome to settle, and will require my close attention for a considerable time.

I have looked upon the movements on the Abolition question as a mere effort to agitate the South for political effect, and I am satisfied that the object will be so palpable that it will recoil upon the movers of it. Our friends need not apprehend any thing from that score. The people are on the look-out and will not be deceived.

I have seen the disgraceful article in the "Sun" in reference to yourself and others. The Sun comes in large numbers to the Legislature and comes much more regularly than the Globe. [Ephraim H.] Foster takes 40, and several other members twenty &c. Old Bradford³ made a pretty good rise when he was here. I do not know whether the Republican and Banner will republish the article or not; if they do, it will be immediately trumped by the "Court Martial" record. I think the authorship of the article is manifest throughout, and none who read it here can doubt it.

The letter of Gen. Jackson⁴ has had a happy effect in the community; it is circulating widely and we begin to see the results. The Union is gaining in patronage very rapidly.

You will see in the Democrat a suggestion as to a State Convention. It was intended as a *Joke*. We have determined in the event of the General Ticket System to have a State Convention.

We deem that preferable to a Legislative Caucus for nominating electors. As soon as the system is adopted the V.B. men in the Legislature will meet and resolve upon a State Convention, and send forth an address to the people. This is the plan suggested by myself and upon consultation, it is deemed the best that can be devised.

I really fear that our cause will suffer for a head in this place after the Legislature adjourns. Laughlin is away and is lacking in energy if here. We will make arrangements however before a break up to put the people in Motion.

Our friends are all sanguine of carrying the state, and our enemies begin to doubt their own strength even in Tennessee. They lay it all on Jackson of course.

A.O.P.N.

Addressed to Washington.

1. The appointment went to James P. Grundy, a Nashville lawyer and a son of Felix Grundy. Grundy had been an applicant for this post in 1835, but his appointment seemed badly timed politically, and the office went to Grundy's law partner, William T. Brown. At the time, Hugh L. White complained that Brown's appointment had been made too hastily, before he himself was aware of the vacancy, and in an exchange of letters it was revealed to White that Grundy was an applicant. On January 26, 1836, Brown was elected by the legislature to be judge of the sixth circuit, and when Grundy was chosen as his successor it seemed that Brown was merely "keeping the seat warm" until a more propitious time for Grundy's appointment came. See James L. Grundy to Polk, January 6, 1835, and the exchange between Hugh L. White on one hand and Cave Johnson and Polk on the other, February 24, 25, and 26, 1835. For information on the election of Brown see Granville S. Crockett to Polk, January 26, 1836.

2. Nicholson regularly wrote editorials for the paper and was virtually acting editor at times when Laughlin was out of town.

3. Thomas G. Bradford, former resident of Nashville, where he edited the Nashville *Clarion*, was connected with the Washington *Sun*, a caustic critic of Polk.

4. This is the same letter that Nicholson mentioned to Polk in his letter of January 22, 1836.

FROM FRANCIS A. OWEN¹

Murfreesboro. February 2, 1836

After reminding Polk that they had met several years earlier at the home of Dr. Rucker, Owen congratulates him on his political astuteness in support-

ing the administration. He castigates Bell and White for trying to persuade Tennesseans to oppose Jackson. He asks Polk to send him the *Globe* and says that he will leave money with Dr. Rucker to cover the subscription.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A Methodist minister at Murfreesboro who became widely known in the South.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother.

New Haven Con Feb. the 2d 1836

I received your letter, but have had no opportunity to answer it untill now. The times are as usual here, the same thing over and over, from one day to another. Our most difficult time during the collegiate course commenced about two weeks since, and if we can stem the current now, there will be but little doubt of our going through. Professor [Denison] Olmstead received your letter. The money you sent, I expect came in good season; he informed Samuel Caldwell¹ that he was very near out of funds and intended drawing for reserves. From that I thought he must be out of funds for all of us. He is a very fine man indeed, takes great trouble upon himself to have us all situated comfortable and is neither too strict nor liberal in furnishing us with money. He has never as much as hinted that I was to extravagant, so I take it for granted I have not passed the bounds of reason. We all have to study hard, but not more so than the others of our class. My eyes have been better this term, but have not got entirely well of the dimness yet. I think it doubtful whether they ever will regain their former strength, especially, while in College. If they become no worse than they are now, I will have very little trouble with them; which I will try to prevent, by not overstraining them. William² has had a slight attack of the fever; he was confined about a week, but has I believe entirely recovered, and begun to go out. If Sister Sarah has received my letter, tell her that I will expect an answer, and to write all the news from home, for no person ever thinks of writing to me from that quarter. I spoke to Professor Olmstead, about going to Washington in the May vacation. He says that Congress generally rises before the May vacation, which

commences on the first Wednesday. But if it does not rise before then we will come on; William & Fleming^s I believe do not intend going.

SAMUEL W. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. Samuel Polk Caldwell, son of Dr. Silas M. Caldwell, had recently enrolled at Yale.

2. William F. Cooper, son of Matthew D. Cooper of Columbia, had entered Yale along with Samuel W. Polk and two sons of James Walker. Cooper was the youngest member of his class and later became a distinguished jurist.

3. One of the six Maury County residents then enrolled at Yale was William Stuart Fleming of Mount Pleasant. Later he was a prominent lawyer and judge. He wrote the centennial history of Maury County that was published in 1876.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Sir

Little Rock Febuary the 2d 1836

I take this occation to drop you a line by Colo. Elias Rector,¹ Marshall of this Territory. He is a gentleman of high standing and deservedly merits the high stand he occupie; in a word he is my friend an desirves that respect and attention due to a gentleman and what the bosome friend of your old acquaintence will command.

We have sent you a Constitution which I hope will meet with better fates than our sister Territory Michigan.² If we are admited I have but little fear we shall take our stand among the Democratic Jackson *Van Buren* states, tho the struggle by the opposition will be [. . .]. But the victory will be ours. We will send you the Hon A. H. Sevier as one of the senators, the other as yet unknown. We will elect our gov. and without we split among ourselves we will send you a man to the H R. who will be "*good and true.*"

Should you feel an interest in our affairs I refer you to my friend *Rector* who can tell you as much about Arkinsas and her men & her future course, as any man in it. In politicks he is every thing and as true as you could wish him. If he should want

any thing either for himself or friend I hope he will meet in you a *friend*.

A. YELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. He was a member of a politically active and powerful family in Arkansas and Missouri. He was a brother of Wharton Rector, long an Indian agent.

2. Because of a dispute with Ohio over a strip of land, Michigan's admission was delayed until 1837. Arkansas, meanwhile, fared better and was admitted to statehood in June 1836.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dear Sir

Columbia Feby 7th 1836

Since I wrote you I have received an account of the sales of all our Haywood crop except 3 bales. The whole crop will not amount to \$2700 which will leave of the land debt about \$300. The Mississippi crop will not pay the balance of that debt & expenses. I have drawn from [Adlai O.] Harris more than the amount of both crops and for want of funds have left our debts in Bolivar unpaid for shoes & clothing &c. If you have any money in Mr. Harris's hands you will please authorise him to advance me what will be necessary. I collected between \$300 and \$2000 of my money and paid it out. I have advanced considerably more money than you have. My means are out and have to borrow money to send to Samuel at College and expenses here much more than I anticipated. I mentioned in my last letter that Reuben was in bad health. If he is no better when I go down I think it would be prudent to bring him home. He has been sick all summer and fall almost. I will be obliged to send Harbert to the district. He is doing very badly. He is stealing drinking and doing as bad as he can. I should have sent him this morning with George Moore¹ if I could have got him he is dodging about that I have not been able to get him. I think Reuben had better be brot to Columbia and put another in his place. The water or climate dont agree with him. Write to me immediately as I shall start down towards the last of March, what I will do with Reuben & Harbert tho Harbert I shall send

to the district as soon as I can [. . .] and meet with an opportunity to do so. If he stays in Columbia I am of the opinion he will be hung. He is a very bad boy indeed.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, 95-96.

1. A resident of Fayette County and former resident of Maury, Moore was a trusted friend of the Walker-Polk-Caldwell connections while they were operating in absentia their plantations in West Tennessee. His frequent visits to Maury County made him particularly valuable to their operations.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

My Dear Sir:

Nashville Feby 7, 1836

I was gratified last night to hear from you, especially as it was the first intelligence from Washington for many days. As it is Sunday and I have nothing on hand I will write a long letter. You were not more surprised than I was to find the Trumpet of Liberty¹ coming out as it did. I understood that the arrangement was made, that the paper was to take the other side of politics, but I presume that the Van Buren men in Pulaski who were to make the arrangement must have backed out. I give it to you as my opinion in confidence, that the means for establishing the paper were advanced by White men, and that their liberality having been greater than that of our friends, they have secured the press. My impression still is, that if our friends would discharge the obligation existing to some White men, the character of the paper could be changed. I fear however, that we have not the right men in Pulaski to make the arrangement.

I read your remarks in relation to the failure of the Fortification Bill² and the debate on the subject with much interest. I should suppose, that Judge White must inevitably suffer for his vote on that measure. The course of Gen. Jackson on the French question is overwhelmingly popular, even the White men here are all committed in his favor. It cannot therefore operate in any other way than prejudicial to the Judge. Even the *great* Mr Wise³ cannot roll from him the damning responsibility of that

vote. I was much pleased with Mr. Adam's speech; it was a severe cut on the Senate. I regret very much that your station forbids you to mingle in the debate. We need bold and fearless speaking on our side. That wreckless fellow Wise deserves to be met in the strongest terms and shivered to atoms. I see plainly the drift of the White-Whig scheme. You are the main object to be reached and I regret that you cannot have an opportunity of meeting and foiling the attacks. In the Globe you have an able advocate and defender, and here in Tennessee you have friends who will rally to your defence. The Union is in a bad condition on account of Laughlins absence and will be still worse off when the Legislature adjourns. So long however as I am here its columns will show symptoms of a disposition to defend yourself and our cause. I have already been openly charged in the Republican with being the *pro tem* editor of the Union, but no charge shall deter me from seeing that our cause is not neglected. The Democrat will not suffer for want of attention. The Shelbyville paper is coming on well. It is doing its duty faithfully and efficiently. It is presenting "Judge Whites true position" in a manner that will tell. You might guess who it is that is striking in that quarter.⁴ The blows will continue to fall thick and heavy. Judge White has made a complete ass of himself in his attack on Curry.⁵ His friends here are wofully beset about it. They are ashamed of the effort of their champion; they are jeered to death about it; they do not pretend to justify or excuse the speech, but attribute it to the vexation of the old man. All the Van Buren papers will republish it and make much out of it. It is a rare speciman of littleness of soul, chagrin, spleen, and low vindictive billings gate, beneath the dignity of a grave Senator. You will have seen that Cahal is in a hornets nest. He has fallen into the hands of our friend Dr. [H. B.] Kelsey who curries down without mercy.⁶ I think Cahal has abandoned all intention of politics, unless he should be goaded into it by his imprudent attack upon Dr. Kelsey and the ensuing controversy. His friends, I understand, still occasionally hold him *in terrorem* over you,⁷ but I dont think they can delude him into that scrape.

On the subject of nominating electors our friends have had a good deal of consultation and have agreed upon our course, though we have taken no steps as yet. We have deferred any

open action in order that the electoral law might be passed and the White men make their movement. A few days since the electoral law passed its second reading. The general ticket was proposed, when a motion was made to adopt the District System in its stead. The motion carried 37 to 33. This produced immense consternation among the Whites, and after maneuvering about two hours, they had the motion reconsidered and by a vote of 38 to 31 they adopted the General Ticket system. I consider it as settled, that we shall have the General Ticket system. What course the White men will pursue in making out their ticket is not yet developed, though I have no doubt, they will meet in Caucus and make a nomination. As soon as they take their step the V. B. men will proceed to act. Our plan will be to avoid the odium of a Caucus nomination ourselves, but to throw it upon our enemies, whilst we will throw the whole matter before the people and recommend to them a Convention to nominate electors. Our object will be two-fold, to avoid the odium of a Caucus, and to produce a spirit of inquiry and discussion throughout the state by meetings in every County to elect delegates to the State Convention. We have consulted about every plan and have come to the conclusion that we can best succeed by this course. The great purpose which we have to accomplish is to arouse the people and direct their attention to the true point at issue.

I discover from your letter that you are under a mistake as to our electoral district. It is not composed of Maury and Bedford, but of Maury, Hickman, Perry and Wayne, a district in which we would have no difficulty under the district system. You allude to the propriety of my running as a candidate for elector. Nothing but [dire] necessity could induce me to undertake it, with the engagements which I have on hand. You are aware of the trouble that I shall have in settling the estate of J. S. W[alker] and the constant attention which it will demand. The proper man in our district is Maj. B. Gordon, and I have been laboring to induce him to agree to it, but altho as true a V.B. as lives he will not consent to undertake it. I understand that Col. [William] Pillow will be the White candidate in our district. It would be an easy matter to lay him out. All this matter however must be well attended to at the proposed Convention.

Resolutions have been introduced into the Senate and passed

with one dissenting vote (Henderson)⁸ approving the President's course on the French question. They will pass our House with the same unanimity. We expect to adjourn in two weeks.

Continue to write.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. This was the Pulaski newspaper that succeeded the *Tennessee Beacon*. While the same editor, Alston B. Estes, put out the two papers, it was thought that he had changed his politics. Estes, formerly of Columbia, was Nicholson's cousin.

2. This bill was called by several names, including "defense bill" and "three million dollar bill."

3. Henry A. Wise was continuing his withering attacks on Polk, but he had become so abusive that some of his friends disapproved.

4. The identity of those writing editorials for the new Shelbyville paper is not clear. Nicholson wrote some, and perhaps Henry B. Kelsey did also. See below, footnote 6.

5. Benjamin F. Currey, an agent to the Cherokees, had written a letter to an obscure newspaper in which he was critical of White's political course. Perhaps goaded by a combination of criticisms, White took Currey to task on the floor of the Senate, demanding that he be investigated, and implying that as an appointee of the administration, he was taking an improper part in politics.

6. The reference to Kelsey's actions may be an indication that he was writing editorials for an administration paper, perhaps the Shelbyville *Western Star*.

7. Terry H. Cahal was frequently spoken of as a possible successor to Polk and perhaps as an opponent, should Polk choose to run for another term.

8. The sole dissenter was William H. Henderson of Haywood County.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

My Dear Sir:

Nashville Feby 7th, 1836

Since sealing my letter of this date another matter of some consequence has occurred to me, to which I am anxious to direct your attention. I do not entirely comprehend the movement of our friends in Va. in nominating Judge Smith.¹ Was it done because the Old Dominion had an insuperable objection to Col. Johnson, or for the purpose of gaining strength in the South? We are somewhat puzzled here to explain this division of the

party as to the Vice Presidency. I should be happy to hear from you on that point. If it has been deemed good policy to spread out our candidates for Vice President, with a view of gaining strength, what is Tennessee to do? Shall we adhere to Col. Johnson or shall we take up Judge Smith, or shall we place Gov. Carrol on our ticket, as some here suggest? This matter has thrown us somewhat into a dilemma, and it must be settled before our proposed Convention. I wish you would consult with Grundy and Johnson, and let me know how this matter is to work.

I have mentioned the name of Carrol, and I feel inclined to say something to you in relation to him, and I say it in perfect confidence. From hints that he has thrown out to me several times of late, I am induced to believe, that he feels himself a good deal neglected by his friends at Washington. He has remarked more than once, that he "has not received a line from a living mortal at Washington since the meeting of Congress," and from his tone and manner I am satisfied, that he feels neglected and mortified. He has also made some insinuations that induce me to think, that he is under the impression, that his claims to some office have been overlooked, and perhaps, that he has had some assurances of an appointment, which have not been fulfilled. These are mere inferences that I have drawn from his remarks, and in them I may be mistaken, but whether I am mistaken or not, I cannot look at him and think of the services he has rendered his country, and see his present situation, afflicted and prostrate, without feeling and expressing the desire, that he was provided with an appointment that would be honorable and suited to his standing. When I remember that he has been sacrificed for his adherence to the Republican party and that others in many instances without half the claims upon their country, have been elevated to high and honorable stations, I cannot forbear to volunteer the opinion, that he has been overlooked too long. I write thus without the knowledge or advice of any one, but from [my] own mere notion, and in confidence.

I believe I have never yet alluded to our new governor and I know you will not be surprised [at] it, as he is of too little consequence to be spoken or written about, except when one has nothing else under heaven to do. That being my present condi-

tion and having a blank page it may not be amiss to give you his true standing in the Legislature. By the by, the Governor has no standing at all. He has not one solitary friend, save his brother-in-law.² Those who voted for him are ashamed of it, and are wishing for another election, that they may atone for the sin. He [has] neither dignity nor sense; indeed he commands no more respect than one of our door-keepers, and deserves not so much. Wright³ says, that two years hence, the people will have his hide in the loft and his tail hanging out at the window. This is enough to say about such a governor.

The candidates in Maury are traversing the county in droves. I cannot learn whether the Presidential question has much influence or not. From all the accounts I have had, it will be a doubtful race between Gordon and Porter—the chances are thought to be for Gordon. Our friend Zolicofer will be in a drive in that election, between brother-in-law and leader.⁴

I shall expect to hear from you soon and often.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Virginia Democrats did not approve of Richard M. Johnson and were highly indignant that his nomination for the vice-presidency was assured at the Baltimore Convention by Tennessee votes cast by Edmund Rucker. Recently Democrats in the Virginia legislature had in convention nominated Van Buren and William Smith of Alabama for president and vice-president.

2. Which of Cannon's brothers-in-law is intended here remains obscure.

3. Archibald Wright was a native of Maury County; admitted to the bar in 1832, he subsequently practiced for a while in Pulaski. He was a Van Buren Elector in 1836.

4. Powhatan Gordon was running for sheriff against the incumbent, Nimrod Porter, who had occupied that post since 1819. Felix Zollicoffer, friendly to Porter, was married to Gordon's sister. Porter defeated Gordon by a large margin and remained sheriff until 1842.

FROM LEVI WOODBURY

Washington. February 8, 1836

The Secretary of the Treasury informs Polk that the instructions of Archibald Yell concerning the disposition of his salary had been mislaid.¹ The Treasurer will send the specified amounts of Yell's salary to Polk and Andrew Erwin Jr. as instructed.

Addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy in General Records of the Department of Treasury (RG 56), National Archives.

1. See Archibald Yell to Polk, December 28, 1835.

FROM ALFRED BALCH

Washington. February 9, 1836¹

In Washington, where he seeks to collect more than \$1500 that the government owes him, Balch has run out of cash. He requests a loan of fifty dollars so that he can pay his landlady.

Addressed to the House of Representatives and delivered by hand.

1. Balch gave the date as "Tuesday the 9th." The Library of Congress has suggested the year 1836. In 1836 Tuesday came on the ninth of the month only twice, February and August. Polk was not in Washington in August.

FROM JOHN MCKINLEY

My Dear Sir

Florence [Alabama] February 10 1836

If my silence requires an apology I am prepared to make it. From the last of Nov. til within a few days, I have been confined to my room, & the greater part of the time to my bed, by severe indisposition. Nothing short of this could have restrained me from tendering my congratulations on your signal triumph over your & the countrys enemies, in the late election of Speaker. Things did not turn out in relation to the General post office¹ as I had hoped they would. But now I am glad they did not; for I think your present position more honorable, & in every respect more desirable, & I hope you agree with me in opinion.

Whiteism is as low here as you could wish to see it; & I think, from all I see & all I hear it will be equally low in Tennessee before the election of electors. I feel very thankful to the judge for his Curry letters, & Curry speech in the Senate. If additional proof of his incompetency to the dignity & duties of the station he aspires to were wanting, I think, the most incredulous & prejudiced of his honest supporters will not be satisfied. But the old man has made himself so ridiculous that it is now almost degradation to notice him further.

How does the emasculate Johny Bell come on? He appears

silent as usual. You saw his indirect attack upon me last summer, if you were not too much occupied by attacks upon your self. In addition to the newspaper attack, he stated to one of my friends that, my object in attempting to go to Illinois last spring, was to be there prepared to be appointed a judge of the Supreme court, which office Mr Van Buren had promised me for my support in Alabama. But he said I would be greatly disappointed. For if Mr V B kept his promise, which he did believe he would, I could not get the appointment, intimating that the Whig power of the Senate would defeat me. You know the office of judge of the Supreme court is the only one I ever desired, not in Illinois, however, but here, should it be created & the conduct of Bell & his friends has not diminished that desire as you may reasonable suppose.

The great unanimity with which the bill extending the circuit courts to the new states, has passed the Senate² induces me to believe that it will become a law. In that event I shall rely greatly on the support of you & judge Grundy, for in great confidence that you will not repeat what I here state, I must say, that the representation from this state is so little calculated to be of service to me, if disposed to do so, that I regard it as almost useless to invoke their aid. And in addition to this consideration I have strong suspicions that Col King disclosed to Bell the fact that I would be willing to accept the office. He is the only individual to whom I mentioned it, except yourself; & that was in reply to the direct question from him. He came to me one day in the Senate chamber while the bill was pending in the House, & asked me if I thought it would pass, & if it did what will we do for a judge, said he; you are the only man I would be willing to see appointed, & you are not eligible, & I do not know that you would accept it. I replied that if the office were offered I would accept it. Afterwards he & Bell travelled to N York together, & unless Bell got the intimation from him, he must have guessed at it, which I do not think very probable. Indeed the great intimacy which has subsisted between these men under the circumstances has, perhaps unjustly, diminished my confidence in King, & therefore I have not, & shall not say any thing to him on the subject.

Judge Crawford,³ the district judge of this state has I, under-

stand, obtained, directly or indirectly, a recommendation from the members of the last legislature or some of them, & now professes to be a great friend to Mr V B. Notwithstanding which I think the real White men from this state will prefer him to me. If I can not get the office without a subscription paper I will never fill it. If you choose to speak to Martin & Chapman or any of the others from this state on the subject, & take sufficient interest in the matter to do so, I have not the least objection, & will be greatly obliged to you for any information you can obtain.

If however there should be the least unwillingness manifested on the part of the President to appoint me drop the matter & never mention it to him again. It would be well enough to sound the Secretary of State. He has a son, I believe, living in Mobile⁴ & district attorney whos good wishes I have no doubt Crawford has secured.

Mrs M unites with me in kind respects to Mrs P. Let me hear from you when convenient.

J. McKINLEY

P S You may show as much of this letter to Judge Grundy as you think proper & tell him that I wrote to him at Nashville to which letter I have received no answer.

Addressed to Washington.

1. There had been rumors that Polk would be appointed Postmaster General when William T. Barry resigned. Although the appointment went to Amos Kendall the rumors that Polk would join Jackson's cabinet continued.

2. Early in January 1836 the Senate passed this bill by a vote of 34 to 1.

3. William Crawford had moved to Alabama in 1817, where he served as federal district attorney. He was appointed federal district judge in 1826 and served in that capacity until his death in 1849.

4. John Forsyth Jr. was at this time federal district attorney, the post held by Crawford prior to his appointment as federal district judge. Both Forsyth and Crawford were residents of Mobile at this time.

FROM DAVID R. MITCHELL¹

Montgomery, Alabama. February 11, 1836

Mitchell writes that he is forwarding to Polk legal papers drawn against Opothleyoholo, a Creek chieftain.² He also asks aid in getting an appointment to assist in removing the Creeks to the west.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A resident of Maury County, Mitchell spent much time in Alabama.
2. See Mitchell to Polk, January 11, 1834.

FROM ADLAI O. HARRIS

Columbia. February 12, 1836

Harris indicates that the price Polk has asked for a parcel of land in Columbia is too high and that as a result he has temporarily abandoned plans to build a new warehouse.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM DAVID W. McREE¹

Chesnut Creek Post Office

Dear Sir

Autauga Ct. Alab Febuary 12th 1836

I have had it in contempl[at]ion for some length of time to write to you. I now will comply with my long intentions. I now enjoy good health, and is doing midling well otherwise, and is still in hopes yet to make a fortune, or at least sufficient for *old age* which by common coarse of nature is approaching on me.

It is some time since I have seen you or herd from you directly, but I have closely serchd out your coarse through the papers and from casual Tennesseans that pass in this Country. Your coarse as a publick servant has at all times met my intire san[c]tion. Above all others your elavation to the *Chair* over Speaker Bell so triumphantly pleased me the best. From all I can gether your course ever since you have been a member of the House of Representatives has been consitant with the Jeffisoan Principals. I shall make one small imposition on you, although I am not directly one of your constituents, I am indirectly, and as [. . .] I claim the right as such for you to put my name on your list of correspondance and send me such news as you may think more interesting perticular as to the French controversary and the Presidential Election.

You have no doubt hered that Alabama woud go for H. L. White which it will not, or I think their is no danger. The

[. . .] of the people is against him. It is for M. V. Buren although our Legislator has not at all times supported him. The Nullifiers in the Legislator make out to carry there Elections by there Master mangement which the [. . .] the Union man in.

If Mrs Polk is in the City give her my respects and also any other of old frinds from Tennessee. I wish you to send me a copy of the present pre[e]mption law now in force.

D. R. McREE

Addressed to Washington.

1. McRee had once lived in Maury County, where he acted as the agent of William Davidson of North Carolina in some land sales. He had come from North Carolina originally, and sometime during the 1820s he had moved to central Alabama.

FROM ANGEL CALDERON DE LA BARCA¹

Washington. February 13, 1836

The Spanish minister informs Polk that his delegation has not received any documents from the House during the past session and asks that Polk take appropriate action.²

Addressed to the House of Representatives and delivered by hand.

1. Calderon de la Barca had been Spain's minister to the United States since 1819.

2. See Polk to Calderon de la Barca, February 14, 1836, and Calderon de la Barca to Polk, February 28, 1836.

TO ANGEL CALDERON DE LA BARCA

House of Representatives of the United States

Sir

[February 14, 1836]¹

I have had the honor to receive the note you were pleased to address to me on the 13th. inst. stating that none of the Documents of the House of Representatives which by the provision of that body are designated for the Foreign Legations, have been received by you during the present Session of Congress and asking me to give the necessary directions, in order that the Legation of Spain should not be deprived of such valuable documents.

I have made enquiry of the proper officer of the House, upon the subject of the request contained in your note and in answer I have to inform you that two copies of all documents printed under the order of this House, have been, from day to day received from the Printer, put under strong envelopes and directed to Legation of Spain in this City, and regularly lodged in the Post Office. As they have not been received, they will of course I presume be found in the Post Office, awaiting your order. If they be not found, or if found, and any be missing, upon being informed thereof I will give orders to have the deficiency made good, if a sufficiency of documents be yet in possession of the officers of the House to do so.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. This date was supplied by the Library of Congress.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Dear Sir:

Nashville Feby 14, 1836

"We are in the midst of a revolution, tho bloodless as yet" on the Expunging resolution. A few days ago we moved to take them up, the majority overuled us and pinned them to the table. We immediately moved to take up Johnson's¹ approving resolutions which passed the Senate. It was agreed to. [Andrew L.] Martin moved to amend them by inserting by way of sarcasm, that we cordially approve of the interference of Gen. Jackson in the appointment of his successor. Col. Guild was ready for the maneuver and immediately moved an amendment in lieu of Martins, "that we are of opinion that Clay's resolution ought to be expunged" etc. This opened the field for the battle and it has been fought with bare arms and breasts and scabbards thrown away, for the two last days and night. We have been discussing the question for the two last nights until 12 o clock. The excitement has been immense, the lobby constantly crowded, the discussion warm, pointed and powerful. The action was brought on by Guild who acquitted himself well. He was followed by Turney who carried the war home with unsparing

boldness. Churchwell² followed in a most violent and abusive strain upon Gen. Jackson. He boldly proclaimed him a dictator, and heaped epithets upon Van Buren and our party until he disgusted even his own friends, who were glad when he ceased. Next followed Martin, who took the bold stand of an inveterate enemy and sustained by all his specious premises the charge of dictation and resisted the process of expunging. Humphreys³ then obtained the floor and thundered for an hour against White and in favor of expunging. I then got the floor, the hour for adjourning having arrived, we adjourned for a night session, where I did my best in defence of Gen Jackson, and boldly assailed the camp of the enemy. Ready then followed, and made a Jackson-anti-Jackson, mixture—gatherum speech. When Netherland⁴ took the floor and having delivered a long harangue against expunging he concluded by resigning his seat, because his constituents had instructed him to vote for expunging. Boddie⁵ then rose and proceeded a short time in favor of expunging, then the hour of 12, Saturday night, having arrived, we adjourned. I think it uncertain whether the White men will agree to take them up again. If they do several others will speak, and if a vote is even taken, which is extremely uncertain the amendment of Guild will be rejected, but by what vote I cannot tell, as White folks are very uncertain. I have merely time to give you the passing events. The lobby could not be restrained on either side, alternate clapping and hissing. We are in just about such a scene as I should suppose you are witnessing in Congress.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Willie B. Johnson, a brother of Cave Johnson, had introduced resolutions approving the actions of Andrew Jackson as president.

2. George W. Churchwell of Knox County was serving his only term in the legislature. He was a lawyer and practiced in Knoxville for more than thirty-five years.

3. West H. Humphreys, a lawyer of Somerville, was serving a single term in the legislature from Fayette County. He had a distinguished career as lawyer and judge. He was Attorney General and Reporter for the state, 1839–1851, and in 1853 became the federal district judge for Tennessee, serving in that capacity until 1862.

4. John Netherland of Sullivan County was serving his second term in the

legislature. After his resignation he was replaced by Elkanah K. Dulaney. Eight years later Netherland was again elected and served a single term.

5. Elijah Boddie served four terms in the legislature from Sumner County, no two terms in succession. A lawyer and a Democrat, he was at this time serving his third term.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia, Feb. 14th 1836

I have been both surprised and pained at your long silence. My letters must have satisfied you that I felt myself in an uneasy and difficult situation, and whether you could have communicated any thing pleasant or unpleasant to me I should have been glad to have heard from you, and to have known something of the prospect of relief from the difficulties we are encountering. Caruthers too is silent, or nearly so. His idea seems to be that I want improvement, our business increased. Our case is easily understood. When we took charge of the Mail it was of a size that we could take it through & 6 or 7 passengers each trip when we could get them and it was the mutual calculation that the mail would continue of a weight that would enable us to take as many passengers. It however increased upon us so rapidly, and became so burthensome that the mail alone was nearly as much as our line could transport, cutting us off so much from passengers, it is impossible for our receipts to pay expenses and inevitable loss must be the consequence with the best of management, unless we are paid for the increased service which we have and are still performing. I have forwarded evidence to Col. [Charles K.] Gardner, showing that our mail has increased to from double to thrible the size when we commenced. I think all former Post Master Generals have allowed extra compensation under such circumstances. In this I may be mistaken. Major [William T.] Barry in one of his reports or addresses to the public mentions a similar case in which he had made a fair extra compensation, and I believe every one thought it right. If however we can have no compensation for the additional mail that is put on us, and that weight continues, it must inevitably break us down and that very shortly. If Mr. Kendall cannot pay us in proportion to the service performed, I think he is under

the strongest moral obligation to rescind our contracts and re-let them, to be conveyed in the way that the public interest requires. It would be a heavy mail at 6 times a week; at three times passengers must be excluded and generally coaches are not the proper vehicle to take it in. It must be mail waggons that will take from 12 to 2500 lbs; the average winter mail is about 1200; a failure gives us 2500.

It cannot be the duty of the officers of government to look on & see the individuals arduously employed in the public service, and faithfully performing their duty, ruined & broken down, by circumstances beyond their controul. If we are bound to take an average mail of 1200 (when we commenced at about 300) we are bound to take a mail of 5000 if there shall be so much, and might readily be increased to that size.

It seems to me that a Coach line ought not to be required to take more mail than will allow them to take 6 passengers, unless there is a special agreement that passengers are to be excluded when the weight of mail renders it necessary.

I have sold the line to Huntsville via Murfreesborough to G. A. Sublett,¹ and as the only means of enabling us to go on a while longer, am endeavoring to sell the lines from Nashville to Florence & from here to Huntsville in order to relieve us of a portion of our debt, and enable us to apply all our means south of the river. If I can effect this sale, and anticipate the mail pay on the Murfreesborough line, it will enable me to free from danger our house at N.O. and afford some temporary relief, but even with this expedient the Mississippi lines must inevitably break us down, unless we are compensated for the increased labor performed. Unless we are allowed extra pay for the extra weight or our contracts annulled and re-let, God only knows where it is to end. The Mail pay, every dollar applied, and all the passage money, which the weight of mail will allow us to take will not pay the expences, and the deficiency must come from our estates. It is you know a difficult matter to raise money expeditiously upon the sale of property and this is my only resource. I have already extended my credit as far as I think is prudent or just to my friends.

I hope that our friends at Washington will be able to find some mode of relief for us upon proper principles, upon some

plan that will be just to the public and to us. The best relief to us would be to annul our contract which the P.M.G. has the right to do. The best thing for the public would be to allow us extra compensation for the increase of mail,² and let us go on. It would be almost impossible to sustain more horses on the road than now is. The whole mail must go, therefore the only remedy seems to me to exclude passengers to a great extent, and indemnify us for it. I would be perfectly willing to render a full account of the whole business, to throw in my time and services during the contract, and let the transportation of the mail cost the government, the actual expense incurred after crediting for all passage money received. If I could get out of the scrape by the loss of my time and labor, and save my estate I should be happy indeed.

I have been so much engrossed with mail matters and my mind in such a state of anxiety that I have not been able to pay much attention to the Democrat. I have not been well qualified for editorials. They have managed badly about papers. Indeed to keep up the establishment and respectability of the paper requires much attention. They have between 6 & 700 hundred subscribers, but in a monied point of view this is a disadvantage, as but few pay in advance & it requires money to supply the paper. The merchants here are generally against us. There is of course but little Job work, which is the main source of profit. With their 6 or 700 subscribers, I fear the Democrat must go down for want of means, or its political friends must bleed deep. If I were not so much embarrassed by my mail difficulties *it should not go down*. With such fears as I am now laboring under, it is not surprising that I should be most anxiously alive to the future destiny of my wife & children, and less devoted to politics. My first duty is to my family, not to my country, and political friends. It will be hard indeed if in rendering faithful and valuable services to country and political friends with my friends in power I should loose an estate accumulated by industry and care. But I will not dwell on this gloomy subject, dark as the prospect before me is. I hope to avoid absolute ruin, but I cannot avoid a heavy loss, unless allowed for the increased Mails, or our contracts are cancelled.

Since writing the above, I believe I have sold to Dr. Polk

& Samuel³ the line from Nashville to Florence, the one from here to Huntsville, and the Mail pay on the line via Murfreesborough, which I heretofore sold to Sublett and am entitled to the Mail pay for two years \$7000. The sale for the whole including, the coach shop, black smith shop, and grain on hand at the different stands is at \$24,000—12 mos. Bills which I can get cashed in time to meet our New Orleans debt. This leaves us with the Mississippi lines on our hands, which I could not get rid of on any terms, when I was in the South. The sale made has the advantage of enabling us to concentrate all our disposable means on the Southern lines, and relieves us of an embarrassing debt, and I shall take good care not to get in so far again. If with the capital we have advanced, our labor, and a small debt we cannot by applying the whole mail pay & passage money to expences keep us the lines, they must go. Our endorsing friends and our friends at New Orleans *shall not be affected* by any misfortune that may happen us.

Dr. Polk you know is very wealthy and responsible; Samuel is worth about \$10,000. You will please inform Mr. Kendall of their entire responsibility that he may feel no hesitation in making the transfer. I shall control and manage the lines for them to a great extent and see that it is well run. These were my favorite lines and I sold them with great reluctance. I had no alternative. A heavy debt was hanging over us and notwithstanding the application of the whole of our receipts it was continually increasing, until it was likely to become truly embarrassing. I cannot bear a heavier debt than I can see the means of paying, especially when a disaster might make that debt fatal to others. My course is the result of a consultation with Kinkle.⁴

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private and Confidential."

1. George A. Sublett, of Murfreesboro.

2. During the incumbency of William T. Barry as Postmaster General there had been a congressional investigation of alleged irregularities in granting extra compensation to contractors. This investigation probably influenced the new Postmaster General and his assistants to be cautious in granting extra compensation.

3. Dr. William J. Polk, a half brother of Lucius and Leonidas Polk, and Samuel P. Walker, oldest son of James Walker.

4. He was a partner in the stagecoach firm of Caruthers and Kinkle, Huntsville, Alabama. Caruthers and Kinkle had been in the mail-contracting business for several years, and Caruthers also had recently become a partner with Walker in the Walker and Caruthers firm.

FROM JOHN W. McCRABB

Fort Mitchell, Alabama. February 15, 1836

McCrabb asks Polk to write a letter to the Secretary of War supporting his request for assignment to the Corps of Topographical Engineers.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Isaac J. Thomas to Polk, December 25, 1835.

FROM BROMFIELD L. RIDLEY

Nashville. February 15, 1836

Ridley asks as a personal favor that Polk support the appointment of John S. Young of McMinnville to a position among the Cherokee Indians west of Arkansas.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See John S. Young to Polk, February 16, 1836.

FROM HENRY TURNEY¹

Dr Sir

Columbia 15th Feb 1836

At the request of Capt John Blackburn of Swan I address you on the subject of your sending him & Esqr Sharp² the Globe they subscribed for before you left home. I receive the Globe regularly. After you left us your political enemies said and done every thing in their power to check the tide of affairs, to stop the progress of our cause. They even went so far as to have everything organised to have Columbia illuminated if Bell was elected Speaker, but on the arrival of the news of your success, they have knocked under. In fact the first man I met the day after the news arrived begged of me not to exult over them, as they were fairly beaten. Our cause is on the increase and has been ever since you left us. Your friends are still in the field Batling

for the great cause you have so long and ably sustained.

I congratulate you & the administration on the late Elections of senators in Miss & Louisiana.³ I do not believe Judge White will get Tennessee and if he does not get the vote of this s[t]ate I do not believe he will get a single vote. Mrs. T joins with myself in our respects to Mrs Polk. . . .

HENRY TURNEY

P.S. I will give you & Mrs P a Polk Dinner when you return home with the rest of our Van Buren friends. Old Esquire James Love of Catheys Creek said he wants to live to see you president of the United States and then he will be willing to Die, and I say amen to that.⁴

Addressed to Washington.

1. Turney was an early settler in the western part of Maury County, where he acquired a considerable amount of land. In 1841 he sold his land and many of his slaves to William Pillow and moved to Mississippi.

2. Swan Creek flows northward into the Duck River near Centerville. Only the upper reaches of the stream lay in Maury County, and some of this was later incorporated into Lewis County. Blackburn was a carpenter who lived in this neighborhood. At the time that Beaver Dam Springs was a popular resort he set up a lunch stand at his home, which lay approximately halfway between Columbia and the springs. William Sharp, a justice of the peace, was a close neighbor of Blackburn.

3. Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, and Robert C. Nicholas of Louisiana, both Jacksonians, had recently been elected to the United States Senate.

4. The latter part of this postscript appears on the back of the letter. James Love was a blacksmith at what was then called Love's Cross Roads, later Hampshire. Cathey's Creek flowed northward into the Duck just west of Big Bigby. As used here, however, the reference is to a rather large area that took its name from the creek. This allusion to the possibility of Polk's becoming president is one of the earliest found.

FROM MEDICUS A. LONG

Dear Sir:

Nashville, Feb. 16, 1836

You see what we are doing by the *Union* of this date. I have taken considerable pains to throw some light upon the subjects of Expunging before the people, and to expose the conduct of Mr. Bell.¹ Bell's speech is exciting considerable attention here be-

cause of its direct conflict with the Resolutions of our Legislature. I shall publish several speeches made on the question of expunging, and intend to commence the war upon the course of this White Legislature. It ought to be made odious and can be.

Col. Laughlin will not probably be at home under two or three weeks. I am much obliged to you for the various letters which you have addressed to him and which I have received.

Send us all the documents, good, bad and indifferent, which may fall in your way. Write often.

You will see that I was appointed to publish by *authority* within a few days after I wrote you before. Barrow's complaint on the occasion is injuring him.²

M. A. LONG

Addressed to Washington.

1. This issue of the *Union* contained Bell's comments on what he called Jackson's blundering in the negotiations with France. The roll-call vote on Bell's resolution was printed, and the votes of Dunlap and Shields were noted. But Polk's advice to Laughlin given in his letter of January 30, 1836, was followed, and the two members from Tennessee were treated kindly.

Also in this issue of the *Union* appears an account of happenings in the state legislature that so closely resembles the narrative given by Nicholson in his letter to Polk on February 14, 1836, that it is almost certainly from Nicholson's pen.

2. The nature of Barrow's complaint has not been learned.

FROM JOHN S. YOUNG¹

Dear Sir

Nashville 16th Feb 1836

Having had the pleasure of but a passing acquaintance with you at McMinnville (which you perhaps recollect) it would seem presumptuous to ask your influence in furthering my wishes for an appointment from the Executive. The Subagency of the Cherokees West of Arkansas has been vacated by the death of Capt [George] Vashon.² At the suggestion of some of my friends in this City I am an applicant to fill the vacancy. I beg leave to refer you to letters addressed to the President in my favour by a portion of the members of the Ho R's of this state together with the signature of the late Gov Carrol & others together with

one from Mr Ridley³ to yourself. Should you be disposed to second my views and wishes it would be most thankfully acknowledged. . . .

JOHN S. YOUNG

Addressed to Washington.

1. Born in Virginia, Young had moved to Warren County about 1830. He moved to Nashville, where he practiced medicine, and in 1839 he became secretary of state for Tennessee, holding that post until 1847. He was a moving spirit in the building of the Tennessee Hospital for the Insane, and he was one of the building commissioners of the state capitol.

2. Young did not get the appointment that he was seeking but received instead an appointment with the Cherokees remaining in the east. See Young to Polk, August 11, 1836.

3. See Bromfield L. Ridley to Polk, February 15, 1836.

FROM ABRAHAM McCLELLAN¹

Blountville, Tennessee. February 17, 1836

McClellan asks Polk to use his influence to have the post office at James Crossroads returned to Fall Branch and to have Joseph B. Gilman replace Jesse J. James as postmaster.² He says that he believes the change was made at the behest of William B. Carter, no friend of the Jackson administration.

Addressed to Washington.

1. McClellan had served in both houses of the state legislature. At this time he was a colonel in the Tennessee militia called to duty to put down the Seminoles. Later he served, 1837-43, as a Democrat in the United States House of Representatives.

2. From 1833 until January 1836 the post office was located at Fall Branch, with Joseph B. Gilman serving as postmaster. It was then moved to James Crossroads, with Jesse J. James as postmaster. In May 1836 the post office was moved back to Fall Branch, and Gilman was restored as postmaster. See George Gammon to Polk, November 22, 1835, and January 28 and May 25, 1836.

FROM WILLIAM S. FULTON

Dear Sir,

Little Rock Feby. 19th, 1836

I wrote you a few lines by Capt'n Edwd W. B. Nowland, and avail myself of the opportunity of Col. Elias Rectors visit to Washington, to write you again, and, for the purpose of so-

liciting your aid in favor of our admission as a State into the Union. You are aware of my objections to the legality of our proceedings, in forming our Constitution *without the authority of Congress*. But, my objections being overuled, a constitution has been formed, and it is now in the power of Congress to admit us as a State, and thereby, legalize our unlawful act, and give existence to our State government. It is highly important to me *politically*, that Arkansas may be admitted. By the constitution, the state government is to be organized, without regard to the action of Congress in Sept next, and if we are *not* now admitted, I shall be brought into conflict with the State authorities, and the consequence will be that my doom as a public man, will be *fixed*. This, for the sake of our good cause and my own sake, ought to be prevented. We stand here, upon *doubtful* grounds, and an advantage to the enemy *now*, will be fatal. Col. Rector can explain all. I refer you to him. He will be an applicant for Marshal, I presume without serious competition. I ask for him your friendly aid.

WM. S. FULTON

Addressed to Washington.

FROM WILLIAM W. GANT¹

Dear Sir,

Nacodoches,² Texas. Febury 19th 1836

I am at Nacogdoches as the caption of the letter shows, but I live at Washington on the Brasos,³ and will shortly commence the publication of a News Paper there. A Convention will meet at Washington on the first day of March to throw off the Mexican Authority *in toto*, and form a Constitution for the Government of Texas. With a few exceptions the whole of Texas, many in the United States, but I most especially, am deeply interested in having a regular & certain mail between the two Governments. I am so particularly interested not only from the fact that I am about to commence the publication of a News Paper, but from the fact that it is known that I am opposed to all the fraudulent plans of deception and speculation that have

been carried on here particularly in land claims, in consequence of which I have not and believe I will not receive my papers or letters as I should under the present irresponsible conveyance. The difficulty arises between the Sabine and Fort Jessup.⁴ There is a regular mail from the interior of Texas to the Sabine, created and maintained under the general mail arrangements of the Provisional Government. The speculators have one from Nacodoches to the Fort. The two government mails ought to be connected. I therefore suggest that propriety and necessity of having a common Agency established on the Sabine to receive and forward the mails; and that some new person be sent on to act as Agent and that such a salary be given as will engage the services of a worthy and competent man. If you approve of my suggestion or any other arrangement that will secure the benefits desired, please use your influence to have it put into immediate operation, for I assure you we are labouring under great and grievous inconveniences in this respect. Texas I am sure will do her part, and accept of and acknowledge the services of any one the U.S. may think proper to appoint.

It is rumored here that Texas is sold to France. But is it possible that the French are such fools as to think North Americans can be bought or sold? I require stronger proof than we yet have.

I am just on the eve of starting back to Washington and have written this letter in great haste.

WILLIAM. W. GANT

Addressed to Washington.

1. Gant was a former resident of Maury County who had moved to Texas almost exactly a year before this letter was written. He served in the Texas army and was for three terms a member of the Texas congress.

2. Nacogdoches is a town in Texas about fifty miles west of the Sabine River and well over a hundred miles from the coast.

3. Washington-on-the-Brazos was located about sixty miles northwest of present-day Houston.

4. Named for General Thomas Sydney Jesup, this fort was established by Zachary Taylor in 1822 as a part of a system of Indian control and a defense against Mexico. It was placed on a ridge marking the watershed between the Red and Sabine rivers, about twenty miles southwest of Natchitoches, Louisiana.

FROM EDWIN H. DURRELL¹

New Orleans. February 20, 1836

Durrell is about to open a law practice in New Orleans and asks the privilege of using Polk's name as a reference on his business card. Durrell also congratulates Polk on his election to the speakership.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A native of New Hampshire and a graduate of Harvard, Durrell became a prominent citizen of New Orleans. He was mayor of that city during the Civil War.

FROM JONATHAN WEBSTER

Dear Sir Senate chamber, Nashville Ten Feby. 21st 1836

Press of business, and indisposition together, has put it out of my power to corrispond with you, as [I] wish, for which neglect I know you will excuse me when you reflect that you are also guilty.

Tomorrow we adjurn and there has been nothing done, except what you have seen in the newspapers.

In my feeling toward you I am as formely consequently I make no fuss as to political matters. You know my mind as to men & measures and the only difference between us is that you lost hope of Whit[e] before I did, and I still wait in silence to see further & shape my course accordingly. You know I shall leave White with reluctans if at all.

When Mr. Bradford, the co Editor of the "Sun," was in Nashville, I was induced to put down my name for ten numbers of that paper, on the express condition committed to writing, that I was not to be held responsible for the subscription money, except I could procure other subscribers for them, in my place and further that I was not to put my self to much trouble to get them.

Majr. George Graves¹ of Knox County Ten, has agreed to take one, & I am willing to keep one my self, and the other 8 numbers I wish stoped. I wrote them to this effect, but they still send them on.

Will you be so good as to have the other 8 numbers stoped

and have mine sent to Coffee County, Noahs Fork P.O.² and Mr George Graves sent to Woodbourne³ post office in Knox Cty Ten. You can remind them that our contract in the above effect, was reduced to writing if they are contrary about it. If they make prompt payment a condition for stopping them be so good as to pay them ten dollars for Graves & my self & take their reciept, and I will refund the money at any time, to you, on order.

I wish you to consider this letter as confidential.

J. WEBSTER

NB. I send you a caption of our laws

JW

Addressed to Washington.

1. At this time he was a member of the state senate. He served three terms, 1829-31 and 1835-39, in the General Assembly and at this time was drifting into the Whig ranks.

2. This settlement was on the eastern edge of Bedford County until 1836, when it was incorporated into newly created Coffee County.

3. This village was located a few miles northeast of Knoxville.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr. Sir

Columbia Feb. 22nd 1836

I recd a letter from the Overseer in Missi on yesterday stating that he had got his cotton out. The letter was dated 3rd of this month. He had only made Eight Bales owing to his not being able to procure Rope & Bagging until the time which he wrote, but that he should Bale & send off the Balance of the Cotton as soon as he could. He dont state what he will make. He writes he has commenced clearing land but I am afraid he will not be able to get land enough cleared. He writes me the [that] *Reuben* & Elizabeth have done no work since I left. They were both sick when I left there, in fact *Reuben* has been sick the most of last year. I have not heard from the district since I left there. I have a strong disposition to sell out in Missi if I can get a good price. I could have sold when I was down at \$20 pr. Acre I believe. I am afraid there is too much

of our plantation too flat and wet. I can form a more correct opinion about that when I go down in the spring. If that proves to be the fact I think we had better sell. I should have sold at \$20 when I was down if you had been willing. I find it very troublesome to carry on a farm at that distance. It is so very difficult to get a man that will attend to and do their duty. I am clearly of opinion it would be to our Interest to sell and purchase again. I am afraid our slaves will be sickly owing to the local situation of our Farm. All well.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, 98-99.

FROM THOMAS G. POLK¹

Salisbury, North Carolina. February 22, 1836

A cousin asks Polk to investigate the possibility of obtaining commutation pay allegedly due his father, William Polk, a Revolutionary War veteran.

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 193.

1. He was an older brother of Leonidas, Lucius J., and William J. Polk. Unlike his brothers he remained in North Carolina, where he served in the state legislature.

FROM JAMES C. RECORD¹

Dear Sir

Home² February 22d 1836

With pleasure I'll give you a small histry of the times. A few days since I returned from Nashville. During my Stay there I heard many Questions debated in the Legislative Hall. Among them Thos. H. Bentons Expunging Resolutions was the great topic. Many gentlemen took a part in that debate and to my great astonishment I there saw & heard a gentleman (if I may so call him) on the floor abuse that man whom I think of all men that now lives, deserves the greatest honers. I mean the Hero of New Orleans. Can it be posable that a *Tennesseean* can thus act. I think not, I am shure not. He is found among us

but he is of another Breede. If many such speeches as he made were to be made through Tennessee it would not be many months till she would stand Erect if she dont do it any way. I hope you have no such among you from this state. If you have you had best leave them when you return home for we shall have no use for them again. I have one request to make to all true Tennesseans & all those that has any regard or feeling for Andrew Jacksons Reputation to support Thomas H. Bentons Expunging Resolution to place that man, whom his country glories in uppon the grown [ground] which his servises claims, that when he returns home & retires from the Politicle Struggles that he may be surrounded with all the honners & ware those Laurels that he has so Gloriously ganed.

Dear Sir during this Session we have obtained a conditional County from the Countyes of Maury, Bedford, Giles & Lincoln & the first Thursday in April it will be decided whether we have a county or not by a vote. I think we shall get a County it will be called Martial County in honor of Chief Justice Martial & the County town Louisville.³ If this all takes place there will be some appointmnts to make which appointments I expect you will be able to controll. There will be the appointment of post Master for the County Seat which I should like to receive and if you should think from the long acquaintance you have had with me I am deserving of such appointment I shall gladly receive it.⁴ If its necessary to send a petition with a recommendation you will inform me & I will do so. It is the first of the kind I have ever asked & as many of my friends has all redy informed me from the active part I have taken in obtaining the county, tha [they] considered themselves under obligation to grant what I may ask. This is all I expect to ask & as this is not within there gift tha can do nothing for me.

JAMES C. RECORD

Addressed to Washington.

1. A former resident of Maury County who had moved to Farmington in Bedford County. He was a colonel in the militia and a man of some political influence.

2. Since the letter bears no postmark it is not possible to tell where it was written. On the envelope was written "E. E. Massey died this morning."

3. The county seat of the new county, Marshall, was Lewisburg, named for Meriwether Lewis.

4. Polk received several letters asking for consideration for the Lewisburg postmastership. It went to Abner Houston.

TO WILLIAM R. RUCKER

My Dear Sir

Washington City Feby 22d 1836

Other pressing engagements, which have very much occupied my time, must plead my apology, for having until now, delayed answering your several letters.

I send you by the mail of to day, the several receipts for newspaper subscriptions, which I have taken at your request. You will of course hand them to the persons entitled to them.

The President today communicated to the senate the official intelligence of the settlement of the French question.¹ Thus has happily terminated the difficulty, which threatened to involve the two countries in hostile collision. Genl Jackson has certainly glory enough for any one man. His administration both as it regards the conduct of our foreign affairs, and our domestic concerns, has been most eminently successful, and yet there are those who still calumniate & abuse him and will not agree that he possesses any one qualification to fit him for civil rule.

All things are looking well here.² The political agitators of the opposition, in the North and in the South will be unable to get up an excitement on the slave question, which they can turn to political account. The unanimous vote of the friends of Mr V. Buren (with less than half a dozen exceptions) on Pinckney's resolutions,³ must satisfy the country that they are sound upon that subject. Still a few reckless men in the South, will doubtless endeavour still to fan the flame, with a view to produce sectional divisions by which they hope to profit. The old Federalists in the North who are in opposition, are willing to see the discussion go on. It is amusing to witness the operation, & see how they play into each other's hands. An opposition man from the North presents a petition, whereupon a nullifier or Whitite from the South, spring's upon it, and makes an inflammatory speech, into which he incorporates the most inflammatory portions of the abolition publications of Tappan, Gar-

risson⁴ & Co. & these he distributes under his frank and yet cries out lustily against the dissemination of incendiary publications. The game is well understood here, & will be doubtless by the public. If it were not for the pending of a Presidential election we should hear nothing of the inflammatory speeches, which have been made at the Capitol & circulated under the official franks of honorable members of Congress. The excitement attempted to be raised in the community upon this subject, is most wicked & shows the desperate shifts to which the opposition, Federalists, nullifiers, White men & all, are driven. The whole movement is designed to produce another *panic* for political effect.

The *Expunging instructions*, have passed the Senate of the Virginia Legislature, and the rumour is, that the governor has refused to transmit them to the Senators, and that a special messenger would probably be dispatched by the Legislature. They will probably arrive in a day or two. What course the Senators will take is unknown. The rumour is, that [John] Tyler will resign. If they either resign or obey, Col. Benton's Expunging Resolution will pass without the aid of Judge White's vote.

There cannot be a remaining doubt of Van. Buren's election. The great body of the Democracy in Congress and in the country have united upon him, and nothing but his death or some unexpected change in public opinion can prevent it. I am happy to learn from many parts of Tennessee that the re-action is still going on, and am beginning to be the more confident, that we will yet carry the state. *White* has literally no party in Congress, except his few Tennessee followers, & a part of the nullifiers, who wish to use his name, & who *profess* to support him; and I should not be at all surprised if he should not receive the electoral vote of a single state in the Union. He certainly will not, unless indeed Tennessee or S.C. may support him. As the hopes of success become more and more desperate, his firm followers here not numbering two dozen all told, become more and more reckless & desperate. I have become as you will have seen the peculiar object upon whom they vent their gall & spleen. *Wise* who lives in the boarding house with *White*, *Peyton*, *Luke Lea* & *Co.* is set upon me, and the dirty columns of the *Sun* teem

daily with its falsehoods and abuse. *Here* these things are perfectly understood & can do no harm. They are intended no doubt, chiefly for the Tennessee market. I place them at defiance and am happy to know that I am sustained by the undivided democracy of the House over which I preside, as also by many honorable men among the opposition themselves, who cannot approve the violent course of such men as *Wise & Peyton* & a few others, prompted probably by another, who as usual lies concealed behind the curtain.

Write me particularly the present state of public opinion in Rutherford, and also what you may have learned from Bedford.

I mark this *private*, because I never write for the public or the press.

Remember us kindly to all the kin.

[JAMES K. POLK]⁵

Addressed to Murfreesboro and marked "Private." A portion of this letter has been published in Charles Grier Sellers Jr., *James K. Polk: Jacksonian, 1795-1843* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 314.

1. This is a reference to the settlement of the French Spoliation Claims.

2. The quotation by Sellers begins at this point and runs through the sentence ending "cries out lustily against the dissemination of incendiary publications."

3. These resolutions offered by Henry L. Pinckney of South Carolina were precursors of the "gag rule" adopted by the House of Representatives. Pinckney's resolutions concerned the disposition of memorials asking for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The vote referred to here seems to be that taken early in February 1836 on a portion of the resolutions stating that Congress ought not to interfere with slavery in the District. The tally was 129 for and 74 against, with the entire Tennessee delegation voting for it.

4. William Lloyd Garrison and the Tappan brothers, Lewis and Arthur, were leading abolitionists. Since Arthur Tappan had recently published and distributed a large number of abolition tracts this is probably a reference to him.

5. The signature has been clipped from the manuscript, probably by an autograph collector.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia, Feb. 23d 1836

I have received yours of the 10th. I never doubted but that every thing which could be done with propriety would be done

to relieve us from our unpleasant situation. It is true, I have felt alarm and much anxiety, still I have looked this matter fairly in the face. The result of continuing to convey the *present sized mail*, without additional compensation, is too certain and inevitable. No prudence or energy can prevent a loss, and a heavy loss may be justly apprehended. It is true, that the very rapid increase of the population of Mississippi—the immense number of horses mules, & stock driven along our road, and the consequent scarcity & high prices of supplies for Teams, has operated much against us. But the rock upon which we must split is the extraordinary increase and unreasonable weight of our mails. But for this we could have got and taken passengers enough with our mail pay to have defrayed expenses. If I could have seen any fair prospects of making receipts pay expenses my pride would have prevented my taking the course I have. But pride is but a poor legacy to one's children, but a poor apology to absent partner's for permitting them to get into difficulties without an effort to avert it. The heavy mails during the whole of last year, together with the general bad state of the roads most part of it, has so crippled our means, and used up our property, that it would be difficult for us now to recover from it even with *light* mails which there is not the slightest prospect of notwithstanding the Steam Boat arrangement. This mail must and will continue to increase. The mail that went down yesterday weighed about 2000—5 passengers wanted to go from here & would have rode in the waggon, but we could not take them. Mr. Kendall's decision as to pay for increase of mail is such as I expected, tho I believe it has been the custom of all former P M G's to do so. It is just in itself to do so under circumstances like ours, but we being known to be friends of the administration charges of favoritism might and probably would be the consequence of doing us simple justice. The only and probably best relief which can be afforded us is to forfeit and cancel our contracts in such a way that we will not be liable to damages. Our reputation ought not to be affected because we have faithfully done our duty under heavy losses. It is not our fault if the public have put such a burthen of service upon us as to break us down, with the means at our command.

I have sold our favorite routes in order to raise the means to pay our New Orleans debt. We still owe in Bank here, and our agents are calling for large sums to keep up the lines. I have put my Western District lands in the market but this is *too slow* for the immergency. Additional pay I do not expect, unless then our contracts are cancelled, and other proper provision made for conveying the Mail agreeable to the business and wants of the country, inevitable failure must be the consequence. Disgrace must fall on us & on the Department. It is not in my power to prevent it in any other way than to be false to my friends, and by this means from Bank facilities to keep up the lines. *This I will not do to a greater extent than I can make all safe and prevent any loss of credit to others.* I am determined the mail shall fail first, and my own fortune go to the winds. A *Tri weekly* coach line *cannot* transport this mail. I have repeated this so often that I am tired of writing it. The thing is impossible, a *waggon mail* slower & without passengers might do, but it must cost heavily in any way it is transported.

Seeing the prospects as they are, and there can be no mistake in my conclusions, I have done what I honestly conceived to be my duty. I have fairly and candidly reported the actual state of things to the proper officers of the government, I have disclosed our situation and prospects without reserve, I have in good time warned the department of the danger which threatens the regularity of the mail, and in the mean time, I have used every exertion to keep Mails regular, and with a full consciousness that it is impossible for me to continue to do so, the contract out unless indemnity is made for the extra transportation.

I have done, what I thought was my duty to all parties concerned. Me and my family must suffer the consequences of my engaging in a contract, which circumstances beyond my control, have and must render disastrous.

If our contracts are cancelled without much delay, we may get off with the loss of the whole or part of the capital W. C. & Co.¹ have advanced, provided we can get a fair price for the mail property on hand. This & our time and attention would seem a sufficient penalty for our mistake. We have advanced about \$15000. I would now willingly compromise with the loss of it. Our contracts are too heavy for the controul and manage-

ment of any one man, and when the ballance is on the waning side, the amount must soon be alarming and perplexing. It is of much importance that whatever is done should be done quickly, that we may know where we stand.

Since writing, I have received the enclosed letter from Groves,² which will give you some idea of our situation. If we can get no relief, and are held on to the contracts, and compelled to take the *whole* mail, a heavy loss is inevitable. The loss may be so heavy as to produce embarrassment & ruin.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Walker, Caruthers and Company.
2. This is probably John W. Groves, who had been associated with Walker in the mail-contract business for some time. He was highly thought of by Walker but little else has been learned about him. See Walker to Polk, April 22, 1836.

FROM DAVID GILLESPIE¹

Nashville. February 24, 1836

Gillespie contemplates a visit to Texas with a view to purchasing land there, but he is reluctant to do so until he learns something about Jackson's attitude toward Texas's independence. He asks Polk for information as to Jackson's views.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A former resident of Columbia, Gillespie at one time had been associated with Sam Polk in a steamboat company. Although Gillespie calls himself a kinsman of Polk, the nature of this relationship has not been learned.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Waxhaws near Fayetteville [Arkansas]

My old Friend

Feby the 25th 1836

I will not complain that I have not herd from you this winter. There is no crime of commision, much less of omission for me to bring in Judgement against you. I am ready to attribt. it to other causes rather than intentional neglect.

No man in this nation was more gratified than myself at your late elevation and over a set of renegade politicians who had lost sight of the public interest in the elevation of one or

two of their leaders. By accident I was among the first to learn that your distinction was determined on. An extract from that letter (A. A. Hall) I enclosed to you. From that time I have been in bad odor with the party (No-party party). I saw Bell last spring at the mouth of Cumberland. He barely passed the ordinary civilities and so we parted.

I am pleased to find you sustain yourself in the Chair equal to the expectations of your friend.

Rumor says you are to be transfered to the *War* department. I am inclined to believe you would prefer your present situation. The Treasury Department I calculate will be offered you if VanBurn should be elected, and I hope it may &c.

As Arkansaw will shortly be numbered among the sovereign states of this confederacy, (if we are not mistaken) the news from the afar west might not be uninteresting to you, more especially as many of your old and Devoted friends have or will this spring become inhabitants thereof.

We are now preparing for the struggle in August next when all our Elections will take place under our Constitution. We hold no *Caucus* here but among friend its understood that *Sever* [Ambrose H. Sevier] is to go into the Senate of the United States with Govr. Fulton or some other good man of the party. Col James S. Conway¹ the present surveyor Genl. is to run for Govr and I have been selected it seems to run for Congress H R. Its not the situation I desired but I have been rendered ineligible by the Constitution for the office I would have willingly accepted (Govr). I have not as yet given my assent to run for Congress, nor will I if our friends can select any other man of our party who will run. I am poor and would if elected have but one session to serve & that the short one and the expense I fear will over run the honor & profit. The contest, run who will, will be violent and perhaps uncertain. I am not so generally known as many others, and therefore I should have to use more industry and exertions, and besides I am generally known to be a violent partizan & go the whole for *Van & Johnson*. That will deprive me of many of my warm personal friends who are for White and with the White men & Anti Jackson men the result will be somewhat uncertain, and if our ticket succeed it will be by meeting the question and battling it out, and place things on their proper ground.

In doing that I shall necessarily make myself unpopular with the *whole* opposition and if defeated now may never be able to make a stand in future. My own impreson is, takeing all things into considertion it would be impolitic at least for me to run at this time. Therefore if our friends can find a man of sufficient strength who will consent to run I will not. If I am called upon by the party to bear it out and to risk all for the good of the party, I shall *go it*, and my frinds may prepare themselves to hear any thing. If I am defeated I shall not be much disappointed nor mortified. My competitor² is a man of Talints and an old Citizen of Ark, a *professed* Jackson man and a violent Anti Van Burn man, goes the whole for White. By that means he serves all the old opposition and all the *White Jackson* men, and theres not a few of them. If they beat Conway & myself, you may look out for 2 Senators anti Jackson & Van Burn.

Before this will have reached you I presume Col Sever will have left Washington for Ark. He is needed here in organizing our folks and keeping some of them to the tract.

We shall make a bold fight and if success depends on a frank and independent course the victory is *ours*.

Please say to the old Genral. I shall most likely be a candidate and come what will he shall be defended and I will succeed upon the Jackson principles or will "die in the Ditch."

Present me to your good Lady who I have not forgotten. Does she not read my letters?

A. YELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. He was a member of a politically powerful family in Arkansas and was elected as the first governor of the new state.

2. William Cummins ran against Yell and was beaten decisively. Cummins was from Kentucky, was a lawyer, and at one time was a partner of Albert Pike; at another, he was a partner of Absalom Fowler, the man whom Conway defeated for the governorship.

FROM WILLIAM J. POLK

Dear Sir

Columbia Feby 26, 1836

When you proffered me the rent of your house for 12 months, I thought it more than probable, that I should either build or

purchase before the expiration of that time.¹ In the event of building which I presume will be the only alternative, I can hardly hope to have my buildings complete before the 1st of Ja'y & possibly not in that time. I would be glad to know by the *earliest opportunity* what are your determinations. I would rent it (say at all events to the 1st of Ja'y) &, possibly would take it for a longer period. Would it be convenient for you, in the event of your renting me the house to have your goods upstairs stored away with some of your friends in Columbia? Expecting some frds from N Carolina this summer, it would be a convenience for me to have the room, more especially so as my family is larger. However should it not altogether suit your convenience to make such a disposition of your furniture, I should be glad to get the house under any circumstances.

Mrs. P Joins me in making her compliments acceptable to yourself and Mrs Polk.

WILL J. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. See William J. Polk to James K. Polk, October 15, 1835. Apparently the writer had given up the idea of moving to Mississippi or Arkansas.

FROM ANGEL CALDERON DE LA BARCA

Washington. February 28, 1836

The Spanish minister thanks Polk for expediting the delivery of documents from the House to the Spanish Legation.¹

Presumably addressed to the House of Representatives, but no envelope has been found.

1. See Calderon de la Barca to Polk, February 13, 1836, and Polk to Calderon de la Barca, February 14, 1836.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir,

Montgomery, Alabama, 1 March 1831

I have not written a word to a member of Congress, nor have I received a notice from one during the present session. One cause is that I have no specific property in any particular mem-

ber & another is that I left Tennessee before you met at Washington & have been spending the winter with my kinsfolk in the South.

My wife came with me & we embarked on steamboat at Nashville by way of New Orleans. [John H.] Eaton & family were with us & after spending two or three days in Orleans uncomfortably enough, we came across the Lakes to Mobile. There we met the meeting of Congress the election of Speaker & the election of Printer. Great satisfaction seemed to be felt by all who frequented Sanfords news room. I saw J. P. Erwin's brother Isaac¹ in the street looking as blue as skimmed milk. Hitchcock² was not visible. Indeed I did not see him while there. Mrs Eaton rejoiced heartily & sincerely, triumphing over Bob Foster who was with us there & who of course was deeply mortified. On arriving at this place I met the resolutions of their H R. to expunging, the nomination of the Judge,³ & also the proceedings of convention at Tuscaloosa nominating Electors. The "*Sagacious politicians*" here at once suspected Judge Smith with an inclination to be run for V.P. himself when they saw the features of that branch of the nomination at Tuscaloosa, & the Richmond nomination has gone far towards making some of Judge Smiths best friends here dissatisfied with him. They seem disposed however to bide silently the issue of future events and as he is at the head of their electoral ticket his path is a difficult one if he has private purposes to answer whilst at the same time his position is a very perplexing one to such of his party & friends as would be wholly unwilling to permit him to be an instrument of embarrassment to the general cause.

The selection of the Electoral ticket here seems upon the whole to be a pretty judicious one. Hallet in the far South is a very reputable well known general merchant of Mobile. Judge Hunter next South is of a very Strong Wealth, South Carolina connexion of Nullifiers in Lowndes County and is himself & always has been a union man. Col Pickett⁴ I have known for thirty years. He has been much in public life is bustling & active. Sometimes a weight upon his friends but has uniformly been supported by my relations here first against the old Georgia party & last for Jackson & the Union. His present atti-

tude is utter enmity, personally & politically against all nullifiers & nullification. Indeed, Union & Nullification is now almost the only distinctive line of demarkation of parties here; the former uniformly supporting Van Buren & the latter as uniformly supporting White. Very little excitement has yet been made by the respective tickets of the parties, & I apprehend that Murphey, [Samuel W.] Mardis & Gayle⁵ are endeavouring to keep down discussion until the developments of the present season at Washington shall have been satisfactorily made. Should White stock seem to run down to Tennessee Capital alone they will be very unwilling to be made the tools of their natural enemies here as they certainly are, and they may hope and believe that they are still on retreating ground; and retreat they will if they can make nothing by advancing, better than their friends Bell & White before them have done. My friends here have always supported Murphey. They do not think he has authorized his old enemies to place him on their ticket. At all events his new & strange bedfellows will have use for him but once. They dislike him more than those do who will vote against him & so soon as he has answered the present purpose, whether elected or not he will find himself between the two stools. You know more of Mardis than I do.

The Indian business here is in considerable ferment apart from the open hostilities of the Seminoles. I have been a good deal in the Creek nation & found a sullen spirit of dissatisfaction every where. The execution & final fulfilment of the treaty contained in itself, necessarily, the seeds of Collision.⁶ Each head of a family had a reserve of 320 acres; the Chiefs 640 acres with privilege to sell. Actual settlers could not become the purchasers in a long series of years. The process of contracting through Interpreters & agents could be availed of only by general dealers who could make it a business of speculation & profit. These general dealers have in the very nature of Indian affairs resorted in too many instances to fraud violence & deception. The frauds have sometimes been brought to the notice of Government. Scrutiny has been instituted, the investigators have in their turn been deceived & the worst passions of the corrupt men been brought to bear upon them. In many instances

one Indian has sold the lands of another, the purchaser knowing the fraud. The proof necessary in rectifying the matter is more difficult than the injured Indian can comprehend & much ill humor is created. Most of the reservees have now sold out to speculators; sub purchasers are in some instances coming in. The Indians cannot give possession conveniently, having no other home. Some have gone to the Cherokees & returned. Many it is thought have gone to the Seminoles. Those who remain are spending the proceeds of their land for Whisky & roaming listlessly about. The longer they remain the more multiplied will be the causes of bad feeling between them & the incoming whites and upon the whole it may be worth your while to encourage the department in hastening any migration projects which may be on hand. So soon as the spring opens, all who are prepared & willing to migrate should have the facilities of going. You could not avoid putting [John] Bell on the Indian committee; you found him there or rather, he had been previously & temporarily removed from there by Covin,⁷ but it is to be regretted White occupies the corresponding place in Senate. They can confederate to throw some obstacles in the way of necessary & energetic measures. I see that in some allegations of Mr Black⁸ in the Senate against some of his speculating constituents, the Judge took occasion to utter his detestation of fraud and his determination to protect the natives from injustice. Now, all this is very good poetry or something better but men of less discriminating powers than the judge, might not always be able to discern what it is that constitutes a protection from imposition in a tissue so complicated as our Indian relations.

I begin to be anxious to return to Tennessee, though I shall probably remain here long enough to hear from you should you write immediately. I see by a late paper from Nashville, that old Tommy Crutcher & I were placed in a party minority on some late voting for Treasurer and a new office of Auditor.⁹ I have not received a single line from any of them & do not know what could have been the motive for testing the vote. They may have had their own objects, better known to them than they can be to me. I knew before I left there, that they intended to put out old Tommy & so told some of their party who af-

fectured to stick to the old man. William Nichol¹⁰ seemed perfectly incredulous when I told him that Tommys old friend, his brother in law, Ephraim [H. Foster] would out him if he Could. Eph might splutter & affect as much as he pleased, but in secret he was working the old mans defeat.

If there should be any thing deserving remark when I get to Tennessee I will write to you or Grundy. Commend me to him. Say to him that the people here *on his side* give him the victory decidedly in the affair of the Senate about Little Ben Curry¹¹ & their private grief.

DANIEL GRAHAM

Addressed to Washington.

1. Isaac H. Erwin moved from Tennessee to Mobile, where he practiced law. After serving in the state legislature and as a trustee of University of Alabama, he died of yellow fever, cutting short what had promised to be a successful public career.

2. Henry Hitchcock of Washington County, Alabama, was a member of the state supreme court at this time.

3. Judge William Smith had been nominated by the Alabama legislature as a vice-presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket.

4. William R. Hallett, a prosperous Mobile merchant, had been a member of the Alabama legislature. Judge John S. Hunter, a loyal Democrat at this time, became a Whig before 1840. Col. William R. Pickett, of Autauga County, was the father of the noted historian of the state, Albert J. Pickett.

5. John Murphy and John Gayle were both from the southern part of Alabama, and each had served one term as governor.

6. This appears to be a reference to the treaty signed in March 1832, which was the basis for ultimate removal of the Creeks beyond the Mississippi.

7. Covin is a legal term meaning a collusive agreement or conspiracy.

8. John Black, a Mississippi Whig, served one term, 1832-38, in the Senate.

9. In February 1836 the legislature elected Memucan H. Howard as Comptroller over Graham by a vote of 62 to 35. For some reason Howard never took office, and within two weeks the legislature elected Graham unanimously. See Graham to Polk, March 5, 1836. During the same month Crutcher ran a poor third in the election of a Treasurer. Although he was the incumbent, Crutcher received only 6 of the 98 votes cast.

10. Nichol was a prosperous Nashville merchant, banker, and steamboat owner. He and Ephraim H. Foster had married sisters.

11. This is a reference to the ill-advised attack on Benjamin F. Currey made by Hugh L. White on the floor of the Senate.

FROM ROBERT MACK

Columbia. March 1, 1836

Lamenting that the world is too concerned with politics and material things to appreciate poetry, Mack asks Polk to arrange an auction for selling the volumes of his book of poems remaining unsold at the Washington book firm Thompson and Homan.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Mack to Polk, January 27, April 27, May 5, and December 12, 1834.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

Dear Col.

Columbia March 2nd 1836

You will, no doubt have perceived from the papers by the time this reaches you, that I am a candidate for Major. General of the 3rd. Division of the Tennessee Militia.

Since my name has been announced the White Gentlemen have brought out Cahal with the view of [. . .] the White question upon me. This is understood here to have been done with the view of strengthening Cahal in Bedford as a preparatory step to his opposition to yourself. We shall have a very *heated Contest*. The full strength of the White question will be pressed upon me. I did not desire to make the contest turn upon this question, but since it is *forced* upon me I shall meet it *boldly*. If the friends of our cause are true, I fear nothing. A communication from you, addressed to some of your devoted personal friends in Bedford & Lyncoln would enlist their feelings in my behalf & ensure their respective neighbourhood.

Such friendly assistance on your part would be *gratefully* recollected.

The Division is so large & the time before the election so short that much must depend upon the activity & exertions of my friends. Your friends here all view me as fighting your cause.

The election comes on early in April so that what is done, should be done *quickly*. Let me hear from you as soon as your public engagements will admit of.

GIDEON J. PILLOW

Addressed to Washington and marked "Confidential."

FROM THOMAS WHALEY¹

Dear sir,

Mt Pleasant 2d March 1836

I hope you will accept of my feble effort in the offer of my congratulations uppon the recent triumph of the democrats. I allude to the Election of yourself to the Speakers Chair. It was a shock reather two sevear to be calmly born by the real double faced professed & would be thought White Jackson men of our state. It had the tendency to make some of them quite desperate, yea mad, whilst on the other hand it tended to convince a great maney honest Supporters of Judge White, that they had been blinded by the Leading papers of our once hapy state, and had found themselvs on the rong side promoting the principles that they had struggled long and hard to put down, all of which nearly to a man in my opinion have asposued the Van buren Cause and at this time I believe Van buren is stronger in Maury County than White, and my reason for believing so is that our County Election takes place in a few days and I discover the friends of Porter² (who is a candidate for sheriff) appear verry anxious not to make that a question, and Porters views (which you know are opposed to Van buren) are Kept verry still. The contest will be close between him & [Powhatan] Gordon for Sheriff.

But to the subject, I do feel truly gratified at your Election to the Chair under the circumstances that it took place, nothing in a political point of view could have gave me more pleasure and I hope it will stand as a warning to future politicians who seek to agrandise themselvs at the sacrificse of principle.

I once voted for a man in my old District Who went to Congress & met the Enemies of the present administration at every point. He was a Champion. McDuffie was made to feel his mighty efforts but where is he now. Is he one that contributed to astablish that paper caled the Sun³ that is filed with low grovelling abuse & levelled against the man that he would atte[m]pt to hold forth as a great & good man. Shurly Andrew Jackson has changed or my former representitive has changed & I dont believe Andrew has changed. I am an humble indivial & some might say that it was nonsense for me to think

or Express any thing relative to our national matters but I have rights, and priviledges that I never will surrender until I have been driven beyond the last ditch, and I intend so far as I can understand the moovements of public men to approve or disapprove of them & I shall allways stand ready to be corrected & set right where ever I am convinced I am rong.

Our Citizen Col Nixon⁴ has done a gooddale here for the Van buren cause. He is a real gentleman & has some tallents, untireing disposition, and considerable influence. If you think it worth while you may present my respects to Mr Grundy. I have read his speech franked by you with much pleasure. I mean uppon the three milion appropriation. With a hope that you will enjoy health and return amongst us again. . . .

THOS. WHALEY

Addressed to Washington.

1. Except that he had moved to Maury County from Smith County, little has been learned of Whaley.

2. Nimrod Porter served as sheriff of Maury County for many years. In this contest he won easily over Gordon.

3. This is an obvious reference to Balie Peyton.

4. John Nixon was one of the earliest Methodist ministers in Maury County, and this seems to be a reference to one of his sons, Wesley, a resident of the Mt. Pleasant area, who was a lieutenant colonel in the militia at this time.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia March 3d 1836

Our County elections that come on on Saturday do not excite very much attention. The political question operates to some extent but there is no issue made that will fully test the strength of parties. It will be a hard contest between [Powhatan] Gordon & [Nimrod] Porter, but Porter has so much the advantage in acquaintance and long habits of electioneering that this will be no fair test. The circuit clerkship, [Pleasant] Nelson & [Robert M.] Cooper run on the Van Buren side, (and it is thought the election is between them) against Col. Dooley¹ on the White side. The county clerkship attracts no attention.

For Register *the want* [of legs?] will it is thought will elect Gullet² against all opposition—Madden, Cherry & Wingfield, Van Buren against Cohorn, Old Mr. Dale, White;³ Gullet, no politics, but his connexions Van Buren. The military elections were about to bring up the question and array parties fairly. Cahall came out for Major General, declaring the d-d *Democrat* had been trying to put him down. He would show them they could not do it. The challenge was accepted by Gen. Pillow and all hands prepared to make this a test question. We intended to make it a fair Van Buren & White question and so declared. Cahal (whose conscience was so tender that he could not vote for expunging, and who as the champion of the White cause introduced John Bell's celebrated insidious resolution nominating Judge White and casting all sorts of odium on the President, whilst affecting to praise him) *has backed out*. He, upon better advice, will not give us a chance at him. He, and his "No party" friends now dread nothing more than the development of public sentiment, the expression of public indignation. I am particularly sorry that Cahal has declined. I wanted a fair opportunity to "use him up" and to teach him how the people understand his position.

D. Looney⁴ is a candidate for Brigadier. Dr C. & E.⁵ had a strong inclination to oppose him. I discouraged it. We will beat Looney most shamefully, but I do not mean that any of our connexion shall be candidates for any thing if I can help it. Col. Hunter⁶ of Bedford, and I understand [Samuel] Mitchell of Bedford are candidates for Brigadier. We hold Col [Wesley] Nixon of Mt. Pleasant in reserve, and will be governed by circumstances. We are determined that a Jackson—Van Buren—Polk man shall be the Brigadier, or we will be fairly whipped, of which I have not the slightest apprehension. Hunter is here. I shall see him & converse fully with him this evening—our forces must be kept together.

I have heard nothing from you since yours of the 14th Ult. Am anxious to know how our matters are settled. Since the reception of your two last letters, I feel like I was "coming to myself again." I was in a state of depression at a most fortunate time so far as politics are concerned. But we can no longer avoid excitement or a contest unless the White Whigs fairly back out

as *Cahal has*. You will see by the last Democrat that we agree to the call of a Tennessee Republican convention. We must carry this state, or leave no honorable effort untried. I think we shall succeed. We shall certainly succeed unless East Tennessee comes down upon us with overwhelming majorities for the White cause. We are gaining every day. There is now no question as to where the strength is in this region.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Esom Dooley was a former lieutenant colonel in the Tennessee militia and a justice of the peace in Maury County.

2. Robert I. Gullett was a resident of Columbia who became register of that county in the early 1840s.

3. Thomas Madden was the first Methodist minister stationed in Columbia. At one time he edited and published the *Columbia Democrat*. Jeremiah Cherry was a son of an early settler, also named Jeremiah. After being an innkeeper and postmaster at White House, in Williamson County, he had recently returned to Columbia. Albert M. Wingfield was a native of Georgia who later became clerk and master of the chancery court in Maury County. He was a near relative of Chesley Bynum's wife. Amos Cohorn was a merchant in the village that later became Santa Fe. Adam Dale, a veteran of the Revolution and of the War of 1812, was a Columbia merchant. He was a kinsman of Edward W. Dale and had at one time been in a partnership with him.

4. David Looney was a son of Abraham Looney and a son-in-law of Patrick Maguire, both well-to-do Columbia merchants. Not politically popular, he finally moved to Memphis, where he practiced law.

5. Possibly Dr. Silas M. Caldwell and his wife, Eliza.

6. Ephraim Hunter was a merchant and farmer in Farmington, Bedford County. He was active in military affairs and a supporter of Polk.

FROM JOSEPHUS C. GUILD

James K Polk Esq.

Gallatin March 4th 1836

I have been confined to my room since I returned home with chills and fever, but have sufficiently recovered to drop you a line.

Enclosed you will find \$5 which you will please hand over to Mr. Blair editor of *Globe*. I have likewise sent you my last speech upon White Whigery which if you have time run over. It galled them at the time.¹

You will see by my protest how the White Whigs disposed of this great question. We have placed them I think in a very vulnerable position before the people, where the question is now to be decided. We have gained as much as I expected before that John Bell legislature. We have out managed them on every thing connected with this subject although in the minority, as the whole of the proceedings I think will show, and will have a good effect in the final settlement of this matter before the people. It has been a great lever and we have used it to place those White professed but incinsere Jackson men in their true position before the people, to wit that they profess one thing and act out another.

Capt. Bunch and Leut. Lea's certificate is good.² It shows two things, that they are treacherous in small matters without having sense to know where the blow would fall, and that old Hugh knew that Genl. J. desired the appropriation of 3 millions. "Alas poor Yorick!"

Jo. C. GUILD

N.P. You hav seen our address, prepared by Nicholson.

Addressed to Washington.

1. The enclosure has not been found. It was probably a copy of the speech Guild made on February 12, 1836, sharply attacking Whigs in the General Assembly for failure to support Benton's expunging efforts. This speech had been published by the Democratic press.

2. On January 22, 1836, Representative Wise of Virginia presented to the House statements of Samuel Bunch and Luke Lea alleging that Polk had informed them before the vote on the Fortifications Bill that Jackson wanted it passed, but desired that his views be kept secret. Wise claimed that Jackson and Polk wanted to discredit White by luring him into voting against the bill and then charging him with opposition to administration measures. Polk responded to Wise by taking the floor and dispassionately demonstrating that Wise's interpretation of the incident was absurd. See Andrew Jackson to Polk, May 3, 1835.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Washington City, 4 March 1836

Mr. Samuel Hamilton has submitted to me for my inspection the testimonials of Messrs. Hill & Hubbard¹ of the U.S. Senate,

and also those of several other gentlemen, in his behalf, recommending him as a man of good character, and well qualified to discharge the duties of a clerkship in one of the Executive Departments. I have a limited personal acquaintance with Mr. Hamilton, but have great confidence in the gentlemen who have recommended him, and have no doubt he is qualified to perform the duties of the situation he seeks. Should a vacancy occur I would be gratified at his appointment.

JAMES K. POLK

No envelope is available, but it is obvious that the letter was addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy which Polk did not sign. The letter is in Records of the General Accounting Office (RG 217), National Archives.

1. Isaac Hill and Henry Hubbard were senators from New Hampshire. Hamilton is unidentified.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

Dear Sir

Columbia March 4th 1836

I addressed you on the 2nd. Inst. advising you that I had taken the field for Majr General & that Cahal entered the lists against me. To day he has withdrawn his name. He became convinced that I should defeat him, & has taken this course to avoid this very *hot contest* which he *forsaw* we were to have, & with the double view of strengthening the White cause in Robt Cannon, & of conscileating in Bedford County the *Cannon strength*.

His motives cannot be misunderstood. Cannon is the man who is now to be *run at me*. My defeat is resolved upon if there is *strength* in the *cause* to procure it. This in my judgement they cannot do. My resolve is taken, & I'll *die* in the *ditch* or I will *conquer*. Hickman County is in this Division. Col Johnston¹ could do me much service there by addressing his *particular friends*. This Division is composed of the counties of Franklin, Warren, Bedford, Rutherford, Lyncoln, Maury, Giles, Laurence, Hickman, Wayne, Hardin & Perry & the majr General under the new constitution is elected by the *people*.² A few lines from you to any of your friends would enlist their feelings in my behalf.

Show this letter to my friend Col Johnston & say to him that I am fighting for *our cause*, & should be much gratified to receive the aid of his *Strong Arm*.

I will occasionally as the contest *waxes hot* advise you of the *probable result*, as well as I can judge.

Your friends are all well. I addressed the Hon Martin Van Buren a few days since. Say to him if I should be elected it will afford a *fair test* of the present strength of parties in this part of the state. I am running as you know against a man greatly my *senior* in years & of a more general *acquaintance*, but I will give him the *Camp fever* before I am done with him.

GIDEON J. PILLOW

Addressed to Washington and marked "Confidential."

1. In spite of the spelling this is an obvious reference to Cave Johnson, whose congressional district included Hickman County.

2. The new state constitution provided that major generals in the militia should be elected by persons subject to military duty. Prior to this time they had been selected by the brigadiers and field officers.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia March 4th 1836

I have received yours of the 20th Ult. It gave me some concern when I saw you so anxious for us to hold on to, and go through with our contracts. I understand your feelings, appreciate, and thank you most sincerely for them. Still Caruthers is right; the course you say he was about to take is indispensable to us. I have given him full information on this subject and thought I had given you such information that you could not doubt the necessity of our getting released from our contracts as speedily as possible. Every days delay is a loss to us, and a loss of magnitude. We have been regularly loosing about 2500 pr. month since the middle of Nov. We must *continue to loose* even after the roads get good enough to run coaches & take passengers. What does it signify for the season to take passengers to arrive & plenty wanting conveyance, if our mail is so heavy that we can only take that, or at best but very few passengers. The Steam Boat arrangement will afford us very little relief.

The mail for the interior of Mississippi, is too great a burthen for us. There is no hope of being saved from a very heavy loss but in the relinquishing of our contracts. *All if it must be so.* If Dr. Polk & Samuel are not permitted to retain the routes from Nashville to Huntsville, we must indemnify them, & let them go. I sold to particular friends looking to this contingency. I sold to them to enable us to go on *longer* with the Southern Routes, and was confident that the Department would permit them to retain the routes transferred to them, if it could with propriety be done. If it can not be so done, neither I nor they wish it. Let them all go; nothing else can save us from failure & real disgrace. It mortifies you to think how my enemies will triumph over me. This had much weight with me, and weighed me down until I reasoned more correctly on the subject. Let them triumph. It is better they should triumph over the loss of my lines, than that they should triumph over me as a ruined powerless man. No matter what they may think of it, I am in the path of duty and of honor. Altho I must stand as a failing contractor the public will when they understand the facts, award me justice; my reputation will be unharmed. My enemies cannot triumph but in their own imaginations, and I so sincerely despise the soul that can rejoice in the misfortunes even of an enemy that their triumphs will give me but little concern. Suppose I had concealed our situation, and had from pride struggled on, involved my friends in heavy responsibility that I could not relieve in time to prevent them and it being affected, and before even October for want of cash means, the mail had stopped, our property seized for want of means, to pay expenses. If this had happened, the Post-office Department could not in 6 months have restored this mail to regularity; commercial interests would have been most seriously affected, immense losses sustained, and I must have borne all the odium of the catastrophe. As it is, when I saw the results that must happen, I lost no time in communicating the state of things to the Department and to my partners. I done this in full time to prevent the public from sustaining any injury from our misfortune; in time to prevent any censure from falling on the Department from our failure. I believe I have performed my duty honorably and faithfully to all parties concerned & to my

own family; if my enemies *can* triumph over me, they must do it.

I beg of you not to think of delaying the matter until October. It is the summer I dread. How do you think it is possible for me to get on with the present rate of compensation and pay \$2 pr bushel for corn & haul it sometimes 100 miles at that, \$2 pr. hundred for hay, and transport it from the Mississippi river 150 miles. There is but little fodder¹ in the Choctaw nation. What is there is worth from 75 cents to \$1 pr doz bundles. These facts must satisfy you that the sooner we are succeeded by new contractors the better. I hope Caruthers has done what you say he contemplated; his views about the spring being the best time to sell property are correct; this will make an immense difference in our property. In addition to this the feed we shall have on hand in the scarce region will command a high price, and be so indispensable to our successors that there will be no squabbling about property. As to being denied the right of bidding, I care nothing about it. I am sick of the business, to the extent we are engaged in it. I shall certainly not request the re-letting not to take place. Do not let your friendship for me lead me into further difficulties. I tell you that we can only be saved from embarrassment that may end in ruin & disgrace by being relieved of the contracts as early as practicable. I am well informed on the subject, and I trust you know I seldom jest & never jockey. Delay is only plunging us into deeper difficulties, and endangering us. We will continue to convey the Mail until any time in the spring that may be agreed on, and hope we'll do it punctually. I think the Department would with propriety relieve our property to be taken but it will be so indispensable to our successors, that I apprehend but little difficulties on this score. I should have been glad if the transfer to Dr. Polk & Samuel had been sanctioned, but all must go in preference to our being held on to the lines South of Florence.

William's want of care & prodigal expenditure of money gives me much concern. I gave him \$200. I am astonished at his spending the half of it, no matter how much difficulty he had with ice. He has spent within the last year over \$1000. I find upon examining his accounts that I have paid to & for him about \$400, more than the whole rent of his lands, hire of

negroes, the half of his \$1500 legacy and surplus of \$565 in my hands. I also find that I have paid out & charged to the estate of S. Polk more than \$400 more than has come into my hands, which has been produced by payment of Wm's large amounts. In counting what I had overpaid his own I also credited him \$175 for Fanny Lawson² & 285 for difference in [. . .] & L. P.'s estate. I mention these things to call your attention to the necessity of paying some attention to the prudence of his expenditure at Washington. He is honorable, free hearted and thoughtless, and has such a propensity to *throw away* money that unless he learns more prudence, his estate will do him no good.

JAMES WALKER

P.S. In politics, I am sanguine that all is going well. Our cause is in the ascendant here, and gaining continually. The attack on you in the Republican, will not harm you. It must sink Barrow & Bell low in public estimation. The Union has very appropriately noticed it, and it will be attended to by the Democrat.

W

Addressed to Washington.

1. Leaves stripped from cornstalks and then dried.
2. Unidentified.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir,

Montgomery Alabama March 5, 1836

By letters which I received from Nashville yesterday it seems that Make Howard¹ has upon full advisement backed out from being comptroller & the White wiggery boys are reduced to the dilemma of letting me be elected. I have not been advised of any of the difficulties which occurred in the ranks but it is intimated that Make was appaled at the complicated nature of the duties & there was a good deal said amongst the people of his probable incapacity.

My first impression is that I should take the office until I can have it fully organized & be governed by future developments as to holding on. Of this I will be better able to judge

when I get to Tennessee which I shall now endeavor to do with as little delay as practicable.

The result of the French affair is peculiarly gratifying and our chief anxieties now are directed to the Virginia Senators & the expunging process.

DANIEL GRAHAM

Addressed to Washington.

1. This name is difficult to decipher. It is known that Memucan Hunt Howard was elected comptroller but declined to serve. Perhaps the first name as it seems to be written here was a nickname.

FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Dear Uncle

Wheeling Va. March 7th 1836

After a tedious trip I am thus far on way to Philadelphia. I intended to have taken Washington in my route, but when I reached here this morning, I found that the stages were all full to B[altimore] until Friday or Saturday the 12th or 13th.

When I left home Father was a little uneasy about his mail contracts and I promised him, if I could make it convenient to go by Washington City, but as my business is not very important (and I have an opportunity to get off direct for Philadelphia) I am compelled to defer it until my return.

Say to Caruthers, if he has not left there that Father told me to tell him that he was determined not to carry the mail longer than August or September, unless he can effect a considerable change in the rates. The fact is that no man or sett of men can afford to carry that mail, increased as it has, without an increase of price, and he thinks the Department cannot consider it a forfeiture on the part of the contractors, as they have failed *not once*, but repeatedly, to fulfill their part of the contract, by neglecting to send them pay for services rendered. However, I expect at that he has given you much more information on this subject than I can possibly do, and I write to you merely because I find that I cannot be there as soon as I expected, and I wish to come as near complying with my promise to him as I can.

I promised William¹ to write to him so as to enable him to meet me in Philadelphia; tell him that I will be there about the 13th or 14th. Give my love to Aunt Sarah.

SAM P. WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. William H. Polk was in Washington at this time. Although William Polk was Samuel Polk Walker's uncle, the two were almost the same age.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Sir, Bolivar Tennessee March 8, 1836

Our kinsman Mr. Shelby Polk¹ desires to purchase your tract of hills & swamp near this place. I have asked him \$1400, 500 in hand and the ballance 12 mo. or 1 & 2 years. He will give I think the \$500 in hand and the ballance in 2 & 3 years with interest *after one year*. I have rather encouraged him that he might possibly get it on those terms and await your reply. It is the first and only offer I have had to buy the whole tract and if it were my own I think I should take it. You were charged \$1000 for it in the division² so well as I recollect. An early answer is solicited and a letter of attorney properly certified for registration if you should desire me to make the trade.

I perceive you are having some troubles from unruly & I might say unmannerly anti members. All will work well in the end; the cause of *truth* is gaining ground in Tennessee.

Bell has franked hundreds of Wise's Speech to the District. My respects to Mrs Polk.

JNO H. BILLS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Shelby Polk was a son of Thomas Polk, Ezekiel Polk's brother. He had come to Tennessee from North Carolina in 1813.

2. This is a reference to the division of Samuel Polk's estate.

FROM WILLIAM J. ALEXANDER¹

Charlotte, North Carolina. March 9, 1836

Alexander introduces James W. Patton² and asks Polk to assist him in his business with the President.

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand of James W. Patton. This letter is in General Records of the Department of State, Pardons and Remis-

sions (RG 59), National Archives. This letter was enclosed in Polk's letter to Andrew Jackson, April 15, 1836.

1. Alexander had been Polk's schoolmate at Chapel Hill. A Charlotte lawyer, he had married a sister of Marshall T. Polk's widow.

2. Patton's identity and the nature of his business are revealed in Polk to Andrew Jackson, April 15, 1836.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia, March 12th 1836

I receive no letters from Caruthers, and am in a state of much anxiety to know how our mail matters are to be finally adjusted. It is impossible for me to find language stronger than I have used for months past urging the speedy adjustment of this matter. I know the delays always encountered in getting through with even small matters in the public offices, but this being a matter of consequence, it I presume consumes more time than seems to me reasonable. To hear how the matter is progressing would be to me some relief. I am really so much depressed by the suspense & anxiety that my health is beginning to be affected. I cannot stand this state of things. I must have some certainty, if that certainty is the worst thing that can happen. The P M G. decides that he cannot make an extra allowance; then the only thing we can do is to get rid of ruinous contracts upon the best terms we can, and if no other terms can be had we must surrender unconditionally. I have urged the necessity of no delay in whatever is to be done. If the P M G. could have allowed us 50 pr cent from the 1st of January 1835, and have forwarded us all back pay we could have gone through. With less than this we could not. It is impossible for us to get on longer than the 1st of July at the present rate of compensation, unless we could effect sale of our private property to make up the losses with. A man might as well calculate upon living respectably in Washington upon \$5 pr week, as to execute these contracts at the present rate of compensation. It would be very bad policy in us to go on the 1st of July unless we could have a guarantee then of getting a fair price for our property and having it taken. 250 horses on our hands to feed at that scarce season would be a bad condition to be in. The matter in any way it can be looked at is most per-

plexing, but certainty will afford my mind some relief, whatever is to happen.

The debts against us are continually increasing and it must continue so until we are succeeded. Is it strange then that I should be impatient of delay.

I am aware too that the Department will find more difficulty than they suspect to find successors to us, and if weak hands take hold they must inevitably fail and throw the mails into confusion. This is no business of mine except as the security of any sale to our successors may be affected by it, and my political feelings would make me desire that every branch of the public service may be well performed.

There is nothing exciting in politics; the attacks on you in the Republican evidently emanating from Mr. Bell, are producing no other than a favorable effect for you & the Van Buren cause. Whiteism is pretty well used up in this quarter. We shall commence the nomination of electors shortly; we are waiting for the Nashville District to bring out Carroll at the head of the Ticket. I do not know who will be our Elector, probably Bowling Gordon. Dr. [Isaac J.] Thomas is annoying us with the wish to come out on our Ticket. We must leave all personal feelings & aspirations and endeavor to fix upon men than [that] will assure our Ticket the highest vote. We are determined to fight the battle in earnest & manfully. If Tennessee goes to the opposition it shall not be without a struggle. If East Tennessee does not overpower us, I have strong hopes of beating them.

The attacks on you have been noticed as far as was thought necessary in the Democrat. It will be attended to more lengthily next week. I regret that my private affairs give me so much trouble that I cannot do full justice to the Democrat.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

FROM WILLIAM J. WHITTHORNE

Dr Sir

Baltimore March 12th, 1836

I arrived here yesterday on my way to Philadelphia after a tedious passage of eighteen days from Nashville. Before I left Nashville the Legislature passed a law making a new County

to be called Marshall and be taken off the corners of Bedford, Lincoln, Giles, and Murray [Maury] provided a majority of the voters voting in each county will vote in favour of the new county,¹ which I think is very doubtful. I was requested by my friend W. S. Mayfield² to say to you, provided this new county is established, that he wishes to be Postmaster at the county Seat which I believe is to be called Lewisburgh. I have no hesitation in saying he would make a good & faithful officer and would be extremely glad to see him receive the appointment. Our cause, I mean the great Republican cause, and the strength of Mr. Van buren gains every day in our part of Tennessee. I hope he will get the vote of the whole state. I should have been extremely glad to have seen you in Washington. Will you drop me a few lines to the City Hotel North third Street Philada. and let me know if there is any other applicants for Post Master at the supposed seat of justice for Marshall County. Please to give my best respects to Mrs. Polk.

WM. J. WHITTHORNE

Addressed to Washington.

1. When it was first created, Marshall County contained no land from Giles County, but in 1870 a part of Giles was joined to it.

2. William S. Mayfield did not receive the postmastership, which went instead to Abner Houston, at whose home the county was organized. The location of Mayfield's residence at this time is not known, but within a short time he was living in the Chapel Hill community.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia, March 14th 1836

The attacks of Bells men Peyton & Wise, the Republican & the Washington letter in the Banner, is attracting some attention here. So far as I have any opportunity of judging public sentiment is at [as] it should be. Although these things are provoking and disagreeable I am satisfied that you have nothing to loose from these low & vindictive efforts of your political enemies. I think such malevolent conduct will sink Bell low in public estimation, and Judge White must fall from his once enviable standing. The matter is a good deal talked of here and even people of little information are speaking of Wise as a low & contemptible fellow. It seems to be generally known that he

spent some time in Nashville in getting his education and was thought to be of no account there. White & Bell franked a large number of Wise's speech here last week. I think this will about finish the work for Judge White in this quarter. You need feel no apprehension as to public sentiment in this quarter. I am satisfied that you could to-day beat Bell immensely for any thing which Tennessee could give.

Cahall makes a speech today in the Court House, I presume in behalf of the White cause; Nicholson will reply to him. Judge White franked one of Wise's speeches to Nicholson. He will state this fact, read passages from it abusing Gen. Jackson &c and contend upon the doctrine of the Judge himself, he is endorser & responsible for Wise's abuse of the President. You may depend upon it White-Whiggery is at its last gasp here. I have noticed in the Democrat of this week, editorially, matters and things generally in relation to Bell's vindictive course toward you.

My mind is in such a state of suspense and anxiety respecting my mail concerns that I fear I have not done full justice to the subject, but I think the article will have a good effect. I have heard nothing in relation to my mail business since yours of the 20th Ult. That letter gave me much uneasiness, lest Caruthers might conclude to decline decisive arrangements until I was again heard from. Delay is not only very perplexing, but it is in fact so much increasing our loss and involvement, that when relief does come, it may be *too late*. The disaster will have happened. I saw in Nov. that we could not go through at the compensation we are receiving. I have been writing most urgently to Caruthers, the Post Office Department & to you ever since. Our affairs have continually grown worse, and my letters have increased in earnestness and explicitness of statements. I have continually urged that whatever was done *must be done quickly*. Delay amounts to no relief. I tell you we cannot go through the summer with our present means, and unless other than the present arrangements are made, there will be an inevitable *disaster*, and one the consequences of which must be very injurious to us and the public.

It is obliged to happen. If the P M. G. can do nothing more than release us from penalties on condition we go on until the

time appointed for our successors, it seems to me that it would take but little time for the surrender to be made & the contracts advertised for re-letting. If it is delayed much longer, we shall not be able to go on even until the time necessary for new hands to take possession. We could go to the 1st of July, if there is any guarantee of our property being taken. If this guarantee is not given, the earlier we give up the the better. We can sell our property in the spring; by the 1st of July no chance but to our successor. My situation is so perplexing, and the suspense so tormenting, that I cannot much longer bear it.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dr. Sir,

Columbia, March 14 1836

I have received yours of the 3d & 4th inst. Not having heard from Caruthers what the final arrangement is I am at a loss upon that subject, but am happy that the matter is definitely settled upon any terms, and hope soon to be informed what they are.

Cahal is just done speaking. It is nearly night; he seemed determined to consume the whole day & give no other an opportunity of speaking. The people were fatigued & I hope disgusted. Nicholson is to speak on Monday next. He will be well prepared, and I think will use up Cahall and the White cause. A party were arranged to applaud Cahall as was the case with [Richard C.] Dunlap. There was however a great many from the country, and disapprobation was often manifested in the crowd. Cahalls speech was first in praise of himself, indirect & insidious abuse of the President similar to the White nominating resolutions, abuse of Mr. Van Buren and the Tennessee Democrat, high praise of the fine states man Hugh L. White &c. I am confident he done himself & the White cause no good. The movements of Bell, White &c. against you will be noticed here as our judgement dictates most prudent. A pretty long article on that subject will be in the next Democrat, and the matter will be closely watched & carefully attended to.

You have nothing to fear from public opinion. The vindictive and indecent efforts of Bell will recoil upon himself. I have no doubt from present appearances, that Bell is so vindictive that he will instigate a bullying course towards you. There is indeed no telling to what lengths his malice and disappointed ambition may lead him and White to instigate others. You have nothing to gain from street fights, or low bullying gasconades. I hope you will preserve your own dignity and the dignity of your station by treating with contempt Wise & Peyton, who seem to be Bells *catspaws*. I do not doubt your personal firmness upon all proper occasions, nor would I say that it may not be necessary, but *moral courage* is the highest virtue. You cannot settle the matter by a personal rencounter without degradation, and duelling is clearly a violation of the laws of God & man, and every moral man is bound to avoid this mode of settling differences.

According to my notions, Bell's course is wicked & degraded, and must be so pronounced by all correct men. If he could get you into a personal altercation with Wise or Peyton, he would feel that he had succeeded in degrading you, and have accomplished his purposes. Dignity and firmness in the discharge of your duties and contempt of Bell's minions is your course. The world will decide correctly. By all means do not let Bell so far succeed, as to go into any act from false pride, which your conscience disapproves. Personal defense, when assaulted is alone justifiable and any consequences that grow out of it is upon the heads of the aggressor. I confess I feel some uneasiness in seeing you the object of unrelenting hatred of such unprincipled men. Firmness, integrity and prudence I trust will preserve you from harm.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia March 18 1836

Harbert¹ has been acting badly for some time past. William hired him to Mrs Frazer.² He was seldom there, generally at the

grocery places where he ought not to have been. When George Moore³ was here 1st of Feb. Dr Caldwell concluded to send him to the District and made arrangements for that purpose. Harbert & Matilda eluded the Dr. and he could not be found until Moore left. Two weeks ago the Dr. had another opportunity to send him, got hold of him and put him in his room up stairs at your mothers. Whilst the Dr. was at Breakfast Harbert jumped out of the window and cleared himself. It is strange he did not cripple himself. Upon this Dr. C. declared he would have nothing more to do with him. Not being able to prevail on Dr. C. to pay any further attention to him your mother hired him to Ament⁴ (a brick maker). To this Harbert and Matilda objected. On Monday last I heard that Harbert had gone off in the stage to Nashville. I immediately sent to have the stage over taken and him brought back, put him in Jail and kept him there until him & Matilda made such fair promises that I took him out & hired him to Ament at \$5 per month. He has done very well since.

Col. Sam Mitchell of Bedford is in this county electioneering for Brigadier General; he is succeeding very well I think. Will unite a large portion of your friends. I received a letter from Col. [Kenneth L.] Anderson calling on us to help Mitchell. His opponents are Wisener & Hunter⁵ of Bedford & D. Looney. We shall be able to give Mitchell a strong vote which will have a future good influence in Bedford.

Politics are going all right, Van Buren gaining every day. Nicholson & [Jonas E.] Thomas speak on Monday. Nicholson will reply to Cahall (who has used himself up) at great length. Thomas will declare himself for expunging & sustain the administration &c. As he is over the fence on the right side you may be sure where the popular prize is. We will call a public meeting in a short time, and in conjunction with Hickman, Wayne & Perry nominate a Van Buren & Johnson elector. Carroll is to head the Ticket. We intend to give the Whigs a hard contest and we have some chance to beat them. We shall certainly beat them in this district.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington. The first paragraph of this letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, pp. 96-97.

1. Harbert and Matilda, mentioned later, were slaves, but it is not clear who actually owned them. William H. Polk, a minor, owned slaves that had been hired out to Polk and Dr. Caldwell, and it is probable that these were a part of his inheritance from Samuel Polk.

2. Unidentified.

3. See Silas M. Caldwell to Polk, February 7, 1836.

4. Formerly a resident of Davidson County, Thomas W. Ament had not lived in Columbia very long. Walker's explanation of Ament's occupation is an indication that Polk was not personally acquainted with him.

5. William H. Wisener was in opposition to Polk politically, while Ephraim Hunter was a supporter.

FROM KENNETH L. ANDERSON

Dr Col.

Shelbyville Tenn March 19th, 1836

I have inte[n]ded for some time to write you and have frequently set down for that purpose and was then compeled to decline from the consideration that I should be unable to give you any thing that you would not have known before my letter could reach you, but as circumstances seem to have made it necessary for you to be treated (to say the least of it) in a most unkind maner since your friends have had the pleasure of seeing you elevated to the 3d. office in the American government I presume the humble testamony of even myself will not be unwelcome. As to your standing at home and here I am hapy to say that amoung the number whoes enmity you could be induced to fear or whoes friendship you could under any circumstances trust, there is but one opinion and that is in strict accordance with the opinion you have the proud satisfaction of knowing your constitutents has entertained and expressed for the last ten years. They Sir, manifest an entire confidence that let what will hapen you will do your duty. They say, and say it as it were from the house top that neither the management of defeated ambition nor the more bold though less skilful Bully of the Va Whig can intemidate or cause you to do an act that would in the least cause you to loose any of that high charater your friends now have the pleasure of seeing you enjoy, but that you will on all occasions mantain the dignaty of the House and support such measures only as would seem to

be most conducive to the true intrust of the American people, satisfied that do what you will the curses of the oposition you are destined to bear and ended it would seem strange if that was not the case when it is remembered that you have been so very instrumental in disappointing their most sanguine hopes and thereby saving harmless the constitution of your country. In one word we are as you left us the 4 Friday in Apl. The Election of Genl. comes on. We are very desirous to see our mutual friend Col Saml. Mitchell elected over Capt. [David] Looney of Maury County, and W. H. Wesnor [Wisener], late Editor of the Freeman. I have written James Walker Esqr on this subject who thinks Mitchell can with ease be elected. I take it that his success[ful] polle in your district is matter of some importance to our friend although under any common view of the case I would support Mitchell who is a clean gentleman and a man for whome I entertain great regard. Your friends are in good health and fine spirits. Mention me to Judge Grundy, present me to Mrs. Polk. . . .

K. L. ANDERSON

P.S. When you have the time give me the news, especially on the Expunging Resolution. May God give it a quick and savage pasage to the great mortification and disgrace of thouse who would bring into disrepute the fair fame of the greatest man that lives. You will excuse errors as I am writin in the bed room of Mrs. A. who is confined with the fever.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JONATHAN BOSTICK¹

Hardemans Crossroads. March 21, 1836

Bostick tells of his decision to decline an invitation by the Secretary of War to appear before a board of examination in Baltimore preliminary to appointment in the army.² He also notes growing support for Van Buren.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Bostick was a physician who had recently moved from Bedford County to Williamson County. See Williamson Smith to Polk, April 13, 1836.

2. For some time Bostick had sought an appointment with the army. It is not known why he had changed his mind. See John Robb to Polk, June 29, 1833, and Bostick to Polk, December 15, 1834.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia March 22d, 1836

I have received yours of the 8th & 9th. You manifest a strong wish for us to go on with the contract if we can. I know the kindness of feeling which prompts this wish and fully appreciate it. The thing however is impracticable without great loss & it would be highly imprudent to attempt it. If a total loss of the whole amount of the mail pay from Nashville to Florence & here to Huntsville was all I apprehended, I should never have written the letters I have on the subject nor have surrendered. From the letters I have written heretofore, you will expect nothing else than that I will see Col. [Robert] Armstrong as early as practicable and let the advertisements for re-letting issue. Saml & Dr. Polk will bid for the two routes & perhaps as far down as Columbus. I would rather forfeit the two routes than have them transferred at \$4800, the original price. This will not pay for the weight transported at the rates of wagoning goods. All must go, and we must do the best we can with our property. If we cannot sell the property on this line, I would nearly as soon run without the mail as with it. But enough on this disagreeable subject. I shall take the most prudent steps in my power to get out with as little loss as possible. We have advanced about \$15000 in the business. I think we cannot loose more than this sum and with good luck and good property arrangements I hope to save a good portion of it. I feel under much obligation to Col. [Charles K.] Gardner for his good feelings and gentlemanly treatment of us. I believe him to be an honest & good officer, and if a suitable opportunity offers I would be glad you would let him understand the high respect I entertain for him.

My private affairs are in good condition. I have made [John H.] Bills my agent and put all my district lands in the market except my plantation in Hardeman. My object in doing this was to guard against the contingency of heavy mail losses, and when I get out of this difficulty to make investments in Arkansaw lands & to make a plantation on the Miss river on the Arkansaw side. From the information I have of Arkansaw I

think it a very fine cotton region, and am disposed as soon as I can do so without embarrassment to make investments there. I think it likely we will make up a company to have 20 or \$25000 invested. I will write you on this subject in a short time.

In politics every thing is going well. Nicholson made a speech to a crowded House on yesterday with good effect. Thomas followed on both sides, but rather most in favor of Van Buren and expunging. He is for all sorts of expunging except total obliteration. Mitchell of Bedford was here, made a speech, avowed himself a Van Buren man &c. Our people are much pleased with him and will take him up.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr. Sir

Columbia March 23rd, 1836

I received a letter from you a few days since in which you gave your assent that I might sell the Mississippi farm at \$20. pr acre. I dont know that I can sell it at any price at this time. When I was there last I could have sold at \$20 and regret that I did not. I could have vested the proceeds in Arkansas Lands which perhaps might have some day been very profitable. Situated as I am now it is out of my power to engage in that business for the want of means. You requested me to let you know what our cotton crop sold for. I cannot at this time do so. I have no accounts of the sale of the Mississippi crop nor of all the District crop. I have paid out about \$7000 Expences for the first payment of the Land &c. Caruthers & Harris has paid the second payment so Harris informs me. Our crop will not pay the Land payment and other expences. I have not learnt how many Bales we make in Mississippi. I start the day after tomorrow to the District. I learn I will have to buy at least two Horses for the Haywood farm in consequence of some of them being diseased. I have lost a negro boy about eight years old Sophas oldest boy. As soon as I get the amt of the sale of our cotton I will

write you. I cant now tell you what number of acres I will put in cotton this year.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Washington.

FROM DAVID C. MITCHELL¹

Dear Sir;

Mt. Pleasant March 24th 1836

I am aware that your time is very much engrossed with the duties of your Station and some apology is due you for this trespass but sir permit me to bring to your notice my relation and I may say our mutual friend David J. Craig² who is an applicant for the appointment of Postmaster at this place to fill the vacancy of R. M. Cooper resigned. As Mr. Craig is but little known abroad and probably has no intimate acquaintance at Washington I feel it my duty to say for him that he is a friend to and supporter of good morals; of industrious habits and honest mind he has lived in this neighbourhood for more than twenty years even from a child, most of which time I have been intimately acquainted with him; and am authorisd to say his course has been honorable and his character unempeachable. He is now a citizen of this village and if he can obtain the appoint I have no doubt it would meet the approbation of a large majority of the citizens of the surrounding country, and give genl. satisfaction to all, for he is fully competant to discharge the duties of the Office and is in possession of the industry purseverence & patience requisite for the faithful discharge of those duties. I trust you will find a leasure moment in which to present his name to the department, and rest assured sir any service you can render him in the case will be gratefully received, and shall be considered and acknowledged as a special favour conferred on. . . .

D. C. MITCHELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. Mitchell had been known to Polk for many years. An early settler in the vicinity of Mt. Pleasant, Mitchell at one time had political ambitions.

2. Craig was another early settler in the Mt. Pleasant area, and he too had political aspirations. He ran for the state legislature in 1827 but was beaten. Just how Craig was related to Mitchell has not been ascertained.

FROM RICHARD H. ALLEN¹

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. March 25, 1836

Allen writes in behalf of David J. Craig, an applicant for appointment as postmaster at Mt. Pleasant.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Allen was an early settler in Giles County. It is not known when he moved to Mt. Pleasant.

FROM DAVID J. CRAIG

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. March 25, 1836

Craig informs Polk that he is an applicant for the postmastership at Mt. Pleasant. He has sent to the Postmaster General a petition signed by many of his neighbors, but he did not participate in a poll held in Mt. Pleasant because it did not include all of the people served by that post office. He asks Polk's support in obtaining this appointment.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM CHILES McGEE¹

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. March 25, 1836

McGee states that he has known David J. Craig since 1807 and considers him an excellent prospect for the job of postmaster at Mt. Pleasant. He further states that his appointment would meet with approval by most of the residents of that vicinity.

Addressed to Washington.

1. He was an early settler who accumulated considerable wealth. This name is spelled variously, one popular version being Giles McGhee.

FROM WILLIAM MARTIN

Hardeman's Crossroads, Williamson

County. March 25, 1836

Martin asks Polk to arrange a minor financial matter with Martin Clark¹ of Murfreesboro. He also expresses anxiety over the failure of the government to provide instructions concerning the treatment of recalcitrant lead miners in Illinois.²

Addressed to Washington.

1. A Murfreesboro businessman who entered the ministry of the Methodist church. He was an applicant for the postmastership at Murfreesboro in 1833 and was also briefly connected with a local newspaper. He moved to Austin, Texas, where he ran a tavern, but he later returned to Tennessee and resumed his career as a minister.

2. See William Martin to Polk, November 25, 1835.

FROM SAMUEL STOCKARD¹

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. March 25, 1836

A member of one of the early families in the Mt. Pleasant vicinity, Stockard asks Polk to tell Amos Kendall that David J. Craig has always been a Jackson man, while his rival for the postmastership, James Pullam,² is a Bell-White man. Craig's appointment would give much more satisfaction to the community than would the selection of Pullam.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Samuel Stockard was a son of William Stockard.

2. Not otherwise identified.

FROM KENNETH L. ANDERSON

My Dr Sir

Shelbyville Tenn March 26th 1836

Your favour of the 14th Inst was recd. on yesterday Evening and I hasten to reply with pleasure to such facts as I am able. You inform me that you have had scarce a syllable from Bedford since you left home to which I must reply that I should have written you oftener but presumed you would be addressed by friends who could give you more satisfaction on the all exciting subject of the Presidential election than I could. I therefore remained silent until I saw the very rude manner you were treated by Mr Wise and others and determined a few days since to address you and give you my opinion of your present standing with the Citizens of Bedford and not only my own views but the declarations of many who have long and constantly been devoted to your Intrust and such too as saw with pleasure your proud elevation over the secret enemies of Genl. Jackson and his decidedly republican principles. It would be [. . .]¹ for me

to say to you that as against that great Statesman brave Soldier and *purest* patriot all things and all men must be thrown into the back ground all though I would if I know myself allways feel inclined to promote such views as accord with patriotism come from what quarter they should, yet I am frank to acknowledge that in these stormy and deceptive times I should be much inclined to examine the company in which I might chance to find the greatest and best politicians and if they were found with *even* the suspected friends of that old devoted friend of Civil Liberty I would say to him the world has advanced too far in the art of governing themselves to require such twisting. We simply want Jackson virtue allways, preferring his friend to himself and his Country to either. You know better than any other man in the United States that these have heretofore been the views of the great body of our people as it regards the Election between Mr Van Buren and Judge White. The real people seem onley to want the proper information in order that they may not act inconsistant with their former high character for devortion to the institutions of their Country, and further that they may never be subject to the charge of ingratitude tords the old Chief whoes opinions many have the frankness to declare are intitled to more consideration than not onley eleven *small* men who hapen to be members of Congress but eleven times that number though these 121 should be disinterested as is beleaved not to have been the case with the Bell Crocket & Co concern. That Mr Van Buren is gaining for myself I cannot for one moment doubt, and that this increase is geathering rapidly I am bound to beleave when its remembered the great advantage the White cause had in geting the start and the aditional fact that here is the very nest of anties and has ever been though they were allways in the minority yet by palming themselves on the people as friends of Genl. Jackson and his administration have as you know now and then been successful, allthough they would at any time as they are now attempting [to] stab him in the dark and then cry out, we approve of his administration generally yet there are some things should have been different, for example we like the course he persued as to the French dispute but it never would have done for Congress to have placed at the disposal of the President three millions of money. Genl. J.

would perhaps have used it properly but the example, the example.

I conclude from the best information I am able to get that there is a general Spirit of examination and inquiry among the people very many who were allways true yet have not been in the habit of making much noise about any Election are continually herd to say they had intended voting for White but from the fate of the expunging Resolutions and the fact that they were unable to see scearce a single old and violent enemy of Genl. J. who was not noisey in favour of the Judge they should not do so further. I cannot believe that there is now in the county any man who reads newspapers that beleaves he has any chance on earth to be elected and [p]resently the opinion seems to gain ground that it never was beleaved by those who introuded his name to the American people that he had the semblence of a chance to succede but that he was brought forward for the double purpose of defeating Van Buren and bolstering up some of the enemies of the present administration. The effect that this idear would produce in this community I need not tell you. I am told by several persons intitled to an opinion that it would be difficult to determine which is the strongest on the south side of the River in the lower end of the county and that the changes are still going on. Big Flat Creek tis said Van Buren is desidely the strongest through Deans Country.² There can be no doubt of its truth on Thompsons Creek.³ There has been a fair test at these election on the 5th Inst. for Justices of the peace under the new arangement of things.⁴ I am informed there was about 150 votes in the district and three Candidates, two of them came out opened mouthed for Van, the third for White, who soon found that he would be beaten if he continued for White he changed and was elected. This I consider a fair test in that district. In town I conclude White the strongest, Col Burditt⁵ being the only merchant who is not for him, yet I have no doubt but that in a short time it will be difficult to say whitch has the ascendancy. I saw Col [Aaron] Boyd some days since. He informed me that great changes were going on in his neibhourhood and that many who had heretofore been clamorus for White were now equally so against him.

The Star I think is doing well and it is presumable when the other press is [. . .] into operation there will be an increased effort on the part of its friends to get it on. My impresion is that the people will sustain the Star better when Bradfords paper as it is called is sent forth than they now do. I shall send you the other paper as you direct, commenceing with the first number. There is perhaps one other evidence of public opinion that I should mention. That is the election of D D Arnold as Shff who is an avowed Van Buren man over Volney Steele⁶ who is all the other way. I am not apprised that these politics was spoken of, yet Steele was supported by Bradford, Armstrong, Wisnor, Whitney, Orr, Coldwell &c, and takes occasion very often to say he is for White and generaly for Jacksons measures notwithstanding it has not been long since he toasted Mr Clay at a barbacue in Midleton.⁷

You ask me if something like the same divisions exist between the parties as did heretofore. In answer to this inquiry I can onley say that my own opinion is that it is tending that way as fast as information of the *true* ground occupied by White is had by the people and think that ultimately, say during the coming summer, the old corner will be found much about Where it was first set, and that we can thus know our friends by recurring in our minds to those who were our enimies in old times. The following are some of the persons who I understand have taken ground in favour of Van Buren:⁸ Capt James Yell, Col. John A. Moore, Capt John Deason, Col. Wm Burnett, D D Arnold, Majr Wm Davis, Col J. C. Record, Majr Corhorn, Majr Whitthorn, Dr. J. R. Jones, Majr W. B. Watkins, Wilkins Blanton, Dr. J. G. Barksdale, Jacob Morton, Benj Gambill Esq, Pearsly Yell, Majr Wm Guy, Thomas Green Esq, Majr Wm Murphy, John Dease Esq, Thomas Davis Esq, Thomas Newsom, Dr John. S. Ford, Nathan Wade, A. C. Yell, Col. H B Coffey, Col. James Mullings, W F Daniel, John W Gardner, Col E Parker, Capt Dudley House, Col. F. Shofner, Majr A. Landess, Revd. Wm Martin, K Pearson Esqr, James Anderton Esqr, Wm Houslet, Rice Coffy, Mjr James Walker, Capt R. Clark, Capt Z Weaver, Col James Arnold, Thomas Coffy Esqr, Mjr Thos Black, Robt Arnold Jr, Majr A. Arnold, Col A Boyd, Capt Keble Terry, Majr A Kirby, Saml Doak, Col John W. Hamlin, Jacob

Fisher Esq, Dr C Jackson, Revd. John Brooks, beside ma[n]ly that will occur to you at an instants reflection. I should have said when speaking of the merchants that Davis was not for White. As I am a private you will please consider this communication confidential. Let me hear from you as often as convenient.

K. L. ANDERSON

I should have told you Saml. Doak at the County Elections beat your old friend Saml. Escue⁹ more than 500 votes for County Trustee. Doak is understood to be a van Burren man and Escue as you know married Jno Tillmans¹⁰ Daughter, and the whole set of coarse were for him. I cannot mention to you all the prominent men who are open for Van Buren but am unable to mention to you a single influential friend of yours who is not for Mr. V. I have asked several persons who are intitled to an opinion to know if they knew any thing like opposition among your old friends that had been efficient. They all say they know of none and I am strongly inclined to believe them correct.

K. L. ANDERSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. A smear on the manuscript renders illegible what appears to be a single word.
2. In the southeastern part of Bedford County Big Flat Creek and Little Flat Creek flow northward into the Duck River. The post office along the larger stream was named Flat Creek. The reference to Dean's country is a reference to the residence of Thomas Dean in that area.
3. Thompson's Creek is slightly to the east of Flat Creek. The stream also flows northward into the Duck River. There was at this time a post office named Thompson's Creek.
4. Under the new constitution justices of the peace were elected rather than being chosen by the General Assembly. Also, instead of serving indefinite terms on good behavior, they were elected to terms of six years.
5. Unidentified.
6. Darling D. Arnold had opposed the incumbent, William D. Orr, at the outset of the contest, but Orr withdrew and was replaced by Volney H. Steele.
7. Unidentified.
8. It has been thought unnecessary to try to identify each of the following persons. Some, of course, have been identified in other connections.
9. Nothing further has been learned about Doak or Escue.
10. Tillman is not otherwise identified. In 1838 he was executor of Samuel Escue's will.

FROM JOSEPH MASON¹

Very Dear Sir

Mt Pleasant T. March 26 1836

After my best wishes in your favor, in the course you have taken both at home, & at the Post you so honorably fill, in my opinion & of a number of your worthy friends at home, I will beg leave to inform you of the proceedings, in which you have been much Troubled & I have no doubt you will be more (viz. the appointing a P.M. to succeed Col. Cooper).² I have seen your letter to Col. Cooper in which my opinion accords with yours that the P.M. General refused to dictate any precise plan to appoint a Successor to Col. Cooper. When it was known that Col. Cooper would resign, there was 7 applicants all of which perhaps you know. viz. Henry A. Miller, James Pullom, W. R. Hunter, R. W. Alton, John B. Bond, David J. Craig & myself. There was a meeting held by the applicants for appointment in which we could not agree. Some wanted to confine it to the Corporation, & some to the neighbourhood. There seemd to be so much contention, that I declined asking the appointment. It was however agreed that the P. Master General should be consulted, in what way it should be done, & Col. Cooper wrote accordingly. While waiting for an answer from the P.M.General some who was very anxious broke off from the agreement, and was getting friends from a distance to recommend them. Mr. Garrett³ being at Nashville & learning that letters had been sent up from there & else where, concluded that all of them was doing what they could, (having become an applicant himself), spoke to his friends there for aid in recommending him. On his return home he proposed getting up a petition in this place and vacinity which was opposed, till an answer from the Dept could be had, during which time Mr. Garrett done nothing. On the reception of the same all the applicants but Mr. J. G. G. Garrett and David J. Craig agreed to confine it to the narrow limits of the Corporation, and all too bound themselves to be govrnd by the decision. The ballotting took place and Mr. Pullom finally got 2 votes over Mr. Alton, and there remains no doubt with me that there was illegal votes and some refused that ought to have had the liberty, &c. I have given you a little history of the

course pursued & the great Excitement here about this little Post office, & will now state some other facts that does exist. Politicks run high here as you know. Mr. Garrett will send up a respectable Petition between 25 & 30, that are citizens in Mt. Pleasant and a large number who live in the vacinity, and a few that you will know the name & signature who live in Columbia. He could get a great many more but has declined, & thinks he has done enough. You will see a number of names on Craigs petition that is in Garretts also, the reson of which Mr Craig went and sent over the country & the opinion prevailed that none was runing by petition but himself, & when they found that Mr. Garrett was acting in that way they came a number and assigned his petition. The people in the country are very much opposed to the proceedings of those who advocate that the town had the right alone, to make a P.M. Mr Pullom now thinks his chance bad and is getting up a petition. Mr. Craig & Pullom both & their friends think that Garrett will beat them. Mr. Pullom is violently opposed to the administration, Craig wont say mutch about it, but you know old David Craig & the connexions are strong "all of the same stripe" anti adm. &c.

Col. Polk I have now tryd to explain the course and claims of the three applicants in part. If I should say too much you will please pardon me. I feel a great interest that you may know all the facts, from which you may better Judge. You said in the letter to Cooper that you would not interfere, & let the people decide. I am glad to see you are cautious, but the fact is that when you put the dept in possession of all the facts which I & others give, it will be enough. You will learn from Parson [James] Gwin & many others of Nashville that Mr. Garrett is well qualified, and a strong Van buronite &c. He has had persecution here on that account but Vanburon is gaining here now. Mr. Garrett owns property and is settled in Mt. Pleasant. Mr. Pullom is a clerk in a store, no family & not settled. Mr. Craig owns no property here, and has just moved in town this Spring &c. Col. Cooper has been a candidate for clerk and was beaten and pledged himself to use no influence in this matter. I dont think he will, but if he does it should have no weight from the fact &c. This letter contains facts only, the object of which is to put you in possession of the same, but if known to some would

make me enemies. I am sorry I have so small acquaintance with you. I refer you to the Dept. I have been P.M. 8 or 10 years in Ala. Also to Hon. J. L. Martin & Gabriel Moore from Ala, M. to Congress. I say again that it is generally admitted that Garrett will & ought to get the appointment and if he does it will give more general satisfaction than either of the others. Please pardon my lengthy address & believe me your untiring friend & supporter.

JOSEPH MASON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Mason seems to have moved to Mt. Pleasant from Lauderdale County, Alabama, where he was postmaster of Masonville for some eight years. He was a business partner of James G. G. Garrett and was probably the son-in-law of Henry Gibson, mentioned in James Walker to Polk, April 29, 1836. Mason also seems to have made at least one unsuccessful bid for mail contracts in Alabama.

2. Robert M. Cooper had announced his intention to resign as postmaster at Mt. Pleasant, but when the appointment of a new postmaster became involved to such an extent in local politics, he delayed his resignation for many months, not giving up the office until late in 1837.

3. James G. G. Garrett was Mason's partner in business, but little else has been learned about him.

FROM RICHARD STOCKARD¹

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. March 27, 1836

Stockard writes in support of David J. Craig, one of several candidates for appointment as postmaster at Mt. Pleasant.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Richard Stockard was one of the many Stockards in the area of Mt. Pleasant. Little else has been learned about him.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia March 28th, 1836

I returned from Nashville on yesterday and received your letters of the 14th, 15th & 16th. The political prospects at Nashville, I consider flattering. A large & respectable meeting con-

firmed the nomination of Gov. Carroll for Sumner and Davidson. [Alfred] Balch was making a warm speech when I left which was much applauded. There is much excitement in this country on the Presidential question, as much as was last fall. We are continually gaining, and I entertain no fears of beating the White party from the Cumberland mountain West. East Tennessee I fear. In our own county, our majority is overwhelming. Yesterday the vote was taken on Knob Creek,¹ 56 present. For Van Buren 50, White 6. This must be more than a fair average of our strength, but the most intelligent of our country friends are now giving the opinion that White cannot get more than Jeff Porters vote² against you. There can be no mistake as to public sentiment here.

The editorials in the *Republican & Banner*, and the letters of their Washington correspondent was attracting some attention in Nashville, and so far as I could learn was perfectly understood. Laughlin is not at home. I saw Long and told him, that I was confident that there was not the slightest foundation for the rumors that you were going into the Cabinet, that he might take this as certain and shape his course accordingly; that I was perfectly certain that no situation within the gift of the Executive, would induce you to fail to serve your constituents during the term for which you were elected, without your previously obtaining their consent & approbation; that you had not mentioned this matter in your letters to any of your particular friends, but spoke of domestic arrangements in such a way, as to satisfy them that you would reside at home during the recess of Congress. I impressed it upon him to take this ground without fear of being deceived, and to pronounce the rumor as a fabrication of Bell & his minions. I regret that Laughlin is not at home, as I consider the battle as now raging, and that the present is the crisis in Tennessee politics.

You know the state mind, and mental anxiety I was suffering, wholly disqualified me from paying proper attention to the Democrat during the months of Jany & Feb. As it happened nothing occurred during that time that required very particular attention. Wise's speech & conduct first aroused me and called my attention to the necessity of taking full charge of the Editorial department. You may consider me as editor for the last

4 or 5 weeks, and if there has been any want of a judicious cause in that time it has been owing to my want of ability & judgement, not want of inclination. You speak of Wise's speech being published without suitable comment. Wise's speech, *proper*, never was published in the Democrat. The [scene?] in the House in which Wise had much to say on Mr. Adams resolution was copied from the Richmond Enquirer, without comment. It was copied with design to show the reckless & malicious efforts of your enemies to produce disorder and vent their spleen, and what you *then said* was thought at that time sufficient comment & explanation. My judgement yet approves the course of the Democrat from the 25th of Feb. inclusive up to this time, but I may have mistaken, or not fully understood the best course. Its effect has been most excellent in this county. But you wrote before you had seen the views taken by the Democrat. I think you will be satisfied with them. I think your suggestions have been fully carried out, except the cabinet appointment, which has just attracted attention, and will be attended to next week. I will again look over all that has been said, and if any thing has been left unsaid, will attend to it next week. You may rely on vigilant and close attention whilst the battle rages. If there is any defect, it will be want of judgement or ability. Useful suggestions & timely information, may be of much service.

The question is pretty fairly made on the election of Brigadier General. Hunter was here some 10 or 12 days before Mitchell came into our county. I treated him with much civility and give him all information as to the feeling in our county, informed him that the opposition to Looney here would most likely unite upon him or Mitchell, whoever they thought was the sharpest in Bedford and they happened to be best pleased with; that it was pretty certain that none of your friends in this county would be a candidate. I took some pains to treat him with civility, but not to commit myself or friends to him. He declared himself a Jackson, Polk, Carroll, Grundy & *White* man. He made no impression. Our people would not take him up & it would have been folly to have done so in the present state of public feeling. Mitchell came down, our friends were taken with him personally, he declared himself Jackson, Van Buren, Polk &c. and was instantly united upon. *It was right*. We could not

divide between him & Hunter, we must decide between them, and any hesitation would have affected our strength in this and other matters. Hunter I think will be satisfied. He cannot expect in such an excitement that Van Buren men will vote for a White man, when another presents himself that every way pleases them, and to whom they are under fully as much political obligation. I yesterday received another letter from Col [Kenneth L.] Anderson urging us to sustain Mitchell. It will be done & effectually done. I think our course will have a good effect here & in Bedford in future elections. At all events, it is right. We cannot vote for a *White* man, when a V. B. of equal or superior qualifications offers himself. We shall have a large meeting shortly and nominate our elector for Maury, Hickman, Wayne & Perry. *Bowling Gordon* most probably. You will see the call in the next Democrat.

JAMES WALKER

P. S. The Post office advertisements had not reached Nashville. I told Col. Armstrong to publish without delay. I do not hesitate. We have advanced about \$15000 capital in the business of the lines. This must cover all losses to 1st of July. We could not have gone our time out with less than a loss of \$30 or 40,000 with the best audit & management.

W

Addressed to Washington.

1. A settlement along a creek by that name. Knob Creek flows into Duck River from the north and lies between Swan Creek on the west and Carter's Creek on the east. Thus the settlement was northwest of Columbia.

2. In 1833, when Thomas Jefferson Porter entered the congressional race, he ran a very poor third behind Polk and Theodorick F. Bradford.

FROM JOHN S. YOUNG

McMinnville. March 28, 1836

Having heard that his application for appointment as a subagent to the western Cherokees was unsuccessful, Young asks for appointment to some post with the eastern Cherokees.¹ If nothing else is available he would like a clerkship in Washington.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Young to Polk, February 16, 1836.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Coln.

Murfreesboro, March 29th 1836

I received a letter from you several days ago. Your friends have been pretty well informed by the Newspapers what game your enemies especially the White-Whigs are playing to injure your standing in Congress & particularly their efforts to detract from your merits as Speaker of the House of Representatives. John R. Laughlin got home a few days ago from Washington and has given us a good deal in detail the sayings & doings of the various coteries of the piebald Whigs. He says that Judge White is looked upon by every party but his *Own Caucus members* with contempt and that they all look *upon his prospects* as entirely hopeless. The People here are begining to see things in their proper light. I think with a little exertion and some talents to explain matters that an Elector for Vanburen in this district can be elected. We are going to have a meeting on the first day of our next Circuit Court which is next Monday week to nominate an Elector for this district favorable to Vanburen & Johnstone. I expect we will nominate Coln Moses Ridley who is a warm & active friend of Jackson & *our great Democratic principles* & of course is anxious for the success of Vanburen & Johnstone. Last Saturday was the appointed day for the Vanburen meeting in Nashville. I have not yet learned what they have done, though I am confident that they have nominated Carroll for their candidate for Elector. I should not at all be surprised if the friends of Judge White were to decline running him in this state in six months and I should not wonder if Judge White should himself before the rising of Congress *declare in his place* that he is no longer a candidate for the Presidency with the *dictation & approbation of his Tennessee Caucus*. It must be apparent to every body that if he continues to run that it will be solely to defeat an election by the College & bring it before Congress where he can by no possibility have any chance of being elected. A vast majority of the people here are in favour of Van-

buren in preference to Harrison or Webster, and when they become convinced that White has no chance they will immediately leave their *deluding leaders* and come out warmly in the support of a Democratic Candidate. I received a letter a few days ago from yr friend Coln [William] Moore and the subject of his being a Candidate for Mjr Genl of this division. I wrote to him that [Russell] Dance & [Robert] Cannon¹ would most likely get a majority of the votes of this County. All the White men of course would vote for one or the other in this County & perhaps some Vanburen men would vote for Dance from motives of County pride or personal friendship; but that there were some Vanburen men that would not go for them, and of course they would vote for either him or Genl. Pillow, the one who was most likely to succeed in getting the largest number of votes. I said to him that we would be glad to see both him and Pillow here at our next Circuit Court. I would be glad they could compromise and that one of them would decline. Cahal you know has acted upon that principle. Or perhaps upon another which is that he thinks by giving way to Cannon he will encrease his interest with the Bedford people which would be of advantage to him if he should here after be a candidate for Congress in yr. district. I am told that Pillow would have beaten him most shamefully in Maury if he had continued to be a candidate for Mj General.

I got a letter last week from Govr Carroll urging the claims of Pillow. From what I have heard from various parts of the Division I am induced to believe that Pillow's prospects are better than Moore's and if that becomes the prevailing opinion I expect it is probable that he will be elected, unless Dance should be withdrawn. Dance will get a majority in this County & Williamson & if he were to decline most all of his interest would be thrown to Cannon. Dance has been absent to the North almost ever since he became a candidate & I do not know that any person would take the responsibility to with draw his name. I hope he will not decline.

Mr [David W.] Dickinson it is said is going to settle on his farm near Murfreesboro. You know he was some time since married.² It is probable that he will be a Candidate again for Congress in this District. [Charles] Ready & Ledbetter³ too are

aspiring. I have told the gentlemen not to *divide the party*. Vous verrez.⁴

W. R. RUCKER

Our friends are all well.

WRR

Addressed to Washington.

1. Robert Cannon, a resident of Bedford County, was a younger brother of Newton Cannon. He had little formal education but became a wealthy planter and landowner.

2. David W. Dickinson married Eliza J. Grantland of Georgia, the exact date unknown. Eliza died in 1838, and in 1841 Dickinson married Sallie Bricknell Murfree.

3. William Ledbetter, a farmer and businessman of Murfreesboro, had served in the constitutional convention in 1834 and was at this time a member of the state legislature. He had for several years served as circuit clerk; in later years he became a prominent banker.

4. You will see.

FROM WILLIAM GILCHRIST

Dr Sir

Shelbyville March 30th, 1836

Having waited for sometime to see & learn the movement of things here & elsewhere I have at length concluded I would drop a few thoughts to you on the passing events.

Our Van Buren press went into operation according to our expectation when I saw you. The first payment of \$1000 was borrowed for 12 months at six per cent. When that sum was paid, the opposition viz [Theodorick F.] Bradford, Armstrong¹ &c made it known they intended to have a *White press*, which they style the *Peoples Advocate*, ostensibly known & said to belong to William H. Wisener of this place, who says he is the proprietor & Editor. It was to be here & in operation by the 1st or middle of February. It is not here yet. We learn the type & materials are in Nashville.² I think Cook will profit by the establishment of their press finally, though not at present. A goodly number have subscribed to him since the fraud of the other party has been developed. We call it a fraud & underhanded measure; it being distinctly understood by & between Laird & Cook that the latter was to have the influence & in-

terest of the former paper & was not to be opposed. Laird as is now understood is employed in the new establishment. Cook is well thought of here. It is the general opinion he was betrayed by Laird & his associates & a general feeling is manifested in his behalf.

As to the state of political parties here, I have no doubt the cause of Van Buren is increasing, but I do not think so rapidly as many say. I differ with many when they say there is some doubt whether White or V. Buren is the strongest. In this town I think they are pretty equal & many say in the country it is the same way. This I doubt. I have no doubt, the strong Jackson men & Polk men in this Country are for V. Buren, and I would not be surprised if the V Buren ticket would succeed in your district before the election for Electors will come on. I am well satisfied of one fact, viz, if an administration measure could be brought forward in the Senate which would not involve a constitutional question, & White would vote against it, he would then be dropped in this section. Several think very little of his movements against little [Benjamin F.] Curry; & a few others of this discription I believe would sink the White Cause. At this time, the fact of a Candidate being for Van Buren or White has not much effect in this part of the state. Our Sheriff D. D. Arnold was elected over [Volney] Steel, the latter of whom was devoted to the White cause. Harvey Watterson our representative in the Legislature is much more unpopular than ever he was; Thos Dean has risen very much in the estimation of the people; the former a devoted White, the latter a V. Buren man, as you well know.

I have just returned from Fayetteville court, & was creditably informed there was a decided majority in Lincoln for V Buren. In Fayetteville, it is agreed on all hands, V.B. has a majority. Col Kincannon told me when he commenced the campaign there were but 3 or 4 V B men in Fayetteville, & now the White folks surrender the majority of the town are for V Buren. Col S. Mitchell is a candidate for Brigadier General, has just returned from Columbia & a tour through Maury, states as his opinion, a decided majority there are V B men. Also that he will beat Looney in that County, who you know is decidedly a White devotee.

I learn from the papers your success in being elected Speaker, also that your situation has been much envied by the exSpeaker and his partizans; that every attempt has been made to affect your popularity, & the idea of capability by them. I am rejoiced to see all their efforts fail & that you are so universally supported by the House, having been overruled but in one single decision & that given in favour of Mr Wise, & supported by Bell &c. Please let me know if the *Globe* is correct in reporting Bells vote & argument on a decision made by the Chair & appealed from, upon the number necessary to suspend the rules of the house on private or local business. The *Globe* represents Bell as arguing against the decision of the Chair, & then voting to sustain the Chair. The decision of the Chair was, "That it required $\frac{2}{3}$ rds to suspend the rule." It was contended it required a bare majority. Bell argued in opposition, & voted to sustain the Chair. Is the *Globe* mistaken? What is the matter with Pennsylvania? Is there really a change, as to V Buren, or has it only happened, as it did with Virginia, some two sessions ago; that the Legislature was elected at an unfavourable hour, & composed of men who became abandoned to all principle. Will Pennsylvania yet go for V Buren or will they go for Harrison? Will Webster really be a candidate for president or not, & will his course be known by an answer from himself before the election will come on? Will not *Leighs* refusal to obey the instructions given him by the Legislature of Virginia, prostrate him effectually, as well as the party to which he belongs in Virginia?

Rumor says Secretary Cass will be appointed Minister to France & that the present Speaker of the House of Representatives, will succeed him as Secretary.³ Is the whole or any part of this true or probably true.

What *hobby* will the White friends [. . .]⁴ Bell & Co next ride. Please inquire of Mr Grundy if the friends of the Administration can, or not, bring forward some measure in which White will bolt. If so, my indentures for it, he is lost in Tennessee. Please let me hear from you on the above points.

WM. GILCHRIST

Addressed to Washington.

1. Dr. James L. Armstrong was not only an opponent of Jackson, he was also a personal enemy of Gilchrist. Several years before, Gilchrist and his

brother had whipped Armstrong severely for allegedly slandering the Gilchrist family. See Archibald Yell to Polk, January 10, 1831.

2. See Greenville Cook to Polk, May 24, 1836.

3. The rumors about Polk's possibly taking a cabinet post were circulating widely. One wonders whether Gilchrist may merely have been fishing for information.

4. At this point the manuscript is torn and perhaps one word is missing.

FROM SAMUEL A. GILLESPIE

Little Rock, Arkansas. March 30, 1836

Gillespie suggests William S. Woods as a good choice for register of public lands at Helena¹ if, as he expects, there is a vacancy in the near future. Woods, a native of Virginia, is a planter in the vicinity of Helena.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See John H. Rivers to Polk, January 19, 1836.

TO RICHARD D. SPAIGHT JR.¹

House of Representatives of the U States

Sir

Washington March 30th 1836

In execution of an order of the House of Representatives of the U. States, I have the honor herewith to transmit to you an exemplified copy of a resolution of the House, passed on the 29th Instant, from which you will perceive that the House have decided that the election held in North Carolina in August last, for a Representative of the 12th. Congressional district of that state, in the House of Representatives of the United States for the 24th. Congress, be set aside, and have declared the seat of such Representative to be vacant.²

JAMES K. POLK³

Addressed to Raleigh, North Carolina. This is a copy in Polk's handwriting and signed by him.

1. Spaight had served a single term in the House of Representatives and was at this time serving his single term as governor of the state.

2. After a very close race against David Newlands, James Graham had taken his seat in the House. After this election was voided another was held in which Graham beat Newlands by a much larger margin than before.

3. Immediately below Polk's signature Samuel Burch, a clerk of the House, certified that this was a true copy of a letter that Polk had sealed and posted that day.

FROM THOMAS J. HARDEMAN¹

My Dear Sir

Texas Harrisburgh² March 31st 1836

I expect you know we are at war with Mexico. Santeanna has declared a war of extermination of all the Americans in Texas which forced us to declare our Independance & from his conduct so far it appears that he is determined to put it in execution. At the fall San Antonio he shewed no quarters. A small boy was found under the dead. After makeing him shew David Crockett & Travis the boy started off. Santeanna ordered his men to kill him which was too barberous for any man to be guilty of but such is the fact. Twenty four Mexicans is said to have fallen round Crockett. Every prisoner that surrenders is put to death after promiseing protection. Capt Grant³ had taken an officer of the Mexican line, saved his life, let him off on parole of honour. Afterwards Grant fell into his hands & the scoundrell had him butchered. Doct. Harrison,⁴ son of Genl Harrison of Ohio, fell into their hands & he was shamefully butchered, fastened on his back used the knife then the spears untill he was dead by degrees. Santeanna is impudent as well as barberous he says he can march his men in formation to Washington and take Old Hickory off of his seat. This was said to his men. After killing all the men in the fort Mrs Dickerson & the Servant of Travis⁵ was sent in who gave us our information. The people are falling back to protect their families but are determined to have satisfaction or fall. We are looking to the U S to acknowledge our Independance and give us all the assistance they can. We cannot believe the United States can stand back under any circumstances & see her sons & daughters butchered up in this way.

Monroe & Wm P. Hardeman⁶ has both been cut off by the Mixicans, lost their horses, starved three days, but got in safe. They are now out again. Lord knows what is to become of them. We must all perish or gain our liberty. James, you have an active tongue, why not use it for Texas as all true Americans should do under existing circumstances. I had planted about

seventy acres of corn & had to give back with my family & leave it with all my stock, household furniture &c. I regret it not if we succeed which I think we will. Give my respects to old Hickory & all enquiring friends, Dunlap⁷ & other Tennesseans & believe me to be your sincere friend & Uncle.

THOS J. HARDEMAN

PS The particulars of Doctor Harrison son of Genl Harrison after being tied on his back cut off his private parts then run in a spear & ripped him up by degrees letting him suffer all he could, leaving considerable time between the times of inflicting the punishment.

Addressed to House of Representatives, United States.

1. Thomas J. Hardeman was born in Middle Tennessee, married a daughter of Ezekiel Polk, and moved to the Western District, where he lived for some years. In 1830 his wife, Mary Ophelia, died, and in 1835 he moved with his brother, Bailey, to Texas. Both achieved some prominence there, Bailey being a member of the cabinet during the Texas Revolution and serving in various important posts until his death in September 1836. Thomas J. Hardeman became a prominent lawyer and judge, and he served several terms in the legislature after Texas became a state.

2. A town on Buffalo Bayou which served for a time as the seat of the Texas provisional government. It was later absorbed by the city of Houston.

3. James Grant was born in Scotland and trained in medicine. Something of an adventurer, he migrated to Mexico, where he became a Mexican citizen. His role in the fighting is not entirely clear, and although he was killed in battle, the story of butchery is untrue.

4. Benjamin Harrison, also a physician and an adventurer, had been in Texas about two years and was a man of mystery and controversy. He was captured in 1836 and sent on a mission to the Texans. After his release he returned to his home in Ohio, where he died in 1840. The story of his mutilation and death is utterly false. He was a son of William Henry Harrison.

5. Mrs. Dickenson, the widow of Almaron Dickenson, an artillery officer who was killed at the Alamo, and Joe, a slave of William B. Travis, were among the few survivors of the Alamo slaughter.

6. These were sons of the writer of this letter.

7. This is probably a reference to William C. Dunlap, who had been congressman from Hardeman's district in Tennessee.

FROM JOHN MCKINLEY

My Dear Sir

Florence March 31 1836

Absence at court prevented me from answering your letter earlier. The kind feeling manifested for me, is most grateful, &

will, I hope, on all occasions be reciprocated on my part. Offices & appointments may gratify our ambition; but it is true friendship alone that can warm the heart, & cheer us on our way through this dreary world where there is so much selfishness.

I received by yesterdays mail a letter from Mr [Joshua L.] Martin expressing much anxiety for my appointment to the office of judge of the Supreme court. He mentioned that the bill had been amended by the judiciary committee of the House, so as to restore the circuit, abolished by the Senate; & that there was but little doubt of its passage, in that shape. I think that, a great improvement of the bill; as nine is a better number for a court than eight. The Senate having confirmed the nomination of both Mr. Taney & Mr Barbour,¹ is a strong indication in favor of an additional judge. I do not think that I would be more gratified by being appointed to the office in question, than I am at the success of our friend Taney. It is such a signal triumph of virtue over vice, of free principles over the most base & sordid aristocracy, that its influence will be felt for years to come.

The vote of Judge White upon this nomination, & upon that of Mr Stephenson² & Mr Kendall, is worth a great deal to the friends of Mr Van Buren in Tennessee & Alabama. He has now exposed "the cloven foot," & can no longer pretend to belong to the republican party, or to the slightest regard for the present administration. He has drawn the line himself, let him abide by the consequences.

I should be very happy to have, not only the aid of the present chief justice, with the President, but his approval of my appointment to the office. You will therefore act as you may think best in addressing him on the subject.

Mr Martin speaks of Mr [John Y.] Mason, of Virginia, as being warmly my friend, & Mr [Reuben] Chapman also. Indeed he estimates that most of our representation will be in favor of my appointment. Under these circumstances it may be proper to consult with them & use their influence in such way as may be most advantageous. And if it be practicable to get the influence of the administration members from Mississippi in the manner you suggest, it would, no doubt, have great influence. But I leave the whole management of the matter, to the better judgment of my friend Grundy & yourself.

I perceive that you have the honor, & profit too, of the malignant hate & persecution of the *emaculate John Bell* & his small band of adherents in Congress. However unpleasant it may [be] to your feelings it is daily adding to your popularity with the people. You have nothing to do therefore but to bear & forbear. The latter, I know, is hard to do, but I hope you can perform it.

Mrs M unites with me in respects to Mrs P.

J. MCKINLEY

Addressed to Washington.

1. Roger B. Taney of Maryland and Philip P. Barbour of Virginia had been appointed to the Supreme Court on December 28, 1835, with Taney designated as Chief Justice. They were confirmed by the Senate on March 15, 1836. The vote on Taney was 29 to 16 and on Barbour 30 to 11. McKinley was later appointed to the court and took his seat in 1837.

2. Andrew Stevenson, former Speaker of the House, was confirmed as minister to Great Britain, also on March 15, 1836. Amos Kendall had been appointed as Postmaster General and confirmed some months earlier. White had voted against confirming Taney, Stevenson, and Kendall.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia April 1st 1836

I received about 10 days ago a letter from Col Gardner informing me that if we could not go on with all our Routes that Col. Armstrong was instructed to advertise them for re-letting. I went to Nashville on Thursday last. Col. A. had received no such instructions. Expecting it was owing to some failure in the mail I informed him we could not go through with our contracts and requested him to advertise forthwith upon receipt of the instructions to that effect. I still see nothing of it, nor hear no more about it. If the re-letting is to take place 1st of May it is full time the advertisements were out. I feel much solicitude on this subject, as I am suffering under daily heavy losses which must continue as long as we continue to operate. I wish you would call on the officers of the Dept. and urge them to attend to this matter. If arrangements are not made to relieve us by 1st of July, a heavy and disastrous failure is obliged to take place. We have done everything in our power to prevent this disaster.

It will happen in spite of us if the operations of the Department are not less tardy.

You will see by the last Democrat, that we have made a large call for a public meeting. Our people are now alive to question that agitates the country. I am perfectly satisfied that our majority is overwhelming in this county, and rapidly increasing. The people seem to have their eyes entirely opened. The affair between you & *Bells men* is perfectly understood and your conduct approved by all but the "*faction*" here. The Observer, and its friends, have made considerable insidious efforts to huzzah Wise, and to make an affair of consequence of his blackguard conduct. They have been foiled. I think the Democrat has taken the proper course on this subject, and has said enough. To continue now would only be calculated to give Bell's minions consequence. If there has been any defect in the manner of treating this affair, it has been want of judgement, not want of attention or feeling of interest.

Judge Whites votes on the nominations is operating admirably. It takes away all pleas of his friendship to the President. *The people* can now no longer be deceived. Dr. Hays has been with us in heart for some time but his pride of consistency has made him still declare for White. He gives up on the nomination votes. According to my judgement the prospect never was better than it now is in this quarter for the ascendancy of sound principles. The *empire* county of Maury (as [William E.] Kennedy called it at *their* Vauxhall dinner) is indeed erect. We shall in all probability have a hard contest in the state, and the result doubtful. If we had any thing like equality with them in number of presses our success would be certain.

They are making up a handsome military company here for the purpose of being ready to pay proper attention to the President, if he should visit Tennessee this summer. It will be called the Jackson (or Union) guards. B. R. Harris captain and such men as Lytle &c.¹ will compose it. You may rely on it all things are going well.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Benjamin R. Harris was an early settler in the vicinity of Mt. Pleasant. He was postmaster there from December 1828 until July 1831. William Lytle was a blacksmith and served, 1833-35, as an alderman at Columbia.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia, April 5, 1836

I received yesterday the enclosed letter from F. L. Smith¹ in relation to the business of Marshall's estate. I think it would be well for the house and lot in Charlotte to be sold but not by Sheriffs sale and at a sacrifice. I think the House and lott ought to be sold on reasonable audits and proceeds applied to support of Laura & education of the children. I believe the woods lott can be sold to Dr. Polk for \$1500 cash. He has pretty much agreed that he will come to that understanding, if you sanction the sale by the time he reaches Charlotte, where he will start in a few days. I think it would by a very good sale at \$1500, certainly no sacrifice, and according to my judgement this will be the best way of raising the 6 or \$700 for which it seems property must be sold. The ballance would be a fund to assist in educating the children. Write to Mr. Smith at Charlotte immediately what your opinions are and whether you would be willing for the sale to be made at \$1500 to the Doctor. If such is the agreement Dr. Polk will advance the money to pay the Ballance of the debts against the estate, bring out the executors, and the land can be either sold under execution and he thus obtain a legal title, or we can procure a decree from the Chancery Court upon proper representations sanctioning and confirming the sale. I do not know whether land can be sold by execution while any personal property remains, and what effect Charles, Lucy &c² might have on a sheriffs sale by execution you will know. There can be no doubt but a decree in the Chancery Court can be had authorising or confirming the sale, if any objection exists to a sale under execution. I would be unwilling for the executors to come to this country for satisfaction unless it was fully agreed that the woods lott was to bring at least \$1500. If any property is to be sacrificed Sheriffs sale let it be the House & Lott in Charlotte, but the sale to Dr. Polk would in my judgement be far preferable to that, as if that is sold by sheriffs sale it may be a fair *sacrifice*. Be certain to write Smith immediately and fully on this subject. I think it all now depends on you & let me know what your opinion is.

In politics all goes well—*Very Well*.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Franklin L. Smith was a lawyer in Charlotte, North Carolina. The letter mentioned here has not been found.
2. Probably slaves belonging to the estate of Marshall T. Polk.

FROM BROMFIELD L. RIDLEY

My Dear Sir

McMinnville Ten. 6th April 36

[John B.] Forrester has sent to our Post Office a great number of Hardin's speeches.¹ Wise's speech is also circulated amongst us extensively. They are perfectly inefficient, not advancing the cause which they were intended to advance. But rather the contrary. "Polk & Van Buren" are the political watch words in this County.

This fellow Wise seems to have been set upon you by John Bell & his *leige* subjects in and out of the House of Representatives. It must all recoil upon them. The temperate and dignified course which you have persued under their repeated fires and vulgar attacks is producing what every sensible man would expect, one general burst of indignation in your favour.

We have seen Judge Whites votes on the nominations.² This is as it should be. He is run out from his hiding place. His friends can no longer charge that his opposition to the Administration and its measures is merely *fanciful*. These votes will produce a powerful reaction in Tennessee. I assure you Sir that within the last ten days I have heard at least 20 men who were White Whigs before hearing of the Judges votes on the nominations, say they had been deceived in their estimate of his character and were henceforth against him.

Benton's Speech is a powerful *argument*, conclusive of his positions & I believe unanswerable. He can say in view "Exegi Monumentum" &c.³

Inclosed I send you a copy of an address to the Citizens of the State of Tennessee on the Presidential Election by a portion of the members of the Legislature, written by your late tallented Representative A. O. P. Nicholson. I would be glad to get some 50 copies of Bentons speech & some good speech in reply to Hardin's of Ky & the *Babler Wise*, whose effort was "A fine specimen on the whole of what the learned call rigmarole."

B. L. RIDLEY

Addressed to Washington.

1. During the session of Congress then in progress Benjamin Hardin of Kentucky made several speeches in which he was critical of the Jackson administration. Perhaps the most offensive to the Jacksonians was the one in which he accused the president of extravagance in government. He aimed some of his darts toward Van Buren and made it clear that by this time he was a thoroughgoing Whig.

2. As the Van Buren-White contest shaped up White began to vote frequently against confirmation of Jackson's appointees, although many of White's supporters were still trying to maintain that they were also friends of Jackson. White's actions were used by Polk and others to show that voters could not claim to be Jackson's friends if they supported White.

3. This is apparently a partial quotation from one of Horace's Odes, "*Exegi monumentum aere perennius*," which translates "I have completed a monument more lasting than bronze."

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

My Dear Friend Waxhaws [Arkansas] Aprill the 6th 1836

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th of Feby last enclosing me a Warrant for my last Quarter 1835 for \$375. Mr. Erwin¹ also informed me he had received the Draft for \$750 so all is well.

I presume before this Arkansas is a sovereign state. My friends are pressing me to run for Congress H.R. Others are anxious that I should go into the Senate. Owing to some local feelings my chance is better for the Senate than the House but I am undetermined whether I will run for either. I am poor and either office will make me more so and the contest will be warm and uncertain. All the opposition here are for *White* and he is popular with many of our own party.

If I run I shall have to meet the storm and brace it as well as I can. Prudence would forbid my running as I can be placed on the Supreme Bench with out difficulty, with a snugg salary. Then what ought I to do.

A. YELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. Andrew Erwin Jr., a banker in Nashville at this time. See Yell to Polk, December 28, 1835, and Levi Woodbury to Polk, February 8, 1836.

FROM KENNETH L. ANDERSON

Dr Col

Shelbyville Apl 8, 1836

I Wrote you Some days Since and would not trouble you So Soon but from the fact that I suppose every Scrap from home will be acceptable, at this time. Our Circuit Court is now in Session the first under the new arrangement of things as you know. The grand Jury Composed of the following persons, (viz) Saml Phillips, Forman: Jno Eakin, Geo Davidson, Jno Harrison, Jas Deery, Wm Murphree, R. J. Greer, D. P. T. House, Jacob Cable, Joseph Hasting, Thos. G. Watkins, Wm Galbreath.¹ I forgot the other. With old Mr. Coldwell² (Campbell's farther) Constable proceeded to nomanate H L White for President and then to nomanate, *hold hold* until I tell, T F Bradford as an Elector, with Greer, Murphree & House protesting against the whole proceeding as being a Species of *Dictation*. They were alone at this hour. This evening Hasting & Cable Say they did not understand the matter, and that these names must Come off; that they cant do an act that would injure the fair fame of the Old horse. The people out of doores are talking a goodeal about it and Say every thing produces its kind. The true friends of Jackson & Van Buren are about half *Crasey*. We Conclude that the opposition has done more for us putting fourth Bradford than any thing that could be concieved of. The other jury are equally devided. The *Van* ones will simply give a modest Call through the Star, ask H. L. Turney to be a Candidate and we the real people will in about ten days have a meeting and nominate him by aclamation. The day is Ours. They must fall by their own hands. The old chiefs motto is perfectly applicable, the administration must be sustained under present Circumstances. Bedford will go for Van Buren if they publish their proseedng. The protest I understand will accompany it. Say to the Old Genl. when Bedford leaves him he had better inquire for Tom Benton & J K Polk. Errors of course under present circumstances are excusable.

K. L. ANDERSON

P.S. If any thing hapens I will write you day after tomorrow.

Mention this to Judge Grundy. Let me hear from you. The Expunging Resolution above all things we want.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."

1. Phillips, a political enemy of Archibald Yell, was not a Polk supporter. Eakin, Davidson, Deery, and Galbraith were businessmen in Shelbyville, a class not generally favorable to Polk. Harrison, Cable, Hastings, and Watkins are obscure.

2. Ballard Coldwell, who had a son named John Campbell Coldwell, had moved from East Tennessee in 1807. He fought under Jackson at New Orleans and at Horseshoe Bend, and he was for twenty-five years a merchant in Shelbyville.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia April 10th 1836

The Van Buren meeting on yesterday was respectably attended. The leading influential men were nearly all here. It threatend a storm nearly all day, and it is a busy time with our backwood planters, and it was not thought material to come in as no division of sentiment was expected to take place. Bowling Gordon was nominated as the Van Buren & Johnson Elector, for Maury, Hickman, Wayne & Perry. All are perfectly satisfied, and we shall certainly carry the vote in this district by a large majority. If I did not fear that you would think me extravagant I would give you the opinion that Van Buren, has now the full Jackson strength of the county, say 4 to 1, or 3000 to about 800. A very correct estimate of strength can be formed in the vote for Brig. Genl on Saturday week. Looney is well acquainted, a flaming White man with a large connexion; Mitchell an entire stranger. His vote must be a pure Jackson, Van Buren & Polk vote. Col. Moore was here yesterday. Him and Pillow both being Van Buren, that election will excite no party struggle. I think Pillow will get the principal vote in this country & Moore will also beat Cannon in this county.

As to my own affairs I feel somewhat under the weather. If we can get fair prices for property we shall not loose much, besides our labor & use of capital. The \$15000 advanced in the business will certainly cover all up. My private affairs are snug

& easy, if I am not embarrassed by the mail difficulties. I could do nothing but surrender without certain and inevitable heavy loss. I shall be able to keep up the regularity until 1st of July, and have the consolation to know that difficult as our routes have been ours has been the most regular mail in this region for the last year.

I have given James & Knox¹ permission to visit Washington the ensuing vacation. Take care of them. My circumstances will admit of no extravagant expenditures.

I have frequently mentioned to you the finances of the Democrat. As things are it must now be kept up, and I doubt whether this place will sustain two establishments. The White & Bank party will sustain the Observer. Could not a portion of the way bills printing for the Post Office Department be obtained. They can do the work as well as at Louisville, and it would be convenient to distribute them in this section of country.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Walker's second and third sons who were at this time students at Yale.

TO CHARLOTTE BAYNTON¹

Hond. Miss

Washington City Apl 12, 1836

Your favor with the inclosed document was recd in due time and will [receive] immediate attention. I think the Case a very plain one.²

In the meantime I remain with due regard your very Humble Servant.

JAS. K. POLK

Addressed to Philadelphia. This letter is not in Polk's handwriting, nor is it signed by him.

1. She was a daughter of John Baynton, a prominent merchant in Philadelphia prior to the Revolution. Baynton was a partner in the firm of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, which carried on extensive trade in the trans-Allegheny region.

2. This refers to Charlotte Baynton's claim to a large tract of land frequently referred to as the "state of Indiana." See Charlotte Baynton to Polk, July 22, 1836.

FROM JOHN W. FORD

Dear Sir

McMinnville April 12th 1836

From some remarks in a late number of the *Globe* which seem to have been made "by authority" in answer to Judge Whites "Reasons" for voting against the nominations of Taney, Stephenson, and Kendall, it seems that the P.M. General is determined to make his "rule" upon me, by removing me from the office of Post Master at this place, unless I will cease my connexion with the *Central Gazette*. This is the first intimation that I have received from the Department on this subject, since the letter that was addressed to me under date of the 11th Decr last, the contents of which I have heretofore informed you. Since that time I have used reasonable exertions to dispose of my printing establishment, but have been unable to effect a sale, without making a greater pecuniary sacrifice than I am able to bear.

If it would satisfy the "rule" which the Department has laid down for its government, for me to retire from the Editorial Department of the *Gazette*, that I am willing to do, as a friend of mine has offered to take my place. This change of Editors would be *real* not *nominal*, though the proprietorship of the office would still be in me. For me to surrender up the printing establishment, without I could effect a sale upon living terms, would be at once depriving myself, in a great measure, of the means of supporting and educating a family of six female children, as the profits arising from the Post office alone, are entirely inadequate to that purpose.

On the subject of the P.M. Genl, not being apprised of the fact of my being an Editor at the time the appointment of P.M. was conferred upon me, I will barely remark that this no doubt is true, but that fact *was known at the Department* before I was commissioned, for it was expressly set forth under the signature of my name to my oath of office that my profession was that of

an editor, and I would much rather the commission had been withheld from me the first instance, than to have been commissioned and then notified that I would be removed from office, unless I retired from the editorial department of the Central Gazette. I have a further special reason against being removed—it would afford my political enemies—such small souled men as Barrow, Hall, Zollicoffer &c. cause for triumph over me and I am opposed to affording them any cause for triumph, and I have no doubt Mr. Kendall is equally so. I must plague you to again see Mr Kendall on the subject, and ascertain whether my proposition will satisfy the Department. I wish you to see him immediately and write me the result. Please excuse me for troubling you on this subject—I have no Representative, is my reason. You will also excuse the manner of this letter, as I have written it in great haste and have not had time to copy it.

JOHN W. FORD

Addressed to Washington.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, April 12, 1836

I have only returned home within the last fortnight from the South, from a somewhat unavailable excursion to the South in pursuit of that over which you formerly presided, "Ways & Means." I cannot, in a letter, give you a detail of particulars, though I was tempted to from inducements held out which have not been realized. I spent my own money, and collected little for the concern, though I obtained some good subscriptions and made many valuable acquaintances, especially in Mississippi. I went on the excursion, partly, and mostly, because I was driven to a state of despair of being able to continue the business here, until the end of the Session of Congress without some prompt aid. I wrote you fully of my intentions, expectations and views from Natchez in February, having first informed you that I had left Nicholson literally at the helm, and [Josephus C.] Guild to help. I expected to meet Dr. [William M.] Gwin at Natchez, before I left home, but not finding him arrived from the East, I

proceeded to N. Orleans. I then found the Post, the new talented paper, established at first on a capital of about \$6000, failing for want of support, money in advance, in spite of the best efforts of Breedlove, Gordon, Christy¹ and others. I waited several weeks until the Committee on the subject should use every means to resuscitate it. They failed, but succeeded at last in uniting it with another paper, and still securing the services of Lawrence,² its talented Editor. I concluded under the advice of Mr. Breedlove, that something handsome in the way of subscribers, perhaps an hundred or an hundred and fifty at \$5 each, being tri-weekly, might be procured, after *their own affair of the Post* was arranged. Finding that the Post would die or rather remain dead, I left, and went to Mississippi and awaited Dr. Gwin's return home, and a few days after he did return, I hastened home, under a quasi-prospective arrangement of probably obtaining about \$1000 on loan on my own responsibility or by pledging property, and perhaps without either. If this shall be effected, it will be in all the month of May.

On coming home I found things desperate. Some thought I had stayed away too long, though I remained the time [Medicus A.] Long expected when I left home, though it was longer by several weeks than I had expected, and much longer than was agreeable to my wishes and desires, and longer than suited my purse in the South, but without which I could have effected no feasible arrangement. Here, what money had been borrowed and spent, about \$1500, had been at 10 pr. cent interest paid in advance, chargeable upon the establishment. This *way* of supporting an establishment would soon *weigh* it down, and I had hoped to do better. I only effected what I have told you.

Finding things as I did on my arrival, and some thinking I intended to charge the concern for services at some time (\$1500 per. annum) too much, I soon relieved them on that score by a properly attested release for any prospective charge at all, and postponing any claim I might have against the concern for past services to the latest time to which any creditor would wait for his debt. I also proposed to raise by sale of property or mortgage \$500 to buy paper and pay wages, to be forthwith paid over to J. M. Smith³ who is the agent or bookkeeper of the concern to be prospectively paid as fast as needed to meet the accruing ex-

pense over the accruing income. You will see by Col. [Robert] Armstrong's statement published that our circulation is now the largest in the city and county, being then 17 over the Republican and now a far greater number as we increase every day. In other places, every where, we are on the heels of the Banner and Republican and will soon pass them. Our increase had been generally latterly about or over 200 pr. month, and as not one tenth man of these pays in advance, our quantity of paper has to increase, expense of labor has to increase, and as we have but a very moderate share of advertising, the people, the merchants and others here advertise less than in any other city in America in proportion [to] their wealth and quantity of business, and as Long and a not very unexpensive family establishment must subsist exclusively from the proceeds, you may guess that our expenses exceed our available profits at a rapid rate. I have received literally nothing for any past services, not enough to pay my current necessary family expenses for a month, nor will I while the war lasts, nor while an inch of ground is to be gained by striving, and released all future claim in any event, I am now a volunteer, and can, with my \$500 which I have commenced advancing, with the money that comes in, be enabled under God, to prosecute the campaign until you and our other friends return home, when an exposition can be had of Smiths books, and a consultation had as to what must be done. The Office is indebted for paper and wages now to a considerable amount to Robert Gibson⁴ and others to whom Long owes it, but my money, and what can be received and collected must be mostly and shall be applied to prospective operations, for paper &c. yet to come. The money in Mississippi may be obtained, and as far as Dr. Gwin is concerned, upon easy terms. I may ruin myself, but I will not give up in a pinch. I have never yet had a load laid on me that I did not carry.

In the mean time I am leaving Maj. [Andrew Jackson] Donelson exposed to pay money which I think he told me he borrowed himself to lend to me. While I am raising my \$500, and money to live on, for I have many mouths to feed, I will try to extricate him from the necessity of paying that debt for me.

Long tells me that he wrote you that the concern must go down if I fail in collecting money below. I tell you, although I

collected none worth naming, and had to borrow money to pay some of my expenses, that it shall not go down or falter in its course, until after you and Messrs. Grundy and Johnson say it may go down after you return. Rest assured of this. Having spent 15 months in getting it up and rearing it to what it is, I am not now to be made to yield to common circumstances. I have sacrificed my time, lived upon the substance, not income, of my means, and spun out my brains to but little purpose in a Glorious Cause, if I can now be made to succumb by any ordinary or even extraordinary difficulties. I am poor, very poor, but in such a contest I can afford to be made poorer. My distresses, anxieties, watchings, and family anxieties under the evil of a not very powerful constitution have often driven me into extravagancies and follies, but I have the recuperative principle in me, which always raises me above these, when the time of real trial comes.

I hope under the Administration I devised, that the paper has not suffered while I was money hunting.

I have just seen our friend James Walker who is here on his way to Huntsville. He says the Union's defence of you against both *Wise* and foolish slanders, is satisfactory South. Here your enemies stand at open shame.

I have two things to handle next week, the attacks made here on Mr. Grundy's Bill,⁵ and facts which I have collected and can prove in a great many instances, of Judge White, John Bell and Bailey Peyton franking *Wise's* miserable speech to persons all through this Country. White has franked it into this and your District. Bell has franked it home, and Peyton has sent it here. I am now sitting up waiting for the stage at 3 o'clock, and am going to Murfreesboro with Mr. Walker, to continue Maj. Boyd's suit⁶ of which Mr. Grundy has knowledge, and have written to persons to have proof ready for me there. I have written elsewhere. I will show the position quantumvrate (a new word I think) association of politicians to the good people of these parts, for the special benefit of two of them, White and Bell. Apropos, White though partially, has not been fully answered for his slanders of the Union and its Editor. If God spares me, he shall know with whom he has meddled. A liar God hates, whether he be a grave senator or a chimney sweep.

Let me mention a grave subject. The *Globe must* forthwith

explain the cause why the deposits have been transferred from our Union [Bank] to New York.' I shall meet the complaints of my neighbors, but I do not know the facts.

Here, let me also tell you, that Mr. Blair *must* send me sets of the Congressional and Extra Globe with all the back numbers. I cannot preserve a file of my daily Globe, being obliged to print from it, and compelled often by necessity to cut it for the compositors.

You have acted wisely and all your friends think so, in your affair with Wise. Rest assured of it.

On the 9th, Bolling Gordon was nominated in Maury for Elector. The meeting was composed of the first men from all parts of the county.

[John H.] Rivers will be nominated in Giles. Part of my business to Stones river in the morning is to see Col. [Moses] Ridley, Dr. [William R.] Rucker, John R. Laughlin, Reeves^s and others about a man for Rutherford. You shall hear. The right man, perhaps, has not been yet hit on. I think it is Ridley. He will have all the Brady interest in Rutherford, and great strength in Williamson.

Your Shelbyville Star, with an occasional lift from hereabouts and from A.O.P.N. in its new dress, begins to shine very brightly.

I have no time to look over and correct a midnight scrawl, but its contents are for the eyes of our friends Messrs. Grundy, Johnson and Donelson, to whom, health and prosperity, publicly and privately.

Think of the name of the committee over which you once presided, and as Mr. Grundy is said to be a "cunning man in devices," and the Hon Cave a "sober thinking (not old) bachelor," and Maj. Donelson, according to [Washington] Barrow, to be a "man of prospective schemes," I wish you to forget your present higher dignity and return to your station in the last Congress, all lay your heads together, for something must be done, not for me, but for *The Union*. You may take me for a merry undone man, but this is a most grave and serious subject. Think well of it, and let that which is proper and right, expedient and just, and which may be *most proper* to be done, and be done soon.

Col. [Robert] Armstrong and J. R. Smith^o lent their credit

to the Union while I was gone. I can keep it up by paying ten per cent for money till you return home, by giving security, which money I must repay with other necessary money to buy meat and bread. The money I made by my clerkship at Washington, \$90, is the last I have *made*, though I have spent much since that time.

I find myself fatigued by sitting up, and hear the stage horn. Please present my respects to Mrs. Polk, and accept assurances of my high consideration and esteem.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

P.S. In kindness, excuse the scribbled manner of this letter. Geo. Childress¹⁰ is going to Washington as a Plenapo. to thwart the plans of the new Mexican Minister. Think of that!

Addressed to Washington.

1. James Waller Breedlove, a prosperous New Orleans banker, was the son-in-law of General James Winchester. Jackson appointed him collector of the port of New Orleans in 1832. Martin Gordon was president of the New Orleans Steam Navigation Company and an active supporter of Jackson. Through most of the 1820s Gordon served as a member of the New Orleans city council. William H. Christy was a lawyer, member of the city council from 1823 to 1833, and an active advocate of Texas independence.

2. Philip K. Lawrence moved from New York to Louisiana. In addition to practicing law, he also edited the New Orleans *Morning Post* from November 1835 until its demise in February 1836. In 1837 Van Buren appointed Lawrence judge of the United States District Court for Louisiana.

3. Joel M. Smith was prominent in political and business affairs in Nashville for a long time. He had served as assistant to Robert Purdy when he was Marshal for West Tennessee. Failing to be appointed to succeed Purdy he was appointed as surveyor and inspector of revenue for the port of Nashville. He engaged in the printing business and became a part owner of the Nashville *Union*. He is not to be confused with Joel Ridley Smith, who lived in Davidson County at one time.

4. Robert Gibson was a merchant and a leader of the Irish community in Nashville.

5. This probably refers to Grundy's bill to reorganize the postal service. In the wake of the Post Office scandal involving William T. Barry, Grundy assumed congressional leadership in bringing forth reform. At the same time, he sought to absolve the administration of responsibility for the corruption. Grundy's critics charged that his efforts to centralize the operations of the Post Office were designed to assure him extensive patronage when Jackson appointed him the new Post Master General. Amos Kendall received the appointment instead, although a modified version of Grundy's original proposal became law.

6. The nature of this suit has not been learned. At this time, however, Laughlin was being sued in Rutherford County by George Sublett and John R. Laughlin for failure to pay the principal and interest on a note.

7. On May 5, 1836, the *Washington Globe* made just the sort of explanation Laughlin felt was so necessary. According to the *Globe* proceeds from the sale of Chickasaw lands at Pontotoc had been deposited at Nashville. The Chickasaw treaty required that this money be invested in public stocks, under the direction of the President, for the benefit of the Chickasaw nation. Transfer warrants were issued, payable in Philadelphia and New York, for the purpose of making the investment. When objection to this transfer of funds out of the region was raised, the transfer warrants were withdrawn and new ones issued, payable in New Orleans. Also, for the convenience of the Nashville bank an extension of the time for the payments was given.

8. Moses G. Reeves was register of Rutherford County from 1824 to 1836.

9. It seems obvious that the writer intended to make this J. M. Smith.

10. George C. Childress, former editor of the *Nashville Banner*, had been appointed by the newly formed Republic of Texas as minister to the United States. The appointment was probably made in the hope that Childress's family ties would be of value in negotiating with Jackson. After two months of futile efforts Childress left Washington and returned to Texas.

FROM MAHLON DICKERSON

Washington. April 13, 1836

The Secretary of the Navy reiterates his request for an increase in salary for two clerks in his office. He does so with full knowledge that interference by departmental heads in such matters is often inexpedient.

Addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy in Miscellaneous Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy (RG 45), National Archives.

FROM ADLAI O. HARRIS

Dear Sir

Columbia 13 April 1836

I understand a few days ago that the Government had checkd. on the Union Bank for the amt of the deposits there about 400 Thousand Dollars,¹ and now learn that it is about to have a ruinous tendency on the commercial matters of our Country. The almost total failure of the crops in this country very naturally causes a pressure here, that now begins to be felt pretty seriously. The loss of the Mexican trade at N. Orleans, occasioned by the War in Texas, has produced a pressure there such

as had scarcely ever been felt before. Money has become so scarce at N.O. that the best paper having no more than 30 to 60 days to run cannot be relied on at the Banks. They will discount only in self defence. Their silver had been drained off in all directions, and their usual supplies completely checked by the loss of the Mexican trade. Several sales of Cotton have had to be Cancelld. for the want of money—exchange at 60 days on N. York 3 pc discount. In fact a more gloomy state of affairs has seldom been witnessd at any city in the U.S. Under this state of things at N. Orleans and the consequent pressure [. . .] for means to relieve our Planters & Merchants, who have drawn bills on their Merchants in N. Orleans, you may form some idea of our mortification to find that the last hope we had for relief was about to be so crippled as to deprive it of the ability of giving us the aid that we must have or the country will be shaken to its center. The Union Bank had come forward to the relief of the Planters and Merchants, by discounting long bills to meet the payments of this season but on rec't of the information from the Treasy. Department, that the little pittance of the public deposits in our state was to be sent to the North, all exchange business had to be suspended and the funds at New Orleans held up to remit to the North.

I give you this information with the hope that you will endeavour to have this order countermanded. Do use your influence with the Department, to postpone the call of this Money until next spring. They can do without it & if ever the situation of this country required the aid of the Government it does now. The Amt. does not seem large in the eyes of the Treasy. Department but to our state at this time it is a matter of immense importance. The *White* folks too are taking advantage of it & are endeavouring to create a terrible excitement about it.

Our house below is under all the pressure well fortified for this month & May—in fact up to this time we have passd. along very pleasantly. The Bank has given us very liberal assistance but if they can assist us no longer we shall have to get aid from some source or let all bills unprovided for, return for the drawers, a thing that I would not have to happen for any reasonable sum of money.

Please try to get this order deferred. The Eastern Banks are

no more worthy of the countenance of the Government than ours & they have millions already of the Deposites & we only 400 Thousand.

No news of importance in the political way.

Naomi² has been very sick for about ten days—billious fever —& three of our negroes very sick and for four or five weeks. Other families generally well. Your authority to Judge Yell shall be duly honoured.

A. O. HARRIS

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, April 12, 1836, fn. 7, and James Walker to Polk, April 20, 1836.
2. Naomi Polk Harris, wife of Adlai O. Harris.

TO FRANCIS O. J. SMITH

My Dear Sir

Washington, April 13 [1836]¹

I had no opportunity to see the other gentlemen after our conversation at the House to day. I will request them to come down tomorrow evening, when I shall be happy to see you.

J. K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Maine Historical Society.

1. The date Polk wrote on the letter was Wednesday, April 13. The year 1836 was supplied because it was the only year during Smith's tenure in the House that April 13 fell on Wednesday.

FROM WILLIAMSON SMITH

Dear Sir,

Columbia 13th Apl 1836

For the first time since my return from the lower country I have visited Columbia. There is great excitement here from an order just rc. by the Union Bank that the public deposits would be called for in the course of the summer. There are many conjectures why it is done. The *White Whigs* are putting every unfavourable construction upon the matter, it is possible to do, which I am inclined to [think] will have its influence upon the pending Elections. Your friends here & the friends of the Administration are at a loss to account for it, or at least I am. The opposition here say it is either to sustain the Eastern Banks

against Nick Biddles Bank (as it is called here) or to make a run upon the Bank when it goes into operation, & either destroy it or so cripple as it can be of no use. Say the least of it, it has thrown the commercial part of our community into a very unpleasant condition. I have just returned from New Orleans, and there is an unprecedented pressure in the money market in that place, which has necessarily thrown a hard press upon Banks in Tennessee, and also individuals. You will see that this district has nominated Bollen Gordon for the Van Buren Elector. The knowing ones seem to apprehend no doubt but this district will Elect him. It is not known who will be the White Elector yet.

I have this moment had an interview with David Looney who you know is running for Brig. Genl. He is much alarmed & begs the Pres. question should not be run against him. The prevailing opinion is that Mitchell will be Elected. Bradford has taken Wisener. Hunter pretty much dropped. The contest will be between Looney & Mitchell.

I will write you again in a few days on the subject of our Post Office. Your letter to Doct. Bostick¹ on the subject of getting an appointment in the Army I presume he recd. though I have not seen him as he has moved to Hardemans X Roads in Williamson County. I think it probable he has declined going into the Army.

Present my Respects to Mrs. Polk and for yourself accept my best Wishes. . . .

WILLIAMSON SMITH

P.S. So far as I could Judge of the state of Politics Van Buren will get Miss. Loua [Louisiana] I could form no opinion about.

W. S.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Jonathan Bostick to Polk, March 21, 1836.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

To The President of
the United States

[Washington] April 15, 1836

The undersigned, has been informed that *Mr Thomas T. Patton*,¹ a citizen of the State of North Carolina, has been recently convicted in the Circuit Court of the U. States, held in

that State of the crime of forgery. I am informed that the offense of which he has been convicted, was committed in preparing the papers in support of an application of a soldier of the Revolution, for a pension of small amount, and of so small an amount, that his object could scarcely have been individual gain; I learn further that there are other alleviating and mitigating circumstances connected with his case which his friends hope may justify and induce you in the exercise of your discretionary power to grant him the Executive pardon. He is represented to be a young man, who had borne a fair character, up to the time of the commission of the offense, and from what I have heard from his friends, of the circumstances connected with it, I am strongly inclined to believe that it was rather an act of indiscretion than of criminal intent. His father *Mr. James Patton*² of Buncombe County, N.C. I have known by reputation from my youth, and have a slight personal acquaintance with him, and have always understood that he was a highly respectable and worthy man. His son who has been convicted, is I am told the youngest of the family. If on examining the facts and circumstances the Executive pardon can with propriety be granted to him, I have no doubt, the admonition he has already received, by the sentence of conviction, as also a sense of propriety, will be a sufficient guaranty that he will not again be guilty of the like offense. *William J. Alexander Esqr.* of Charlotte, late the Speaker of the House of Commons of the N.C. Legislature, with whom I believe you are personally acquainted writes me the enclosed letter in his behalf.³ The Mr. Patton whom Mr. A. introduces to me is the brother of the unfortunate young man. Mr. Alexander is now the Prosecuting Attorney of the State in the Circuit in which Mr Patton resides, and is presumed to be fully acquainted with all the facts and circumstances of his case. I will only add, that if you shall think it proper to grant his application, it will be gratifying to his friends, and to myself, and it is hoped that the public interest, would not be prejudiced thereby.

JAMES K. POLK⁴

Delivered by hand. This letter is in General Records of the Department of State, Petitions for Pardon (RG 59), National Archives. A signed draft in

Polk's handwriting is in the Polk Papers, Library of Congress. The draft differs in minor detail from the letter sent. The draft was dated April 14.

1. Patton was accused of forging the signature of a county magistrate to the pension claim of John Duckworth, apparently a commonplace procedure. Patton readily acknowledged his guilt. Jackson granted the pardon asked on May 5, 1836.

2. James Patton was a prominent merchant who also operated the Eagle Hotel in Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina. At one time he was a partner of his brother-in-law, Andrew Erwin, in land speculation in Tennessee and North Carolina.

3. This is the letter from Alexander to Polk, dated March 9, 1836.

4. Below Polk's signature are notes endorsing Polk's recommendation of Executive clemency, written and signed by Felix Grundy and Thomas H. Benton.

FROM LEVI WOODBURY

Sir

Treasury Department, 15th. Ap. 1836

From the proceedings of the House of Representatives, as reported in the public papers and communicated to me by others, I understand that in the course of the two last days, a member of that House has in debate charged me with fraud and corruption in the performance of my official duties, as well as with making a wilful misrepresentation in an official report to the last Congress and, in fine, with having committed various offences against the laws, which if true should justly subject me to impeachment and condign punishment.¹

During a period of much political acrimony, I would not be thought over sensitive, or willingly trouble any public body concerning the subject of anonymous calumnies, or charges of a trifling & impertinent character, or with any thing merely personal in its bearings.

But when an accuser fills the honourable station of a Representative in Congress and the charges are made in the face of that body of the nation and, as represented, amount to the imputation of high crimes & misdemeanours in the transaction of official business by a public officer, it is hoped I shall be pardoned for interrupting in relation to them, for a few minutes, the important deliberations of the House over which you preside.

Conscious as I am of my entire innocence of any such offense, my earnest, but respectful request is, Sir, that you would submit to the consideration of that House this communication, with my strong desire that if such charges have been made, the House will cause an early enquiry to be instituted into the truth of any & all of them, in order, that if well founded, signal punishment may follow and if unfounded, that public opinion may be disabused of any erroneous impressions, which they are calculated to create, prejudicial to that confidence, which would inspire the minds of the community in the honest and faithful discharge of his duties by an officer at the head of one of the important departments of the government.

LEVI WOODBURY

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Papers of Levi Woodbury, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Henry A. Wise of Virginia had attacked the entire Jackson administration and was making sweeping charges of corruption against various cabinet members. He singled out Woodbury and accused him of being in league with Reuben Whitney in some nefarious scheme.

FROM JACOB GREER

Dear Sir

Bedford County 16th April 1836

The wide range that the abolition question has taken since you wrote me last has astonished me very much; instead of Congress refusing in every instance to receive the petition of those wild fanatics as they ought to have done, I see the house of representatives on the motion of a Southern member,¹ have raised a committee, to investigate the matter, and make out probably a voluminous report to flood the country and news papers with; and exhibit the eloquence of some Lawyer & to favor his promotion. This iniquitous plan has already been the cause and will continue to produce cart loads, of these infamous petitions to the great injury of the good people of this government, by their representatives spending their time discussing unconstitutional questions, while they ought to be making laws for the benefit of their constituents, or traveling home to their families. My own opinion is that if there was no Lawyers in

Congress or if they would not act like they do before the Courts of Justice at home, where they are sworn to be true to their clients, there would never be an unconstitutional petition presented to Congress. The common honest yeomanry of the country understand the constitution according to its true reading, not as mistified and sophisticated by the technicalities of laws enacted by Lawyers, whose trade is to work for their own agrandisement. You may think my notions heterodox and futile, but if more attention was paid to such notions, the institutions of our country would be in much less danger than I fear they are under existing circumstances. No man I presume will deny that the citizens of the District of Columbia, are citizens of the United States also, as well as you and myself are, the one of us has his residence in Maury County and the other in Bedford. Now my dear Sir suppose I was to forward a petition to you, praying Congress to free the slaves of one of your neighbors, or in other words to divide them equally with me would you feel it your duty from the oath you have taken to present and discuss such a petition? You certainly would not. Yet you could do it with the same propriety that the members do, who are daily presenting the petitions of the Northern fanatics. The right of petition secured to the people by the constitution, cannot possibly mean any thing else, than that the matter contained in the petition shall be such as Congress has the constitutional power to act on. You may say that a majority in both houses of Congress are of a different opinion from what I express; in answer to that I would only observe that if ever the institutions of this government are destroyed it will be commenced by a factious majority of Congress, and I pray God that, that awful crisis may not have commenced in the 24th Congress under the specious pretext of the right of petition. A common saying among a certain class of politicians is, that they view slavery as an evil and that we ought at all events to get clear of it; I view it in a different light altogether; that same God who says, I make peace, and create evil, has positively commanded in his word, that we should buy our servants slaves of the heathen natives around us; and he is the same God that blessed Abraham with riches, in gold and in silver and men servants and maid servants (slaves if you please). Then it was considered by the people of God a blessing to have

Slaves and now by the fanatics a curse! When did the true worshipers live! then! or now? This same God has also in his word denounced the heaviest curses against those who make slaves of their own children or nation. Let the African slaves be set free in the United States, and it requires no prophet to predict what would be the result. In a few short years the price of day labor would be so reduced, that all our poor children or citizens would find themselves in the same situation of the many millions of human beings in Europe who can claim neither the right to vote in any popular election, nor even the course bread they eat, and who consequently perish by thousands annually, for want of enough of common bread to support nature. It is I think altogether owing to the spirit of compromise that prevailed in the formation of our Federal Compact, which has so long sustained our Union. Let that spirit cease to operate in the councils of the nation, and we may bid a long farewell to Union and liberty. These are serious reflections and ought to be a solemn warning to all who hold the destinies of this republic in their hands. If Sir I am too sanguine in my expressions, it is on account of the deep interest I feel in the matter.

JACOB GREER

Please let me have an answer.

Addressed to Washington. A copy of this letter was forwarded by Greer to Polk in December 1836.

1. On February 5, 1836, Henry L. Pinckney of South Carolina introduced a resolution calling for the creation of a select committee to receive petitions demanding the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.

FROM JAMES H. PIPER¹

Wythe Court House, Virginia. April 19, 1836

Piper asks that Polk intervene with the President in support of the appointment of Harold Smyth, a lawyer at Wytheville and officer in the War of 1812, to be governor of the Wisconsin Territory.²

Addressed to Washington.

1. Piper was a cousin of James Walker and had at one time lived in Columbia. See James Walker to Polk, May 6, 1836.

2. Smyth did not get the appointment.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia April 20th 1836

I have seen your letters to Andrew [C. Hays] of the 5th & 7th.¹ I assure you without hesitation, that you may feel no uneasiness about public sentiment in relation to yourself or the Presidential question. My opinion is that Bell's efforts and the free circulation of Wise's Speech, has had no other effect than to strengthen you and to arouse the people upon their Jackson feeling. The letter writers for the Republican & Banner are by no means affecting Bell's wishes upon the public mind; it seems all to be understood, and Bell's motive and vindictive insidious course I think is destroying him and his party throughout this country. I was at Nashville last week, went with Laughlin to Murfreesborough and had much political talk. Laughlin thinks Bell is sinking at home, and that his letter writers are helping him down. The Van Buren side are gaining in Rutherford, but it is still thought that White is in that county and Williamson the strongest. I was detained at Shelbyville a short time, and had a long conversation with Col. [Kenneth L.] Anderson. He says, you never was more popular than you now are in Bedford. Your friends entirely approve your conduct in relation to Wise &c. The White party intend to nominate Bradford on their Ticket, and Anderson says that even now the White strength is brought down to the Irwin [Erwin] & Bradford strength; he is confident that a majority of Bedford is now for Van Buren. A meeting will take place there on Saturday next, and Turney will be nominated for the elector of that District. In Lincoln there is a decided majority for V.B. In Giles & Lawrence there is no doubt but Van Buren is the strongest. An elector will be nominated for that District in a short time. [John H.] Rivers is spoken of; Dr. [Alfred] Flourney & Fulton² of Fayetteville are also spoken of. You will see that we are proceeding with the formation of our Ticket with fine spirit, and I believe that we shall carry the state. We have this far greatly the advantage in electoral candidates; and will I think soon have our Ticket completely formed. We stand with [William] Carroll, B. Gordon, [Hardy M.] Cryer, probably Rivers, and Fentress;³ they will

most likely start with W. E. Anderson,* [Theodorick F.] Bradford, Col. [William] Pillow, or [Gabriel B.] Fowlkes of Hickman.

The question is pretty fairly made in the election for Brigadier General, which comes on this week. Mitchell is fairly the Van Buren Polk candidate. Hunter however will get many of your friends, as he is admitted always to have sustained you. We have said nothing against Hunter, but let him get on as well as he can. Mitchell will be elected by a triumphant majority or I am greatly deceived. Your friends in Bedford are much pleased at the prospect of his high vote in this county. It is right in itself and will have a good effect in future.

The Democrat is doing well in the way of subscribers and I hope you are satisfied with its course since it has been awakened up. They are now getting a good share of the Job-work, still they are hard run to pay expenses. I wish a portion of the Post office printing could be got for them. I mean the way bill printing for this section of country. It will not do for the Democrat [. . .] for want of pecuniary means. The Observer [would?] treat us most villainously in such an event and this place after the excitement is over will not sustain both. Look to this matter, as you must feel that you have a deep stake in it.

I will write to you tomorrow on our mail business and forward you a copy of Dr. Polk & Saml's bid &c.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. These letters have not been found.
2. James Fulton was a prominent Fayetteville lawyer who had served in the constitutional convention in 1834. He has been called the father of the Fayetteville bar.
3. James Fentress had moved to Yellow Creek in Montgomery County from North Carolina in 1798. He served in the lower house of the General Assembly for eight consecutive terms, 1809-25, and was speaker of that body during his last four terms. Fentress County and its county seat, Jamestown, were named in his honor.
4. William E. Anderson was a Nashville lawyer and a former partner of Felix Grundy. He was chancellor of the Western District, 1827-30, and served two terms in the General Assembly, 1833-35 and 1837-39, after which he moved to Mississippi.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia April 20th 1836

Can you inform me the meaning of the government checking for the public money in Tennessee in favor of the Northern Banks?¹ The White party are most industriously circulating the story that the public money is to be all withdrawn from the South & West and taken to the North to aid & assist the New York Banks in making war on the new U.S. Bank, and another *panic* attempting to be got up. The time is favorable for their producing some effect upon this tack. The money market in New Orleans is in a terrible condition, and the pressure here is greater than ever has been known. The Tennessee administration editors ought to possess information enough to know how to treat this subject. The draft of \$400,000 on the Union Bank surprises all sides, and as no doubt good reasons can be given, the sooner they are furnished the better. We are on such rising ground at present that we have every motive to desire that our opponents can have no advantage over us in the argument before the people.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, April 12, 1836, fn. 7.

FROM ROBERT D. FENNER¹

Courtland, Alabama. April 21, 1836

Fenner reports that news has reached Courtland that Dr. Jack Shackelford has been killed in Texas, and asks that John J. McMahon be appointed postmaster to replace him.² He indicates that McMahon will give the profits of the office to the widow and children of Shackelford.

Addressed to Washington.

1. At one time a wealthy man, Fenner had moved to Courtland from North Carolina. One of his sons died in the Goliad massacre.

2. Shackelford was spared at the Goliad massacre, perhaps because he was a physician, but one of his sons was killed. McMahon, a merchant, had married a daughter of Shackelford, a wealthy planter as well as a physician. Shackelford's return from Texas added complications to the postmastership at Courtland. See Polk to John J. McMahon, June 15, 1836.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia April 21, 1836

I enclose you duplicates of proposals which have been forwarded to the Post office Department. It may be safest for these to be put in also, lest the others may have miscarried. You will see that Dr. Polk & Samuel bid (in case both routes are assigned them) precisely what they agreed at with us, our present compensation for these Routes. I desire much that they may get these Routes, as they will then go on as though no change had taken place. The understanding between them & me is that if their bid is accepted the sale I made them is to stand from the 1st. of January last. I sold them $\frac{2}{3}$ ds of the property &c, retaining one third in my own name with them, which interest really belongs to W.C. & Co. If the PMG. considers it improper for me to be a secret partner of Dr. P. & Sam'l, then they are to take the whole interest, but I must manage the lines for them for a stipulated compensation, for a while at least. I will not conceal from you that I particularly desire that Dr. P. & Sam'l's bid may be accepted, if it can be done with propriety. It will make the blow fall much lighter on us. The bid of John W. Otey¹ will seem high. It is however a fair bid, and I believe if any one bids for any of the Routes for much less, that they will fail unless they are very strong. There is a perfect understanding between Otey, Caruthers & Kinkle & myself. If his bids are accepted on any or all the lines, he is to have our property to fulfill the contracts with. The agents will remain with him & retain the same proportion of interest they now have. In fact on any bid of Otey, which may be accepted the Routes will go on without interruption. All the terms as to property &c. are agreed on and perfectly understood. Otey is a man of high respectability and responsibility with a small family. If his bids are accepted he will move his family on the lines, and personally superintend them, aided by the agents already in charge of them who are the best that can be procured. He will be sustained by King,² [Reuben] Chapman & [Joshua L.] Martin of Alabama. I particularly desire that you will also sustain, and inform Grundy & Johnson, that it is highly important to our getting safely out

of the contracts for Otey to be our successor on as many of the Routes as can be properly assigned him. The most essential favor you can render us is to be sure that the bids that are accepted are made by responsible men, men who can give us unquestionable paper for our property, and men who if they find they have made a bid too low will not back out. I am perfectly certain that no one can perform any of the Miss. Routes without our property. It is their interest & ours mutually to make a fair arrangement. Our intention is to sell to our successors, be them whom they may, if we can get fair value & *secure* pay, but we will look well to the *security* of the debt made for our property.

It would place us in much difficulty if any of the Routes were bid off (as two of Caruthers & Kinkles were) and the bidders on examining the prospect was to decline commencing. This would produce a necessity for us to see that the Mail did not stop, and we could only do so, for a short time at high rates. It is a matter of much importance that the bids accepted should be from men of unquestionable responsibility. You are safe in saying that Polk & Walker & Otey are such men, and if their bids are accepted the changes will produce not even temporary irregularity or derangement.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. John W. Otey, a merchant of Huntsville, Alabama, bid on a number of mail contracts but never seems to have been successful. It is possible that he was in some way connected with Caruthers and Kinkle, a Huntsville stage-coach firm that regularly obtained mail contracts.

2. William R. King was at this time a member of the United States Senate.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia April 22d 1836

I wrote you yesterday and forwarded you the bids upon which we rely for our Routes. I feel much solicitude that the bids of Sam'l & Dr. Polk should succeed. I think it likely it will be the first offer from a responsible source. All the good you can do us is to see that no irresponsible bid is accepted. I am also desirous that Otey's bids for the Mi[sissippi] lines should be accepted. If so he will remove on the lines, devote his entire at-

tention to them and with the property agents and arrangements now made will execute the contracts, without the public deriving any injury from the change. It will also have the good effect of making all property concerns easily adjusted.

John W. Groves, a favorite agent, has bid for the line he now manages from Columbus to Jackson. This is the most difficult of all the lines, and the most destructive on property. Groves had bid it lower than Otey. If there should be but the two bids on the line (which is probable) you will please say nothing about Groves; he has no recommendations. If there should be a responsible bidder between Groves & Otey, I would take it as a particular favor if you would in that event sustain Grove's bid. He has not the means of executing the contract himself, but I have every confidence in him & will furnish him the property and means to go on in the case his bid is accepted. He is honest and energetic, has married into a respectable and wealthy family, and his wife desires to remain in that part of the country. However [ra]ther than fail to have business he is accustomed to he would take the contract at \$16000 if he fails of being concerned with Otey at \$18000. If Otey's bid is accepted, Groves will be continued as agent, and be entitled to one fourth of the profits of the line. Therefore I desire that if silence respecting Groves will secure the contract to Otey that you may be silent; and if there is a responsible bidder between them that then you may sustain Groves fully, and I will guarantee that he fulfills, all that can be expected on his difficult route. What the opinion of others who may bid will be, as to price I know not, but I am sure that the bids forwarded are as low as can be afforded high as they may seem. I should be glad you would get Grundy, & Johnson to assist you & give all the support you can to these bids, consistently with propriety and fair dealing. I do not wish to succeed upon but fair & correct principles; if *responsible* men underbid the bids I have forwarded I am perfectly willing to sell them the property on the Routes they get, and be of any service in getting them to make a fair start. I shall certainly be particular that the paper I take for property shall be well secured. It is of much importance that the Routes should be assigned to persons who can be relied on, as we cannot go on for a short time after the 1st of July, even

at [. . .] of the bids forwarded. We must sell our property [. . .]¹ July. Two of Caruthers & Kinkles lines were bid off by some of Saltmarsh's² men. After examination it was found that the contract would not do; they declined starting the line. C. & K. or Otey are now running at their bid, but the matter is unsettled. I should dislike such an occurrence and be at a loss what to do under it. I hope Mr. Kendall will be particular on these important Routes to secure the services of responsible and efficient men. I have to request that you will fully understand me in Grove's case. If silence respecting him will secure the contract to Otey I would like nothing said about him, but if a responsible bidder is between Groves & Otey, then I desire that Groves may be sustained fully & strongly.

It is a little uncertain how we shall be able to close; we have had a good deal of bad luck lately and the roads are still bad, *very bad*, and the coaches cannot run in Mi[ssissippi]. I hope we'll not *actually loose* more than our time and the use of our capital. But this is uncertain. We have advanced about \$15000, which will certainly cover all losses. I hope I have lost all that depression of spirits which so weighed me down in January & Feb. and shall be able to act with the energy that becomes. The political excitements and necessary attention to the Democrat, I believe has been of service to me, roused me. *Your enemies* are aiding and assisting you to greatness in the nation. If your health is preserved, your political prospects are most flattering, and Bells & Whites malice is of great service to you.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private and Confidential."

1. This and the preceding ellipsis denote a place where part of the manuscript is torn away.

2. D. A. and Orlando Saltmarsh held mail contracts in most of the southeastern states. There were several different companies of which one or the other of the Saltmarshes was a partner.

FROM THOMAS J. LACY

Smithland, Kentucky. April 23, 1836

Lacy explains that during his passage through Louisville he was unable to see Shadrach Penn,¹ publisher of the Louisville *Public Advertiser*, on unspeci-

fied business for Polk. However, he arranged with Judge John Oldham² that the unknown matter would be promptly handled.³

Addressed to Washington.

1. Penn was a staunch Jacksonian and a leading newspaperman in the west. In 1828 he turned down an offer to become a member of Jackson's cabinet.

2. A resident of Louisville who had served for several years as judge of the state district court there.

3. See Lacy to Polk, May 14, 1836.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Columbia April 23, 1836

David Looney was this day beaten more than two to one in Maury by Col. Saml. Mitchell. The thing is out; Judge White's hide wont hold shucks in this county. I say again, Great and glorious Victory!

One word—*Tennessee is not yet gone for White*. Thats all I've got to say now.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

P.S. David says now, that Van Buren is the strong man in Maury.

Addressed to Washington. At the top of the letter where the polite opening ordinarily appears was written "Great and Glorious Republican Victory."

FROM WILLIAM D. MOSELEY

My dear Sir, Moseley Hall [Lenoir County,
North Carolina] April 25 1836

A good many years have lapsed since we had the last interview; several, since the last epistolary communication. Our correspondence commenced with you and ended with me. Perhaps if I were to consult the strict rules of etiquette, the matter would here cease without a renewal of it on your part. I was never a very strict observer of formality, particularly when it conflicted with my duty. You will I am sure pardon my ob-

trusion, when you have heard the cause that urged me to it. You have read I am sure, with feelings of regret and horror, the account of the brutal massacre of the unfortunate Major Dade¹ and his companions in arms. Among them was my most valued personal and political friend, Dr. Gatlin.² Previously to his joining the army as Surgeon he had been for several years an inmate of my family. More sterling integrity, patriotism and valour never had an abode in the form of any man. Mercantile misfortunes had reduced his father and mother (a daughter of the late Gov. Caswell)³ to poverty. They were dependent upon the savings of their two sons, both of the army, for subsistence, the one Asst. Surgeon, the other Lie[u]t. Then one fell with Dade; the other is now at Ft Gibson.⁴ His aged parents need his wages as a means of subsistence and therefore, it is necessary that he should remain in the army but it would add to their consolation, to have him nearer home. A petition has accordingly been sent on to the Sec of War Cass. This family I know well, and in the name of an old friend and of humanity, I ask you to aid in procuring this small favour. I have written to Mr Brown and Speight⁵ upon the same subject, and have suggested to them the propriety of petitioning for a pension. This however is done, without the knowledge, as yet of Mr or Mrs Gatlin. You no doubt recollect that three men only survived that tragic scene. One of them by the name of Clark⁶ has published a very minute account of the whole affair. To that publication I refer you as a testimonial of the worth of my late friend. This letter will be handed you by my personal (not political) friends, Dr. Knox and Col. Blount.⁷ They are gentlemen of high moral worth. Your attention to this will oblige an old friend. They will also be enabled to furnish you with a more circumstantial acct. of Mr Gatlin's family. Did you know them as well as I do, you would not be satisfied with slight exertions for their relief. This I hope, in a measure, will excuse the liberties I have taken in this letter. I expect to visit Washington about the 20th of May, when I shall be glad once more to shake you by the hand. Tis possible I may carry Mrs Moseley with me.

N.B. Dr. Gatlin was the only Jackson man in his native town, and that too, from his boyhood to his death.

W. D. MOSELEY

Addressed to Washington.

1. In Florida Territory Major Francis L. Dade was leading a small force of troops from Ft. Brooke toward Ft. King when on December 24, 1835, he was ambushed by the Seminoles, who killed all but three of the party of 108.

2. John S. Gatlin, former student at University of North Carolina, became an assistant surgeon in the army in 1834 and was stationed at Ft. Gibson. At his request he was transferred to Florida in the late summer of 1835, only a few weeks before he was killed.

3. Richard Caswell, twice governor of North Carolina, had died in 1789. One of his daughters, Susannah, had married John S. Gatlin.

4. Lieutenant Richard C. Gatlin was a graduate of the United States Military Academy in the class of 1832. He was prominent in military affairs of North Carolina during the Civil War.

5. Bedford Brown and Jesse Speight were members of Congress from North Carolina, Brown in the Senate and Speight in the lower house.

6. Ransom Clarke survived, but he was badly wounded and never fully recovered from a shattered shoulder and crippled leg. He drew full pension for his service. His account of the massacre was not printed until 1839, but it is the best source of information on the action.

7. This probably refers to Dr. Ruben Knox and Nathan G. Blount, both residents of Kinston, Lenoir County, North Carolina, where Moseley lived. Knox is known to have passed through Washington at about this time.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My Dr Sir: [Nashville, Tennessee April 26, 1836]

Will you do me the favour to deliver the within to Mrs. Marshall,¹ if in the city, & if left forward it.

I am just from the District land looking. The belief is there we can get the Electoral vote. So say our side; and the others say in certain counties it is doubtful, but they'l get the vote. I saw many were turned, saying White had no Earthly chance of success; it was all humbug. And again, that they were lying on Polk, said he was partial, & when they appealed got only thirty odd votes. That the letters in the papers were written at home &c. Yet they are not I think, but are doing some good. Every *White-Jackson* man is turned, or turning, & the matter coming down to, for the admtn. & against. These letters are strongly identifying you with the strong side. Mark it: we beat them in the fall.

As you said to Mr. Stevenson,² so it shall be. The Presdt. shall be well used.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Washington.

1. John Catron and Sam Marshall married sisters named Childress. This is possibly a reference to Catron's sister-in-law.

2. This is probably a reference to Andrew Stevenson, former Speaker of the House of Representatives. The occasion mentioned remains obscure.

FROM ANDREW C. HAYS

Dear Colonel

Columbia Ten April 26 1836

When you learn that ever since your departure, until within a few weeks past my health has rather declined, that the Editorial, as well as the *pecuniary* concerns of the Democrat, has almost entirely devolved on me, and that I have had to take charge as far as my health would permit, of the Post Office, I think you will excuse me for not having written you, especially as I presume you have been regularly advised of the *real* state of things here by Mr. James Walker.

At present the state of politics in this county is even better than I could have anticipated. We are moving on swimmingly. That we will carry this district I do not entertain a doubt, and our friends confidently calculate on success throughout the State. A constant change is daily taking place, and in my opinion, three or four additional presses judiciously located, would insure the Electoral vote of Tennessee.

I learn from our friends at Shelbyville that the paper there is producing a wonderful revolution in public sentiment in that County. The Democrat is still on a steady *increase*, and is much more dreaded by the White Whigs, than any paper in the State; every effort of which they are capable, they are making to break it down. One half of the time of *those in our little village* is employed in slandering and villifying you and the Democrat; the paper however, continues to exercise the same degree of success in reforming public opinion that it did when you left.

All the efforts of White, Bell & Co. through Wise, Peyton, &c. and the *Correspondents* of the Nashville papers to destroy you at home, have so far proved to be impotent and vain. Bell

has franked some two hundred of *Wise's* and other speeches to this [post] office & White, several, among them one of *Wise's* to Nicholson, who in his speech to a crowded house, exposed the whole affair. You will also see that the Democrat has had this matter in hand, and you can judge of the ability with which it has been disposed off. The last articles on the subject were from Nicholson.

The opposition here, have become more bold of late in their denunciations of Jackson and his friends. They seem to be perfectly desperate. This is as it should be. Indeed, if I had the power of chalking out a course for them, which would certainly insure your success, I would take the one they are now pursuing.

Our Military elections are just over and it is really somewhat painful in walking the streets to day, to see the chopfallen countenances. To the White Whigs it has been a complete "*Waterloo defeat.*" They had flattered themselves that Judge White's strength was overwhelming, calculated so confidently on success that they appointed a muster of the Guards on the next day, to do honor to the occasion. For this purpose had mustered into town 20 *Friersons* but O! what a disappointment in their anticipations. The election between Loony and Mitchell was clearly a test of the strength of Van Buren & White in this County. The result (as follows) has proven glorious to the Republican cause in Maury.

Maury County.¹

Mitchell	1478	Very few White votes.
Loony	717	Some few Van Buren votes
Hunter	304	Two thirds Van Buren votes
Wisener	27	All White votes

In the Regiment, including Loony-Frierson connexion, Bigbyville &c they have elected both Col's & Majors, White men. In the other four Regiments I can hear of no *White* man elected, except Lockridge,² over the river, as Colonel. All the other officers are Van Buren men who took the stump and so declared themselves throughout the canvass. The particular results you will see in the papers.

The result of this election will exercise a most salutary influence on the general politics of both Bedford and Maury, in-

deed thro' a great part of the State, for there were some peculiar circumstances attending the canvass which fixes the election between L. & Mitchell as a test of the strength of parties in Maury. It has given confidence to the Van Buren men. From all quarters of the County they are in high spirits and speak out boldly. Some of the most honest of the White men confide that Van Buren is 500 strongest; we claim between 12 & 1500. We have not yet heard the result of Bedford, but do not doubt that Mitchell has beaten all his competitors.

I am very apprehensive that Cannon is elected; if so, Pillow and Moore are both to blame; either could have beaten him with ease. One week before the election Pillow would have received at least 6 out of the 700 got by Moore in this County. It having been reported in the strong Van Buren neighborhoods that Pillow had changed his politics and had named a child Hugh L. White, the consequence was, where it was the least believed to change his voters to Moore, and at two precincts Amis's and Adkins's where Pillow (as the Van Buren man) was proverbially strong, Moore beat him. Every decent effort was made to get one or the other to withdraw but without success.

Great efforts are now making by the leading White men here to prejudice Pillow against his Van Buren friends by telling him that they have acted treacherously towards him. In this they have to some extent succeeded. I today told Pillow he should be cautious how he believed such reports without conclusive evidence of their truth, that honorable men did not like to be *suspected*, and he had nothing to gain by listening to slanders upon his friends coming from such a quarter. He said to me that a heavy set had been made to induce him to believe that Nicholson and *myself* particularly had so treated him; that so far as I was concerned he did not believe it, that he knew me to be his friend, and every insinuation from no matter whom, to the contrary, was *false*, but that with the information he had, he was compelled to believe it with regard to *Nicholson*, and some others (whom he would not mention) until he could get better evidence of their innocence. I do not doubt that (for effect) some one has been slandering Nicholson, and it will so appear, for I know he did support him, according to his promise when he came out and I know too, that he used his influence to get Moore to decline. Next to yourself Nicholson is despised by the lead-

ing White men here, and every exertion of which they are capable they will use to injure both, but they can effect nothing to your prejudice; they are adding to the strength of you both by their illiberal and violent opposition. That Nicholson is now 500 votes stronger than he ever was I do not doubt.

Thomas will at last take the right track; he has read Bentons speech and tells me he agrees with him. By the bye you should *frank* a quantity of the speeches of Benton, & Rives &c. to your constituents; I have daily applications for them. Frank one to Lemaster, Hitchcock,⁴ Adam Dale, J. Wilkins, Zelner⁵ &c.

The nomination of [Boling] *Gordon* as our Elector was a death blow to the whigs. They are greatly at fault whom to select, and are much divided in opinion. Our friends are all highly pleased with our selection; next Monday Hickman County will make the same nomination.

Be pleased to present my best respects to Mrs. Polk and for yourself assurances of my high regard, personally & politically.

HAYS

We are exceedingly anxious to see you both at home.

Addressed to Washington.

1. The division of the vote in Bedford County approximated that in Maury.

2. Robert P. Lockridge, a resident of Maury County, was elected colonel of the 80th Regiment of Tennessee militia in 1836.

3. Neither man has been positively identified. They may have been John Amis and James Adkins. Amis was a planter in the area of Fountain Creek. Adkins was a resident of Maury but is not otherwise identified.

4. John W. Lemaster was a blacksmith in Maury County who moved to Alabama after 1840. He served in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. James H. Hitchcock was a grocer and fellow member with Polk of the Royal Arch Chapter of the Masons in Columbia.

5. James Wilkins was a silversmith who had lived in Columbia for many years. Arnold Zellner, an ingenious man, also long a resident, had devised the first plan for a water supply for Columbia.

FROM JAMES H. PIPER

Wythe Court House, Virginia. April 26, 1836

Should a separate surveyors district be established in Wisconsin, Piper asks that Polk support his candidacy for surveyor general of the new district.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM THOMAS DAVIS¹

Dear Sir

Shelbyville April 27 1836

I should have answered your kind favor covering the lottery tickets before this time but owing to the elections coming on in your own district for Military office and presuming you would like to hear the result of Brigadier General, tho I presume you will hear of the result long before this reaches you, I feel it a duty incumbent on me to advise you for fear you might not receive the information, as I am assured it will be gratifying to you, to learn that Col. Sam Mitchell beat the White candidates so far after coming out and telling the people he was a Van buren man, tho I cannot assure you that, that is a true case of the strength of parties but I can assure you that Van buren is gaining ground in this county & as to Murry [Maury] I have no doubt that it was made more of a question than what it was in this county. We have not heard the result of the Major General election. This County, Rutherford, Murry, Giles, Lincoln has given [Robert] Cannon a majority. Moor[e] got beaten in Giles. We expect perhaps to hear this evening from some other countys. If I should receive any information which will be gratifying to you I will communicate it to you as soon as possible. May fortune smile on you under the frowns of an indignant faction & John Bell & Co.

THOMAS DAVIS

N B Moor 300 & odd to Cannon 100 & odd in Franklin County.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Davis, formerly mayor of Shelbyville, was at this time postmaster, a place he held for more than a decade.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr Sir

Columbia April 28th 1836

I have a day or two since returned from Miss. & Haywood. I left Miss. about the 12th of April. I had about half my Cotton planted; the Balance I dont know when the Overseer will get planted, owing to the season being very wet & part of the Land

I intend planting in Cotton I am afraid will not be dry enough in time to plant. I calculated to plant 150 Acres in Cotton there. I am fearful he will not be able to plant more than 100. I have planted 125 Acres in Haywood. I did not bring Reuben¹ from Miss. He had got in tolerable good health and was not willing to come and we needed him there. I had to buy a *Mule* for the Haywood place. We made only 20 Bales of Cotton in Miss. I have reced. the amt. of the sale of all the Cotton which is \$3750 and the Bailing is to be taken out of that. Our expences last year was between 21 & 22 Hundred Dollars. Our Crop will fall far short of paying the Land payment & Expences.

Our Farming Operations therefore have not been very flattering and I am afraid we will not be able to get in a full crop this year. I am very anxious to sell out in Miss. I am afraid that farm will not be very profitable; it is too far from home and too expensive to keep it up. I left the *Cook* note at Bolivar with Bills and wrote to Cook where it was & requested him to pay it.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, 99-100.

1. Reuben's health had been a matter of concern to Caldwell for some months, and at one time Caldwell had recommended that he be brought to Tennessee to recover. Apparently Reuben had made progress in recovering his health by this time. See Caldwell to Polk, January 31, 1836; February 7, 1836; February 22, 1836.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Dear Sir:

Columbia April 28, 1836

In your letter of the 15th inst. you desired me to give you a minute account of our present strength in Maury. To do this would be to write down the names of every prominent man in our county, leaving out the town, the Frierson connexion, the Loony connexion, the Worthams and the Stockards.¹ On Snow creek² where we have usually counted much opposition there is a unanimity scarcely ever witnessed, even the old Williams party there are now warmly with us. Billy Williams³ says he is a Grundy, Polk, Van Buren man; he is zealous in the cause. We owe this state of things to Maj. Allen and Bobbit.⁴ Indeed, Sir,

I have been astonished at our strength; it is now rapidly approaching the old Jackson and Anti-Jackson-Polk and Anti-Polk condition. I attended a meeting at Williamsport the other day & found the people entirely on our side. I head Loony make his speech there. He said, "if the people elected Mitchell, he was afraid he would try next to beat the "*patriotic*" Polk." Good! the people understood him; he said too, that he was monstrous "proud of Carrol." It wouldnt do. The military elections have proved beyond a doubt, that every regiment in the county is for Van Buren except the one including Columbia.

In accordance with your suggestion I have written a long letter to Mr. Van Buren giving him my views as to the chances for Tennessee. You are authorised to see it if you choose, and any other of our friends. I did not say any thing to him about shewing it.

Things must be so arranged during the summer that we can have frequent collections of the people. The White men have had their day—now is our turn—we must use it to advantage. Mitchell says that he thinks the vote of Bedford is now about equally divided, but that the Van Buren Cause is rapidly gaining.

We are very anxious here to know whether you will be at home by the 4th of July; we want you to attend some celebration and make a talk. The Carter and Knob creek people are talking of a dinner as soon as you return. The White men dread your return; the Van Buren men are anxious for it.

You have seen the Democrat of the 21st inst., the article headed the "Congressional Bully" &c. What a pity we have not a better paper at Nashville! If we had an able hand to push in the current now sitting in our ferry it would certainly lead to victory. Laughlin has talents, but they are not of the cast for an Editor. Such a man as [Thomas] Ritchie would carry us through with glory.

I have nothing of particular interest to write. The Democrat gives a correct account of the political complexion of the late military elections. You must continue to write, and make suggestions as to any thing you wish particularly attended to. I hold a free and willing pen; its at your service.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. The Worthams and Stockards were among the early settlers in Maury County.

2. Snow Creek was a settlement in the northwestern part of Maury County, taking its name from a tributary of the Duck River.

3. Williams has not been positively identified. He was probably a kinsman of Samuel H. Williams, one of the earliest settlers in that part of Maury County.

4. These are probably Richard H. Allen and William Bobbitt, both of whom were prominent in militia affairs. Bobbitt later moved to Yalobusha County, Mississippi, where he kept an eye on Polk's plantation and reported affairs to him.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia, April 29th 1836

In relation to my mail concerns I have but little to add. I think it probable there will be much competition for the Routes on this side of the river. I have heard a very low bid spoken of by Mason, (Gibsons son in law)¹ if it is so, and his bid is accepted he is obliged to fail on it. He cannot secure the pay for the property, and I shall have no alternative but to run on without the mail, which must inevitably ruin him. If Sam'l & Dr. Polks bid is underbid by any one who can give good paper for the property, they shall have it and no competition. I should dislike to run an opposition line and will not do it if I can get rid of property on fair terms without it. I will particularly thank you to examine into the evidences of responsibility of bidding likely to be successful. This is a matter of great importance to us that solvent men should get the contracts, or that the bids of Otey &c. should take. If irresponsible men take hold, we will be in an awkward situation about property; we cannot let our property go but upon sufficient securities. If the bids we rely upon are however underbid by those who furnish satisfactory evidence of responsibility, we have no objections to make, and shall wind out the best way we can. So soon as the bids are decided on, I wish you to furnish me a memo of all the bids put in for all the routes & designate the ones accepted.

You will see from the newspapers that we are in a hot political fight. We are greatly in the ascendant and gaining

rapidly. It is now admitted on all hands that this county has an immense Van Buren majority; the election for Brigadier General *was a fair test*. On Carters Creek I am assured that it was a fair V.B. & White vote, 110 for V.B. & 5 for White; in Bobbitts neighborhood about the same, and indeed every where except in town and the Frierson neighborhood there is scarce a division; in town it is about equally divided. In the nine counties composing the Division of Militia, it is clear that V. Buren has a large majority. Cannon will be elected but it is clear that either Pillow or Moore would have beat him with ease; it will be a close race between the three.

Pillow says that it was clearly understood in all the counties, even the most remote, that him and Moore were Van Buren, & Cannon, White, and that the people intended to vote according to their politics; that this was generally the case I have no doubt. I think we shall carry Tennessee. I am certain we should do it, if we had a few more able newspapers to assist in giving the people proper information. The Democrat wields a powerful influence as far as it circulates; its patrons have the most unbounded confidence in it.

We had on Saturday last a most ludicrous scene—the [. . .]² (and all the Friersons) paraded to celebrate the Victory of Dave Loony's election, and to present a *cup & medal to two babies* named Hugh Lawson White (Dales) and Mary Tennessee White (Gardner Frierson's).³ Our friends had a great itching to have the affair ridiculed. The article I enclose for your & Sarah's amusement was written for the purpose. I wanted to print it, but Andrew & Cameron objected to it so strongly (on the ground that the paper already contained as much as the Whites could bear) that I yielded. Perhaps it was best so, it was probably too small an affair to notice. It was written by N.⁴

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Henry Gibson of Mt. Pleasant had some success in obtaining mail contracts in Alabama. The Mason mentioned here is probably Joseph Mason, postmaster at Masonville, Lauderdale County, Alabama, for some eight years.

2. At this point a part of the manuscript is torn away. One or two words are missing.

3. The Dale child was the son of Edward W. Dale, a Columbia merchant. Gardiner Frierson moved to Memphis a short time after this letter was written.

4. This is an obvious reference to A. O. P. Nicholson. The enclosure was a humorous account of the presentation of the medal and cup to the infants.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

Dear Sir;

Yale College May 4, 1836

Your young friends, S. W. Polk, K. Walker, Caldwell and Cooper are I trust with you before this time, and enjoying the interesting scenes of the capital. They have all deserved the esteem of their friends by their good behavior during the last session.

I am at a loss what course to recommend for young Caldwell. He was found after suitable trial not prepared to go on with the present Freshman class & accordingly was withdrawn from that class and put under a private tutor, with the view of joining the next Freshman Class. This was the best I could do for him provided he remains here, but still this leaves him mostly to his own control; and though he is an uncommonly sober youth & tolerably studious, yet I think it would be much better for him to be under the wholesome discipline of a school. Ellington School,¹ near Hartford, would be a very eligible place for him to pass the summer. He would acquire more studious habits and higher notions of scholarship than he has at present, & the expenses would be less than here. As I learn that his father is absent from home, I have thought best to consult you on this subject, & will be entirely governed by your decision. Your brother will require about Two Hundred dollars to meet the exigencies of the ensuing session, & to cancel some claims already accruing.

DENISON OLMSTED

Addressed to Washington.

1. Unidentified.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir,

Nashville, Tennessee. 5 May 1836

Before leaving South Alabama on the 9th March I wrote you from Montgomery and since then I have been so hurried on by the bustle of Steam Boat navigation and the pressure of business here that I have communicated with no one beyond the Revenue jurisdiction of Tennessee.

The new system commenced here on the 1 day of March. I did not arrive until the 25; every body having any thing to do with receiving or making payments at the Treasury was kept in suspense. I was forced to read and understand all the tax laws in one night, and to arrange an active system for a new office in the course of Saturday & Sunday. I have now, however, got every thing in train and the regular duties of the office¹ will be much less difficult than has been generally imagined. It must have been mortifying to the "no party" after having made an office for themselves to find no one amongst them competent to its duties, and it must now be doubly provoking to see that with a little experience in business and a little method they could have got along so easily.

The public attention is now as much drawn to the So Western frontier that we have very few discussions of U.S. politics. This district, Davidson & Sumner, have nominated Carroll for elector. He has gone to Pontotoc to adjudicate Indian claims and will scarcely be home in 3 months as he has it in view to visit the hot springs in Arkansas before he returns. I believe that Catron was willing to be nominated for the purpose of taking the field in open discussion, but Carrolls general strength was thought to be of more importance. Catron could doubtless do much good by open debate, especially as big Bill Anderson² will take the stump on the other side of the question. There was some ground of hope that after the Virginia elections, our people could of themselves see the futility of continuing to run Judge White, but I now apprehend that the result will still leave Virginia to be debatable ground. Those who have all along been using Judge White for their own profit in this State can still deceive such of us as are willing to be

deceived and claim for White all that are opposed to Van Buren every where.

The portion of our affairs on the Indian border in the So and S'West is interesting in more views than merely as a scene of Seminole or Santa Ana irregularities. Politics, electioneering politics, president making politics, I have no doubt, have extended into the motions of many of those who mingle openly or secretly in the operation of the frontier. The rapid concentration of Generals in Florida was the result of feelings on the part of Gaines³ which have long been to him a *consuming fire*. At Mobile, at New Orleans & here it is evident that there is a watchfulness to take advantage of any incident which may be used to the prejudice of the administration & of the War department & that in the normal disturbed state of affairs, it is hoped that means can be found of putting the government in the wrong in its management of the Seminole question through its authorized agents, or of embroiling us with our neighbours of Mexico. You will have seen a letter published from Gen Gaines to Gov. Cannon in which upon vague specifications he has called for a Brigade of Tennessee Volunteers. Similar requisitions are said to have been made in the other South Western Governors and while we admit to its fullest extent the propriety of precautionary measures, we have a right to wish that great circumspection be used. Should the Command of our Volunteers be placed in indiscreet hands, there is no estimating the possible mischief that might be produced. Our people if standing on the frontier could not easily continue neutral spectators of a battle between Santa Ana & Houston; they are not accustomed to look upon the Texeans and Mexicans as foreign parties and no one but an impartial friend of the U.S. Government could restrain our troops from taking sides with the weaker party in a way which could not be justified by our treaty stipulations.

We see from the papers that [Alexander] Macomb has gone from Florida to New Orleans, and it may be that the President has foreseen the probable current of events on the Mexican border & has got the Commander in chief in a position where he can prevent mischief that might otherwise occur. I was anxious that the Governor should not make a call for

Volunteers without hearing from the War department, which he could have done in three weeks, and had the measure been sanctioned by the President the requisite forces could have mustered where wanted, in less time after the delay of three weeks in obtaining that sanction than they can now be without it.

When at Mobile in March I promised a gentleman of that place who was on a project of a rail road from that place to the lake toward New Orleans, that I would write to some of you about it. His project embraced the idea of expediting the great Southern mail with Certainty, but I had not time to examine the plan, nor its merits. He and his folks are good friends and I shall be gratified if you can be of service to him.

Maj Dance is here, just from the East & brings no news but that Harrison will get Pennsylvania. The White whigs seem every where to have glory enough if Harrison get the vote. What has become of Ben Curry & the Judge.

DANIEL GRAHAM

Addressed to Washington.

1. Daniel Graham had recently been elected comptroller of the state. See Graham to Polk, March 5, 1836.

2. William E. Anderson.

3. Edmund Pendleton Gaines, a fiery, unrestrained man, was a veteran of the War of 1812 and campaigns against the Creeks and Seminoles. He was the second ranking officer in the United States army at this time, holding rank of brigadier general with a brevet as major general. He was a brother of George S. Gaines of Mobile, Alabama.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia May 6th 1836

I am informed by a letter from my friend James H. Piper of Wythe C. H. Virginia, that a separate Surveyor's district will shortly be established in Wisconsin Territory, and Mr. Piper desires the appointment of Surveyor General.¹ He is particularly desirous of obtaining your friendly aid to his application. He says he will seek no other aid than yours, Wm. C Rives & Col. Benton's. He can ask nothing from B. W. Leigh, having had considerable agency in placing him in his present

predicament. You know that Mr. Piper is exceedingly well qualified; as a mathematician superior to [William L.] Williford; a practical surveyor, and in every respect qualified. He has always been a firm and unwavering friend to Genl Jackson and his administration; he needs the office. Any assistance you may be able to render him I shall regard as a favor done to myself. He is my kinsman, and you know the Scotch blood is strong in the Hays family.²

You will see from the newspapers that political feeling is violent & bitter here. The White Whigs die hard but die they must in this quarter. We have greatly the ascendancy among the people, and will carry our electoral Ticket in this district by a large majority. I hope and believe we shall yet carry the State. I am certain we should do so, if we had an equal number of presses on our side. Wherever the Democrat is read its influence is decided and overpowering. Zolicofer, or his aides, are anxious to descend from the main question & go into personal vituperation against individuals. He will make nothing out of Madden,³ and I do not feel that I am vulnerable. Madin never wrote a political editorial for the Democrat in his life. What he has written is *temperance articles* perfectly consistent with his calling as a minister. The late military elections conclusively show that in middle Tennessee, Van Buren is much the strongest.

The enclosed letter to James & Knox, please forward to them if they are not in Washington. I hope you will without delay advise me of the result of the reletting of our lines.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. See James H. Piper to Polk, April 26, 1836.

2. Walker's mother was a Hays, and he was a first cousin of Dr. John B. Hays of Columbia. Apparently Piper's mother was also a member of the Hays family.

3. Thomas Madden was a Methodist minister in Columbia.

FROM JOHN B. HAYS

Dear Sir

Columbia May 13th 1836

Mr Kirk¹ and myself requested Mr [Adlai O.] Harris, about two months ago, to enquire of you whether you would sell your

woodland, and if so, at what price.² He has forgotten to write to you.

Please inform me & authorise some one to sell. Say what for each side of the road. He wants his for wood.

If I can purchase the north side at a fair price, I wish to build there as I am satisfied that it will suit better than to live in the centre of the town. I would be able to pay next spring, if you can sell at a reasonable price.

The news by yesterday's mail, Houston has beaten & captured & shot Santa Anna & his officers, with one third or half the force, in the engagement. Lost half a dozen or a dozen of his men. Killed a third of Santa Annas &c. It is well authenticated by their Secretary of War.³

Write by the return mail. All well.

JOHN B. HAYS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Probably John Kirk, a Columbia merchant.

2. See Gideon J. Pillow to Polk, May 31, 1836, for another attempt to buy this property.

3. A statement confirming Houston's victory over Santa Anna was made by Texas Secretary of War Thomas J. Rusk. This statement, widely published in newspapers, bore the date April 26, 1836.

FROM THOMAS J. LACY

My Dear Sir, Helena [Arkansas] May 14th, 1836

Since my arrival, I have found an opportunity to make an investment for you of a very profitable kind. I have contracted conditionally for two Lovely claims,¹ which I can locate to the greatest advantage, as soon as the lands in the South part of the Territory come into market, which will be in the fall or winter. They are now surveying, and the plats will be returned to the office as soon as the work is completed. The claims will be proved up and allowed, as soon as we get a Register duly authorized to act. The former Register has resigned, and the commission for the one lately appointed² has not yet arrived, though its daily expected. I shall not want to use your funds till some time this fall, and as I shall be in Tennessee this

summer, & see you, we then can make an arrangement, all about the funds. The lands will cost you about \$3.25 cents per acre & is worth & will bring \$20 the moment they are secured. This operation can be made without doubt, and I need not say to you, My Dear Sir, to effect it, will give me both pleasure and happiness. Let me get a line from you on the reception of this.

I wrote you from Louisville, that owing to Mr Penn³ being out of the city I did not see him; but that I left the communication with Judge Oldham⁴ & he promised most faithfully to attend it, & send you & Mr Grundy a paper; and that the Advertiser would come out fully in your defence & favor. I have been const[ant]ly on my circuit since I got home & as we have had but about three mails I have not as yet heard a word from the Judge nor have I seen a Louisville paper. If its not attended to at that place, *it shall be immediately elsewhere*; and that as soon as I learn the fact. But I doubt not it will, & has already appeared from that point. As far as I can hear, from men of all parties, public sentiment every where is simply taking punishment into its own hands against your political enemies, and its judgement is as overwhelming as its possible to conceive. All the calumny & [. . .]⁵ that has been poured out against you, is fearfully recoiling on those who have sought without cause to destroy you; and your reputation and fame is daily increased in a double [. . .] by their vile efforts. This is to me [. . .] pride and delight, and it proves the people cant, and wount be deceived.

I return you my most grateful acknowledgements for the deep & lively interest you have taken in my favor for the Federal Judgeship of Arkansas; & I know, in your hands, my prospects cant well fail; and I am sure they will be continued to the last for me; and now, & forever you will ever find me your devoted friend.

THOS. J. LACY

P.S. My best regards together with Mrs L's for Mrs Polk.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."

1. Polk had asked Lacy to help him to find some good lands to purchase in Arkansas. The claims here mentioned were in the Lovely Purchase negotiated by William L. Lovely in 1816. Irregularity in this negotiation made it

very difficult to obtain clear title to the land of that region, although much of it was excellent.

2. John T. Cabeen, Register of the land office at Helena, had recently resigned, probably as a result of an investigation of the affairs of his office, and was succeeded by Henry L. Biscoe. Biscoe was confirmed in May 1836.

3. Shadrach Penn, publisher of the Louisville *Public Advertiser*.

4. See Lacy to Polk, April 23, 1836.

5. Deterioration of the manuscript at a fold and on one edge has rendered it illegible in some places. The three ellipses in this paragraph represent perhaps three or four illegible words.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia May 20, 1836

In politics we are at the highest point of excitement. Since the reception of Wise's first speech we have been gradually reaching this point. Whatever may be its consequences the fault is not ours. The most violent assaults have been made by the Whites upon our friends and our personal feelings; we have repelled with interest and carried the war into Affrica. If they cannot stand it, it is their own affair. I have always been opposed to making politics cause of personal hostility and bad feeling. The other side have left us no alternative. We must maintain our position with manly firmness or surrender our principles like cravens to a few upstart minions of Bell & Co. I think you will see from the tone of the Democrat and Observer that we have sustained our cause triumphantly. The people by a large majority are with us, and they seem to feel whipt in the argument & are for a resort to the fools argument; they seem disposed to fight it out. In this we will not be the aggressors, but must maintain our rights and our principles, *peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must*. You will notice the remarks respecting the White meeting nomination &c. There is nothing personal or exceptionable in it. Cahal is a great fool, and sent word by Wm Voorhies¹ to [Chesley] Bynum that if he did not quit speaking of him &c. that he would Cowhide him; to prepare himself for it. Bynum of course returned the message that he was always ready and entertained for Mr. Cahal the most perfect contempt. It was not intended to say

any thing more about Cahal at present, but this course renders it necessary. Our duty will be performed & self respect maintained at all hazards.

You will see that the Observer assaults me and I presume will shortly come out violently against me. I fear no exposure and am ready for any consequences which what I believe to be a [. . .] course of action can bring on me. I have nothing to gain in standing to descend to low vituperation with as contemptible a miscreant as Zolicofer, therefore shall personally treat the matter with silence & contempt as long as I prudently can. The imprudence & impertinence of Zolicofer is really laughable to those who know all the parties. The last events have convinced me that it is indispensable to keep the Democrat in existence. They have a fine subscription, but so little Job work that they are continually hard run to procure paper & defray necessary expenses. This is the only difficulty, and altho they have upwards of 700 subscribers I fear they must go down unless some aid is furnished them. The White assist & patronise the Observer in every way & the State printing will aid them much. I think something must be done to enable Bynum & Cameron to contend with the difficulties that present themselves.

I am somewhat anxious to hear the result of the re-letting. I have but little calculation of retaining any of the lines. If responsible men get the contracts I shall get out & wind up in the best way I can. My opinion is that no man can put the lines in operation in less than 6 months without our property, and the inducement will be as great to purchase as with us to sell. I have made up my mind to quit the business but will furnish means to execute any bid I am concerned in that may be accepted, but I have but little expectation that any will be accepted. I am content. Could not have selected a better time to quit whether at a loss or not.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. William Voorhies was one of the early settlers in Maury County. His son, William Jr., is probably the person referred to here. He was recently married and a young lawyer. Later he moved to California, where he became a man of some importance.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Bolivar, Tennessee. May 21, 1836

Bills explains that Shelby Polk fears he cannot meet the payments and has declined to buy a tract of land in Hardeman County that belongs to Polk.¹ He thinks that other purchasers can be found. Public attention centers more on the events in Texas than on the presidential campaign.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Bills to Polk, March 8, 1836.

FROM ERWIN J. FRIERSON¹

Dear Sir

Shelbyville Tenn. May the 23d 1836

Alexander H. Coffee Esquire² wishes to take the extra Globe,³ and has furnished me with the funds to pay for it, which I will pay over to you when you reach home, as from the amount it cannot be mailed. Have it sent to this office. I delayed answering a letter of yours recd. some time since, enquiring into the progress of Van Burenism in this County, and the prominent men in different parts of the County who had espoused his cause until the Van Buren meeting should take place and until the military elections were over. You have seen the overwhelming majority by which Mitchell was elected and although his election was not generally made a test, yet it proves that Van Burenism has ceased to be the bugbear which 12 months ago it threatened to be; and it also proves from the inability of the White leaders to make it a test (which they tried to do) that Judge White has no very firm hold upon his supporters; at least nothing like the hold which General Jackson has always had, and still has. When was there a time since Genl Jackson first became a candidate that an avowed anti-Jackson man could have been elected Brigadier General or any thing else in Bedford? You will have seen from the committee &c appointed at the Van Buren meeting some of the persons who have proclaimed for Van Buren. Theodorick [F. Bradford] is unquestionably preparing to give you battle at the next contest; at least the appearances are that way. He is in town almost every day and talks politicks freely. Wise and his Speech

are his text books. A few weeks ago a correspondent of the "Peoples Advocate"⁴ closed his essay by recommending Cahal as a candidate for Congress, and the Editor (who is but the mouthpiece of Bradford &c) rather demurred to the recommendation. All that the people of the County want is light. If you and Bradford run for congress, I have but little doubt that you would get three fourths of the County. Bradfords nomination as elector is a bitter pill to some of the White party, and cant be swallowed at all by many who were rather on the fence. I would like occasionally to hear from you what is going on at Washington &c.

E. J. FRIERSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Erwin J. Frierson was a Shelbyville lawyer who, unlike his kinsmen in Maury County, was a firm Polk supporter.

2. Unidentified.

3. As described in its prospectus the *Extra Globe* was a weekly edition, beginning in May, to be published for twenty-six weeks, of the *Washington Globe*. It would carry the leading features of the regular edition, and the last issue of the series would include an index.

4. This was a Shelbyville newspaper recently established to counteract the Shelbyville *Western Star*, edited by Greenville Cook. The *People's Advocate* was often called Bradford's newspaper, since Theodorick F. Bradford was a prime mover in getting it established.

FROM RICHARD WARNER

Dear Sir

Near Fishing Ford¹ May 23rd 1836

I had the honor to receive your communication of the first Inst on the 15th but in consequent of having but one mail per week and other incidental causes I have not had an opportunity to answer it until the present. I shall subscribe for the *Extra Globe* and will send on through Doctor Robinson² the money in a few days, when a sufficient number subscribe to inclose by mail. Should you see the editor and think of it have the paper sent on to me forthwith. I think some ten or fifteen will subscribe for the extra *Globe* at Chapel Hill. Many of the people are convinced that the papers they have hitherto read

do not give a fair relation of facts; besides they are profuse in abuse and misrepresentation of their best friends. I allude to the mis-called "Republican" and "Banner." These papers profess to be friends to the Administration when at the same time they are the most prolific in misrepresentation abuse and falsehood against the Administration and its faithful watchmen. In these friendly periodicals we see the embittered and most invective enemies of the glorious, the prosperous and unequalled Administration of President Jackson, eulogised in the highest possible strains, spoken of as the defenders of the people's rights, the champions of the day, and the uncompromising friends of the Administration alluded to as unfaithful, men serving, office seeking, and party serving individuals. Now it seems strange to me that a true sincere friend to me and my measures should be the first individual to find falt of all my conduct and circulate their complaints through the country in order to do me an injury and destroy my influence, and also to speak well of my enemies and their measures which must be the opposite of my own & theirs, therefore they agree with those best who disagree with them most. Such a course of conduct may suit men who has no regard for truth and honesty but they will not answer those whose object is to arrive at facts.

The "Union" is more circulated here than formally and where it is read the desired effect genally is achieved or obtained. Most assuredly a great change has taken place in the Presidential contest since you left for Congress, against my old favorite Judge White, and in favor of Mr Van Buren. I consider the matter very doubtful at this time in Bedford wheather White or Van Buren has the ascendancy, and Van Buren is on the growing side. When Judge White became a candidate for the Presidency he was decidedly my first choice, although I considered Van Buren much the more talented man of the two, yet White being a citizen of my own State and I was personally acquainted with him, having formed an attachment for him believing he possessed respectable talents and that he was perfectly politically honest and a faithful supporter of the Administration. I earnestly desired to see him the successor of President Jackson knowing that he had never giving but one or two votes in opposition to the measures of the Administra-

tion and as I considered him an honest politician. I thought they were nearly an honest difference of opinion, but I must confess that the whole course of his conduct from that time up to the present has been one step after another convincing me most clearly that instead of those votes being an honest difference of opinion they were only the forebodings of a settled opposition to the Administration. When I see Judge White voting on all important questions with his old enemies, voting against men and measures he heretofore has supported, provoking violent opposition speeches such as John Bells & Henry A. Wise's, associated in all things with the enemy, looking entirely to them for support, I have but one conclusion left and that is he has sacrificed his old principles and friends and joined heart and hand with the camps of the enemy and must distinctly be considered against us. Taking this view of the subject I cannot, I will not, support him. While White was faithful to his former principles I would have supported him in preference to any man, but the Judge & his friends are doing much in favour of Van Buren and against himself in this State by opposing Jackson and his measures in Congress and elsewhere. I should not be at all astonished should Van Buren get the vote of Tennessee in November next (this however is doubtful).

Your old enemies crowed largely in this County after your Moorsville speech last fall, and were very industrious in misrepresenting your course last Summer, but lately they seem to have let down and now are scarcely heard to flap their wings. Many of the people are quite careless about political matters. I would give it as an opinion you at least realise your old strength & the people expect you to be a Candidate again. I wrote you on the subject of appointing William S. Mayfield Esqr Post Master at Lewisburg the County Seat of Marshall County,^s or that I would be glad you would use your influence with Post Master General on his behalf. I hope you will not neglect it. Mayfield has got right in politicks and is of the true stamp.

Some information on the subject of Marshall County might not be amiss, as much the largest portion of territory taken to form said County is from your district. The County at this

time is in a State of suspense. A bill of injunction has been filed to prevent the law from taking effect establishing the County and it is not known when it will be determined. Much dissatisfaction exists amongst the people, particularly in the Bedford fraction, relative to the location of the County seat, which is at Abner Houstons, and operates about as follows. From Houstons South 13 miles, north 19 miles, east 8 miles, west 6 miles. This is the cause of the dissatisfaction, the inequality of distance from the seat. More of this when I see you.

My friend [Harvey M.] Watterson did not realise the expectations of the people. They seem to be wholly disappointed and I would guess at least he is done. I shall become irksome, therefore I will close. [Thomas] Dean has not gained much popularity. Please excuse interlineation.

RICHARD WARNER

Addressed to Washington.

1. This was the point on the Duck River where the road between Chapel Hill and Farmington crossed. All these places were in Bedford County until the formation of Marshall County in 1836. The letter was posted at Chapel Hill.

2. Despite the inconsistency in spelling, this seems to refer to Dr. John H. Robertson, a resident of Chapel Hill.

3. See William J. Whitthorne to Polk, March 12, 1836.

FROM GREENVILLE COOK

Dr Sir,

Shelbyville May 24, 1836

The news in this part of your District I presume you get by the Western Star. You are aware that Theo. F Bradford is a candidate for elector on the White Ticket. You are also aware of the manner in which he was brought out—by eleven grand jurors. You are also aware that Hopkins L. Turney of Franklin county has been nominated by the Republican citizens of this county in their primary assemblies. The citizens of this county deemed Mr Turney the most able to compete with Bradford, to make speeches before the people and procure a majority in their county in favor of Mr Van Buren, and to show the White Whigs that you represent the true wishes of a majority of the people of Bedford. But I am sorry to have it to say, that Mr.

Turney declines the nomination. I have a letter now before me from Mr. Turney in which he says that Maj. John Cowan¹ of Franklin [county] is a candidate, and very justly alludes to the old maxim "United we stand—divided we fall." Maj. Cowan is an intelligent citizen of Franklin, always attached to republican principles and withal is a *Revolutionary Soldier*.

It is well known here, that Theo. F. Bradford has always been an anti Jackson man, though I have been unable to procure any substantial proof of it. I have therefore thought proper to enquire of you for a circular of yours, published during a canvass between yourself and this gentleman relative to an appointment which he was seeking under J. Q. Adams (Marshall of Tennessee).² I understood he or his friends wrote a letter to the War department stating that he passed here for a Jackson man though his feelings were in unison with the administration. If you think proper to furnish me with this circular, I will make the best use of it I can.

Although our friends in this place have been very prompt in affording me pecuniary aid, not one of them has ever wrote one single sentence for the "Star." One of your townsmen has wrote a series of numbers headed "Judge White's True position," which you have probably seen (Mr. A.O.P.N.)³

There seems to be great diversity of opinion here with regard to yourself; they are of opinion that you will not again be a candidate for Congress; that you will receive an executive appointment, to all of which vague speculations I have invariably said that the office you now hold, is preferable to any that could be conferred by the Executive. The letter writers of the Nashville papers raised the belief here that you would be called to the War Department—hence the vage speculations.

About a month since I stayed all night with Col. Webster. He seemed to find great fault with you for not writing to him; he seemed to express a belief that you was *afraid* he would oppose you for Congress. From what I could collect from him, left very little doubt in my mind, that he will be a candidate for Congress, so soon as *you* are out of the way, and not before. I am also pretty well satisfied from what little I have been able to discern that there will be three others in the field, when

you withdraw—Cahal and Nicholson from Maury and Bradford and Webster from Bedford.

Since the Grand Jury nomination of Bradford I understand that two of the Grand Jurors have come over to our side of politics. There was only nine of the jurors made the nomination (three dissenting). The nomination would now stand 7 and 5.

You will perceive by the appearance of the "Star" that I have procured new type. So soon as I took possession of the "Freeman" office Bradford sent to Cincinnati for materials for an office. This was done about two months before I sent for my type. The Ohio river was frozen up all winter and they could not get their materials here before it broke up. By the time the ice broke up my order reached Cincinnati, and they both came on the same boat. Then ensued the most desperate struggle of all—which should get their materials here first. A great deal of solicitude was felt on both sides. They enquired of me when I was going down. I told them. They, in order to be ahead of me, went three days before I did. I knew pretty well what a strong Van Buren man John Laughlin of Murfreesboro, was (the stage contractor). I told him the circumstances, and procured an order to have my type brought up in the stage which got here near three weeks before the others.

If you have time and see proper to write me on any subject, either private or for the press, the strictest secrecy will be observed if you desire it.

GREENVILLE COOK

Addressed to Washington.

1. John Cowan was an early settler of Franklin County and was one of the commissioners chosen to locate the county seat. He seems to have died within a year of the date of this letter.

2. See Andrew Jackson Donelson to Polk, May 30, 1833.

3. A. O. P. Nicholson had written editorials for the Nashville *Union* and for a Columbia paper. Thus it is not surprising to find him writing also for the newly established Jackson paper in Shelbyville.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

New Haven, Connecticut. May 24, 1836

Olmsted acknowledges receipt of Polk's check for two hundred dollars. Samuel P. Caldwell, whom Olmsted characterizes as irresponsible in his per-

sonal conduct and attitude toward scholarship, will spend the summer under the close supervision of Olmsted and a tutor.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Olmsted to Polk, May 4, 1836.

FROM GEORGE GAMMON

Dr Sir

Sullivan County May 25th 1836

Your esteemed favour of the 30th ult was Recd in due time. You will except my thanks for this together with many other letters and documents giving me important and satisfactory information on many of the leading measures of this administration, which information has been useful in this section of the country particularly so owing to the course persued by the Tennessee Delegation in Congress. They have flooded this country with one sided slanderous and abusive documents such as Bells, Wise & Hardins speeches. From this circumstance and nearly all the Presses in Tennessee until lately being opposed to the administration falsly and basely misrepresenting the truth, and many leading men in the outset being for White, we have had fearful odds to contend with. Yet the light is begining to shine and the people are or will be convinced that White and our delegation *all* have gone over to the opposition and to establish the fact we refer them to the course of our Representatives in Congress, voting and acting against every leading measure, and Whites votes on the cabinet nominations, Clays land bill &c, which are facts that cannot be controverted. Truth is mighty and will prevail.

I have no doubt but Sullivan, Hawkins, Green and Washington is or will go for Van Buren. We are preparing to nominate an Elector for this district. We do not certainly know yet who it will be; either Cleon Moore¹ Esq of Hawkins County or Colo [Abraham] McClellan. I would prefer the latter but think Moore will be good selection as I understand he will rise and discuss the subject. Sullivan, Hawkins, Grainger & Claibourn compose our district. Who will be the White Elector is not known. John Netherland Esq is spoken of. The Van cause is gaining rapidly

in the adjoining counties, the White organ, Embersons² dirty & slanderous sheet to the contrary notwithstanding. We shall soon publish a Van Buren paper in Jonesboro. Every thing is ready except the arrival of the Press. The Editor is a Mr Mullan,³ a resident of Kentucky and who spent some time in Washington City last winter. This paper will have extensive circulation particularly in the upper counties in East Tennessee, and will no doubt contribute much to the present contest for President.

I have never believed that Republican Tennessee would ever separate herself from the Democratic party, and my hopes are brightening. When this subject is explained by the different candidates for Elector and the truth told the White cause must go down. You know it was popular twelve months ago to be for Judge White which induced many leading men in Tenn. to espouse the White cause in order to secure their own success, and now the[y] must sustain the cause, or him and them *all* go down together (a Death Struggle). The[y] all well know White has no chance for success either by the vote of the Electoral Colleges or in the House. Still he has to be represented by the party and held up as a successful candidate in order if possible to throw Tennessee into the ranks of the opposition, which is the only alternative by which Bell, Payton &c. can be sustained. Tennessee must be an opposition State or the White leaders *must & will* go down. As to White he must die a political death sooner or later. After death there is a judgement and if justice is done he will not only die but he will be damned.

The Jackson Van Buren cause has many warm friends in this country. We also have a majority of the leading men and no pains will be spared to gain the victory. The true light is beginning to shine. Tennessee is Republican and begin to enquire what she shall do to be saved, and when informed she will rally around the Jackson Van Buren flag, which is and will continue to wave over the Land of Liberty.

Sir I feel a deep interest in the present contest. Would to God I was a Benton, a Grundy, or a Polk; with the little confidence reposed in me I would shake the White cause in this region to the very center. It should not begin with Black and end with White; it should be *all* Black. I want you & Judge Grundy to

pass through this country on your way home. Afford us an opportunity to give some dinner; we want you to address the people. If you should think it advisable write me immediately. If you should pass through Blountville I must insist on a visit from you & Lady. It would afford me infinite pleasure.

I have another project in view. I want Gov Carroll to canvass throughout the State and his Expenses pd by the party, which I think would advance the cause very much.

Colo. Bunch has been so kind as to send me Bells speech. I have read it. It is a poor effort, 6 votes in favour of his amendment.⁴ I put a mark of condemnation on its title page least [lest] some of my posterity in after times find it amongst the files and think I approved of the doctrine. I should have answered your letter some time ago but the prospectus for the Extra Globe did not come to hand untile lately. I will do all I can to procure subscribers. If Wm & A. L. Gammon⁵ has not written to you to forward five Extra Globes you will please send that number, one to Saml. Hall, Hiltons P.O. Tenn Sullivan Cty, one to Wm. B. Childress,⁶ Shipley's P.O. Tenn., and three to Blountville to Wm & A. L. Gammon. I will be responsible for the whole or enclose the money. I have forwarded one to Mr Gilman which he will attend to. The last I heard from Gilman this little Fall Branch P.O. was not restored or Gilman Reappointed P.M.⁷ I hope [you] will attend to that matter before you leave the City, and let me know what will be the result. The office was removed without cause and mainly for party purposes, by Genl Carter, and to gratify personal feelings of James, the present incumbent. You will confer a *particular* favour by attending and having it restored because I think it right and for many other considerations.

Present my respects to the President. Say to him I am as heretofore both his personal & political friend; that one of the greatest and most important battles is yet to fight and we look up to him the great comander for success. Also my respects to Judge Grundy; he promised me a letter on politics some time ago which has never come to hand. Say to Van he has faithful friends here. My respects to Chamberling [Cambreleng]. I have never seen him, still I like [him]. Also Thom. Benton, and for yourself you have my prayers for a long & happy life and

that you may rise higher & higher until the perfect day.

GEO. GAMMON

P.S. It is probable that Mr Lawsen Gifford,⁸ one of the publishers of our Van paper Jonesbo will be in Washington City about the time this letter comes to hand. Any encouragement the friends of the cause think proper give by subscription &c would be thankfully recd by him and his friends.

GEO. GAMMON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Cleon Moore had represented Hawkins County in the lower house of the General Assembly 1821-23 and 1829-31. He was chosen as the Van Buren Elector.

2. This refers to Thomas Emmerson, publisher of the *Washington Republican* at Jonesboro. See John C. Mullay to Polk, September 26, 1836.

3. John C. Mullay became editor of the Jonesboro *Tennessee Sentinel*, published by Lawson Gifford.

4. Bell proposed an amendment to the naval appropriations bill that would have reduced the appropriation for the Portsmouth Navy Yard. It came to a vote on April 7, 1836, and was defeated by a vote of 166 to 6. Consideration of this amendment gave Bell an opportunity for attacking the Jackson administration.

5. These were sons of the writer of this letter, William B. Gammon and Abram Looney Gammon.

6. Hall and Childress are not further identified.

7. Gilman was reappointed on the same day this letter was written.

8. Lawson Gifford and F. Gifford owned the Jonesboro *Tennessee Sentinel* jointly. Lawson Gifford was a brother-in-law of Landon C. Haynes.

FROM JOSEPH C. HERNDON

Dear Sir

Columbia 25th May '36

An apology is necessary for not complying with my promise to write. I have been receiving goods (a package at the time) ever since I arrived. I have also been under the necessity of making two or three trips to Nashville which placed out of my power to comply. I don't know that I can inform you of any thing in the Political point of view of which you are not already apprised. You have no doubt seen, in the papers, an account of the White meeting in this place and the names of *all* those who signed the call. That list of names contains the

strength of the White party in old Maury; in the language of Ritchie, she may be said now to be "*Erect*." After Striking off hand-bills for the call of the meeting and placing one in the hands of all the noisy Whites, one at every Grocery, cross roads, mills, and muster ground & log-rolings & house raising, in the County they have been able, in three months, by calling on all "*original Jackson men*," to *procure* about 600 signatures. *What a falling off from 19/20ths!* There were about 150 or 200 (Van Buren men and all) attended the meeting. The proceedings you can see in the Democrat & Observer.

S. D. Frierson¹ made a real "White" Speech, roared against the Baltimore Convention, Dictation, Abolition, and in short against Van any way and evry way; praised White as the only pure and unspotted patriot and statesman now *extant*; nominated T H Cahal as Elector, who, by the by, will now be handled "without gloves" by the 26 Editors of the "Democrat." They can prove, by his votes in the Convention,² that he is a *little better* Abolitionist than *Van*. He (Cahal) has threatened to *cow-hide* Bynum on sight; says that he is not before the people for any trust, and therefore they have no right to say any thing about him & his votes. He is the most uneasy man I ever saw—never stands still a moment, always moving about, finds himself in *Stra[n]ge Company*, viz, *his old enemies*, and in short he will be about the *worst beaten* man for Elector perhaps ever heard of. Jonas E Thomas acted as Secretary to the meeting and he has told several persons that he had followed White to his grave when he (White) voted for the land Bill, and that he could not Stand to be buried with him.

When you come home, you will find all your former friends as *usual*; the strongest kind of *Polk-men* still, and altho a *few* were vasclating for a while, they have all *studied* themselves again and now remain "in statu quo."

Your return is looked to with a great deal of interest by both sides. The *Whites* look forward to the time of your return with "*fear & trembling*"—the Vans, with deep anxiety and "*full faith*." When they (the "Whites") are bantered for a bet on this District, they say "We *will* bet that Cahal beats Gordon in this County, *if* Polk dont come home and turn the balance of the votes." Good!

The county is healthy, crops are *fine*, times are improving. Good news from Texas. We have letters from Dr. Davidson³ & Wm. W. Gant both of whom were in the engagement. Houston has taken Santa Anna &c. My best respects to Mrs Polk.

JOS. C. HERNDON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Samuel D. Frierson was a Columbia lawyer who had been at one time a partner with Marshall T. Polk. The Friersons of Maury County had become alienated from Polk, however, and were among his most steadfast political opponents.

2. At the constitutional convention Cahal had presented a petition from a small group in his county asking that the convention consider the ultimate abolition of slavery in the state. Cahal then became involved in a debate concerning the disposition of the petition.

3. William Francis H. Davidson, like Gant, a former resident of Maury County, enlisted in the Texas army at Nacogdoches about four months before this letter was written. He had studied medicine and was appointed as a surgeon.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir,

Nashville, May 25, 1836

Enclosed you have an Extra¹ issued last night, giving a further account of the late victory in Texas.

I have no time to write you about matters and things in general, my object being hastily to trouble you with a small matter of business—business connected with the pecuniary wants of our establishment. The following is a list of all the members of Congress to whom our paper is sent. Some of them have never, I believe, been subscribers. Some of those who are subscribers, and all on the list you brought home last spring, have paid a year's subscription. Among the gentlemen of New York, Gen. Bockee and Mr. Gillett,² have directed their papers to be discontinued. Mr. Ruggles of Maine³ has also directed a discontinuance. Their several requests have been attended to. Instead of inserting the entire Washington and Congressional list here, you will find it on the last page of this paper. I wish

all those who are not subscribers, to become such, or to signify their wish for a discontinuance; and all subscribers who are willing to assist us in our struggle and necessities, to pay up. As the money is for the paper makers and compositers, and not for myself, I feel at liberty to ask for it. I do not know, however, how to have the matter brought to their notice, for be assured, I am far from wishing you to take the trouble of becoming my collector. Can you engage some person for pay, to present the paper, or as the matter ought to be private, had it better be omitted altogether? I leave you to judge and act as may be best.

I can keep up until you come home; but by that time, some new arrangement must be made here, and will be imperiously necessary. I have, with Judge Catron's aid, and others, by mortgaging a negro boy, negociated for some money which will enable me to keep up till then. I bought all the paper used and paid upwards of \$100 in journeyman's wages in the last six weeks, above receipts of the office, or such receipts as I have been enabled to have applied to its accruing expenses, and not to former debts, not of my contracting. I have contracted none for it, have subtracted nothing from it, and have received no assistance or pay from it or from any other source on its account. I am now supporting it alone; but with its present incumbrances, I must soon be worse than broke, if a change in its Administration is not effected, or in the manner in which its patrons pay for their papers. Subscriptions increase, and increase beyond my hopes, but the subscribers do not pay as they go.

These reasons make it proper that as many of those in Congress, and at Washington, as can or will lend a helping hand, should now do so. To borrow money in Mississippi, and pledge my property, as I expected to do through Dr. [William M.] Gwin's agency, would cost more than to pay interest and brokerage here; and besides, if a salutary change of business here cannot be effected, I cannot consent to make myself a beggar *pro publico bono*.

List of persons⁴ to whom the Union is sent tri-weekly—Washington.

Secretary of the Treasury	Hon. J. Turrill [New York]
Hon. W. R. King [Alabama]	" A. Vanderpoel [New York]
" T. Morris [Ohio]	" M. V. Buren [New York]
" J. Tipton [Indiana]	" A. Ward [New York]
" J. M. Robinson [Illinois]	" S. G. Hathaway [New York]
" T. H. Benton [Missouri]	" W. L. May [Illinois]
" H. Hill	" J. Garland [Virginia]
" G. Y. Lansing [New York]	" M. Ewing
" J. Pierson [New York]	" W. Montgomery of N.C.
" J. J. Morgan [New York]	" A. Huntsman [Tennessee]
" S. Wright [New York]	" R. J. Walker [Mississippi]
" N. P. Talmadge [New York]	Department of State
" E. Shepley [Maine]	Hawkins
" G. Parks [Massachusetts]	" E. A. Hannegon [Indiana]
" S. Beardsly [New York]	" W. C. Dunlap [Tennessee]
	P. Mast. General

Papers to Dr. Linn, Gov. Reynolds, Mr. Boon, &c.^s who are not subscribers, have been sent I understand, to their addresses at home, and to Col. Johnson^s &c.

Out of all these sources, those who choose to subscribe, pay or continue, I should like to raise the means of redeeming my boy now mortgaged for money to carry on the campaign till July; or to carry on the war prospectively, for my servant may go to Mississippi and another with [him] before I will yield to the enemy an inch of ground until the fall battle is fully fought and won. Take such steps in the matter as you and our friends at Washington may deem proper and advisable.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."

1. No copy of this issue of the *Union* has been found.
2. Abraham Bockee and Ransom H. Gillet, members of the House of Representatives from New York, were beginning their last terms in that body. Bockee was a member for three terms, and Gillet for two.
3. John Ruggles served in the Senate from 1835 until 1841.
4. Nearly all the persons on the list were members of Congress. Beardsly, Hathaway, Pierson, and Morgan had recently retired from the House of Representatives. Hill and Ewing could not be identified, because the initials were probably incorrect or incomplete. In the case of Hawkins, it appears that he might have been an employee in the Department of State, but Micajah T. Hawkins of North Carolina was at this time serving in the House of Representatives.
5. Lewis F. Linn was a senator from Missouri, John Reynolds was governor of Illinois, and Ratliff Boon was a member of the House of Representatives, from Indiana.
6. This is probably a reference to Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, although it could possibly have been a reference to Cave Johnson of Tennessee.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia May 25th 1836

I have received yours of the 15th.¹ I cannot say that I think the reasons given by Col Gardner for giving Route No. 2504 to Price & Gordon,² over the joint bid of Polk & Walker, are satisfactory; the differences in Winter Waggon is mere nominal; neither will fail to run coaches when they can, and when the road requires either must & will use waggon. The condition about the arrival at Nashville, I think ought not to have been regarded by the Department under all the circumstances. The only ground upon which I could consider the acceptance proper, would be refusal to consider the bid joint; or also adding together 2504 & 2651.³ It may have been all right. At all events I have no disposition to complain. I have long since made up my mind to give up the business and all the concern I feel about it, is to dispose of property and wind up with as little loss as possible; profits are not to be counted. I can devote my means, attention & credit more advantageously, and am content—glad to be rid of the vexation trouble & imminent risque. If I can sell our property to our successors at a fair price and get

the pay properly secured I shall do so; if not we must do the best we can with it. We want to sell & they cannot do without a good position for a trade.

It would be a strange thing indeed if the Department were at this late day to accept our bid for a coach line from Jackson to the Lake [Pontchartrain]. We can not now think of such a thing, all connexion being cut off. Otey's bid is low enough, and if they do not take that it must go for us. I have no notion of a coach line so far from me, and especially as expenses have raised full fifty per cent since he made the offer. As to the prices the contracts have been taken at I have nothing to say. We have, to say the least, made no money with pretty good management & tolerable luck, and at better prices, considering the notes of expenses for 1834-5 & now. But all this is no concern of mine. I feel happy out of the scrape, and shall wind up as well as I can.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. This letter has not been found. It was apparently a report from Polk on the outcome of the bidding on the lines Walker was giving up.

2. This was a stagecoach firm of Lebanon, Tennessee. M. Andrew Price and Obediah Gordon obtained several mail contracts, and Price later became a wealthy man, becoming known as the stagecoach king. Route 2504 ran between Nashville and Florence, Alabama.

3. Route 2651 was between Florence, Alabama and Columbus, Mississippi.

FROM GEORGE R. POWEL

Dear Sir,

Rogersville T[ennessee] 26 May 1836

I recd. some time since some documents on various subjects of much importance, some of which are now deeply agitating the publick mind in this part of the state. I had a thought at the time to open a correspondence with you, but considered that the slight acquaintance we had formed did not authorise me to take that liberty. I thought however upon reflection that as yourself & Mr Grundy with a few others of our delegation were the only Republicans from the state who deserved the name, the others having gone over to the opposition, I considered as we were both labourers in the same cause, you perhaps would be

in a situation to render our party here by a dissemination of truth and such Republican documents as would tend to enlighten the people on the various political subjects which now agitate the publick mind, some service. For I assure you Sir we get but one side of the question, and the country is now flooded with Bells & Wises speeches, and such other Whig documents as the White Whigs think the people will bear. I am clearly of opinion that light is all we need, and if the people are rightly informed in regard to the political attitude of *some* of our politicians they will be remembered at the next election with a vengeance.

I would be glad if it is convenient that you would send me the Journal of the Senate of the last & the present session. I wish to show the people from the Journal itself Judge Whites present attitude, some of his leading friends still contending he is an Administration man.

We are gaining ground here hourly and altho' great pains are now and have been taken by the White Whigs to make this county subservient to the White Whigs, still I am confident in the belief that with proper exertions we will give a majority in November to the Republican candidates.

Mr. Cleon Moore who is known to you if not personally, by character will be our candidate for Elector. Sullivan is still as decidedly Republican as she ever was and unconnected with any other question she will give three to one in favour of the Republican candidates. If you could conveniently, I would be glad you would furnish me a few copies of Mr Rives¹ speech. I think if you would send documents to the following persons much might be effected. At Rogersville: Thos White, John Louderbach, Rev Geo. White & Revds [. . .] & Senter, Jas. P. McCarty, Jas Bradly, Peter & William Smith, Capt John Ball, John Tunnell & Father, Howell Brewer Esq. At Lee Valley: Colo David Rogers & Father, C. Sullivan, Wm Walling Sr, Colo James Willis & Father, Capt William Babb, Abram Hawke Esq. At Clinch Dale: Richd Mitchell, Lewis Mitchell, Messrs Frosts, Joseph Baker Esq. At Red Bridge: Jesse Cobb & Father, Gabriel McCraw, Hon G. Moore & Son, George Williams & Wm Gray, Wm Mays & Richd Stubblefield, James L. Etter. At Surgoinesville: John Young & Rev. Arden Sanders, Rev Wm Reynolds

& Rev Emanuel Rutledge, Wm Lyons & Son, Wm Phips Esq, Thos Coldwell Esq, Henry Watterson, Wm Armstrong & Jacob Miller. At Hords Store: John Shough & Majr Henderson, Philip [. . .] & Wm Hord, John Kincaid, Doct Robt Johnson, James Johnson Esq, Jos & Geo Smith, R. S. Hale Esq, Geo. M. Lyons, Maj Campbell Smith & Benj. Coldwell.² If you find too many names select such as you can send to. Perhaps Mr Grundy could assist, and other friends. I should be glad to hear what you are doing at any time it may suit your convenience. We are about starting a press in Jonesboro. Will you please do what you can for it. It *must* be sustained as we labour under great disadvantage in that respect. I have little doubt of its getting in a short time a large subscription list. We have recd Judge Whites speech on Mr Clays land bill,³ as yet I have not taken time to read it, but presume it contains pretty much the reasons which have been advanced heretofore on that question. What position did Judge White occupy heretofore upon that question? His friends say he never voted, being at the time President of the senate Pro. Tem. We all however understood him to be against it. I know our Rep. was against it. Will you please inform me?

GEO. R. POWEL.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Confidential."

1. On March 28, 1836, William C. Rives of Virginia spoke in favor of expunging and maintained that such action would not be a violation of the constitution, since expunging did not involve mutilation of records.

2. In listing these names Powell used few punctuation marks. That, together with the faded manuscript, make reading the names difficult, and in spots, impossible.

3. In April 1836, during debate on Clay's land bill in the Senate, Robert J. Walker offered an amendment for a system of graduation of prices in selling public lands. Clay opposed the amendment, as did Hugh L. White. On April 25 White not only defended his vote against graduation but supported the main thrust of Clay's bill. Van Buren supporters naturally used this as evidence that White had joined the Whigs.

FROM WILLIAM J. ALEXANDER

Charlotte, North Carolina. May 30, 1836

Alexander asks Polk for all available information on the status of certain

Choctaw lands in Mississippi. He also reports that Laura Wilson Polk and her children are at his home.

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 194.

FROM JOAB H. BANTON AND WESLEY NIXON

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. May 30, 1836

Banton asks that the appointment of a postmaster at Mt. Pleasant be postponed if the poll of the village is not to be followed. The delay will allow others to present petitions to the Postmaster General.¹ Nixon adds a brief postscript saying that the Van Buren cause is growing.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See the several letters to Polk from Mt. Pleasant, March 25, 26, 27, 1836.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Dear Sir: Lebanon [Tennessee] May 30, 1836

You discover that I hail from the cedars of Lebanon, the town made immortal by its shameful attack upon you by its public meeting some time ago.¹ I have been here for a week preparing to put to press a digest of our Statute Laws.² Having a little leisure time to-night, I have concluded to give you a short account of my observations here. I understand from the P. M. here,³ a good Jackson V. B. man, that Mr. Bell has deluged this county with anti-Jackson documents, whilst few, very few, of the orthodox documents have been received. As might be expected the people here have seen but one side. Still I find that there are a goodly number of the true faith even in Wilson. In Lebanon as in most of the other towns the cause of the aristocracy is in the ascendant, but I find that there are many good and true men in the country. [Robert M.] Burton is managing things very well; he is exerting his influence silently but effectually. He will be a candidate for elector and will do execution on the stump. I am in Caruther's Office preparing my work, and am often much amused at the visits of

the V. B. men; they wool him roundly in his Whitison. I heard one of them to-day tell him roundly that he was not a Jackson man; it bored him deep, for he proclaims himself a devoted Jackson-White man. The same man told him that luckily we still had a "Jackson to devise and a Polk to defend." That was wormwood to Caruthers. He has pinned himself to Bell. I would say from all I have discerned here, that the blab-mouth town politicians here are zealous for White, and that the people, the *real* people, I mean, are perfectly cool and indifferent and are yet to make up their minds from the discussions of the summer.

Gen. [Richard G.] Dunlap passed thro' here yesterday from Knoxville; he was awfully down in the mouth about White. He said it was a forlorn hope; that he could not get a single vote, except in Tennessee, and that was doubtful. He said that things were very cold even in E. Tennessee.

In Nashville I found our friends in good spirits. They are calculating upon a zealous fight during the summer; they have clearly the majority in Davidson County.

It is understood that the Old Chief will be out this summer. Great anxiety is felt every where for him to come. His true friends are warmer for him than they ever were, and his false professing friends dre[a]d his return to Tennessee. I sincerely hope nothing will turn up to prevent him from coming. I have nothing of importance to communicate. Our cause in Maury is perfectly safe.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Several weeks before this letter was written the Lebanon *Mirror* had called an "indignation meeting," where resolutions were adopted censuring Polk for "mistreatment" of Bell by failing to recognize him on the floor of the House. Included in the resolutions was one favoring the candidacy of Hugh L. White. Robert L. Caruthers was the major speaker.

2. R. L. Caruthers and A. O. P. Nicholson, *A Compilation of the Statutes of Tennessee* . . . was published in one volume at the steam press of James Smith at Nashville. Robert L. Caruthers was one of the founders of Cumberland University and for many years was professor of law at that institution.

3. Isaac Golloday was postmaster at Lebanon, having been appointed in 1817. Two of his sons were later members of Congress.

FROM WILLIAM BOBBITT

Dear Col.

Maury Cty Ten. May 31st 1836

I have no doubt you will be gratified to see the success I have had in procuring subscribers to the Extra Globe and perhaps surprised, but your surprise will leave when I assure you that "White & Bell Whiggery" in all this section of County is without a solitary public advocate. There are some half dozen who occasionally endeavour to operate clandestinely but their efforts have been attended with no success & they have prudently abandoned the contest, and Democracy waves her triumphant banner almost without an enemy. I alone had the hardihood last spring to advocate the cause of Democracy in this section & the contest for a while was hot but the people discovered they must abandon principle to follow White gave him up to the common enemy to make the best use they could of him.

I received your letter last Tuesday & have procured you will see, 45 subscribers who manifest great anxiety to get the paper. I have the money also to send on, but having taken on myself the whole responsibility, & fearing a miscarry I have to request of you the favour to pay it to the Editors & have the papers forwarded on forthwith (with the four Extras to which I am entitled, which I expect to compliment to our enemies) and the money shall be refunded so soon as you get home.

Our cause is advancing with rapid strides & I now believe we shall save Tennessee.

If I do not go a contemplated trip to the north this summer, we intend to tender to you a publick dinner at Pin Hook,¹ which we think you will in courtesy to your friends accept. A few, I mean the half Dozen want you, as they think you an honest statesman, to shew that his course, I mean Wise, towards you as Speaker unjustifiable & their opposition will cease.

I assure you my Dear Sir that all that is wanting in Tennessee is light. If that spread in time all is safe. It is just necessary to say to the opposition as old Diogenes said to Alexander the Great "get out of my light."

I could write about several things, if I had time, that no

doubt would be interesting to you but I am in a great hurry. Excuse my excentricity & bad grammar & consider me as ever. . . .

WILLIAM BOBBITT

Addressed to Washington.

1. This community was at one time called Benton and later became Santa Fe.

FROM HENRY A. MILLER¹

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. May 31, 1836

Miller says that if it turns out that results of the poll held for postmaster are ignored, he wishes to put his name in the competition.²

Addressed to Washington.

1. Miller was a merchant in Mt. Pleasant.

2. The incumbent remained in the post office for many months, and eventually Miller was appointed as postmaster.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

Dear Sir

Columbia May 31st 1836

I will give you \$30 per acre for the land south of the road leading from this place to Mt. Pleasant,¹ the one half cash & the other half in 12 months. I esteem this a liberal offer & it is what you asked me some time since. Advise me by letter *immediately* whether or not I can have it.

You have no doubt e'er this seen the result of the election for Maj. General. On the eve of the election, I was compelled to leave home for *Pontotoc*.² I was absent from the Divisions 2 weeks & returned but two days before the election. From this movement I sustained immense injury in my own County & in all parts of the Division. A report got out and was circulated extensively over the District that I had declined the canvass & gone to Pontotoc with a large capital to speculate in land.

You no doubt too saw that after my name was announced Col [William] Moore became a candidate. This I regretted exceedingly, but being upon this field I would *not be forced off*.

The result was a division of our strength & the election of Cannon.

Your relations with the exception of Mrs Harris^s are well. Mrs Harris has been & is yet quite unwell, but is thought to be some little better than she has been.

Our cause is every day becoming stronger & stronger.

GIDEON J. PILLOW

Let me hear from [you] upon the subject of my proposition without delay.

G. J. P.

Presumably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found.

1. See John B. Hays to Polk, May 13, 1836.

2. Pontotoc, Mississippi, was the site of a land office, but the nature of Pillow's business there has not been ascertained.

3. Mrs. Adlai O. Harris (Naomi Polk) never recovered from her illness and died early in August 1836.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia May 31st, 1836

I have received yours enclosing your letter to Col. [Charles K.] Gardner & his letter to me on the subject of mail property. I am greatly obliged to you for your solicitude to preserve our interests. The property regulations of the Department are scarcely of any value to either new or old contractors. The *mutual interest* of the parties alone exercises influence in such matters. Either can evade the taking or letting go property if they choose. In the present case too, Col. Gardners letter merely amounts to a recommendation to trade about property, which it is clear would be advantageous to both parties, as well as for the public interest. I do not mean to complain; I am determined not to do so. Still I think there has been any thing else than *favors* shown us in the decision of the 12th of May between Price & Gordon & Polk & Walker. The Department knew that they could accept the bid of Polk & Walker at \$6500 for two Routes with perfect propriety, and saved \$140 p. annum by doing so; saved us a great deal of trouble and vexation & probably a heavy loss, for if they had done so our property & mail

pay on the Murfreesborough line was sold at \$2400. Price & Gordon would have taken the Columbus Route at \$5900 it being a separate bid, as Price informs me. The difference in wag-gons & coaches mentioned is nothing & can count nothing, the difference in arrival at Nashville at best immaterial and if 4 oclock was indispensable it could have been so accepted. We have labored faithfully and sustained heavy losses and common kindness ought to have had some influence. We may be too secure in politics in Mr. Kendalls estimation to be cared for. But let these things all pass. I only give to *you*, something of my feeling, that you may understand that I think the Whites have very little ground to say in our case that Van Buren men are treated with too much kindness.

Price left here this morning. He was evidently afraid I would run an opposition upon him, and had judgement enough to see the advantages I possessed. Polk & Walker not getting the Florence line, the bargain between them & me was broken up, and of course I have to run the Huntsville line for them. The Huntsville line cannot be run to advantage without running it on to Nashville. I told Price that I should so run it, but was willing to sell him the property on his road at a fair value, or was willing to make the Huntsville & Florence lines a joint business into Nashville, and sell him the stock on the Columbus road. He proposed that we should make a joint business of the line from *Columbus* to Nashville & Huntsville to Columbia. To this I had objections as the Columbus & Florence line was taken by him much too low. Price's deportment was liberal, and I had no reason to be dissatisfied with him, and finding there was some danger of our getting into a foolish opposition business on a part or a whole of the road I concluded to make the interest all joint, and to take charge of the business from Nashville to Florence & Huntsville, and as much of the business from Florence to Columbus as convenient, Price engaging to assist me and particularly attend to the Florence & Columbus line. I sold the property needful on the lines for \$18800, one half of which Price & Co. pays to Walker, Caruthers & Co. We reserved the stands & supplies, work shop, and 10 or 15 horses, in all worth about \$6000, which is to be subject to future negotiation, as it is all property that will be needed by the new carrier. They pay

us \$9400 in New Orleans acceptances at 4, 8 & 12 m. I have recently sold 4 coaches for \$2200; thus are matters arranged down to Columbus.

I have been expecting to see or hear from Salmon & Roberts¹—have requested Kinkle to inquire into their responsibility. If they will give us good paper, they shall have our property from Columbus to Natchez at a fair price. I shall certainly have no concern or interest in their contract. If they do not take our property I will sell it as soon as I can, but must use it to pay as much expense as possible until I can sell. I made the arrangement that I did with Price to avoid mortification and excitement at home, knowing that a state of things might happen here that would bring on *party* strife in all its fury, and as Price is a White man, the majority of the travelling part of our own town would have been against me on political feelings. I hope I can stand up to war where necessary, but I always wish to avoid it. Price's contract is not a very bad one. I am still to be chief controulor, and am to receive \$1000 pr. annum from the Co. for my attention. I think all has been done for the best, and cannot be very seriously injured, let what will happen below Columbus.

I am placed in an awkward condition about the Route from Jackson to Covington. I cannot continue it longer than the 1st of July at the present rates. We have from the commencement lost from 4 to \$5000 on that route; it has always been performed at a loss. Otey's bid is low enough in sulkeys at \$9000. Mr. Kendall must decide with dispatch on that Route, or the New Orleans mail I should think will likely stop. I could not think now of putting on Coaches at the prices I am offered at. Expences have raised full 50 per. cent. I have not now the same inducement, and the time is too short for so heavy an expence. It is too far off for me now to desire to run coaches on it at any reasonable price. Mr. Kendall must decide without delay in this matter if he has not already done so. It was the Lake Route, and the Route from Columbus to Natchez that bore so heavily on us. If Otey's bid is accepted at \$9000, we will have the contract filled; if not we shall sell our property first chance after 1st. of July, and Mr. Kendall must make more economical arrangements if he can. We have lost all the money we can spare

to the Department, and especially as they can look on our interests with so much indifference. But enough of this.

Another matter in which you have a deep interest is giving me much trouble. *Unless the Democrat gets some assistance it must go down.* The subscription list is daily increasing. It has already upwards of \$700 [*sic*] subscribers, but so little advertising & job work that they cannot find means to purchase paper & pay expenses. The very circumstance of a large subscription is against them, as it makes the cost of paper so much the heavier. The subscription is not the profit. The Observer is patronised in all possible ways by the Bell & White party. The majority of business men are of that party. They have also a part of the state printing. What can be done for the Democrat I am at a loss to know. If it goes down the misrepresentations of the Observer will exercise a very pernicious influence, and especially against us and our political friends. Zolicofer is as venomous as a viper. With the *tools* we can manage him and the White Whigs with ease. Bynum & Cameron have continually to borrow money to buy paper &c. Andrew [C. Hays] & myself lend them and endorse for them, but we cannot continue to make such individual sacrifices. I am out heavily in money, and have devoted a great deal of time to the Editorial department and am still willing to aid and assist my full share, but cannot make all the sacrifice. If the printing I mentioned to you from the Post office Department could be obtained, it might enable them with other patronage in our power to get on. *If nothing can be done, it must go down*, and a very effective Republican battery silenced for want of patronage—not want of circulation, but want of *profitable* patronage. I should be sorry to see this although I have no personal interest, except the desire to see correct principles prevail. I have been too unfortunate to be able to share much pecuniary assistance. Andrew is continually telling me that the Democrat cannot stand it without additional help. Think of this matter; it is one of consequence to us all, and especially to those who have important political interests at stake in this country.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. A stagecoach firm of Moulton, Alabama.

FROM JAMES H. THOMAS

Dear Sir

Columbia June 3d. 1836

Yours enclosing Mr Kelly's¹ papers was duly recd.

You have, no doubt, been informed of the general state of politics in Maury from different sources, one of which is our Papers, in reading which, a slight correction should always be made. The Observer represents its party at least three times as strong as it is & the Democrat does not represent it as being near so strong as it really is.

The account of the White meeting lately held here you have seen in the paper, but a word of Mr. S[amuel] D. Frierson's speech upon that occasion. The greater part of it was made up of misrepresentations of northern politics, and insidious appeals to the prejudices of the west and south, such as (I would think) it is treasonable for any sane man to indulge in. Mr. F. dwelt much upon abolition, making many charges upon Mr. Van Buren and his friends, which tho false called forth occasional plaudits from the few "Original Jackson men" present. Mr. F. also spoke of expunging and attempted to reason upon the subject, and tho (as you know) a gentleman of learning and a good lawyer, he made a complete failure. I was disposed at first to believe that *he* was blameable but I now think it was the barrenness of the subject; the weakness of the cause & not of the advocate. I am informed that Mr. F. has said if either Jackson or Bell must sink, let J. go, for his part he clings to B.

All this is written with due respect for Mr. F. as a gentleman.

I think you may safely take the list of names published in the Observer as to the call for the White meeting, as the full strength of the opposition in this county. I attend the courts in Lincoln Giles & Lawrence and I think the Republican ticket will prevail by considerable majorities in all of them. H. L. Turney of Franklin County told me not long since that his county would give two to one for the good cause. Bedford there is no doubt of. There is no doubt as to middle Tennessee, and not much as to the western District. By October I expect to see Tennessee again free.

As for yourself you *never* were as strong in your district. The Col. of the Fountain Creek regiment says he knows but two men opposed to you in his regiment, & these two are John D. Love & Reuben Smith,² nullifiers. I have no conversation with our town White folks upon politics, but when the *men* of the country call at my office I give them what little light I can upon the subject of whiggery. Information is all that our people want. I seldom fail with the unpredjudiced to make them republicans & expungers.

My Father [Dr. Isaac J. Thomas] requested me to say to you that he recd. a prospectus for an extra Globe & that he wished you to send it to him, directed to Columbia. Send me a copy also & be so good as to pay for both & I will be *sure* to see you paid on sight.

Your friends are all well. My Compliments to Mrs. Polk.

JAMES H. THOMAS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Unidentified.

2. Love and Smith had lived in Maury County for a long time. Love built the first mill on Fountain Creek. Smith had once lived in the Carter's Creek vicinity. The Colonel of the Fountain Creek regiment has not been identified.

FROM WILLIAMSON SMITH

Nashville. June 5, 1836

Smith explains that he has met with William Martin who is distressed over the failure of Polk to reply to his letters and the uncertainty of his reappointment as an agent to the lead mines in Illinois.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM WILLIAM GAMMON

Dear Sir

Blountville, June 6, 1836

Enclosed I send five dollars for five Extra Globes which my Father wrote for a few days since.¹ You will please direct them to the following persons & places.

1 to Irison Longacre ²	P.O. Rockholds	Sullivan Co
" " Wm. B. Childress	" Shipleys	Do Do
" " Saml. Hall	" Hiltons	Do Do
" " John Taylor	" Do	Do
" " John Barns	" Do	Do

This day we had a meeting in this place for the purpose of nominating some suitable person for an Elector friendly to Mr Van Buren and the present administration. We have selected Col Cleon Moore of Hawkins County and have recommended him to the other counties composing this electoral district. I think by November we shall have a majority in this district. Washington County will act upon the subject shortly; several persons spoken of, Honbl. *Jno. Blair for one*, Jno Dixon³ &c. Our cause is daily increasing. People are beginning to understand Judge White's course and that itself is sufficient to turn multitudes against him. I think if we manage judiciously we will carry Tennessee yet.

I would be glad to hear from you when convenient. We could obtain many more subscribers for the extra Globe was it not that we [are] starting a Van Buren paper in Jonesboro.

WM. GAMMON

Addressed to Washington.

1. See George Gammon to Polk, May 25, 1836.
2. Of the five persons listed here all but Samuel Hall are known to have owned land in Sullivan County. Longacre and Barnes also owned slaves.
3. John Dickson was a merchant and farmer in Greeneville. He and his brother, William, both Irish-born, were among the wealthiest men in the county.

FROM WILLIAM M. GREEN¹

My dear friend Hillsborough N.C. June 6th 1836

It has been a long time since any thing of the epistolary kind has passed between us, and now that I am about to break the silence I am almost afraid that you will suspect me of only interested motives. It is true that I have a favour to ask, but I hope you will give me full credit for sincerity when I assure you that I take more heartfelt pleasure in the simple act of com-

municating with you than in the hope of a successful answer to my petition.

The favour which I would ask is to obtain for my oldest son (Wm. M. jnr.) a situation in the Military Academy at "West Point."² He is now almost sixteen years of age, and nearly as large as his Father. He is of a bold & ardent temperament, fond of active pursuits, and desirous, so far as he knows his own mind, of becoming a Civil Engineer. He has been for five or six years at the best classical school in our state, and could without difficulty enter College at Chapel Hill. But so changed for the worse are the habits of the students at that place, since our day, that I would gladly avoid sending him there, notwithstanding the advantage of having him so near me. I have always entertained a high opinion of the "West Point" School, as affording a better practical education than could be obtained at any of our other institutions. From its general popularity however I fear that there will be some difficulty in procuring a place for my son. I know not by what rules they are guided in granting admission. And supposing you to be well acquainted with the regulations of that Institution, as well as possessed of influence with its Directors, I have determined to trouble you with this application. I do it however with some reluctance, knowing the arduous & engrossing nature of your present duties. Well convinced of your willingness to oblige me, as far as may be in yr powers, I leave the matter, to fill the remainder of my sheet with other things of a less interested character.

I have watched yr course, my dear friend, with something of a Brother's pride, and much of a Brother's interest ever since we shook hands for the last time at Chap. Hill. While *I* have been pursuing my silent way as an humble "Village Pastor," *you* have been buffeting a stormy sea; but *both* of us I trust have had an eye to the happiness of our race and the welfare of our country no less than to the promotion of our own ambition. I am no meddler in politics. My duty is to moderate the heat of every party, and to inflame that of none. Like an independent man I have my opinions of men & measures. But a strong innate love of peace and justice toward all men joined to a little of that Charity which hopeth all things, even of the bitterest adversary, would never let me become a strong party man. The

longer I live and the more I see of my prejudices & mistaken judgments the more inclined am I to make allowance for those who differ from me.

The present bitter & distracted state of our great National Legislature is a just occasion of sorrow to every lover of his country. *Where* the blame lies I will not pretend to say. Probably on both sides, as is generally the case. These are matters not for my decision. *My* duty is to pray for the "President of the U. States & all others in authority," together with our "Senate & Representatives in Congress assembled," that all things may be so "ordered & settled by their endeavours that peace & happiness, truth & justice, religion & piety may be established among us for all generations." For yourself individually I have much sympathy. The high station you now fill in the eyes of the Country is not only one of honour & responsibility, but one which must expose you to continual vexation & insult. You have indeed need for all the forbearance & patience & watchfulness of the self-sacrificing patriot. May you have all these, my friend, to sustain you in yr trying duties; and may you have more, even help from on high, help from the Ruler of nations, who can still the tumult of the people as easily as he stills the raging of the sea.

I do not often meet with any of our old classmates.³ *Waddell* still lives in this place, tho strongly persuaded by his Brothers to remove to the S. West. He is daily rising in reputation and in favour with the people, and is very much of the same "clever fellow" that he was in College. *Moseley* I suspect has lately paid you a visit, as he spoke, when I saw him last, a few weeks since, of taking a short excursion to the North. He is one of our first political men, and if he had been treated rightly, ought at this time to be in our Gubernatorial chair. *Hill* is the sober rice planter with a family of 7 or 8 children. *Jones* is the Editor of a paper in Salisbury, and also a practicing Lawyer. He is still as fond as ever of a joke & occasionally of a frolic also. *Mallett* is in Providence (R.I.) with a [house full?] of children. I seldom hear from him. *Donaldson* is the wealthy Capitalist in N.Y. with [a wife] but no offspring. *Green* (T. J.) still resides in Mecklenbg Va, a lawyer [of] growing reputation with a great number of sprouts around him. R. *Morrison* is the faithful min-

ister of a large Presbyterian Congregation in Mecklenburg Co. in this state. *E Morrison* was also a Presbyt. Clergyman of considerable promise, but died some years ago, soon after his entrance into the Ministry. These are all of our old Companions that I can at the moment call to mind. Moseley has no doubt informed you of my present domestic history, or rather of the recent change in my domestic affairs. Four years ago I was left a widower with five children. After bearing my privation as well as I could, I was blessed six months ago with the hand of one who could make happy the days of any man. Could you not in yr journeys to & from home call by this way, and make me glad with a visit? Waddell & myself would go with you to "the Hill," where we could retrace our old walks, and "fight all our battles over again."

But I must now stop my pen, lest I intrude, beyond bearing, on yr time & patience. In writing to an old friend like yrself I feel much of that propensity which is said to belong peculiarly to old age. Speaking of age, reminds me that I could tell you of many grey hairs in the head of a certain friend of yours; but I will be silent on that subject inasmuch as I learn that *you* have *three* to my *one*. May many blessings of life be yours, my dear friend, and may close of yr days afford a review of much usefulness to yr country, and a certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life.

I have not the pleasure of knowing yr Lady, but nevertheless please present my best wishes to her. As soon as yr business will permit, let me hear from you. Yr letter will receive a hearty welcome. . . .

W. M. GREEN

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 194-197.

1. Green was Polk's classmate at the University of North Carolina. He became an Episcopal minister and was the first Episcopal Bishop of Mississippi. He was one of the founders of the University of the South and served as its chancellor.

2. Green's son did not enter West Point.

3. All of the names mentioned in this paragraph were of members of Polk's graduating class at Chapel Hill, 1818. Robert H. Morrison became the first

president of Davidson College. Moseley, Polk's roommate, became the first governor of the state of Florida.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia June 6th 1836

I have been looking with some anxiety for the decision of Mr. Kendall in relation to the route from Jackson to Covington.¹ We presume it cannot be intended to *leave* unprovided for, this important link of the New Orleans mail and surely the P.M.G. cannot expect us to continue to carry it after the 1st. of July. At the present contract price it is the most losing Route we had and if no decision is made in time to instruct our agent on the subject we shall be compelled to direct our agent to sell our property as soon as possible after the 1st. of July and cease to operate from that day. We cannot stand the loss longer than the time agreed on. I will take it as a particular favor if you will have this matter immediately decided on if it is not already done. No Coach proposition under our old propositions (when we had all the lines, and every inducement to make this a coach line) need be made to us. I wrote to you that I had settled all matters with Price & Co. I had a strong inclination to run without the mail, the two lines into Nashville. The arrangement made is however much better and mutually satisfactory. I hear nothing from Salmon & Roberts. I have addressed them at Moulton Ala. and informed them that Uncle Leetch² opinion upon the goodness of the paper they would give us would be satisfactory. If they intend to comply with their bids I think they cannot do without our property. I sometimes fear they will back out upon understanding the difficulties they have to contend with. If I had this property sold & secured, with the Jackson & Covington route settled, I should feel pretty well satisfied. I hope you will see how important it is to me to have the Jackson & Covington route fully decided on, if it is not already done.

You will see that we are still in warm political state. The quarrel seems to have become a local personal affair. Zolicofer is a low malicious wretch. He has a strong personal hatred to me, because he believes that I have sustained the Democrat,

thwarted his malicious views, and really trampled White Whiggery under foot. With the exception of our old enemies about town, in the Looney & Porter neighborhoods, and Frierson connexion, *the people* almost unanimously sustain us. Our power never was greater, nor in as good organization. We shall certainly carry our electoral Ticket in this District by a large majority. And I think we are the strongest from the Cumberland mountain west.³ East Tennessee I fear. The people are so ignorant, and the entire Press there against us it may turn the scale against us as it did in the governors election. But at the worst, we shall give them a hard contest, and I am not without hopes that we shall yet carry the state. We have fought the battle well thus far, considering the start they got on us thro' the defection of the press. The Whigs look upon me as a very formidable adversary, and would if possible affect my reputation. There is no telling what they may attempt; but I hope that although I cannot boast much *personal* popularity, that I have a moral strength which they will find invulnerable.

The [Nashville] Union is not of as much value to us as it ought to be in its local position. *It is too tame* for the times. As to yourself I think you have been fully sustained by public opinion, and have now more power & strength than any man in Tennessee, (except Jackson) Judge White not excepted. *I think Bell* is done every where but in Wilson. The Washington letter writers are rendering a great service in using up the White, Bell, & Co concern. These letters have produced nothing but disgust—a perfect Nausua. Bell has much less sense, and management than I thought he had.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. The route from Jackson, Mississippi, southward to Covington, Louisiana, was what Walker occasionally called the lake route. Covington lay just north of Lake Pontchartrain, and the route from Jackson to Covington to New Orleans went almost due southward from Jackson.

2. Irish-born William Leetch had married Naomi Knox, Polk's aunt, in North Carolina before moving to Moulton, Alabama, in 1818.

3. The Cumberland range was the recognized dividing line between East Tennessee and Middle Tennessee. Later the Tennessee River became known as the line of division between Middle and West Tennessee.

FROM RICHARD A. L. WILKES¹

Columbia. June 6, 1836

Wilkes thanks Polk for having the *Globe* delivered to him and expresses confidence that Van Buren will carry Maury County.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A colonel in the militia who later turned to politics. He was a member of the General Assembly 1845-51, and in 1850 he was a member of the Nashville Convention.

FROM GEORGE W. JONES

Dear Sir

Fayetteville Ten. June 7th 1836

There is considerable excitement and division in this County among the people in relation to the approaching Presidential Election, though I think that the friends of the "*Kinderhook Magician*" are in the ascendancy in this Congressional district. You have some rather violent enemies, in this County in consequence of your course, who misrepresent you and give or quote as authority for so doing John Bell and Henry A. Wise, the speeches of these gentlemen having been sent here under the Franks of the said John Bell and the Hon. Hugh Lawson White. I received the speech of Mr. Wise on the loss of the fortification bill, under the Frank of Judge White himself.¹ Whether he has Franked any of Mr. Bell[']s four days speech or not I am not advised, but Mr. Bell himself has sent a goodly number of them into this County.² Believing that you could do a great deal in counteracting the spirit of opposition that has been gotten up in this county against you as well as against the *administration* upon the *Bell and White* concern, as well as to advance the cause in which you are engaged, it is the wish of a portion of your old friends and former constituents that should you find it convenient and in accordance with your feelings on your return home this summer to attend a public dinner or Barbecue to be given at this place which will be gotten up for the occasion. The people here with few exceptions I think have confidence in your Honesty, Patriotism, & Republican principles and your

presence amongst them would be attended with good results. I wish you to see Judge Grundy and ascertain whether he will accompany you or not, should you attend.

I wish you to answer this and inform me what time you will probably be at home and whether you think you will come or not. Should you find it convenient to attend on your arrival at home we will give you an invitation in *form*, have the necessary arrangements made, and, give a general invitation to the Citizens of the County to attend and see and hear you in defense of yourself and in support of the cause in which you are engaged. So far as you are concerned White and Van Buren is not the only issue involved in Tennessee. The Struggle will in my opinion at no very distant day be between yourself and Bell in Tennessee, therefore it behooves you to be up and adoining.

Really, I should like that some means could be devised to bring Judge White out on the subject of the Bank since his support of Mr Clays Land Bill. The reason Mr. Bell gave why the Judge should not give any pledge upon the subject having been removed (if it ever existed) by the letter of Mr Van Buren to the committee at Cincinnati. I can see no good reason why the Judge should not come out on this subject also.

Your attention to the above will confer a favor of your old friend. . . .

GEORGE W. JONES

Addressed to Washington.

1. Loss of the fortifications bill during the waning hours of the Congressional session that ended March 4, 1835, had been a subject of controversy ever since. Administration friends, including Polk, placed the blame on intransigent White Whigs in the Senate. On January 22 and 23, 1836, however, Wise attempted to place the blame on the duplicity of certain administration Democrats in the House. His slashing attack, often vituperative, was directed chiefly at Polk and Churchill C. Cambreleng of New York.

2. After Polk had beaten John Bell in the speaker's election, there was a concerted effort by Bell and his allies, Wise and Balie Peyton, to harass Polk at every opportunity. Polk had frequently failed to recognize Bell, but on March 16, 1836, Bell obtained the floor and began a speech that lasted for four days. He reviewed what he termed the abuses of extreme partyism and personal government. His speech was not larded with invective as were those by Wise and Peyton, but Bell left little doubt that he had completely and permanently severed his ties with the Democratic Party.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Murfreesboro June 10th, 1836

We have yet due us in Alabama, for the Land I sold to A. J. Crawford¹ of Demopolis, a note for about \$400 which I have no opportunity of collecting. The Honl. F. S. Lyon² a member of Congress lives at Demopolis and has been engaged at home as a collecting attorney and I presume a safe man. If you will speak to him upon the subject and he will attend to it, I will, when he sets out for home, enclose the note to him, & also the Deed for the Land which we executed last fall when you were here. He can with the money buy a check and enclose to us. Please write me soon what is done. I should have written oftener of late but have for the last two weeks been waiting to hear of the adjournment of Congress. We have no news here political or other wise except of Houstons victory³ which you have heard, and the raising of volunteers under the Presidents requisition for the Creek war.⁴ There is no doubt but that the call will be answered promptly in Tennessee. When you write, I would be pleased to know your opinion of the future disposition of Texas, and what will be done with regard to it by Congress or our Government. Tell Sarah I will not write again as I presume Congress will rise before a letter will reach there after this. We are all in good health.

JNO. W. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Andrew J. Crawford served for some years as register of the land office at Demopolis.

2. Francis S. Lyon, a Whig, served, 1835-39, in the House of Representatives.

3. Houston's victory over Santa Anna late in April had been so badly exaggerated that it took several weeks to correct many erroneous details.

4. When the Texas Revolution began, General Edmund P. Gaines hastily called on the governors of several states, including Tennessee, to send militia to reinforce his troops in the southwest. Jackson countermanded the order, and the Tennesseans who were directly involved in the fighting there went on their own initiative. Meanwhile discontent among the Creek and Seminole Indians intensified as their scheduled time for removal approached. Finally, in December 1835 the Seminoles at two points attacked and massacred bodies

of American troops, thus introducing a long period of difficult and costly campaigning. Tennessee responded to Jackson's call for volunteers by sending twice the number requested. They made a rendezvous at Fayetteville in June, the month in which this letter was written.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia June 10th 1836

I have for several mails past most anxiously looked for a letter from you containing some information in relation to the P M Genls decision, as to the Route from Jackson to Covington. I thought you would at any count have written to me that I might have known what to have depended on. Mr. Kendall surely cannot expect me to continue the Lake Route after the 1st. of July, and if he is unwilling to pay a price that will indemnify there is no alternative but for that mail to stop and the [communication?] between here & New Orleans, to cease. We have already lost 4 or \$5000 on the Lake Route, and self defense will compel me to sell our property on that road immediately after 1st. of July. Our situation will not permit our waiting the tardy movements of the Department, when we are suffering such a certain loss, and especially when we have such clear and incontestible evidence, (as the decision on the Florence line affords) that our interest and safety is a matter of very little concern with the officers of the Department. If the Department make themselves easy on this matter, the mail will surely stop, unless the P.Ms on the route make some temporary arrangement about it. Price & Dr. Salmon left here to-day for the South, Dr. Salmon to go and examine our property from Columbus [Mississippi] to Natchez. It is probable we shall agree, if Salmon & Roberts can *secure* their drafts. Kinkle may have yesterday, and by agreement is to go to Courtland, and the drafts are to be drawn and endorsed to his satisfaction and if this is done, we are all to meet at Columbus on the 25th of June to close the arrangement and deliver the property if we can agree. I think it a little doubtful whether Salmon & Roberts will start their line, as I understand they have but little capital. I hope however they may start. I shall aid them all I safely can. At all

events I consider that we are released from the mails after 1st. of July and I wish the Department to distinctly understand this. I shall leave home in about 10 days, for Columbus & do not expect to return until I have disposed of all the property on the road. If I do not in the meantime receive information as to the Lake Route, it will cause me some trouble, but my decision is made.

There is much interest here on the War question—the Whigs took the start and the V. B. men about town did not show any disposition to vie with them. About 30 volunteered. Yesterday they tore up the paper, and decided that the White Guards must go as a company with their present officers, if they could make terms of volunteering to suit them. They will not go, and will disgrace, I fear the county. One or two companies *from the county* will probably be raised. The White Whigs have spoilt every thing about town.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

FROM SAMUEL BURCH¹

Sir

Ho Reps. [Washington] June 15 1836

In compliance with your desire expressed to me this morning I give you the following statement.

I have, *exclusively*, made up the Journals of the Ho Reps of the U.S. for the last 23 years and occasionally, before that time. I write it up from the short minutes (which are a species of shorthand) taken at the table and from the papers which come from the Ho.

In fulfilling this duty it necessarily often, indeed daily, happens that I have, upon revising and comparing, to erase lines and sometimes whole entries. Changes are occasionally made by the clerk where (not being usually in the House) I have mistaken the course of proceedings. The rule requires the Speaker to examine & *correct* the Journal daily before it is read in the Ho. I submit it to him every morning. He examines it with care, and if he discovers any thing in it which he deems proper to have changed or corrected, the changes or corrections are made.

All the alterations which are made appear on the face of the paper.

It is the original rough draft which is read in the House and is preserved. It cannot be examined until within a few minutes of the hour of meeting. It is therefore wholly impossible to copy it before it is time to read it in the Ho; a dozen clerks could not do it, and indeed I think it proper that the original draft should be the official draft.

I speak advisedly when I say that from the commencement of the gov. it has been the practice to make the alterations on the face of the paper and that the original rough draft is the one which has been always read to the House; and I will further state that my drafts of late years are much more perfect and contain less alterations than those of former days.

During the present session, in consequence of the fact of the Journal seeming to excite more attention on the part of the Speaker and members than usual, I have been more than usually careful in constructing the entries. I frequently write them fuller than I deem necessary or even proper as in making alterations or corrections, it is much easier to erase than to insert. This was the case with respect to the entry about Mr Adams' appeal² on Monday last. That paragraph now stands as, upon advisement, it was supposed to contain a more explicit statement of *fact*, than as originally drawn out *by me*, having placed it in *remarks* which it was supposed a *Journal* of proceedings had nothing to do with.

S. BURCH

The cover sheet of this letter bore no address. It was obviously hand delivered, probably never leaving the chamber of the House of Representatives.

1. Samuel Burch was the chief clerk of the House of Representatives, under the principal clerk, Walter S. Franklin. See Franklin to Polk written on the same day as this.

2. A few days earlier John Quincy Adams and another member of the House claimed the right to the floor at the same time. The speaker ruled against Adams and was upheld by the House when Adams appealed. Later, when the incident was reported, Adams claimed that the house journal did not correctly give the ground upon which he based his claim to the floor. It was this affair that evoked this letter and the one following from Walter S. Franklin.

FROM WALTER S. FRANKLIN¹

Sir
Office of the Clerk of the House
of Reps Washington June 15th 1836

Mr. Adams having on yesterday stated that he intended making some motion in relation to the Journal of Monday last, it becomes me to state the usual practice in making up the Journal of the day.²

Mr. Burch the journalizing clerk makes up the journal from my minutes and submits it to me before handing it to the Speaker for his correction. I make such alterations in it as are necessary or as suggest themselves to me as proper, after which it is, agreeably to the rule of the House, handed to the Speaker for his correction.

Erasures and interlineations are invariably made when the first draft of the Journal as written and by Mr. Burch, is altered either by the Speaker or myself before it is read to the House, and scarcely a journal is made up and read to the House that does not contain them. It would be impossible to have a fair copy of it made between the time it is submitted to the Speaker and the meeting of the House and of course the journal read in the House is the one approved of by the House, and from which the journal of the House is printed.

In relation to the journal of Monday, Mr. Burch wrote the first draft of the journal and submitted it to the Speaker. The Speaker sent for me and after consultation as to the best mode of expression to be used in relation to the fact, it was concluded that the mode made use of in the paragraph referred to by Mr. Adams, as read to the House was the best and adopted accordingly. The Journal of that day was made up and corrected in the way that it has always been done since I have had the direction of it, and as it now stands was read to the House.

W. S. FRANKLIN

The cover sheet bears nothing but Polk's endorsement. The letter was probably delivered by hand without ever leaving the House chamber.

1. Walter S. Franklin was elected Clerk of the House of Representatives in December 1833. He was twice re-elected but died before his third term was complete.

2. See letter of this same date, Samuel Burch to Polk.

TO JOHN J. McMAHON¹

Dear Sir

Washington City June 15th 1836

I have received your letter of the 22nd. ultimo, in which I am requested to state what transpired between *Capt. Thomas B. Jones*² and myself, during his late visit to Washington, or since his return on the subject of the appointment of Post office at your place. If *Capt. Jones* mentioned the subject to me, or in my presence whilst here, I have not the slightest recollection of it. I have seen Judge [Joshua L.] Martin, who informs me that *Capt. J.* did not whilst here mention the subject to him. Judge M. will himself write to you on the subject.

Some short time after *Capt. J.* returned home I received a letter from him, informing me that the office would probably be vacant, and that in that event, he would be an applicant for the appointment. A few days after I had received this letter, I received from *Capt. Jones* a second letter,³ of which I send you a literal copy, from which you will perceive that *Capt. Jones* has acted the part not only of a friend to yourself and the family of Dr. Shackelford, but of a generous, high-minded and honorable man, such as I have long known him to be. I am satisfied that the rumours to his prejudice of which you speak, are unjust towards him.

I will only add that the occasion upon which it would have been proper for me to act, never arose, and I took [no] part in procuring the appointment. I never mentioned the subject to P. M. Genl. and indeed had no knowledge of his appointment, until I received your letter.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Courtland, Alabama. The letter was marked "Copy" but is obviously a draft from which Polk copied the letter actually sent.

1. McMahon was a prominent merchant and a son-in-law of Dr. Jack Shackelford. Eventually he moved to New Orleans and engaged in business as a commission merchant.

2. Thomas B. Jones was a merchant in Courtland who had moved from Virginia. It appears that McMahon suspected Jones of some undercover scheming to obtain the appointment as postmaster. Jones was appointed postmaster and served several years. See Robert D. Fenner to Polk, April 21, 1836.

3. The letter here mentioned has not been found. It is perhaps significant that Polk wrote on the envelope that he was sending McMahon a copy to forward to Jones.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Colo

Murfreesboro, June 15th 1836

There seems to be nothing hardly talked of now but Military matters—raising Volunteers for the Creek & Seminole Indian wars. Today and yesterday five companies passed through Murfreesborough on their way to Nashville to be mustered out of service under the requisition of Govr. Cannon for the Texas frontier. Three companies I am told are ready to be enrolled for the Alabama & Florida campaigns. We learn that there will be more than two thousand troops at Nashville on next Thursday, a large part of which will be ready to march immediately to the South. Your county I learn can raise five hundred herself. I calculate that the present military enthusiasm will go very far to resuscitate the warm affection and attachment which the people of this state formerly felt for our Old Chief and which as you know has been greatly lessened by the misrepresentations and most [. . .] standing of the White & Bell Whigs of Tennessee. The People will see right after a short time. But I presume that the Republican cause in Congress will not be very materially injured by the Defection of Judge White. I hope that Van buren will be elected without Tennessee. I have just heard from Bob Burton that the great *Washington Sun* has given up the ghost for *want of Patronage*. I presume that Whites friends would have strained the pint a little longer if they had thought that there was the most remote chance for Judge Whites election. Bells organ at Lebanon has given up & complains that its friends the Whites did not patronize as they promised him.¹ Our little paper in this place I expect will have to fail.² He receives no better support than when he published a Van buren paper. Francis A Green³ gave a Dollar for you a few days ago which he said you had paid for him for the Congressional Globe. Remind me to give it to you when you return.⁴

WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. The Lebanon *Mirror* was anti-Jackson and was particularly critical of Polk.

2. This probably refers to Peter G. Warren and the Murfreesboro *Central Periscope*. Warren had been associated with Edwin A. Keeble in publishing the *Central Monitor*, and while notices of the publication of the *Central Periscope* have been found, no issues of the paper seem to have survived.

3. Uncertainty in deciphering the name makes positive identification impossible.

4. At this point the letter ends abruptly. Since the letter stops at the bottom of a page and bears no signature it seems obvious that a portion of the letter is missing. The identity of the writer was made possible by the handwriting and by the fact that Polk gave the name of the writer on the envelope.

FROM WILLIAM DAVIS

Sir

Benton Tenn. June 19th, 1836

The neighbours here are generally well. I seen a letter yesterday from Dr. [George W.] Haywood to Mr. Shields at Washington, requesting him to secure all the information on the White side for the presidency he could, and also Mr. Porters speech¹ on the expunging resolution and particularly the Sun paper,² and any information on that side he could. Sir he is against us but thank God we can spare him, for I am well assured that we have a large majority on our side and gaining very fast in this settlement. No doubt there is five Vanburen to one White man.

I was at Shelbyville at the nomination of our Elector and was well pleased. As lively a collection as I ever witnessed and very large indeed, and in as much as the White party has applied to Mr. Shields for information let us not be lacking. You well know what would suit us best. I think a few N[umber]s of the Extra Globe would be of great use in this office. Send us the best information on the Vanburen side you are in possession of.

Sir I expect you are apprized of our new county business. We have had a new county granted us by the Legislature on certain conditions whitch conditions we have fully complied with, but when the county site was located a few designing men living on the north side of Duck River became dissatisfyed and has filed a bill of injuncion in Chancery against the establish-

ment of Marshall County. They are something like the White party. If we would give them all the offices that is required to organize Marshall County then I believe they would be satisfied. Strange indeed to me that men can [. . .]³ oppose a measure so strong and at the same time praying appointments at their hand. I have good reason to believe that some of these very men who are opposing the establishment of Marshall County are at this time asking the P. M. G. for the appointment of P. M. in Lewisburg, Marshall County. Sir please give my best respects to Mr. Grundy and Mr. Kendle and let Mr. Kendel be apprized of the course these men are pursuing as respects Marshall Cty, and then he can judge whether or not they are worth the appointment asking at his hand &c.

WILLIAM DAVIS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Alexander Porter, a Whig from Louisiana, strongly opposed expunging in a speech before the Senate on March 22, 1836.

2. This seems to be a reference to the *Washington Sun*, a caustic critic of the Jackson administration and of the Democratic Party.

3. A smear at this point renders two or three words illegible.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother

Yale College June the 19th 1836

I have been intending to write, ever since I returned, but untill now have not been able to get fa[i]rly at it. I find it a very difficult matter to make out a letter, that will be in the least interesting, situated as it were beyond the busy scenes of the moving world and apart from the theater of political warfare. The people here, especially in college, are almost to a man of one and the same political trait, following up, serf like, blindly the beck and nod of their arch leader, and who become infatuated when the least objection is offered to their *infallible chief*. We stand our ground, to the contrary, notwithstanding, seldom making the attack but never retreating when an action does commence. We had a complete triumph when Perry Smith was chosen Senator, although I do not think he will be a Star

in the Senate chamber, yet any person over a whig.¹ I never heard of the man before, even his name was not mentioned, but when he was chosen, he was the only target, at whom the opposition let fly their abuse and slander.

In a few weeks we will have the honor of being called Juniors when I will endeavor to write somewhat more frequently in payment for past delinquencies. It is generally the custom during this year (Junior) to study in addition to the regular course, either French, Spanish, or German. My reason for writing this is to know if you would prefer that I should study any one in preference to the others since only one can be studied during this year. If not I shall study the French. James & Knox received a letter from their father a day or two since in which among other things, he directed them to have the management of their pecuniary matters. I know not the reason for this step; it was a very unexpected one to me, though not in my opinion an injudicious. I do not intend asking the same privilege, but by giving an innuendo, leave it to your judgement. I suppose the reason which induced Mr. Walker to give them the direction of their money, was that they should not go into the world book worms and simpletons in the common affairs of life.

SAML. W. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. Smith was a lawyer at New Milford where he was also postmaster, 1829-37. After serving several terms in the state legislature he was elected to a single term in the United States Senate.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia June 20th 1836

I am at a great loss to account for your mysterious silence for the last 3 or 4 weeks and cannot account for it in any other way than that every thing is going on well with you, or that you are dissatisfied with some thing which we have thought it best to do here. Your silence is certainly remarkable under all the circumstances. I made an urgent request that you would attend to my mail concerns, and give me without delay informa-

tion on the subject. This you have done in relation to all but the Lake Route. The want of information in relation to that particular route is to me a serious embarrassment. I am compelled to act, and must now do so without that information which might have been afforded me. If the Lake Route is to stop, the public ought to know it that they may provide some other means of communication with New Orleans. We ought to have known it, that we might without hesitation have sold our property on it. It cannot be possible that Mr. Kendall can expect us even temporarily to continue the Lake Route after the 1st of July, when we have so distinctly declared that of all our unfortunate Routes this has been the most loosing, is the most detached and inconvenient to attend to. We have already lost about \$5000 on that Route, and must and will cease to operate on it after 1st. of July. Self defense requirs this course, and it must be done, let the consequences be what they may. You can well imagine the excitement that will prevail in this country if the New Orleans mail stops, and it must stop unless the Department has made some provision for it. If Mr. Kendall does nothing about it I do not know why I should. I must take care of myself and partners & shall try to do so. I have no evidence that Mr. K. cares anything about my losses or interest from him, after his decision to give Price & Co \$140 more than he might have had the same service from P. & W. for, (and we served in a sale of much importance in our situation). I can expect nothing—therefore I ought not to make further sacrifices.

Dr. Salmon has gone below to examine our property. I am to meet him at Columbus on the 25th. and expect then to make a sale and delivery to him. I have made him a fair offer which I think he will take. He will certainly take it unless he declines to put the Routes into operation, upon seeing his prospect. I understand he is limited in circumstances but can give satisfactory endorsers. The contract will ruin them, but that is their affair. Nothing but the ability to command all needful means, has saved us from an embarrassment that must have ended in ruin. Our debt has been continually increasing notwithstanding the appropriation of all our mail pay and passage money to expenses. I shall sell or make arrangements to sell all our property below Columbus before I return from Mi[ssissippi]. If I can

I will sell the property on the Jackson & Covington Route to some one who will convey the mail with it until Mr. K. can take time to decide on what is to be done. As Price is a good White man (and therefore no favoritism can be charged in any arrangement with him) he may purchase the property and risque Mr. Kendall. Price says he is a favorite, and from the decision in his favor on this route I cannot doubt it. The present political doctrines seems to be favor to political enemies—*friends* will be *friends* anyhow.

I confess myself dissatisfied, but nothing shall ever make me an apostate from my principles or true friends.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

TO JAMES B. THORNTON¹

Dear Sir

Washington City June 22nd, 1836

It is with much surprize that I learn from the letter submitted to my inspection on yesterday that rumours have obtained circulation prejudicial to the moral and political standing of my friend Col. Franklin Pierce² of New Hampshire. So far as I believe or have any means of knowing, these rumours are wholly destitute of truth, and do him great injustice. I have been intimate with Col. Pierce from the time he became a member of the House of Representatives, and take great pleasure in saying that few men with whom I have been associated in Congress, have possessed to a greater extent, the confidence and respect of the political friends with whom he has uniformly acted. He has been a constant friend and undeviating supporter of the administration and of all its prominent measures, and at no period has he been more so, than at the present session of Congress.³ The rumour that he has at any time faltered in his support of the administration is without the shadow of foundation. The rumour which charges him with intemperance or immoral habits is equally groundless, and cannot to those who know him require a serious refutation.

JAMES K. POLK

No address appeared on the cover sheet, which bore the notation "Copy in substance, but not literal." The original was probably hand-delivered.

1. A New Hampshire Jacksonian who had served in his state's legislature and was at this time employed as Second Comptroller in the Treasury Department.

2. Pierce was in his second term in the House of Representatives. The letter which Polk was shown has not been identified, nor has Thornton's connection with it been clarified.

3. At this point Polk struck through five lines in which he had begun listing Pierce's services in the House.

FROM GEORGE W. CAMPBELL¹

Dear Sir,

Nashville 24 June 1836

Since our arrival here, early in May, we have been much occupied in having repairs made on our house, which was greatly out of order, and only got into it a few days since. I would have written you long since, had any thing transpired here worth communicating that would not reach you in the public prints.

On the subject of politics a perfect calm seems to prevail. Until very lately the public mind was principally occupied with the war in Texas particularly the victory of Houston; and now the Creek and Seminole war engages the public attention. The volunteers are collecting in considerable numbers—mustering into service, with much spirit & will march for the scene of operations in 2 or 3 days, though it is *probable* before they can reach there, the fighting will be all over.²

Little, very little is said about the presidential election, & the name of Judge White is scarcely ever mentioned. His partisans evidently despair not only of his success, but of his obtaining such a vote as to indicate any thing beyond a moderate standing in society (with which he should have been satisfied) for they can have no reasonable expectation of his getting a vote out of this state; and it is, at least, doubtful if he can get the vote of it. This will, it is believed, depend upon the course taken by East Tennessee and the vote of that section will mainly depend upon the information that can be infused among the people of the course pursued by him—his votes & speeches & those of his particular supporters during the present Congress. If they could be made acquainted with these things &

understand how completely he & his supporters, from this state, have gone with the opposition & turned against & opposed the administration, the great majority would at once abandon his support. Especially when it is clear there is no prospect whatever of his success & supporting him can have no other effect than to manifest their ill will to the President at the close of his successful administration, which would gratify his enemies, and must to him & his friends be the more unwelcome, as being the act of those, many of whom are his old acquaintances, & former friends, & would still be so if they understood the real state of things, & particularly the late conduct of their candidate. But it is said there is not a news-paper in East Tennessee that has not been long since engaged on the part of the opposition, & of course in support of Judge White, & still continues so; and therefore the people have not the means of obtaining correct information. How far this state of things can be remedied is yet uncertain.

I have seen some of the substantial citizens of Maury. There is some reason to believe a large majority of that county will go right. It is also believed the Western District will be sufficiently reformed to give a majority to the candidates of the administration—Democratic party, as reaction, it is said, is steadily progressing there. I think it a fair conclusion that middle Tennessee will also give the same candidates a considerable majority.

You appear to have had a very stormy session lately. A sitting of 25 hours is beyond any thing of the kind in former times—a continued session of 19 hours was the longest produced by the efforts of the Federal opposition party during the Embargo times.³ Some of your modern *wise* speakers however, have become more *tough*, & determined to have their own *will*, as they are stated by their friends to be particularly qualified “for a long chat.” I trust this will reach you at Washington & find you & Mrs. Polk well & at your leisure shall be very happy to hear from you & learn the present posture of affairs there, so far as you may find it convenient to communicate it.

Mrs. Campbell & Lyzinka⁴ send their love to Mrs. Polk to which my best respects are united and you will accept for yourself assurances of the high regard & esteem. . . .

G. W. CAMPBELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. A native of Scotland, Campbell was brought as a small child to North Carolina by his parents. After graduating from Princeton he studied law and began practice in Knoxville. From 1803, when he was first a member of Congress, he served in a wide variety of public offices. His most recent tour was as a member of the French Spoliation Claims commission. His return to Nashville, mentioned below, came after his service on this commission was ended.

2. See John W. Childress to Polk, June 10, 1836.

3. Campbell was a member of Congress from 1803 to 1809 and witnessed the passage of the Jeffersonian Embargo as well as its final rescinding. The twenty-five hour debate in the House occurred on June 9-10, 1836, while questions concerning the admission of Michigan and Arkansas were under consideration. A House rule was invoked to require members to be brought to the House, but the session finally ended without important action.

4. Campbell's daughter was born in Russia while he was minister to that country and was given this Russian name. She married James P. Brown, who died within a few years. Some years later she married Richard S. Ewell, the Confederate general.

FROM JOHN MCKINLEY

My Dear Sir

Lexington [Kentucky] June 25 1836

I send you the Kentucky Gazette in which you will find published a letter, from Washington, giving some account of you & *your friends*.¹ It does not appear to have been written for any particular political purpose, & may therefore produce the greater effect in Tennessee. The writer has drawn the line between the opposition, generally, & the little factions which have assailed you, & connected them, & particularly Mr. Adams, with Judge White. If the Tennessee papers will act upon this hint, & keep White & Bell in company with the abolitionists & nullifiers, & show the many instances in which they have acted in concert, it will go far to weaken them, & promote the interest of our friends.

I leave here tomorrow, & shall be absent, perhaps ten days, on some business, & hope to reach Louisville by the time you pass through. We shall be at Drakes, where we hope you will stop if you pass through that city.

The political parties here are very quiet. No excitement can be produced in favor of Harrison & the result of the elections entirely uncertain.

I see the 4 of July is the time fixed for the adjournment of Congress, & no step, at the last dates, had been taken in the judiciary bill. The probability is strong, I think, that it will not pass—no one appearing to take any interest in it.²

Mrs M & my daughter unite with me in respects to Mrs P. and hope shortly to see her.

J. MCKINLEY

Give my respects to Judge Grundy & tell him we have not heard a word from Mrs. G yet.

Addressed to Washington.

1. The *Kentucky Gazette*, edited by Thomas J. Pew, was an administration newspaper. The issue mentioned here has not been found.

2. This bill provided for the creation of three new circuit courts in the west. Uncertainty over the outcome of the approaching presidential election caused it to be postponed, because the incoming president would have the privilege of appointing new justices to the Supreme Court. After Van Buren's election, however, the bill passed.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Waxhaws, Arkansas. June 26, 1836

Yell urges the appointment of Abraham Whinnery to the position of captain in a newly organized unit of dragoons. Yell is optimistic of his chances of election to Congress.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM HENRY HORN

Dear Sir

Philada 29th June 1836

I am aware that the station you occupy prevents you from rendering me the kind service you did at the last Session of Congress in reference to our troublesome little hardware bill.¹ Yet I believe that a word from you to some of our leading friends in the house as to the best mode of getting it through would tend greatly to the accomplishment of an object which *really is of much more importance* so far as the public interest is concerned in the fair and equitable collection of the revenue

arising from that branch of Commerce to which it relates than any one not perfectly acqu[ain]ted with the subject would be willing to attach to it. Your kind aid in this matter will confer a lasting favour on one who knows how to appreciate if he cannot return it.

I am unadvised of your sentiments upon the subject of the Deposite or distribution bill which has recently become a law.² But if you and I coincide upon this as we have uniformly done upon all other political questions, you must feel the most poignant regret at the accomplishment of a measure concocted by the most unrelenting enemies of the administration for the most unworthy purposes and pregnant with dangers of an alarming nature to the peace and safety of our Republican union.

The Whigs here, upon change, rejoice much at the passage of the bill because they believe that by a division in our ranks the old chief has been coerced to sign the bill against his inclination. As a general rule whatever pleases my political opponents displeases me.

HENRY HORN

Addressed to Washington.

1. As a dealer in various kinds of hardware, Horn was interested in revising the 10th and 12th clauses of the 2nd Section of the Tariff Act of 1832 so as to reduce the duties on a wide variety of hardware items. Portions of the two clauses had been suspended some months earlier, but apparently Horn wanted more drastic action.

2. This bill had been sponsored by Henry Clay as a means of diverting attention from the tariff. By draining off all surplus funds to the states he hoped that lowering of the tariff as a means of reducing the surplus would be forgotten. The Deposit Act, or the Distribution Act as it is more often called, required the Secretary of the Treasury to designate at least one bank in each state as a place of public deposit and provided for the distribution among the states the Treasury surplus in excess of five million dollars, the distribution to begin on January 1, 1837.

TO L. KNOWLES AND COMPANY¹

Dear Sir

Washington City July 5th 1836

When I last saw you at Washington I gave you a general description of such a carriage as would suit me, if I concluded

to order one. If you can build me such an one, and deliver it, in this City on the first of December next, for \$850, the price mentioned in our conversation, you can do so. That you may the more fully understand the description of article which I want, I will here repeat a few particulars. I do not wish to have it so large as the carriages made by you for Mr Pickens, Mr Hammons & others which I saw here this spring.² As it is intended to be drawn by two horses, and as I must often travel over rough roads, and across mountains, it must not be heavy, but must be at the same time strong & durable. I wish it of course to be made of good materials, and to be when finished a handsome & fashionable article built after the latest style. Let there be windows behind and before, with venetian blinds and glasses; the lining to be of claret coloured cloth, the inside curtains of silk of the same colour, and other trimmings' as your taste may suggest to suit these, with a [. . .]³ cloth. Let the mountings be of brass, with good lamps and harness. I wish also an oil-cloth covering to accompany it. In a word I am pleased with the general appearance and style of the carriages built by you for *Messrs Pickens & Hammons*, and the principal difference between theirs and the one I want, will be, that mine shall not be so large or so heavy as theirs. The carriages built for them are too heavy and large to be drawn by two horses, unless it be for a short distance and over paved roads.

You will oblige me by informing me, whether I may calculate that you will deliver the carriage at Washington, by the 1st of December. Address me at *Columbia Tennessee*.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Amherst, Massachusetts.

1. This Amherst firm was earlier operated by Lyman Knowles and Asabel Thayer under the name Knowles and Thayer. It employed more than a hundred workers and was widely known as a manufacturer of fine carriages. The firm advertised extensively and had designated dealers in several large cities.

2. Probably Francis W. Pickens of South Carolina and Joseph Hammons of New Hampshire, with whom Polk had served in the House of Representatives. Pickens was still a member of the House, but Hammons had died during the previous spring.

3. At this point a word has been struck out. Following the strikeout is a blank space of such size as to indicate that the insertion of a word was intended but not carried out.

TO WALTER S. FRANKLIN

Dear Sir

Washington City July 6th 1836

Messrs Gales & Seaton called on me this morning to know my opinion as to the proper manner of carrying into effect the resolution adopted by the House some days before the adjournment, directing certain books to be purchased and distributed among the members of the 24th Congress who had not heretofore recd. them. I do not remember the precise terms of the resolution; but if I am not mistaken in substance directs the Clerk to procure and distribute the books in the manner prescribed by the resolution. No appropriation having been made by law to defray the expenses and the House having refused to direct the payment to be made out of the contingent fund, my opinion is quite clear that you would have no authority either to pay or to contract any obligation to pay for them, but as the resolution stands unrescinded and is [. .] of the House my opinion would also be, and I express it as an individual member of the House, and not as its Presiding officer, that the resolution as far as it could be, should be executed. I wish you to understand me as giving this as my present impression without having had an opportunity for much examination of the subject,¹ and without knowing what may have been the practice in like cases, which may have occurred heretofore. The resolution if I remember its purport aright is unqualified on its face. It is proper that I should add, that since my attention was called to the subject this morning, I have seen my colleague the Hon. Cave Johnson who informs me that it is the opinion of himself and other members of the House that you have no authority, and ought not to give any order for furnishing the books, until provision be first made either by an appropriation or an order of the House for paying for them. I am very far from having any wish & if I had, I have no authority to influence the decision you may make & as to what it may be

proper for you to do on the subject, but on the contrary merely give you my own impressions and the opinions of others on the subject, leaving it to you of course to act as you may think your duty requires. Being requested to do so I write you this.

JAMES K. POLK

Nothing appears on the cover sheet except the name of the addressee and the word "Copy." This, however, is actually a very rough draft, with numerous interlineations that make portions almost impossible to decipher. In its final form the letter was probably delivered by hand.

1. The remainder of this sentence and all of the next one appeared below the signature, with notation as to the proper place for it to be inserted.

TO MAHLON DICKERSON

Sir

Washington City July 7th 1836

Mr. Josiah F. Polk¹ of this City informs me, that he is desirous of obtaining a Pursership in the Navy. I have known Mr. Polk for some years and have no doubt but that he would if appointed perform the duties of the situation satisfactorily to the Department. I enclose to you as a testimonial in his behalf, a letter received by me some weeks since from Judge [Henry] Baldwin of the Supreme Court, recommending him for another office. I shall be gratified if you shall have it in your power to appoint him.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Connecticut Historical Society.

1. At this time Josiah F. Polk was a clerk in the office of the Second Auditor. He was born in Maryland and not a near relative of James K. Polk. He did not receive the appointment mentioned here.

FROM DAVID R. MITCHELL

Maury County. July 7, 1836

Mitchell informs Polk that he arrived too late from Alabama to have his company of recruits ready to respond to the governor's call for troops to put down the Creek uprising. He is disturbed that he has not heard from Polk concerning land difficulties involving the Creek chieftain Opothleyoholo.¹ He

says he is acquainted with many of the Creeks and speaks their language. He asks for assistance in getting an appointment as an agent to assist in the Indian removals.

Addressed to Washington and forwarded to Columbia.

1. Opothleyoholo, son of a half-breed and an Indian woman, was an important figure among the Upper Creeks during their removal to the west. See Mitchell to Polk, January 11, 1834.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

[Columbia, Tennessee] July 16th 1836

My letter to you of the 20th of June, was written under the most perplexed and excited feelings. I was at much loss to decide what course to take in relation to the Lake Route, and under strong apprehensions that Salmons & Roberts, when they saw their bargain would back out, as they did, and leave me the embarrassing decision to make, whether to let the *mail stop* or to risque still further losses in keeping it up. All the *profitable* and easy parts of the lines had been let to others, and the difficult and expensive portions, threatened to remain on my hands. About a month previous, you had informed me that on Mr. Kendall's return from New York, you would press a decision on the Lake Route, and advise me of it. I most anxiously looked for this information, in vain up to the date of my letter, and in a fit of vexation, and agony of mind, which a consciousness of daily heavy embarrassing losses cannot fail to produce, on the best ballanced mind, wrote you the letter, to which you justly take exceptions.¹ The reproach contained in the language employed is most *unjust and undeserved*. I could not have read the letter after writing it, or thought of the import of the words written. I have never for a moment doubted your earnest and sincere desire to serve my interests without any selfish motives. I expected to have heard from you in relation to the position the P M G thought proper to leave the Lake Route—and to have decided upon the course proper to take, from the information you would give me. I was perplexed & vexed at not hearing from you, and guilty of petulance, folly & injustice. That friendship which cannot bear with and forgive the misery and imperfections of friends writhing in mental agony, is of but little

value. I should be most miserable, if I thought our ties of friendship were to be different or less intimate than they have been, and more so, to be satisfied that the breach of friendship was owing to my own petulance and injustice. I confess that I feel conscious that the Post-office Department have treated me with less kindness than I had a right to expect under the circumstances which existed. I cannot feel satisfied with the decision between, Price & Co. & Polk & Walker, when P. & W's was actually the lowest bid and they knew to accept their bid seemed to us a sale of much importance, under the heavy losses we had sustained in the service of the Dept. This was not your fault, and I never meant to insinuate that I felt that it was. My letter principally meant to express dissatisfaction on this ground with the Department at their leaving the Lake Route on our hands. But let all those things pass. The wrong was done by me—you have shown a perfect willingness to overlook it—it would be painful to talk it over, therefore, I have made this written explanation, and shall consider that our relations remain as formerly. That our friendship has heretofore been sincere and ardent cannot be doubted by either, and I hope we know each other too well for anything to break it up.

JAMES WALKER

This letter bore no address and was delivered by hand.

1. Between June 20, the date of Walker's letter to Polk, mentioned above, and the time this letter was written, Polk had arrived in Columbia from Washington. It is clear that Polk had rebuked Walker because of the tone of that letter, but it is not clear whether he had done so in a letter or in person. Obviously Walker was concerned that his constant nagging had earned him Polk's rebuke. The fact that Walker chose to write Polk a letter rather than make his apology orally is an indication of the extent to which Walker was disturbed.

FROM CHARLES CASSEDY

Benton P. O. Bedford Co, Tenn.

Dr Sir:

17 July, 1836

Could I presume that any discordancy between us, in political sentiment, would have the least influence on your personal feelings, I certainly would not address this letter.

When last at Columbia, I went thither with the intention of inspecting the printing establishments of your city, and if possible to contract for the publication of a work, said to be of no ordinary character by critics superior to myself, which I had then lately corrected for the Press.¹ I soon discovered that little book printing could be done to any advantage in the present state of your Presses; that they were mostly and strenuously engaged in the great political conflicts of the times; and that I would ultimately have to appeal to some of the typographical institutions of Nashville or Cincinnati, for such a contract as I thought and still think the work richly merits. Unaccustomed of late years to the tumult and confusion of businesslike multitudes, my health became debilitated by confinement and the heat of the season, to say nothing about my natural cowardice respecting vague apprehensions of cholera, I left the M. S. book for safe keeping with a young gentleman in the Bar of Mr. Nelson's hotel.² I have since written on the subject to A. O. P. Nicholson Esq. stating my wishes on the subjects of procuring and disposing of the work, and as yet have had no reply, probably owing to his continued absence at Nashville. Will you be good enough to get the work into your hands so soon as may be; to judge for yourself of its merits; and to write me as soon as convenient? The work is an elaborate one, and has cost me much labor and research; and if it should unfortunately be irrecoverable, I am at this advance in age and delicacy of health and constitution, unable to write it over again. Please to omit no endeavors to befriend me in this particular; such manifestations of your attentions and friendship, will never fail to challenge my best gratitude.

I begin to experience a considerable diminution of hope respecting *my side* of the next Presidential Election. No man of any impartiality of thinking and investigation of facts can believe what he wishes to be true: the rational being *must* believe, precisely according to the *strength of evidence* presented to the mind. All I desire, or ever have wished, in state and federal politicks, centres in the single wish that the unbiased sentiments of the *popular majority* may govern the republic. Whenever in popular governments the people resign their sovereignty and mental independence to mere parties or partizans, it is to

me sufficient evidence of an intellectual degradation, comporting with the domination of aristocracy or despotism. Our government was founded on the noble principle of physical and mental independence of opinion, sentiment, and action—and can be supported and perpetuated by no other means. With great respect and Consideration.

CHARLES CASSEDY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Cassedy spoke several times about having a manuscript ready for the press. His addiction to strong drink was such, however, that these works never got printed. Some ten years after this date Cassedy did publish a work with the title, *The North American Spelling, Defining and Reading Manual of the American Language, on a New Plan*. . . . It is likely that the manuscript mentioned in this letter was the one that ultimately was published.

2. Pleasant Nelson kept a hotel in Columbia for several years. The unfortunate Cassedy's weakness is well illustrated here. Almost certainly intoxicated, he left his prized manuscript in a bar and was trying to get Nicholson or Polk to recover it for him. For another such adventure see Cassedy to Polk, September 3, 1832. In this earlier letter he wrote that he had finished a valuable work entitled *The North American Reading, Spelling, and Defining Book of the American and English Language*. . . .

TO JOHN W. CHILDRESS

My Dear Sir. White Sulphur Springs, Va., July 18, 1836

We reached here four days ago, on our way back home, and concluded to spend a few days with the busy, bustling, fashionable throng that at this season of the year frequents this celebrated watering place.

Finding the roads intolerably bad from the long continuous rains, and my horses being very much jaded, I sent Elias¹ with the empty carriage on to Guyandotte² three days later, where we will overtake him in the stage.

We will take the stage today. From Guyandotte, we will take a boat to Sainsville³ and go from there without unnecessary delays to Nashville.

I hope to be at Nashville in the course of ten or twelve days. Sara⁴ is anxious to see her mother and friends at Murfreesboro, and if I reach Nashville in time and shall ascertain (as my impression [*sic*] now is) that the court in Bedford sits on the

first Monday in August, we will go to Murfreesboro before our return to Columbia, where Sara will remain until I can [sic] pay a visit to my constituents at Shelbyville and return for her.

This, however, is not certain, and if we do not come by I will write you from Nashville.

The President⁵ is on his way and will be at the Hermitage about the time we will get to Nashville.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Murfreesboro. This letter appeared in the *Murfreesboro News Journal*, May 5, 1933. The original has not been found.

1. Elias was a trusted slave who was given to Polk by his father at the time of his marriage.

2. Located on the Ohio River at the mouth of a river with the same name, Guyandotte was an important steamboat embarkation point as well as a point where stage lines converged.

3. Unidentified.

4. Since Polk consistently used the spelling Sarah, it is believed that the spelling was changed in the newspaper to conform to that used in an accompanying article.

5. At this point in the newspaper the name of Andrew Jackson was inserted in parenthesis.

FROM JOHN C. WORMELEY¹ ET AL.

Maury County, Tennessee. July 30, 1836

A committee of Maury County citizens² praise Polk for his performance in Congress and invite him to a public dinner in his honor, to be given at his convenience.

Addressed to Columbia. The letter is in the handwriting of James Walker.

1. An early settler in Maury County, he was one of the original purchasers of land in Columbia. He was a major in the militia and a trustee of Woodward Academy.

2. In addition to the signature of Wormeley there were fifteen other names appended, including those of Thomas Mahon, James Huey, A. A. Campbell, and William Bobbitt.

TO BIGBYVILLE CITIZENS

Gentlemen

[August 1836]¹

I had the honor to receive on yesterday, your letter of invitation to partake with a large number of my constituents of

a public dinner to be given at Bigbyville on Friday the 19th inst. or on such other day as may suit my convenience, in which you have been pleased to express the undiminished confidence and approbation of those for whom you act, "of my public course during the many years I have represented them in Congress."

I will not disguise, the pleasure it has afforded me to have received on my return from the late protracted session of Congress, from yourselves, and others of those to whom I am accountable for all my public acts, the high testimonial of the unsolicited expression of their "continued confidence and approbation." No public man is or ought to be indifferent to public opinion, and especially to that public opinion which proceeds from those with whom he is more immediately connected, and whose agent he is.

To have heretofore had so many and repeated evidences of kindness and confidence, from the enlightened body of constituents of whom you constitute a part, has at all times been gratefully received and cherished as the invaluable reward of humble efforts on my part to be faithful to the trust they had confided to me, but has never I assure been more gratefully received or highly cherished than at the present moment. That I have of late become the peculiar object of violent attack by political opponents, and of much misrepresentation through the columns of a portion of the public press, I ought not, however great the injustice done me may be, to complain, because such assaults and such misrepresentation, have become but too much the price of public station. I could not expect to escape the fate which of late in a greater or less degree awaits all public men. Since my election to the Speaker's chair I have perhaps had an unusual prominence given me in this respect by my political opponents, but I confidently appeal to an enlightened and untiring public, not doubting, but that full justice will be done, not only to my own course, but to the causes which have produced and to the motives and objects which have actuated the course of many of my assailants. I am happy to have learned since my return among you, that my own immediate constituents, already fully understand and fully appreciate them.

To continue to deserve your confidence Gentlemen, and that of my constituents generally has ever been and shall continue to be the high object of my ambition, so long as I may continue to represent you.

Tendering to yourselves and to those in whose behalf you act my acknowledgments, for this manifestation of their kind regard and friendship, I beg you to be assured that it will give me unfeigned pleasure to meet yourselves and them, upon the public occasion at Bigbyville, at the time specified in your letter.

JAMES K. POLK

No address is available. This is a signed draft of the letter actually sent.

1. The letter was undated. The specific day could not be ascertained.

TO JAMES L. EDWARDS

Sir

Columbia Tennessee August 1st 1836

Isaiah Reed¹ a Revolutionary Pensioner, heretofore paid at the Agency at Nashville, has lately removed from his former residence in *Maury County* Tennessee, to *Gibson County* Tennessee and desires for the future to receive his pension at the Agency at Jackson instead of Nashville as the former will be more convenient to his present place of residence. Will you cause the order to be issued, or if it be necessary for the Pensioner to make any statement as to the fact of his removal, and his desire to be paid at Jackson, will you forward to me the necessary instructions for his guidance.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Revolutionary War Pension File S4053 (RG 15), National Archives.

1. On the census of 1830 this name was spelled Reid. Isaiah Reed had served in the Revolution while a resident of North Carolina.

FROM JOHN C. WHITSITT¹

Gainesville, Alabama. August 1, 1836

Whitsitt wants to know whether A. O. P. Nicholson has accepted appointment as an agent to investigate the Choctaw reservations, and, if so, when he

will assume his duties and where he will live while conducting the investigation.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A cousin of Mrs. Polk, Whitsitt was a successful businessman and a prominent political figure in Sumter County, Alabama. He served three non-consecutive terms in the state legislature. See John W. Childress to Polk, December 28, 1836.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Sir,

Clarksville Augt. 2nd [1836]¹

I reached home yesterday in time to attend a Van Buren meeting to nominate an Elector. There was a large crowd but a large majority of White men were in attendance & when they were not allowed to vote or take part in the proceedings, retired shouting & hurrahing for White & had a meeting in the public square & speeches from *Judge* Martin (the price of his election)² & G. A. Henry.³ After both parties had done their *business* I invited them into the court-house & gave them an hours talk. I was replied to by Martin & Henry. There is much excitement here & I think the county as far as I can learn pretty well balanced—from all I can learn, all my counties will give large majorities for Van except Montgomery & Robertson & I do not despair of them. I shall attend a Barbecue & round dance on Thursday & Friday at Port Royal.⁴ I shall make a speech if the occasion will permit. In the crowd of White men on yesterday there was a large majority of the old & violent opponents of Genl Jackson out of which I shall *make much*. [James W.] Howry writes me that a public dinner will be given us in Hickman & wishes to know the day. I have appointed Saturday the 27th August—if any other day will suit you better write him by the first mail. The Union is not conducted with sufficient spirit. You & G should attend to this as I shall be out of politics soon & have but little interest in it.

Shields I consider *gone*.⁵ We learn that A. V. Brown will oppose him. Huntsmans talk does us some good—in his opinion as stated at Charlotte.⁶ White has no chance. I heard you was near being drowned.⁷ I did not receive a letter at Harrodsburgh. I am thinking of drawing out & printing *a speech* & distribut-

ing. If I am not too lazy I will have it ready by the time we meet & will shew it. Tell Madame I made my bow to Mrs. Hardin^s & discussed politics & said something of making her a *set speech* when I came to Columbia, of course meaning a *political one* but I am not sure that she so understood it at first. I thought from her apparent embarrassment at the moment that she did not exactly understand & of course explained. I kept very much from the ladies there. They were all opposition & I thought most of them very bitter in their feelings. I am anxious to hear every thing in your quarter.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The year has been assigned on the basis of the content of the letter.
2. Mortimer A. Martin, a Clarksville lawyer, had been elected judge of the seventh circuit over Alexander M. Clayton by a narrow margin.
3. Gustavus A. Henry, a graduate of Transylvania, served, 1831-33, in the Kentucky legislature before moving to Clarksville, where he began the practice of law. A Whig, he served one term in the Tennessee General Assembly but failed in his efforts to be elected to Congress and as governor of Tennessee. Later he served in the senate of the Confederate States.
4. Port Royal is a small town on the Red River in the northeastern part of Montgomery County.
5. This seems to be an acknowledgment that Shields was now firmly in the camp of the opposition. Shields was re-elected.
6. No account of this speech has been found.
7. This passage is obscure unless it is a reference to the occasion when Polk and his wife were aboard a stage that was inadvertently driven into a flooded stream.
8. Unidentified.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir, Union Office, Nashville, Aug 3, 1836

To try to save myself from destruction, and to endeavor, at the same time, to avoid doing injustice to the numerous persons to whom Mr. [Medicus A.] Long had contrived to run this establishment in debt, I have had to take it out of his hands—upon terms hard and unjust to myself, but on the best terms I could to avoid an open *blow up* and public sale of the concern.¹

From the time I wrote you in the spring, up to the time of the new arrangement, I have not only given my time, but including last week, about \$625 in cash of my own raising and means. The creditors have been favorable in giving time. It will be indispensable, before I can put the concern on the footing I intend, that I should see you and Messrs. Grundy, Johnson & Donelson together. This I hope will be shortly, as the President will be at home in a day or two at farthest. Our Committee have gone to meet him at Lebanon, where they expect to meet him this morning.

I did not know you were in town until you were gone. Let me hear from you.

I can congratulate you on the state of public feeling which I know you found in Maury. All things will yet work together for good to those who have been faithful. I shall, as prospects now stare me in the face, be reduced to absolute want—to the necessity of going into the *pie poudre*² courts to earn bread—but I shall not regret it in after life, if we can whip the enemy in November.

I have daily to use my private means to buy paper, bread and pay wages, which I will stand as long as I can, and then give up. Neither subscriptions, which continue to increase, nor jobs, especially those done for Committees of Correspondence, and *pro publica bono*, are paid for with any regularity or punctuality.

I can suggest, as having now an exact knowledge of the State and prospects of the office, the means of making the establishment *independent, permanent*, and what it *ought to be*; and in doing which, every person interested shall agree and be satisfied with my course, and with the liberality of the course to be suggested.

If I am to be broke up by the affair, the sooner the better; and as my fate and future prospects are in suspence, the sooner I can see those together, whose advice I esteem greatly before my own judgment, the better for me, and the better for my peace of mind and prospect of usefulness to myself and the public cause. A man with ruin before him, and scarcely any prospect of extrication, is not in a situation to be usefully efficient in a station like mine.

I do not expect you collected or received any thing from the Washington and Congress list I sent you. If you did, I am in sore need of it; but these things can be talked of when I see you.

Dr. Ramsey, (brother of the Knoxville Register Ramsey) who is a *true man*, writes me *who* ought to be put up for Electors in Districts, No 1, 3, 4, & 5.³ He suggests Dickson of Greenville for No 1, Col. Williams or Maj. Wheeler for No 3 (Knoxville), and one of the Gillespies for No. 4 (Maryville), and Gen. Nat. Smith for No. 5 (Standefers).⁴ These things must be thought of and acted upon *soon*. They are important. All the other Districts have candidates—good ones—much better men than the *Whities* have.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private." This letter was enclosed in the same cover as the letter immediately following.

1. For Long's laconic version of his departure from the paper see Medicus A. Long to Polk, August 21, 1836.

2. Pie poudre courts are lowly merchants' courts.

3. Noted for his history of Tennessee, James G. M. Ramsey was trained in medicine but turned to banking and writing. In later years he carried on a voluminous correspondence with Polk. William B. A. Ramsey had recently acquired an interest in the Knoxville *Register*, a newspaper favoring the candidacy of Hugh L. White. He was Tennessee's secretary of state, 1847–55.

4. John Dickson, a prosperous merchant-farmer of Greeneville, and John E. Wheeler, later a state senator representing Grainger, Campbell, Anderson, and Morgan counties, were chosen as electors. It is not clear which Williams was intended here. James Gillespy and his two sons, James H. Gillespy and John F. Gillespy, were prominent in politics at this time and all served in the state legislature. None of them became an elector at this time, but John F. Gillespy was a Van Buren elector in 1840. Nathaniel Smith had represented Grainger County in the legislature, but at this time he was living in Calhoun, which was in James Standifer's congressional district. He was not chosen as an elector.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Nashville. August 3, 1836

Laughlin believes that Jackson will arrive at the Hermitage on the evening of August 4. The people are anxious, as never before, to meet Jackson.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM JOHN S. YOUNG

Dear Sir

McMinville 4th August 1836

During the last winter and at a time when you were most actively engaged in your public duties I took the liberty to ask your friendship in securing for me public employment¹ and now when you have returned home after having passed through a period of the most eventful period of your political life I have taken the opportunity to offer you my most grateful & sincere acknowledgements for your friendly manifestations to me expressed through Majr [Benjamin F.] Curry in relation to the Cherokee service. I have not learned positively but it scarcely admits of doubt that dispositions have been made in that service none of which embrace your humble friend.² In my letter to you last winter I spoke of the situation of Clerk in some one of the Departments at Washington and from the large increase in the General Land Office of the number of clerks, I have determined to make an application for the appointment of one out of twenty-five of whom are to receive salaries of \$1400. per anum and the remaining sixteen salaries of \$1300. per anum, all of whom are appointed by the Commissioner of the General Land office. Could you write to the gentleman having the power to confer the appointment or cause a suggestion to be made to him by the President now at the Hermitage it would be a favour which I would highly appreciate and for which I would feel much gratitude. It was at the suggestion of my friends that I first made an application for public favour and whilst I would wish to be guarded against too great a thirst for office I desire to render available the testimony of perhaps too partial friends in laying a foundation upon which I might be enabled to build a superstructure that would fully answer my yet youthful aspirations.

Entertaining honestly the same political opinions with yourself it affords me no ordinary degree of pleasure and satisfaction to know that you have triumphed over your enemies and that the arrows of corruption and party virulence which were hurled at you have fallen harmless at your feet. The developments of every day go to prove that the people of Ten-

nessee would rather be free and thinking republicans than the vassals of John Bell and the recreants of principals which they have proudly cherished in past days.

JOHN S. YOUNG

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See John S. Young to Polk, February 16, 1836.
2. Young did receive an appointment, although it was not exactly the one for which he applied.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Aug. 5, 1836

The President arrived at the Hermitage yesterday evening. Our Committee—say of 50 picked men—met him in Wilson, above Lebanon, yesterday morning, when Old George W. Campbell made a speech to him, in which he fully came out on all the points and openly denounced the whole White scheme in all its parts and designs. The speech and reply will be published when I get the copies. Both were good—first rate for the times. A. Ewing¹ made a speech for the Young mens Committee.

Campbell, [Robert] Weakley &c. staid at the Hermitage last night. Mr. Grundy, Judge [John] Catron and Parson [James] Gwin staid at Mason's,² and will spend part of to-day with the President. The old horse is in excellent health.

I have received a letter from Mr. Johnson of the 3d. enquireing after documents, proceedings of our Van Buren meeting in 1832 &c. They have had a meeting in Montgomery, at Clarksville, and nominated [James] Fentress. Much speaking took place during the day, in which the Hon Cave and Judge Clayton³ & [William] Overton (of Assembly) were encountered by [Mortimer A.] Martin and [Gustavus A.] Henry. The campaign there, will be warm. Johnson says we will beat in Robertson and Montgomery.

As the President came through East Tennessee, by Jonesborough, Greenville &c he was met, followed and escorted by hundreds and thousands—the like never before having been seen in East Tennessee. [John] Blair and Wyly⁴ have publicly

renounced White and Bell, and Blair would have been our Electoral candidate in 1st district, but for his name being attached to the infernal Caucus papers.⁵

The people of Marion, Standifers county, have confirmed the nomination of Blackwell⁶ of Athens. *Good*. I had not received notice of the nominations of Dickson & Blackwell when I last wrote you.

I hope to see you soon. I have seen Maj. Donelson, but have not said a word of our affairs to him or Mr. Grundy. To Maj. D. I had no time during the few minutes I saw him yesterday. Both he and the President are in high spirits.

[S. H. LAUGHLIN]'

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. Andrew Ewing was a young Nashville lawyer who had recently been admitted to the bar. He was a Democrat and soon entered a law partnership with his older brother, Edwin A. Ewing, who was a Whig. He later served one term in the Tennessee legislature.

2. Unidentified.

3. Alexander M. Clayton, a Clarksville lawyer, had returned from Arkansas, where he had received an appointment as judge. Soon after this time he moved to Mississippi, where he became a member of the state supreme court.

4. Probably James W. Wyly of Greene County in East Tennessee. He had served in the state legislature but moved to Missouri shortly after this letter was written.

5. This refers to the meeting of most of the Tennessee congressional delegation in Washington the previous winter, at which time the members agreed to support Hugh L. White.

6. Julius W. Blackwell moved to Athens, Tennessee, from Virginia. He was elected to the House of Representatives for two nonconsecutive terms, 1839-41 and 1843-45. Each term, however, was followed by failure to be re-elected.

7. Laughlin left the letter unsigned, perhaps expecting to add to it before mailing.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My Dear Sir

Columbia Aug 5th 1836

I am in the receipt of your favor of the 3d. Instant. I regret that I could not see you as I passed Nashville. I arrived at night, intending to remain at least one day, but learning the extreme illness of my sister, left on the stage on the next morn-

ing. I found my sister lingering in the last stages of consumption. She died on Tuesday last.¹

I expect to be at Nashville upon the occasion of the Presidents reception. Nothing will prevent unless the time fixed should interfere with the arrangements of our Maury people, who I understand are moving with a mind to have several public dinners in different parts of the County. The time for only one of the dinners spoken of has as yet been fixed, & that is to take place on Thursday next the 11th Instant. I wrote to Grundy, to let me know on what day the dinner would be given to the President at Nashville, that we might avoid any collision but he has not done so. It is important that I should know immediately, on what day it will take place, and I must ask it as a particular favor of you, to write me by return mail, if the day has been fixed. I hope it may not be on Thursday next. Among others, I understand that a public meeting is called at Bigbyville on tomorrow, and I may within two or three days have to give an answer and fix a day to meet the people in that part of the county, and unless I can know immediately the day the President will be at Nashville, there will be a danger of collision.

Should ample notice be given scores of our people will go in to meet the President. Your notice should be at least 10 days or two weeks before the day, otherwise the people in the distant Counties will have no opportunity to attend.²

I see that the Lebanon people are to have a dinner & have invited Wise & Hardin,³ and following their leaders have denounced "*the party*" in power, or in plain English the friends of the administration. When men of the political faith of Ben. Hardin & Wise are invited by the Tennessee friends of Judge White to their festivals, it ought to be known. Might it not be well to notice this.

When I see you we will talk over all the other matters about which you write & I hope be able to make suitable and satisfactory arrangements.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Nashville, although no envelope has been found. This letter has been published in Parks, editor, "Polk-Laughlin Letters," The East Tennessee Historical Society's *Publications*, No. 18, 154-155.

1. Naomi Polk Harris, wife of Adlai O. Harris, died on August 2, 1836.
2. See Laughlin to Polk, August 8, 1836.
3. Henry A. Wise of Virginia and Benjamin Hardin of Kentucky.

FROM W. BOWLING GUION¹

Washington. August 7, 1836

Guion asks Polk to support his promotion to a captaincy in the Corps of Topographical Engineers by writing a letter to President Jackson.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A native of Mississippi who was appointed to the United States Military Academy, where he was a roommate of Jefferson Davis. After a drinking party that resulted in a riot, Guion was expelled from the academy. He enlisted in the army, however, and became an officer.

TO JAMES L. EDWARDS

Sir

Columbia Tennessee August 8th 1836

In your letter to me of the 11th of August 1834 you inform me that the papers in the case of *Samuel Hillis*¹ an applicant for a Pension, had been returned in January of that year to Charles C. Mayson² of this place for amendment, and that it did not appear from the records of the office that they had ever been returned. About that time Mayson moved from this State, and *Mr. Hillis* being unable to obtain any information of his papers as first prepared, or in whose possession, or where they were, had a new Declaration for a pension made out, and forwarded to your office, through the Post Office. Will you inform me whether the Second Declaration was ever received & if so what action has been had upon it. From what I know of Mr. Hillis's case I have every reason to think he is entitled to a pension. He is perfectly blind and in great want.

His second declaration was made out for him by Wm. P. Martin³ Esqr. and was forwarded by him to your office.

You will oblige me by giving the information asked.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the University of Pennsylvania Library.

1. Hillis moved to Tennessee about 1810. His efforts to obtain a pension for his military service during the Revolution had been dragged out over a long period by a series of unfortunate circumstances. First, there was some confusion as to the proper spelling of the name (Hillhouse or Hillis). Then the lawyer who was handling his papers left the state, apparently taking the papers with him. See James L. Edwards to Polk, October 8, 1833; Polk to Edwards, July 31, 1834; and Edwards to Polk, August 11, 1834.

2. Mayson practiced law in Columbia for a while, then in 1833 moved to Mississippi, where he became editor of the *Jackson State Rights Banner*. He had been thought of as a Nullifier in Columbia.

3. At this time Martin was practicing law in Columbia. He had practiced in Fayetteville before moving to Columbia, and later he became a state circuit court judge.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir,

Nashville, Aug. 8, 1836

I have received your letter of the 5th instant, and have conferred with Mr. Grundy. The dinner to the President, which will be a barbacue to which *all creation* will be invited, will not take place for ten days or two weeks, perhaps three weeks from this time. Abundant time will be given for the circulation of invitations to distant counties. Dr. [Wallace W.] Estill promises to bring a goodly number from Franklin County. The committee are to wait on Gen. Jackson on Thursday, to hand the invitation and fix the time.

Mr. Grundy goes to Franklin, (McGavock's)¹ on tomorrow, and so on down to your Dinner. Possibly, I may be there. If I am not, Joel Smith² will, for reasons and purposes of getting subscriptions & to help us on.

I have not seen Judge [George W.] Campbell to-day, but hope he will be out. His speech to the President, which I cannot publish before Saturday, will do him signal honor, as he openly denounces the whole White intrigue.

Mr. Walker is here, and goes to the Hermitage tomorrow. Joel Smith goes with him.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The Grundy and McGavock families were tied together by intermarriage. Randal McGavock married Felix Grundy's sister, and Jacob McGavock

married Grundy's daughter, Louisa. At least three McGavock families lived in Williamson County at this time, but it is not clear which one is intended here.

2. Joel M. Smith had become owner of the Nashville *Union* shortly after Medicus A. Long left. Smith in turn sold the paper to J. George Harris in 1839.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia August 9th 1836

A committee of our citizens will visit the President of the U. States at the Hermitage on Saturday next. They are deputed by a large and respectable public meeting to tender to him an invitation to the County, during his visit to the State. I hope he will not decline it. If he goes to no other part of the State I hope he will come here. He made me a partial promise that he would do so on his way to visit Mrs. Coffee.¹ He could not be charged with having any political object in view, and if he was, it should in my opinion be a matter of perfect indifference with him. He has no favours to ask of his White Whig enemies. They seem inclined to make the issue between White and himself, and to give no quarter. In such an issue there can be no contest. I have never witnessed such enthusiastic zeal in his behalf as pervades our community with few exceptions, or such anxiety that he should visit the County, and afford them another opportunity of testifying to him in person their continued confidence and support. Say to him that I hope he will not fail to accept the invitation. If he does so and it can be known on what day he will be here, ten days previously, he will meet an assemblage of the people greater than has ever been known in this part of the country. The whole county will be out, as well as hundreds from the Counties of *Giles, Bedford, Lawrence, Hickman and Williamson*. His visit would have a very happy effect.

V. Buren's strength in this County is overwhelming, and increasing. I am to attend a public dinner on Thursday the 11th and another the week following. Others I understand in different parts of the County are getting up. *King of Georgia* was at my house on yesterday, will be back from Hickman where he

has gone on business, on tomorrow and will be at the dinner.² In my speech I shall call a *spade* a *spade* and men & things by their proper names. If the battle is now fought boldly and vigorously, the day will yet be ours. Make my kind respects to the General, and urge him without fail to accept our invitation. Make the kind regards of Mrs. P. & myself to Mrs. D. and say to her that we shall expect the promised visit during the summer. Should the President come out we shall of course expect you to be with him, and you must not fail to bring Mrs. D. with you; and I need scarcely add, that when you come to our village, we shall expect you to stop at my house.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Mrs. Coffee, widow of John Coffee, was a niece of Rachel Jackson. She was living in Florence, Alabama.

2. John P. King was at this time a member of the United States Senate from Georgia. He had at one time lived in Bedford County. He was detained in Hickman County by heavy rains and did not see Polk on his return through Columbia. See John P. King to Polk, August 21, 1836.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My Dear Sir

Columbia Augt 9th 1836

I am greatly disappointed that I have not heard from you, on what day the dinner will be given to the President at Nashville. I shall be compelled tomorrow to answer the Bigbyville people, who have fixed upon Friday the 19th as their day. I will delay an answer if possible until the arrival of the mail of tomorrow, in the hope that I may hear from you. If I should not hear from you, I can delay it no longer and shall be compelled to accept for that day.

I may probably have other similar invitations to answer as our people are all in motion, and I understand others are in contemplation. I wish if possible to avoid a collision with the day at Nashville, as I desire very much to be there, as do also many of our citizens. I hope you will go on with your dinner, the Banner & Republican & Whities to the contrary notwithstanding.

standing. Their course in throwing cold water on the attempts to pay honor to the President, is having an admirable effect, and will be the means of making his reception the most splendid he has ever had.

A committee of our citizens will wait upon the President at the Hermitage on Saturday next to invite him to the County. I hope he will come, & if he does we will shew what old Maury can do. I have written a letter to Majr Donelson today, addressed to Nashville. I am very anxious that he should receive it, if possible, before our committee wait on the President. It is somewhat important that he should do so. Will you do me the favor to cause it to be conveyed to him, before Saturday. *King* of Georgia will be at our dinner Thursday; we will have a speech from him. We have some hope that Grundy and Judge Campbell will come out, and I should be very happy as I know our people would be, if you could come out with them.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville.

FROM MADISON CARUTHERS¹

Dear Sir

N Orleans Aug 11th, 1836

Your favour of 1st. inst came only to hand this morning covering Five Hundred dollars. I am truly concerned to hear of Mrs [Adlai O.] Harris' low and I fear hopeless state of health; but sad & unwelcome as the intelligence is I confess it was not unexpected. Her long and increasing illness was enough to wear out a stouter frame than hers. My only hope indeed for sometime past has been in her recovering sufficient strength to travel, the exercise of which, and a change of climate were I thought most likely to effect her restoration. My friend Harris has been all this summer the subject of most melancholy afflictions and to add keener point to the shaft which has stricken his domestic circle, he has been burthened all the while with a business of the most onerous and engrossing nature, that extreme solicitude & perplexities of which cannot be well understood by any not connected with it.²

I hope Mrs P. & yourself have returned to Columbia in good health. Please present my best respects to *her*. . . .

M. CARUTHERS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Caruthers, a former resident of Columbia, had been Polk's law partner for a few months and had been a business partner of Adlai O. Harris for more than two years.

2. The exact nature of Harris's business burdens has not been ascertained.

FROM RANSOM H. GILLET

My Dear Sir, Ogdensburg [New York] Augt. 11th 1836

We are home once more on the banks of the St Lawrence, where peace & tranquility reign. We found our friends all in health & every thing as we expected. I will leave Mrs. G. to tell her own story. I will come to what interests us gentlemen to so great an extent. First, New York is all safe for V.B., but as I told you, our legislature made a bad session for us, & the air is not pure all over. I see no reason to doubt that we shall return our usual number of members, but great efforts will be made to defeat us in the weak districts. Harrison & Granger¹ will be pushed, while White & Webster are not talked of. Marcy² will be reelected by a large vote, & our state legislature will reelect Mr. [Silas] Wright to the U.S. Senate without much opposition. Our most discreet friends approve his course on the distribution bill, & condemn Talmadges.³ But as our country is *speculation mad*, the effort will be made by those engaged in these things, to push on distribution to its utmost verge, to aid in the schemes to make money.

I find my constituents highly pleased with my winters work, & there is a very strong feeling to have me returned again. But as the other county in my district, by the rules of rotation, is entitled to the location I expect to have to yield. Should I not yield, but be nominated, as I presume I could by making an effort, it would probably ruin all my future prospects in the District.⁴ This I think I ought not to do, & if another is nominated, I shall make him a strong political speech to aid him. I shall then hope to come in at the end of two years. What I shall

do in the mean time, I do not know, except to practice law, as well as I can. I shall send my speech in reply to Bell tomorrow. I have waited for his, so as to quote his printed words, but it has not come & so I send off, relying upon my own notes, which contain what he did say, though he may not print all. Allow me to hear how the battle goes. Remember me to Mrs P. with sentiments of great esteem.

R. H. GILLET

Presumably addressed to Columbia, but no envelope has been found.

1. Francis Granger of New York was a member of the House of Representatives and a favorite son of that state for the vice-presidency. Harrison later appointed him Postmaster General.

2. William L. Marcy, a firm Jacksonian, served from 1838 to 1839 as governor of the state. He later served in the cabinets of both Polk and Pierce.

3. Silas Wright and Nathaniel P. Tallmadge both voted for the distribution bill. It was on the second part, however, that they decidedly disagreed. Tallmadge thought that there would be a large surplus and that it should be placed in the state banks in the form of deposits. Wright, on the other hand, thought there would be little surplus and that to make further deposits in state banks was not desirable.

4. Although Gillet did not try for re-election at this time he was never again elected to any important political post.

FROM JOHN S. YOUNG

Dear Sir Cherokee Agency East¹ 11th Augst 1836

I wrote you a short time since saying that I had come to conclusion that dispositions had been made in the Cherokee service which did not embrace me. In this I was mistaken. Through Maj. Curry I was informed that I was appointed an appraising agent and I am now at this place about to enter on the duties of my appointment. After the appraisings are completed I will be retained in the service as Physician to the Emigrants. For the favour I have recd from the government I am indebted to you and I trust my conduct in office will be such as will increase rather than diminish your confidence. For the kindness you have exercised towards me I cannot be too grateful.

I understand when the President passed through Knoxville

he was treated with coldness and disrespect and at Lebanon Parson [James] Gwins effigy was hung up and intended for the observation of the President when he would pass but was cut down and removed by the Post Master before his arrival. This was in Mr Bells district. If the gray hairs of the President and his years long and venerable for his service to his country will not protect him from insult it is high time the moral sense of the people should revolt at and [. . .] down the actings and doings of a party whose miserable [. . .] are adverse to the best interests of the country.

JOHN S. YOUNG

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The East Agency was located at Calhoun, Tennessee, and this letter was posted there.

FROM ALBERT G. HARRISON¹

Dear Sir, Fulton [Missouri] Aug 14th 1836

Presuming that you would be pleased to hear from our elections, I have concluded to send you the result as far as known.

So far as the returns have come in, and enough has been heard from to make us *certain* as to the result, they show satisfactorily that *Whiggery* in all its forms and shapes, and all its hues and colors, is *utterly* demolished in this State. *We have succeeded in all our elections.* We have elected our *Governor*, our *Lt Gov.*, members of Congress, and an overwhelming democratic majority to the Legislature. Boggs will beat Ashley² about 500. Ashley was here yesterday, and gives up that he is beaten about 200. Cannon (democratic) for Lt Gov., will beat Jones³ his competitor, about 3000. Gov. Miller will beat Birch⁴ the foremost *Whig* Candidate for Congress about 4000, and I will beat him about 5000!! I shall get the largest vote ever obtained in the State. Never did any man get a worse drubbing than the Whigs in our late elections. Upon this splendid victory, I send you my hearty congratulations and hope that we shall hear of many more such.

A. G. HARRISON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A native of Kentucky, Harrison had served one term in the House of Representatives from Missouri. As indicated in this letter he polled more votes than any candidate for a major post, winning his second term in Congress.

2. Lillburn W. Boggs won over William H. Ashley, but the margin was far from overwhelming. Boggs was a prime mover in expelling the Mormons from the state during his term as governor; he then moved to California. Ashley had been lieutenant governor of Missouri and served in the House of Representatives from 1831 to 1837.

3. Dr. Franklin Cannon was a native of North Carolina. Prior to winning this election he had been elected to several terms in the state legislature. James Jones, a somewhat obscure figure, seems not to have been active in politics at the state level after this time.

4. John Miller, a resident of Virginia and Ohio before moving to Missouri about 1818, was governor of the state from 1825 to 1832. In the election under discussion he ran well behind Harrison but far ahead of James H. Birch, the Whig who ran third. Birch was a former Democrat who had turned Whig because of his dislike for Thomas Hart Benton. During the 1840s he returned to the Democratic fold.

FROM JAMES M. HOWRY ET AL.

Centerville, Tennessee. August 15, 1836

A committee of Hickman County Democrats congratulate Polk on his conduct as Speaker and invite him to attend a public dinner to be given in honor of Cave Johnson.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM ABRAHAM WHINNERY¹

State of Arkansas Washington County Cane Hill
Dear Sir August the 15th 1836

The election for filling the different offices for State Government has taken place and it is with a great deal of pleasure that I can say to you, our old friend Judge [Archibald] Yell is no doubt elected to congress. Although I have not yet seen the returns yet he certainly will beat 3000 votes.² Vanburan you know he is the whole hog. Our Vanburan candidate for governor, I fear much for his success not on the account of his Vanburanism but on the account of Sectional question that took place in the legislature last fall and also in convention fixing the basis of

representation the north was arrayed against the South. [James S.] Conway the Van. Candidate was considered a southern man. So if we should be beet for govenor for gods sake do not set us down in opposition to the present Administration for this state will support Vanburan.³ We will send you senators of the Right cast to congress.⁴

I have been again Relected to the legislator beating the field. This is the third time I have been ellected to the Legislator. I was also a member of the convention that framed the constitution. This County will send six representatives and two senators to the Legislator all Vanburan men. I have viewed with much regret the political poison that has been shot at you by Bell and Co. but gratified to find they fall harnless at your feet. I won last winter going to convention a half bushel of tody on your ellection for Speaker. I informed the man whom I bet with as we Arkansas boys Say you would lay him with all his appostacy to the land.

Sir I have to request you if it is consistant with your feeling to present me to the President of the U.S. as an applicant for the office of Register of the land office at Fayetteville. Wm Ball⁵ has Resigned before this time and I expect has Recommended some person probably for that office as he has been ellected as one of our senators from this County. I have no doubt but I could procure any amount of petitioners in my behalf, but I have thought it unnecessary. Col McKissick Drew up a petition in my behalf directed to the President which I have taken the liberty to enclose to your care, expecting the old Cock might be at the Hermitage. If so please forward it on to him. The office would be of great importance to me as I am in low circumstance. I am not personally acquainted with the president, that is I know him well but he does not me. I was one of his fellow sufferers in the Creek Nation. I joined a company that was going before I was eighteen years of age and was with him at the battle of the horse shoe.

Judge Yell will be at home this week I think. There is no doubt but he will write in my behalf if you have no other man in view that you are partial, for it would be taken as a singular favor if you could assist me in the present appointment.

A. WHINRY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This name is variously spelled but it is believed that the spelling given here is correct. Whinnery's signature is so slurred that it cannot be trusted as a correct spelling.

2. Yell won over William Cummins by a wide margin, but the exact figures have not been found.

3. Conway defeated Absalom Fowler by a comfortable margin. Fowler had at one time been a law partner of William Cummins.

4. Ambrose H. Sevier and William S. Fulton were overwhelmingly elected by the pro-Jackson legislature.

5. William M. Ball was appointed register in 1832. He had been charged with perpetrating certain frauds in this office but his election to the legislature seems to indicate that these frauds were never proven.

FROM RICHARD WARNER

Fishing Ford, Tennessee. August 18, 1836

Warner expects a large crowd to be present at Farmington, when a volunteer company will be mustered into service and then discharged.¹ He thinks that it would be good for both Polk and his party if he could be present on this occasion.

Addressed to Nashville and hand-delivered by Ephraim Hunter.

1. The governor had called up the volunteers only to have his order countermanded by the President.

FROM SUTHERLAND S. SOUTHWORTH¹

Boston. August 19, 1836

Southworth has heard that his name has been mentioned as a possible editor of the *Nashville Union*. He asks Polk to act in his behalf if this position has not already been filled. If the editorship is no longer available Southworth wishes to become the Washington correspondent of the *Union*.²

Addressed to Nashville and forwarded to Columbia.

1. A free-lance writer of Providence, Rhode Island, Southworth served at various times as correspondent of the *Baltimore Sun*, *Philadelphia Inquirer and Courier*, *Boston Courier*, *New York Aurora*, and the *Nashville Union*. In 1862 he was editor of the *New York Gazette*.

2. See Southworth to Polk, September 5, 1836.

FROM JOHN P. KING

My Dear Sir Jasper [Tennessee] August 21, 1836'

The continual rains detained me longer at Centerville than I anticipated or wished and my late arrival at and early departure from Columbia deprived me the pleasure of seeing yourself & M[a]dam on my return.² My principal object is to ap-pollogize for this omission.

On my way here I passed through some of the most populous parts of Tennessee and was gratified to see the changes that are going on. An intelligent man, an old acquaintance on Duck River, and not long since a warm White man informed me that *he* and his neibors had recently changed almost to a man. This he thought they might consistently, and honorably do as he said they had been decived by the Judge & his friends who had professed to support this administration, & told them that White was to be supported by *his* old political friend. Whereas he said they had borne til fall, this mask and the people were now plainly informed by their representative (J. K. Polk who had never decived them), that Judge White had changed his principles and that those who sustained him were entirely in opposition to the President and his measures. He thought they had not only forfeited all confidence but should be punished for their duplicity. I mention this mans sentiments as only a specimen of what seems now a very common sentiment among the people of middle Tennessee. *Here* also in this Valley³ where they were almost unanimous when I was here last summer, they are now much divided, and if the election could be delayed 6 months I do not believe the election would be at all doubtful. The truth is the canvass is now beginning to rest on its proper basis and little time could be required to enable every Tennessean to vote understandingly on the subject. I have still a great respect for the old man but no true friend of his can but regret some weaknesses he has shown, and that he should suffer himself to be made a mere tool of by those who have (or have had) no sympathies with him.

I shall leave here in the morning and shall make a slow

tour through Georgia home. My accounts are favorable from there but I shall have a better opportunity of learning when I pass through the state. I cannot think the danger of losing the state very great but would rather trust the judgement of some others on such a subject than my own.

If in your political rambles you meet with Johnson give my best respects to that faithful sentinel who I have been in the habit of considering one of the most useful members in Congress. Give my best respects to Madam. . . .

J. P. KING

Say to Johnson I would have written him but have forgotten his address. K.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. At the Library of Congress this date was misread and the letter placed in 1830. Contents of the letter, however, make it quite clear that it was written in 1836.

2. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, August 9, 1836.

3. This letter was posted at Jasper, the county seat of Marion County. The town is in the Sequatchie Valley.

FROM MEDICUS A. LONG

Dear Col.

Woodbury [Tennessee]¹ Aug 21 1836

You are, no doubt, aware that I have quit the Union, a broken merchant, and commenced *lawing* in this quarter.² The object, however, of this communication is to let you into a *little* secret. Some zealous *Vanites* in Athens, E. Ten.³ have established a press in that town, intended to throw some light on the White cause in that end of the state, between this time and Christmas. Yesterday I received a fee for carrying on this [seat?], which I shall not do in my own name. Tomorrow I shall go up there, and shall send you the first No. You must, with out naming me, have the Democrat sent to the "Athens Republican." I still pretend to be attending to law business, and indeed have a fee or two, and shall edit *incog*. Now, the argument is this: I want you and Nicholson to help revolutionize E. Ten. The paper will only be printed for 4 months, at \$1. and with or without subscribers, will be sent all over East Tennessee. The case is special and exceedingly urgent. In God's

name let us "do the thing nicely." Write to me at Athens immediately. There are not 100 Van papers taken in all the 21 east counties. The people want light, and with the help of God they shall have it. The plan is evidently good, if we can give the proper developements in the proper manner. "Come up to the help of the *cause*, against the Mighty." You are the only living soul that I have or intend to communicate *my* participation in this enterprize to. But as old Hickory would say, "By the Eternal God" the truth must be told to the people of East Tennessee. The paper will be sent every where. Let us give them all the facts.

M. A. LONG

P.S. As the "Athens Republican" is to be *peddled* about in every nook and corner, and will be elegantly printed, I think some of the friends in Middle Tennessee would do well to send particular documents occasionally and assist in the expense of circulating them. I have no interest in that matter further than another friend to the cause. I intend to spend fifty dollars myself and expect to die none the poorer on that account. Talk to your friends on the subject but do not mention my name. If you should be reluctant to correspond with the publisher, you can do so through me, without any human beings knowing any thing of it.

LONG

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. Woodbury, formerly Danville, was the county seat of newly created Cannon County. The letter bears the Danville post mark only because the post office officials had not had time to make the name change.

2. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, August 3, 1836.

3. Athens is the county seat of McMinn County. It was here that J. W. M. Breazeale published a newspaper, and it seems that his paper and that of Long were being published simultaneously.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

My Dear Friend, Sir

Waxhaws [Arkansas]

August the 23rd 1836

I Received you letter written from Washington only a few days since on my return from a small tour [tour] to the south

of Arkinsis seeing the sovereigns & bying [. . .]. I have made no further entries for you since I wrote you last and now have in my hand about \$1000 which I design to locate near the Missi. River or as near as I can get it expressly for your [. . .]. Your other Entries are above the Rock [Little Rock] & on the Rivr & first rate locations. In a few weeks my Agent will go below & make selections. I can make your Entris with the Money I have or I can precure the Gold at the Garison (Gibson)¹ without any difficulty. I can precure Gold or Silvr to any amount I may wish them. I shall draw on Dr. Hays for R. H. Rices² money as soon as I can find a chance to sell. Tell the Doct. I have as yet made no location for Him but will do so soon as my Agent goes below in the Helena District. Its impossible to precure an agnt on whom we can trust to travel the swamps before the 1st of Sept. He is now engaged above the Rock but will Return. I was sorry to see Jams Walker declind having any locations above the Rock for speculations thereabout. Locations in the county can now be made in that region tho for a cotton farm I should greatly prefer below the Rock & on the Missi Rivr. I shall take greater pains to select you & Dr. Hays as good places as can be made in the County. Please say to Dr. Hays I shall draw for the Rice money shortly. I am sorry I have not the money now. I could use it to advantg. You have seen I presume before this that I have been elected to Congress and by a decided majority, somthing over 3500. Our total Jackson & Van Tickett succeeded. We shall have a large and ovrwhelming majority in the Legislature. We will elect to the U.S. Senate *Sevier* [and] probably Govr. Fulton, both of the right politicks. I suppose you will not need my vote during this Session of Congress and I may not have the good fortune to be in the Next. Indeed I shall be content to quit publice life at the end of the old Chiefs term, if the Senate will ony pass Bentons *Expunging* Resolution. Should you see the old *Man* please present him my best wishes. To Him & *yourself*, I am more indebted for the situation I now occupy than to all the world besids, and I hope I shall nevr be so ungrateful as to forget it.

I will send you a N. paper containg the election Complete so soon as the Returns are all in & Complete. You will see sevrel of your old frind in the Legislature to wit Jo McKean, Col

Whinry, Williamson³ (from Lebanon) &c. You need have no fears of Ark. in the Presidntial Election. We will carry the state by 4 or 5000 majority.

I have a hope that you will be provided for in the Cabanet under Mr. Van Burin if you desire it. You or Grundy *should be in the Cabanet* but I presum that mattr is undertood among our frinds.

Be so good as to present me to Mrs Polk & say that I am still her frnd & will be hapy to see her at Wasngton this winter, that I will do myself the pleasure to introduce her to Madam Yell who has [. . .] Consented to go to Washington as she thnks its quite likely it may be the last time she may have the oppetunity. I flatter myself the object, or one of them at least, has been in some degree effected by my settlmt in Arkinses. My Appontmt as Judge was in the right section of the Territoy for effect. They vote very nearly half the seates in the State & [. . .].⁴ This election we [. . .] almost any county is my circuit not more than [. . .] out of about 25 and my opponent Col. Cummins [. . .] but 400 votes out of 3000 or upwards. We have things here just as we wish them & by proper Care & management we can keep them so.

I was not anxious to run for Congress this election. The only office I desired (Govr) I was inelegeable under the Constitution which required 4 years residence. Should I be so fortunate as to sustain myself with the people its not unlikely that I may be the next Govr if I should then desire it, but its too far ahead pehaps to be making calculations.

Since I wrote you last I have been married to Madam Frickln.⁵ She is as you might suppose very much to my liking with the single exception that she has more prudence & less ambition than myself as she is very much opposed to my embarking in politicks. My judgment of [. . .] her views, but my ambition or aspiration [. . .] came in conflict with her wishes and as Ladies [. . .] Govern their husbands I think it quite likely I shall return after this session to private life. If I do you will say that I am a Philosopher at least.

Write me on the recept of this. I shall not get off before about the 1st of Novr.

YELL

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Fort Gibson, earlier called Cantonment Gibson, was located in what is today northeastern Oklahoma, near the point where the Grand or Neosho River flows into the Arkansas.

2. Unidentified. The name may have been Rivers.

3. Joseph W. McKean, Abraham Whinnery, and John Williamson had all previously served in the territorial legislature. This is probably the John Williamson listed on the 1830 census as a resident of Wilson County, Tennessee, between 40 and 50 years old.

4. The ellipses here and in a paragraph below result from flaking around double folds.

5. His second wife, Nancy Moore Yell, had died the previous October. The new wife was the former Maria McIlvane of Missouri, who was of a prominent family. She was a widow, her first husband, Fricklin, having died some time before the death of Yell's wife.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

New Haven, Connecticut. August 24, 1836

Samuel W. Polk has passed his examinations and is spending a part of his vacation at West Point. Olmsted asks that Polk forward two hundred dollars to cover his brother's bills that will be due in October.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM BOLING GORDON

Columbia. August 26, 1836

Having failed to see Polk at Columbia, Gordon urges him to be present at the public rally at Centerville on September 1. He invites Polk and his party to dine with him on the day preceding the rally.

Addressed to Columbia and delivered by hand.

TO JAMES M. HOWRY ET AL.

Gentlemen

Columbia August 27th 1836

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 15th Instant, inviting me in behalf of the "Democracy of Hickman County" to be present "at a public entertainment to be given

to your Representative in Congress, the Hon Cave Johnson, on Thursday the first day of September next."

Having for many years been intimately associated with Mr Johnson in Congress, and having witnessed his uniformly consistent public course, it will afford me sincere pleasure to be present on an occasion when his enlightened and patriotic constituents of the County of Hickman, shall be assembled to do him honor, and to bear my testimony with theirs, to the faithful, vigilant and able manner in which he has discharged all his public duties.

I cannot Gentlemen, convey to you in adequate terms the deep sense of gratitude with which I am impressed and the high gratification which I feel at the flattering expression which you have been pleased to give of the opinions which you entertain of my public career and especially "while I was in the discharge of the high duties which devolved upon me of presiding officer of the House of Representatives." From the moment I was called by the Representatives of the nation to that high station, some of those differing with me politically seem to have singled me out as the peculiar object of attack and a fit victim, in the public estimation & especially in my own state, which, it was fondly hoped, through the instrumentality of a venal press they had prepared, for the sacrifice.² With the motives and objects, which may have incited the "wanton and unprovoked" violence, with which I have for the last few months been assailed, I have not, as it does not become me to have anything to do.

An intelligent and just public will duly appreciate them, and to the unerring judgment of an enlightened public opinion I shall ever yield a ready acquiescence.

If my "destruction has been meditated" because I have pursued principle, and lent my humble aid to prevent a "dismemberment of the Republican party," I have an ample assurance, in the kind expression of sentiment and opinions from numerous bodies of my fellow citizens, my immediate constituents and others, such as you have been pleased to give, voluntarily tendered since my return to the State, that it has not been accomplished.

I have been too long in public life, now to abandon either

my political principles or my political associations, and suffer myself to be transposed into a false position, or placed in the ranks of my former political adversaries, making common cause with them, in waging a proscriptive and relentless political warfare against my old political friends whose principles I approve, and with whom I have so long acted.

I return to you Gentlemen, and through you to my fellow citizens of the County of Hickman, whom you represent, my sincere acknowledgments, for this unexpected mark of confidence & regard, and beg to assure you & them, that it will afford me unfeigned pleasure to unite with you at your entertainment on the 1st of September.³

JAMES K. POLK

This letter is marked "Copy" and presumably was addressed to Centerville, Tennessee. Actually, this is a draft of the letter that was sent.

1. This letter, summarized above, has been quoted from throughout this reply. See James M. Howry et al. to Polk, August 15, 1836.

2. The awkwardness of this sentence is perhaps due to the fact that Polk inserted two lines after it had been written.

3. Below his signature Polk listed the committee members: James M. Howry, Samuel Whitson, Pleasant Walker, Samuel B. Moore, Dennis G. Jones, John Philips, Robert Shegog, Garret Lane, and Boling Gordon.

FROM HENRY W. CONNOR

Lincoln County, North Carolina. August 29, 1836

Although final results are yet unknown, Connor reports that Edward Bishop Dudley, a Whig, has been elected governor. The legislature will probably have a small majority of Democrats. Nevertheless, Connor believes that Van Buren will carry the state.

Addressed to Columbia. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 198.

FROM RICHARD WARNER ET AL.

Chapel Hill, Tennessee. August 29, 1836

A committee of citizens of Chapel Hill praise Polk for his labors in Congress and invite him to attend a public dinner to be held in his honor and at his convenience.

Addressed to Columbia.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia Sept. 3rd. 1836

I returned from the *Hickman* dinner last night, where I met [Cave] *Johnson*, [Boling] *Gordon* & Dr. Dewitt,¹ two of our candidates for elector and from six to eight hundred people. I have no hesitation in saying that *Hickman* is the strongest *Van-Buren* County in the State, in proportion to its number of voters. We have most cheering accounts from the District. [James R.] *McMeans* the former senator from Henry whom I saw, thinks that we have now a decided majority in the Northern part of the District, and changes are daily taking place. I am fully satisfied of the importance of the suggestion which I made to you at my house. Have you yet written to Dr. [William E.] *Butler* at Jackson? Grundy should be in motion in *Rutherford*, *Smith*, and in that quarter of the State. The ball is now in motion, and all that is now necessary, is a vigorous & bold effort on our part. Our opponents have made it a war of extermination & we must meet them. They are to be today I understand in *Williamson*, on Monday in *Robertson*, and though they are in a fearful minority here, they are I learn to pay us a visit in old *Maury* on the 20th to correct our people from the error of their way, and indoctrinate them in the principles of *White Whiggery*. Let them come. We will give a good account of ourselves. I go tomorrow to *Bedford*, and will probably be in *Giles* & *Lincoln* shortly. Will you see *Grundy* and urge him to move out. There can be no difficulty in having suitable occasions upon which he can address the people and convey to them the truth. What is [Robert M.] *Burton* about?

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I was both mortified and distressed upon my return home, last night to learn, that the Stage agent did not go on from this place with his full team with the President's carriage. *He* had engaged to do so, and I had no doubt would. Say to the President that it is attributable to the [penuriousness?] of the agent in the absence of Mr *Walker* altogether, and it is exceedingly regretted. I fear he did not get on so well with the horses which were sent.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Confidential." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Both Boling Gordon and Dr. Washington J. DeWitt were chosen as electors. DeWitt was a practicing physician in Paris, where he was a man of prominence in civic and political affairs. Later he moved to Texas.

FROM RANSOM H. GILLET

Ogdensburgh, New York. September 4, 1836

Gillet asks that in the event Democratic papers in Tennessee want to reprint his speech attacking John Bell, they correct the minor errors that appeared in the version published in the *Globe*.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. In the Washington *Globe* of August 27, 1836, appeared a long speech made by Gillet in the House of Representatives on June 24, 1836. The speech was in reply to one delivered by John Bell which had been harshly critical of Jackson, Polk, and certain committees of the House.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My Dr Sir:

Nashville 6 Sept [1836]¹

In answer to your two letters I hardly know what to reply. Such are our friend L[oughlin]'s habits that his paper is likely to cease every month in the year. About the first of July he came to me and said he must have \$500. I had it furnished, as I did small sums afterwards. Then our frds came to me & said he was drinking and the paper would instantly (next number) cease to be published unless edited by some one & no person to do any thing could be found. I excused myself as being inexperienced wholly with such duties; nor did it suit my age of life or standing to squabble with Mr. [Allen A.] Hall & Shad. Nye,² who would know every act from the printers done in the office, they being late transplants fr[om] the Banner & Rep. If the regular editor were there it wd. be different. Furthermore, I had left the Bench with property, but no money & must make my expenses by my profession. Next day I was again assured the paper wd. not appear unless I give my aid. To prevent this, I did so & from one number to another, for nearly a month. Thus it got along until Mr. L. went to Maury. Since, I have

furnished the matter editorial principally & am looked to to an extent that baffles my own philosophy. Why it is thus! Editorial aid & *special* aid the Union *must* have even to command money; confidence is lost in its conduct. The weekly paper requires a constant editor, and financial management to command anything. I know too little of our frd's affairs to talk to him plainly and am too much engaged in the courts to act *alone* & find no one here offering to act with me. Under the present aspect of affairs, I will not involve your means, whatever I may do with my own.

Mr. Grundy goes to the District in three days from this & of course no dinner arrangements can be made at this time.

The Bell dinners will open the eyes of the people to the attitude the White party have assumed much better than anything we can do, and will only want exposure, which ought to be done by our Electors. You'll see the ticket is now full, by the Union of today.

The defence of our Presdts toast at Nashville & the Bedford letter, you'll see in the this day's paper, & the next in an indirect form. Mr. Laughlin is sober, & will no doubt efficiently aid.

Of one thing I am certain—that a Strong impression is now making on the public mind that Judge White's prospects are hopeless, and that Tennessee is being transferred, and becoming an opposition State, & the Judge used to this end.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The year has been supplied correctly by the Library of Congress.
2. In 1834 Shadrack Nye, long a resident of Sumner County, had bought out the Nashville *Republican*, of which Washington Barrow was editor. When Barrow left the paper Nye carried on for a while virtually alone. Hall, meanwhile, was editor of the other antiadministration paper, *National Banner*. In 1837 Hall bought out the *Banner* and with Nye merged the two opposition papers into one, the Nashville *Republican Banner*.

FROM W. BOWLING GUION

My dear Sir:

Nashville 7th Septmb. 1836

I found, on my return here from Columbia, that the President did not intend to leave the Hermitage for Washington un-

till the 10 or 11th prox. & to my regret, that I might have spent one or two days with you without inconvenience or injury to my cause.

I receiv'd your letters & I need hardly assure you I retain a grateful sense of your kindness. I found the President quite unwell, suffering from a chill & fever, & surrounded by a crowd of visiters, several of whom were on business. I therefore did not press my business upon him but merely presented my papers to him, which he promised to attend to, so soon as the vacancy should occur. Mrs. Donelson, I was sorry to learn was very ill having had a hemmorrhage of the lungs.¹

I beg you to present me in the kindest manner to Mrs. Polk. . . .

W. BOWLING GUION

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Emily Donelson, wife of Andrew Jackson Donelson, never fully recovered her health and died during December 1836.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir, Philadelphia, Sept. 7, 1836

I reached here on yesterday on my way to Washington, where I intended to have been tonight but meeting with Mr. Kinkle he informed me that Mr. Kendall had not yet returned and was not expected for a few days. I have concluded to spend two or three days here as the most agreeable place. I parted with the boys yesterday morning at New York—the two Samuels were along.¹ They were bound up the North river to West Point, and Knox was going up to Catskill. They are on an excursion for recreation and amusement and I hope improvement. I found them at some loss how to put in the time of their long vacation and advised the excursion. It will not cost more than \$20 each more than to have remained at New Haven in idleness, and possibly in the construction of bad habits. I hope Dr. Caldwell will not think I have advised his son into any unnecessary expenditure. I advised my own boys, as I thought for their pleasure and advantage, and the Dr's instruction is that

his son may do what Knox does, and if he does, Sam. P. will be quite a spruce young gentleman, living at the rates of about \$500 a year. I am much pleased with New Haven and the improvement of our boys. I think it is very marked. The *standard* in every respect seems to be very high at New Haven, and the City must be a delightful and healthy residence. The expenses are indeed heavy, but I hope the advantages will be found worth the money.

It is plain that the *Bank Whigs* are making a most powerful, and united effort to accomplish the defeat of the Republicans, and to elect *Harrison*. Harrison & Granger are their men, and no effort or money is to be spared to accomplish their objects, which are in the main, the rechartering the U.S. Bank, and fixing upon the country a regularly organized Aristocracy. I now think there is more danger of their succeeding than I had apprehended. Three or four to one of the papers seem to be in their service. The Cities are Whig by large majorities. The late Treasury order, though I think it wise for the country, is not likely to operate favorably to our political party at the present moment. The present rate of exchange & discount on Southern & Western paper is a powerful argument in favor of the utility of the U.S. Bank, and the Bank men are using it with great industry. There is as great an effort now making to derange the currency exchange and lay all the blame on the administration, as during the panic session, and all for the same object—the *restoration of the U.S. Bank*. You may depend upon it, the U.S. Bank is yet in the fight, backed by all the aristocratic feeling of the country. It is now boldly asserted by Whig politicians that men who handle the plough are too ignorant to participate in the government; that they are the dupes of demagogues, and the government ought to be in the hands of the more intelligent & virtuous. I suppose the rich Bank Aristocracy is what is meant.

The Whigs do not disguise their plan of operations. Harrison is the man fixed upon for President and the abolitionist Granger for Vice President. The Election is to be taken to the House, where Biddle is to purchase the Presidency and put the government under the dominion of the Bank. White is to be used in the South & South West and Webster in the East, and White,

Bell & co. are probably to be rewarded with the high places in the government, for their apostacy to principles formerly *professed*. To aid in this unholy scheme Tennessee is certainly calculated on; Republican Tennessee is confidently relied upon to prostrate and put down the equal rights of the people and to build up an aristocracy, and it is a melancholy reflection to think that the calculation is not without considerable chances of being realised. If the enlightened people of Tennessee can be persuaded by such traitors as White & Bell, to become the passive instruments of the Northern Federalists, to elevate such a man as Harrison to the Presidency, (under the belief of sustaining White) then it will seem too true as the Whigs say, that the common people who handle the plough, are too ignorant for self government. They will deserve the yoke that is preparing for them with so much care and assiduity. The South Western States are relied upon with great certainty to make Harrison & Granger, the Federal Bank & Abolition candidates, President & Vice President. Do the people of these states, mean this. Does even such men as P. R. Booker &c. mean this. It certainly cannot be. And yet they cannot open a Northern Whig paper without seeing that our people are fully calculated upon as the Dupes, incapable of self government; the instruments of the wily Federalists of the North to bring about their new dynasty.

I think great exertions ought to be made by real Republicans to preserve our principles and our institutions. The people ought to be informed what is going on. Every exertion must be made to preserve the honor and interest of Tennessee at least, and if with all the warning which can be given, our people choose to become the vile slaves & instruments of the aristocracy and the victims of Some apostates, if must be so, it will not have been for want of faithful warning. I think every Republican in Tennessee ought to set to work to do all in his power to give the people information of what is going on. If they are true to themselves, all is safe.

I almost fear you will think my intellects are in danger for what I have written. The signs of the times will relieve me of such an apprehension. There is danger and great exertions are necessary.

The North Carolina elections are discouraging. The Whigs are much encouraged by the result, and now put down the South Western States as all for them, and are full of hope of getting the election into the House. I think some stirring and arousing articles ought to be written for the Democrat & Union & circulated all over the State. Our political friends ought to contribute funds to effect this, and if our people will suffer themselves to be deceived, and become the ridicule and sport of Northern Federalists let it not be for want of faithful warning.

I can very well live among the Aristocracy—could perhaps play the Aristocrat as well as another, but I have posterity, and if equal rights and equal privileges and opportunities does not descend to them it shall be no fault of mine. Be sure to attend to the Democrat, and try to arouse Andrew. It will be of service to his health to have him excited.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. James Walker's two sons, James and Knox, were students at Yale. Samuel W. Polk was also a student at Yale, while Samuel Polk Caldwell was in residence at New Haven, working to achieve entrance at Yale.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Sept. 8, 1836

The great Bell dinner in this county is over, and I cannot hear of a single convert made at it. Some few White men, moderate men and friends of Gen. Jackson as well as White, became disgusted at the slanders and abuse of the speakers, especially [Balie] Peyton, and have renounced the cause. I learn this from [Enoch] Ensley, one of the most influential and prudent of our friends in the southern part of the county.

Bell in his speech abused Mr. Grundy, you, and myself, dealing however with great moderation as to yourself. Peyton abused every body without stint, in the most rude and vulgar terms; the President, Vice President, yourself &c. Of Mr. Grundy he said he would as soon expect to find female virtue in a whorehouse in Seniff^a as to find political virtue in him. He

abused Judge [George W.] Campbell rudely and vulgarly, and assailed you in the terms of a blackguard and bully. This you must regard not—adhere to your resolution of having no controversy except with the *principal*.

I have heard from the Lebanon Bell dinner. It is said that Bell and Peyton both “outdid their former outdoings” in abuse of the President and his friends. This dinner is said to have been numerously attended; they say by six or seven thousand. This is not true. Fifteen hundred was the full number who attended the dinner in this county—at Lebanon it could not have been greatly more.

I am out on White’s toast sent to the dinner here, as you will see by tomorrow’s Union.² Tomorrow I give at length your reception of the President to the exclusion of many other good things. You will see that we have laid the Whigs out, Ashley and all, in Missouri. That is good. I have got hopes of North Carolina.

I must not forget to inform you that Bell and Peyton produced at [*sic*] read at their dinner on Mill Creek, what purported to be a letter from Richard M. Johnson to Bell, denying that Bell had ever written to him such a letter as Blair’s publication and Pew’s certificate imputes to him.³ This matter must be stirred. I will republish the Globe’s charge and Pew’s certificate, and call on those who defend Bell to publish this letter from Johnson. There is some fraud in the matter, or else Johnson is a dupe or dishonest man. I fear Bell may have cheated him out of some kind of certificate in the form of a letter last winter. If so, it is a letter written for use, containing the truth as *far as it goes*, but creating a false impression from not stating the *whole truth*. If Johnson suffers us to be played foul by this faction, who are daily publishing his *blackened* shame to the world, he will be unworthy of the confidence we have reposed in him. Cannot you get the truth from him: if you cannot, I think Mr. Cave Johnson can.⁴ What say you.

Mr. Grundy will go through the District in the next two or three weeks, where Dewit and Terrell by preceding him, are to make the necessary arrangements to afford him opportunities for *speaking to the people*. Good.

Although I am in hell about money, and sinking my credit

and means for paper to circulate three thousand Union's weekly, not one cent of which the office pays, yet no more has been made to help me. I only want to borrow and be personally bound in goods and limb, but this I cannot do without endorsers, and therefore as I cannot run after men and beg them to endorse, I am to have no help I suppose. Dr. [William M.] Gwin is now here. He is rich and whole-sould. I shall try, if nothing else offers, to sell him a family of negros and pay my pressing debts with the proceeds. There are twenty men here with more political and personal interest in the matter than I have, yet they expect me, although they are rich and I poor, to do every thing, and grumble like misers and sore-eared dogs if I do not do every thing they wish, and write and publish, in season and out of season, according to their sage and wise advice. In such times as these, such men are only fit to be damned, as they most infallibly will be some day both in this world and the next.

The President will be here tomorrow. He will return on Saturday to the Hermitage, and on Sunday leave for Mrs. Saunderson's⁵ (a relation) and on Monday remain some time in Gallatin on his way. In the meantime I have not seen Maj. Donelson about the disposition of his claim, but I must; for I must soon know how to steer my final course with regard to final matters here.

I am very well in bodily health; that is, my body is as well as a man's can be whose mind is in a continual hell of anxiety. I have no time to read over, so excuse haste. . . .

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This reference remains obscure. Perhaps the place was Seneffe, a town in Belgium where at least two historic battles were fought.

2. No copy of this issue of the paper has been found.

3. Pew claimed to have seen a letter from Bell to Richard M. Johnson suggesting that the latter become a candidate for the presidency and urging him to come out in favor of the Bank.

4. Cave Johnson and Richard M. Johnson were relatives, but they were never able to ascertain their exact relationship.

5. Mrs. James Saunders, only daughter of General Daniel Smith, was the widow of Samuel Donelson. Andrew Jackson Donelson was her son. She lived near Hendersonville in Sumner County.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir

Clarksville Sept 9th [1836]¹

Our friends have determined to give us a big dinner at Springfield on the 1st of October, to which you will be of course invited, and I hope you will find it convenient to attend. I suppose Grundy & Hise² will be there. I was at Springfield on Monday last. The White Dinner was had near town—I suppose 400 or 500 were there. Wm. E. Anderson was present & was the *star*. Bell & Peyton were absent. Speeches were made by Anderson, [Richard] Cheatham, [William K.] Turner, Rivers³ & [Gustavus A.] Henry. I learn a consultation was holden as to the individual who should be my opponent, and its consideration was postponed until after the Presidential election. The result will determine the opponent. If White gets a majority of my district Cheatham or Henry will be the man, as the strongest. If not, all hope will be lost of beating me & Allen⁴ will be run by way of harrassing me; I have thought it prudent to give no intimation of my determination to quit as I might be like *J. Blair*⁵ & repent before the time, but I am strongly inclined to go to Mississippi this fall to resume my profession. It would be greatly to my advantage. I shall however fight this battle through as I have got into it. I expect Van Buren will get near 1000 majority in my district unless I have been mis-informed as to Humphreys, Benton & Stewart. I shall visit them soon. They are getting up a large Barbecue for me at Dover and will probably do so in Dickson. We shall have much excitement in Robertson. I have my speech drawn up and am still hesitating as to the propriety of publishing it. The Iron men are for the Bank and Tariff & have heretofore always opposed. Renewing the discussion upon those subjects might draw them off and I could not well omit them.

Anderson abused Laughlin outrageously, and lied without stint agt. Van Buren, if I have heard his speech properly reported. Tomorrow I go to a Barbecue given me about 14 miles above this; next Thursday attend the Genl Muster in Robertson, & tomorrow week attend another Barbecue at Cheap Hill⁶

near the mouth of Harpeth, & then I go to Stewart, so I shall be fully occupied. Let me hear from you often.

C. JOHNSON

Remember me with my respects to Mrs P and tell her I have no time to attend upon my widdows here and I of course give up all hope.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The year has been supplied on the basis of the content of the letter.
2. Formerly of Russellville, Kentucky, Joseph Hise was at this time making his reputation as a lawyer. Later he moved to New Orleans, dying soon thereafter.
3. This is probably Robert J. Rivers, a Clarksville lawyer who later moved to Texas.
4. Nathaniel H. Allen was a talented criminal lawyer in Clarksville.
5. John Blair of Jonesboro had recently failed of re-election to Congress after having served six successive terms.
6. Cheap Hill was a village due north of the mouth of the Harpeth River and a short distance from the Cumberland River. At this time it was in Montgomery County but later was incorporated into Cheatham County.

FROM JACOB GREER

Dear Sir

Bedford County 10 Sept. [1836]¹

I confess my astonishment was great when I heard your argument on Monday² in favor of Mr. Van Buren; the burden of it appeared to be to persuade the friends of Gen. Jackson and Judge White, to desert the latter Gentleman, and vote at the approaching presidential election for Mr. Van Buren, who you seem to consider the Strong man. How would this same honest patriotic people that you addressed on the occasion alluded to, have taken it in 1824, if any man had come among them in order to deter them from voting for their beloved Jackson by telling them that they ought to vote for Mr. Crawford the Caucus Candidate, because we could not elect our favorite Jackson. We would modestly have told such an one, as thousands did, myself among them, that if we could possibly know that Jackson would get no other votes in the Union he should have ours. Upon the identical same principles do we now stand in regard

to our republican fellow citizen Judge White, and, the Ned Rucker Caucus Candidate. And here permit me to make one remark in relation to Judge Whites vote against the nomination of Andrew Stevenson as minister to England. I have made it in private conversation. Stevenson stood previous to that transaction in my estimation as high as any man in the republican ranks; and I faulted him not for his becoming president of that convention, nor for his attachment to the Vice President. But for his sanctioning with the weight of his great name, the farce of calling on the Clergy of the City of Baltimore to open the Convention by prayer, daily, and then Sign his name to the proceedings of said Convention with Ruckers 15 votes cast for the State of Tennessee. I have repeatedly said no honest man ought to have voted for Stevenson, after his being guilty of such conduct. Of course as my opinion had been formed and often expressed, I did not as some others blame White for his vote.

Your belittling Allen A. Hall Esqr Editor of the Banner and Whig surprised me very much. I am not in the habit of reading that paper, and I have seen but very few extracts from it since Mr. Hall became its Editor, but one thing I well remember, altho it may possibly be forgotten by his enemies; this same A. A. Hall in the darkest hours of Gen Jacksons prospects in 1823 & 4 battled as hard for Jackson and as honestly as any other man in Tennessee. The Editor of the Republican³ you also jolted hard as you passed on. I have often examined the article you alluded to and cannot see those faults you point out. Perhaps those faults never would have appeared if Judge Whites name had not come in contact with Mr. Van Buren's for the presidency.

I view these matters in the same light I always have done as a Juror in a court of Justice, with due deference, paying all proper respects to the arguments of the lawyers on both sides of the question, yet forming my verdict on the evidence which is often circumstantial. The strange alteration that has taken place among men, if not measures, in the last 12 or 14 years, induces me in a friendly way to propound a few interrogetories to you. Why is it that the Editor of the Albany Argus who in 1823 & 4 was so smart that he had not respect enough for Gen Jackson, to call him Gen. but by way of derision says *Mr. Jack-*

son has no chance to be elected, should now be the organ of the administration in the great State of New York. Why is it that such men as Amos Kendall, Mr. [Thomas] Ritchie, and Col Benton with those who are devoted to them, should now be the only true friends of Gen Jackson, when the time can be well remembered, that Kendall said he would rather see Aaron Burr president of the United States than Andrew Jackson; that Ritchie, that old political sinner, proclaimed that his election would prove a curse to the country; and Col. Benton considered himself literally in hell, while he was compelled to live where he could see Gen Jackson; and his actual friends that went the whole hog for him in 1824, has stuck to him ever since approving every act of his administration up to the present time, should be denounced as antiJackson and antiRepublican because we prefer the honest patriot Hugh L White to Martin Van Buren, who has been as strongly opposed to the president of our choice, as either of the Gentlemen before named. I know many, very many of the honest yeomanry of the country, who are too intelligent to be deceived in this matter, and I know them to have been, and still are, the personal and political friends to Jackson and will go their whole strength for White at the election on the 8th Novr. next, from the same principles they did for Jackson in 1824, and they are as confident of the success of the cause of White, and the people now, as they then were of the Success of Jackson and this Same honest people.

Dont think my dear Sir that I gather these thoughts from the excited press in our country at this time. No, I have often expressed such thoughts before, and I seldom forget any thing I read no matter how great the lapse of time. One other enquiry and I am done for the present. Why did not the president appoint Wm. Gilchrist, of Shelbyville, instead of Afred Balch of Nashville, who was notoriously opposed to the election of Jackson at all times.⁴ I personally know nothing of Balch; Gilchrist I do know has always voted for Andrew Jackson. These things appear strange to me and if you can in a friendly manner explain them I shall be much gratified.

I assure you that my friendship for you personally is undiminished and I hope it will ever remain so. I am no aspirant to office, nor never shall be. I was satisfied by the trial I made in

1833, at the request of a number of my friends to test the question, whether a man could be elected without going among the people to electioneer.⁵ I quietly acquiesced with the decision on that occasion, and determined not to meddle with politics any more, only so far as it was the duty of a free private citizen. Last spring at the election for County officers, my neighbor would have my name as a candidate for a Justice of the Peace, and I obtained the unanimous vote of the district. Lately my name has been drawn into the Newspapers, in the interest of Mr Van Buren, for the purpose of injuring me in the estimation of my fellow citizens, by a person who was greatly indebted to me for his election; and I gave him the best possible hint when I asked him to resign, for if I held any office whatever and had deserted the principles on which I was elected, I would resign without being asked. I have no hesitation in believing that two thirds of the men that voted for him is now against his course. Squire [Thomas] Dean is the man alluded to, who has been long my neighbor, my personal, and political friend; also a native of South Carolina as well as myself. My own creed since I became a voter has been to vote as I please, and let all others do so too; this I conceive to be the true republican doctrine. I have through your kindness recd. and filed away all the presidents annual messages for the use of my only son, who was named Jackson Monroe. He can now read the messages. Please continue the favor.

JACOB GREER

Addressed to Columbia. Greer later sent Polk a copy of this letter. See Greer to Polk, the end of December 1836.

1. The original of this letter was so smeared that only the month and day are legible. The copy which Greer later sent to Polk, however, clearly bore the date September 10, 1836.

2. In 1836, September 5 fell on Monday. Polk probably made a speech on this date in Shelbyville or elsewhere in Bedford County.

3. Washington Barrow.

4. Balch favored the election of Crawford in 1824. After the election Balch became the most prominent booster of Martin Van Buren in Tennessee. In his later years, Balch seemed to mellow in his attitude toward Jackson.

5. In 1833, Greer ran for the legislature, but he refused to campaign and suffered a resounding defeat.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Nashville. September 11, 1836

Grundy is about to leave for the western part of the state and will be accompanied by Cave Johnson. Henry W. Connor has written that Van Buren will win North Carolina.

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

FROM GEORGE GAMMON

Mount Pleasant S[ullivan] Cty

Dear Sir,

Sept 12th 1836

Our election for member to the legislature to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Mr [John] Netherland has terminated in the defeat of Capt. Fain,¹ the White candidate, in favour Doct. Dulany,² V.B. by more than two to one! Had there been a general turn out the majority would have been overwhelming. Old Sullivan is sound to the core. Every exertion was made by the White party in order to make an impression abroad, but we are determined to contend to the very last for the vote of Tennessee. Our cause is daily acquiring strenth in this end of the State. All we want is for some men to discuss the subject and the people are wright, in which we are diferent. Our candidates for Electors fails in that particular. I know we have men in Middle Tennessee that will do there duty, on whose talents & firmness with our feeble aid we rely to save Republican Tennessee from being deceived & thrown into the army of the Opposition, for that is what is intended. Do send Gov. Caroll through East Tennessee to address the people. He is a powerful man before the people and his speeches would have a powerful effect.

Write me on the receipt of this. Let me know how the good cause is growing &c &c. and except my sincere adknowledgements for past favours, which favours will be remembered and recollected in all time to come, and my best wishes for success happiness & prosperity.

GEO. GAMMON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Thomas Fain Jr. was a nephew of Nicholas Fain, a distinguished political figure of Hawkins County.

2. Elkanah R. Dulaney had a long and distinguished political and medical career in Sullivan County. He served six terms—1817–23, 1825–27, and 1835–39—in the General Assembly. He was an ardent supporter of Van Buren.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Clarksville. September 12, 1836¹

A public dinner is scheduled for October 8 at Springfield and Johnson urges Polk to attend.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This date, assigned tentatively by the Library of Congress, is correct.

FROM JAMES McKISICK

Washington County, Arkansas. September 12, 1836

McKisick has recommended Abraham Whinnery for the office of register at the Fayetteville land office.¹ Not aware of this recommendation, Archibald Yell has recommended McKisick for the same place. McKisick stands by his recommendation of Whinnery but becomes an applicant for the post with the understanding that if Whinnery proves to be the leading candidate, McKisick will withdraw. McKisick suspects, however, that the political situation is such that neither he nor Whinnery can get the appointment.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Whinnery to Polk, August 15, 1836.

FROM GEORGE C. CONRAD ET AL.¹

Springfield, Tennessee. September 13, 1836²

In appreciation of the course that Polk has followed in Congress, a committee of citizens of Robertson County invites him to attend a public dinner to be held at Springfield on October 8, 1836.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Conrad was one of the two leading merchants in Robertson County. Other names appearing on the invitation were: John Caulfield, Isaac Dortch, John S. Hutchinson, John C. McCreary, George Murphey, and Willie L. Norfleet.

2. This is an undated letter that was sent to Samuel H. Laughlin for publication in his paper, then forwarded to Polk. It was postmarked September 14, 1836. The Library of Congress assigned the date October 8, but on the envelope Polk noted that he answered the letter on September 29, 1836. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, September 15, 1836.

FROM WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

Dr Sir

Little Harpeth¹ September 15, 1836

You may suppose that I am disposed to intrude upon your sense of discretion or better Judgement but I trust the relation of my standing towards you would be a sufficient apology, and more especially when others of whom I shall hereafter speak should be concerned. I have spent a week in Nashville latterly & I fear a deep scheme is attempted to be laid with a view to your destruction both politically and personally. That there is great excitement between your friends & Jno Bell there is no doubt & perhaps it is feared on the part of your opposers that the crisis is not far distant when a personal combat will be inevitable in some way or other and what will be the attempt to screen the Ex gentleman and [thrust?] some of his instruments between, to wit Bailey the blackguard,² and then you may inquire how is this to be done the answer is at hand. A dinner is to be given to B. Peyton in your county & you are to be invited when he is to come out in a way that you will be bound to notice him. Perhaps it will be said that it will be no party dinner so as to draw you out.

In matters of this kind a man should avoid such attempts to be drawn into a rencounter with the subaltern, always seek higher game though doubtful if the expression will apply here to the principle properly & if caught could it be considered game of any order.

Then I would say if it is to come to this, seek a combat with John the apostate, and if he has used the remark towards you and in your hearing that his friends say he did & of which they are boasting, I understand the call will come from you. When he declines giving satisfaction the hunt will be up if I may be allowed the expression. I would be extremely glad to have an interview with you. I profess to have had some little experience

in such cases but in a word, something should be done before Bailey is driven to screen his master. This information I have from one of your friends in Nashville. If you can come & see me. . . .

W. G. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

1. This is an area along the Little Harpeth River in the northern part of Williamson County. The Harpeth post office was in the southeastern part of the county.

2. There had been uneasiness among Polk's friends for some time lest he be drawn into a duel with Henry A. Wise or Balie Peyton. Indeed, many thought Peyton was making his intemperate attacks with that in view, some of them believing that John Bell was a party to the alleged plan. See James Walker to Polk, March 14, 1836.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Sept. 15, 1836

The letter from Maj. Conrad¹ in pursuance of which the enclosed is published, requested me to send you a copy. You must attend.

I was in Gallatin on Monday night with the President. He left that place on Tuesday morning accompanied by Dr. W. M. Gwin, of Mississippi and Col. C. I. Love for Louisville. Col. Love will go to Louisville & return. Dr. Gwin will go all the way, Maj. Donelson being unable to go on, on account of the illness of Mrs. D. who had a rupture of a blood vessel some ten days ago, of which she is happily recovering rapidly. The Maj. will go on the earliest day he can leave with propriety.

Old Sumner made a glorious turn out. There was no formal dinner, but a procession, military parade of a handsome uniform company, and such a shaking of hands, and warm greeting as has never been seen before in that county. Going to Gallatin, the President passed by Peyton's door, accompanied by at least a thousand of that gentlemen's constituents. It was a proud affair. You will see that I have attacked Bell and the Whities for getting up their Bedford dinner. Damn 'em.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See George C. Conrad et al. to Polk, September 13, 1836, and Polk to George C. Conrad et al., September 29, 1836.

FROM WILLIAM C. DUNLAP

Dear Sir

Bolivar [Tennessee] Sept 17th 1836

There was a meeting in this place to day for the purpose of giving you a Dinner and you will no doubt receive the invitation in a few days after the receipt of this. I wish you to decline accepting it, for the following is some of the reasons I have. Write as strong a letter as you please in defence of yourself from the attacks of your enemies.

Mr Bell & Peyton are to be in Sommerville on the 27th Inst. to a Dinner given them and which I shall not attend if invited. If they make any attack on you and a Dinner is tendered you at that place do as you please about accepting it. I wish in my next canvass to have an opportunity of abusing Bell for coming into my District to dictate to them who to elect to congress as Speaker; his friends are determined to run [Lewis P.] Williamson against me for my vote for Speaker, and they have invited him down to give them some assistance.

I do not want any thing done in my county as I will be charged with it all as the Van men in this county are my personal friends. There will be a large majority in my District for White and they are making a considerable fuss about my voting for you. I shall be able to sustain myself easily if nothing else takes place. I desire to have it in my power to charge Members of Congress of riding out of their Districts making speeches for party purposes, of acting as dictators to the people; and that all the charges made by these Gentlemen against the President were false or they acted different from their professions. They are lavish in their charges of dictation on the part of the President, and then to come into a part of the state where they are unacquainted and make party speeches is so inconsistent that the most ignorant must see their object. The county of Fayette is very nearly equally divided between White and Van Buren but it is not so in any other county in my District. Some say

this county will be nearly divided but it is not so. There will not be one third of the county for Van.

I will try and be at home at the time you expect to be here. Give my respects to Mrs. Polk. My health is almost restored. I have had no spells since I arrived at home.

W. C. DUNLAP

Presumably addressed to Columbia, but no envelope has been found.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Sept. 17, 1836

Dr. Gwin and Col. Love, and two other friends, on the day the President left Gallatin, gave me the enclosed authority to raise the wind.¹ I have applied to no one else and Judge Catron says he wrote you, that he did not like to use *your* name without limitation. Mr. Grundy before he left, told me he would go in with others, and will. I have a friend who will raise the money on the note at moderate interest. I wish to have eight or ten names to it. The man who will raise the money is a personal and political friend, and the whole matter will be private. If you see fit to join in it, do so, and enclose it back to me by mail. I have no doubt Judge Campbell would join in it, but I do not know how to mention it to him. I am and have been left to paddle my own canoe, for I have applied to no one but Catron except to Mr. Grundy, and the persons who made the note. Them I saw at Gallatin, after the President left. Up to this day, I am out, over receipts, about \$900. For the enclosed note, if the makers shall require it, I would be willing to mortgage land. I must effect the negotiation, or be ruined. Dr. Gwin is surprised at the backwardness of our people in assisting a poor devil who has gotten himself into distress by helping the cause beyond his means.

I will keep up the paper and fire, damn 'em. Send back immediately by mail, as Mr. Nicholson will not return for a week.

I understand there is glorious news from Maryland. The *people's candidate* left yesterday morning in rather a private way, but I must refer you to Nicholson and the papers.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

PS. As our enemies pretend to have authority from Col. [Richard M.] Johnson for contradicting Blair's and Pew's account of Bells letters, he ought to be written to. Write to him to know if he will come down to a big Grundy dinner here, if we get one up.

P.S. As Mr. Grundy is away, will you feel authorized to write to Judge Campbell to assist me with his credit for his proportion of my loan. The money I propose to raise, will pay my debts, and carry me independently through the election.²

Addressed to Columbia and delivered by A. O. P. Nicholson.

1. The enclosure was a note signed by William M. Gwin on which Laughlin apparently wished Polk to be a cosigner. See Laughlin to Polk, September 27, 1836.

2. The second postscript was written on the margin of the first page of the letter.

FROM AUSTIN MILLER¹ ET AL.

Bolivar, Tennessee. September 17, 1836

Voicing approval of Polk's diligent service in the House of Representatives, a committee of citizens of Hardeman County invites him to attend a public dinner to be held in his honor and at his convenience.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Miller was a lawyer in Hardeman County and later served two terms in the lower house of the General Assembly.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Hon James K Polk Bolivar T[ennessee] Sept 19, 1836

Dunlap informs me he has intimated to you *not* to accept the invitation of your friends to accept a public dinner at this place. Billy¹ seems to fear it will create excitement here, a thing which the friends of the administration generally do not fear but I suppose his position a little peculiar. He says he intends to decline a participation in the Bell dinner at Sommerville and will *ride* him & Peyton for coming into his district and other distant parts to enlighten the people from *Nashville* & he does not

want you rendered [obnoxious?] to the charge, unless you are attack, as you certainly will be. Then you should accept there. West Humphreys writes me bad will be tendered you at Somerville. Do as you please about it, your friends here would be much pleased to have you accept. Our Circuit Court sits first Monday in October. Spend a day or two in social intercourse with us at all events.

I have just returned from the Eastward. Family and friends well except Mrs McNeal.² The old lady I fear is again attack of fever. My best regards to Mrs Polk.

JNO. H. BILLS

Addressed to Washington.

1. This appears to be a reference to William C. Dunlap, Bills's fellow townsman.

2. Mrs. McNeal was a daughter of Ezekiel Polk and also the mother of Prudence McNeal Bills, the wife of John H. Bills.

FROM ISAAC E. CRARY¹

Marshall, Michigan. September 19, 1836

Crary predicts that because of dissatisfaction over the proposed settlement of the Ohio-Michigan boundary dispute,² the approaching convention will reject statehood. He thinks, however, that prospects are good for reversing the decision of the convention in the fall elections.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Crary was a Democratic lawyer and had served as a member of the 1835 constitutional convention. When Michigan entered the union he was elected as its first member of the House of Representatives. He served 1837-41.

2. Congress offered Michigan compensation in the Upper Peninsula for disputed lands lost to Ohio in the vicinity of Toledo. The convention rejected the scheme but Michigan came into the union quite soon afterwards.

FROM WILLIAM C. DUNLAP

Friend Polk

Sommerville Sept 22nd 1836

I have been here several days and there is much excitement about the Presidential election and your friends here are so very

anxious that you should come here and partake of a public Dinner, that I believe you should do so if you can make it convenient. Write to Johnson to come if you accept of the invitation as the Meeting here to day Resolved to give a dinner to you, Grundy & Johnson. They may want you to go to other places. Do as you please, I do not care, except for my county. There I would prefer there should be none.

W. C. DUNLAP

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM ERWIN J. FRIERSON

Dear Sir

Shelbyville Sept. the 23rd 1836

I promised to let you know of the doings of the White dinners. The same batch which were at Bigbyville arrived here on Wednesday evening in very democratic style, that is, riding in two coaches and four. I had gone up home before they arrived and did not see the reception. There was great tumult during the night, firing cannon, ringing bells &c. In the morning on the top of one of the houses was a flag with a white oak bush on the one side and a polk stock on the other in a falling position, and on the square was a White flag with the American Eagle and Stars in the centre and the representation of a bell at each corner. The assemblage of people was from fifteen hundred to two thousand but I recognized among them a very considerable number of our friends, who almost all when they left the ground had old *Scratch* raised in them. The proceedings of the day have roused your friends who were present more than any thing that could have happened.

I was engaged when they first went out to the field, and did not get there until Mr. Bell had been speaking for half an hour. Very shortly after I got there he pronounced the leaders of the Van Buren party to be all a set of profligate political *Knaves*. He then took up the subject of the amendment of the constitution in the election of President &c, charged that the Van Buren party prevented Gilmer's Committee from making a report,¹ though I need not be particular upon the point as he read from

one of his speeches (on the harbour bill I think) and only reiterated the charges therein contained. To forestall any defence you might make hereafter, he told the people to recollect that he had made the same charges against you to your face and that you had not denied them, and not to believe you when you denied them in his absence. He was exceedingly abusive and charged you with treachery to your constituents and your state. I think you ought to obtain that speech and prepare yourself to answer it. He charged that the Van Buren Tennessee delegation had sold themselves and agreed to transfer the state for office and that he could prove it and convict them of it before any Jury of 12 honest men, but was particularly cautious to offer not one particle of proof. He further charged that you were at one time a nullifier at heart; that at the time and after Mr. Grundy made his speech in the Senate on Footes resolution² you were understood to agree with him and that you were very careful not to commit yourself either way; that he having great concern upon the subject of nullification had laid a trap to draw you out; that upon some occasion in the house after Judge [Jacob C.] Isaacks had made a speech against nullification you were asked for your sentiment and replied that you had not fully made up your mind upon the subject but you could say that you did not agree in opinion with Judge Isaacks.

He said that he did not agree that Judge Whites prospects were desperate; that Genl. somebody from Georgia whose name he had forgotten told him that Georgia would go for White; that he had recd. letters from Judge Whites friends in Pennsylvania, Ohio, &c. stating that Judge White had a strong party in those states and that if the electoral votes of those states could make him president he would get them; and added that after the treatment which Judge White had recd. if no other state than Tennessee voted for him, she should not desert him. He spoke three hours or more.

Peyton next took the rostrum. He has left a more favorable impression of his talents and Honorable bearing than Bell. He charged you with gagging Bell and Wise and on one occasion overlooking him after he had first risen and giving the floor to Hanes;⁸ said that while Wise insulted you, you ought to have fought him, and told how he had done when lieutenant Ran-

dolph challenged him.⁴ He said that it had been stated in this part of the country, and conveyed the idea that it was by you, that Wise was a grog-shop bully and he fell to work to defend him from the charge. I think the best answer to the charge of gagging will be to produce the journal and shew how much time they occupied. He took up the subject of Van Burens vote in the New York convention and the free negro vote and his vote against giving the elections of sheriff, constable &c to the people and argued that he was no Republican. The Newland & Graham contest,⁵ Reuben M. Whitney,⁶ the Baltimore convention &c came in for their share. I forgot to say that Bell when he pronounced the leaders &c profligate Knaves that he excepted the President and said that he would treat of him seperately, and when he did come to treat of him it was with the same sort of slang employed in the Nashville newspapers, except that he went further and said that there were 30,000 office-holders who were compelled to electioneer for Van Buren *or loose their places*. He read extracts from a letter which he had recd. from Dick Johnson, but they were so disconnected that although I was earnestly listening I cannot relate the import. I understood one of the extracts to be that Bell in his letter to Johnson had not given him any advice in relation to the presidency. Bell also exhorted his hearers whenever they heard you deny any of his statements to speak up and ask you why you did not deny them when he charged them in Congress and you may expect to be questioned to that effect.

Our friends are to have a meeting on Monday next to give you a dinner. I think it will not be until week after next. Saturday week, the time spoke of will be unsuitable on account of some muster in the lower end of the County and a large sale at Col. Erwins.⁷ They are about to give you as I understand a dinner at Lewisburgh and if we can learn what day it will be ours will be the day after. I cannot be here on Monday as I am going to Coffee Court,⁸ but I will prepare resolutions &c.

In the first part of this letter I stated that a flag with a polk stock &c was placed on the top of one of the houses; I have just learned that it was placed there by our friends and upon looking at the inscription I am satisfied that it was so. It is a hickory bush instead of white oak and under it is written or rather

painted in large letters, The Hero of New Orleans. Under the Polk Stalk⁹ (which only for a few minutes was suffered to lean from the breeze and was soon placed erect) was written James K. Polk and under all your Mooresville toast, the unity of the republican party &c, and they are at this moment 2 oclock P.M. floating to the breeze.

E. J. FRIERSON

N.B. I heard but few toasts. Old Jonathan Webster's was the Hickory first and the White oak next, but his sons, sons in law¹⁰ &c are all with us.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Following Jackson's message of December 1, 1834, in which he suggested that the Constitution be amended to prevent a recurrence of the situation of 1824, a select committee was chosen with George Gilmer of Georgia as chairman. Gilmer was an antiadministration man and a White supporter. Ostensibly the committee was created in response to Jackson's message, but the real motive was to counteract the argument that White's candidacy would split the party and bring about just such a situation as had existed in 1824. The Van Buren men on the select committee were strong enough to prevent agreement on a committee report.

2. In his speech on March 1, 1830, Grundy had clearly stated that a state convention could nullify an oppressive law and that the federal government had no right to force compliance.

3. Charles E. Haynes of Georgia served, 1825-31 and 1835-39, in the House of Representatives.

4. Details of this incident have not been learned.

5. James Graham, a North Carolina Whig, had taken his seat in the House after a close race with David Newlands. His election was challenged and the seat declared vacant, but in the subsequent contest Graham defeated Newlands easily.

6. In the second session of the Twenty-fourth Congress a committee of the House was chosen to investigate the relationship between Reuben Whitney and the Treasury Department. After appearing before the committee Whitney refused to return, claiming that he had been threatened with physical violence by Wise and Peyton. He was cited for contempt, but when evidence was presented confirming that pistols had been drawn during the committee meeting he was discharged. Democratic leaders claimed that the whole investigation was an effort to discredit the administration.

7. The exact location of this sale has not been learned. Andrew Erwin had died in 1834, and this could have been a sale connected with the settlement of his estate. It appears that the sale might have occurred at the home of Andrew Erwin's son, James Erwin.

8. Coffee County, recently created, took in the eastern part of Bedford

County, including the homes of Jonathan Webster and Harvey M. Watterson.

9. On two occasions earlier in the letter this word was clearly written stock. Here it is written stalk.

10. Jonathan Webster had supported Polk, but it was thought by many that he wanted to run for a place in the House of Representatives. Now that he would soon be in a district in which Polk would not be a rival, he seems to be showing his independence. His two sons were Joel and Jonathan Jr. A daughter, Virginia, married a man named Jones. It is not clear whether or not there were other children.

FROM LYMAN KNOWLES

Amherst, Massachusetts. September 26, 1836

Knowles acknowledges receipt of Polk's instructions with regard to finishing his carriage and promises to deliver it to Washington by November 25, 1836.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Polk to L. Knowles and Company, July 5, 1836.

FROM JOHN C. MULLAY

Respected Sir, Jonesboro, [Tennessee] Sept. 26, 1836

I take the liberty of addressing a hurried line to you in the anxious hope that it will meet your prompt attention. My private character has been most slanderously assailed in the White-Whig paper of this place (Judge Emerson's¹ Republican) and circumstanced as I am, even the testimony that you can give me will be of use to me. You will be kind enough to remember the flattering note I gave you from Hon John Chambers² of Ky. at the time I solicited the privilege of using a Reporter's table in the H.R. last January. I have written out that note from memory and published it as a note to an editorial article last week. You will also remember that you presented to the House, at my request, a petition for aid from govt. to make an experiment with Saloman's patent Steam Boiler. You may have noticed my general conduct in Washington, altho' our acquaintance was most slight; but in a case of this kind, when a young man's private reputation is most cruelly and wantonly assailed your friendly interposition in his behalf would render him essential service. My enemies have nothing in my conduct here to quarrel with, but by procuring the certificates of some scoundrels

in Kentucky against me they hope by murdering my reputation to break down the Van Buren party in East Tennessee. I have been, it seems a little too hard for them in our paper, and they meanly attempt to destroy the influence of the Sentinel by prostrating its unobtrusive and humble Editor.

JNO. C. MULLAY

P.S. Be good enough to answer this immediately, if it is possibly convenient for you to do so.

J.C.M.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Thomas Emmerson had served for some time as a judge of the supreme court. When he retired from the bench he practiced law, but his main interest was in journalism. He was one of the two persons who established the *Washington Republican* at Jonesboro in 1832, and he continued as its editor until he sold out in 1837.

2. John Chambers of Mason County, Kentucky, was in the House of Representatives 1835-39. Later he became the territorial governor of Iowa.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Sept. 27, 1836

I wrote you a few lines by Mr. Nicholson last week and have not yet received an answer. I need and must do something with the paper it covered. Ensley, our Country friend here, will confidentially accommodate me upon it and what is good, he will cause the man he once supported, but now despises, John Bell to pay him what he owes him in order to get the money to lend me. In this, however, he consults his own affairs, not me. No person but himself and Smith is aware that he is raising money to extricate me from oppression. Mr. Grundy is away, Col. Love is away, and I am in a bad fix. I know you have been constantly employed and kept on the alert, and that you have met the invaders of your territory in their own way and conquered; at which I feel rejoiced, and that you have had no time to write to me; and that in fact, under the pressure of weightier matters, my letter might well have slipt your memory. I hope now, however, that you will re-enclose me the note of Dr. Gwin and others, that I may speedily do something. I cannot get sub-

scribers to pay, and the approach of the legislature compels me to increase my expense by the employment of one or two additional hands.¹

The Davidson Address² takes well. I have heard from Johnson. He says it is doing finely. From ten to fifteen thousand will soon be distributed.

I receive daily, encouraging letters from every quarter. With a strong pull and a pull altogether we may win the day, which God send.

Grundy speeches have counted by the conversion of hundreds, as I hear, from the District. Cryer³ makes a speech in Rutherford next week.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

P.S. I have just received a letter from old Cave stating that he has gone to Benton & Humphreys, and calling for copies of the address.⁴

Addressed to Columbia.

1. These are probably the printers that John Catron said were "late transplants" from the *Banner* and *Republican*. See Catron to Polk, September 6, 1836.

2. This refers to the "Address of the Davidson Corresponding Committee to the voters of Tennessee." See Polk to Laughlin, September 28, 1836.

3. Probably Hardy M. Cryer.

4. This postscript was written on the margin of the letter.

FROM GIDEON LEE

New York City. September 27, 1836

Lee, a former mayor of New York, and currently a member of the House of Representatives, predicts a victory for Van Buren and says that White's friends have done him a disservice in placing him before the public as a candidate.

Addressed to Columbia.

TO DENISON OLMSTED

Dear Sir

Columbia Tennessee Sept. 27, 1836

The difficulty of procuring checks on the East, for even small sums, has prevented an earlier answer to your letter of the 24th

ultimo. Enclosed I send a check for two hundred dollars (\$200) for the use of my brother. That I may know that it goes safely to hand will you do me the favor to acknowledge the receipt of this.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to New Haven, although no envelope has been found. This letter is in the library at the University of Chicago.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir

Columbia Sept. 28th 1836

Your letter of yesterday is received. On the 26th I re-enclosed to you the paper forwarded by Mr Nicholson, and have no doubt you received it last evening.

Bell and Peyton's and Bradford's visit has neither advanced their cause nor injured me in Maury. On the contrary all the changes have been from White to Van-Buren and I have heard of several. The Webster dinner¹ was well timed and my friends say I made a happier effect than usual on the occasion.

It will be impossible to make the Presidential question a full test, in our pending Senatorial election, which comes on, on the 30th. The White men will go for their man. Our man will lose many Van-Buren votes, still I think Smith² will be chosen by a handsome majority. My Bedford friends are in motion as you will see from the enclosed hand bill. I will attend the court at Shelbyville on Monday next.

I wish you to send out immediately, two or three hundred copies of the "*address of the Davidson Corresponding Committee to the voters of Tennessee*" addressed to the persons and Post offices in Bedford whose names you will find on the enclosed paper.³ Pay the Postage and make a minute of the amount. It will I think do great good in that County.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Should you see any of our friends from Bedford, hand them as many additional copies of the address for distribution as they may think useful.

J.K.P.

Addressed to Nashville.

1. The text of this speech to his Maury County constituents has not been found. It was probably published in the *Columbia Tennessee Democrat*, but if so, the issue in which it appeared is not available.

2. Williamson Smith was a candidate for the post in the state senate from which Terry H. Cahal had resigned to go on military duty in Florida.

3. This enclosure has not been found.

TO FRANCIS THOMAS

Dear Sir

Columbia Tenn Sept 28th 1836

Mr Cambreling wrote to me on the 6th of May 1836 in reply to an enquiry made by me that "Mr Thomas told me that Mr Bell stated to him previous to the election of Speaker, that he should support the Candidates who might be selected at the Baltimore Convention." I do not like to use the statement even in defence without your permission.

Mr Bell and *Mr Peyton* have lately made a visit to my district, and in their speeches as I learn, have assailed me, and among other things the former has said much as regards the position I occupied and my course about the time Judge White was brought out for the Presidency as also the position which he himself occupied previous to, and at the time White was nominated at Washington. I have vindicated my own course in a public address before the people, but the cause of truth may require, and I think will require, that I should be at liberty to use your statement. In a casual conversation early last Winter in reference to Mr. Cambreling's letter [to] me, of which he had advised you, I understood you as being averse to volunteer a statement, but if the cause of Justice or truth required it, you might give it. I design to make no improper use of it, and indeed, shall not use it at all unless it be rendered necessary (as I think it will) by the violence of the assaults upon me. I hope under the circumstances in which I am placed, you will not think the request I make unreasonable or improper, and that you may see no impropriety in making to me the statement of a fact within your knowledge, with authority to use it if I may deem it necessary. We are in the midst of greater political excitement than I have ever witnessed in Tennessee. I should be

pleased to hear your opinion of the probable result of the Presidential vote in Maryland.

JAMES K. POLK .

Addressed to Fredericktown, Maryland. This is a copy of the letter actually sent.

TO GEORGE C. CONRAD ET AL.¹

Gentlemen

Columbia Sept 29, 1836

I have received your letter of "invitation to partake of a dinner given to the citizens of Robertson County on Saturday the 8th of October," and have to regret that it will not be in my power to be present on that occasion. I thank you for the confidence you have been pleased to express, in my "determination" to continue to "support those Republican institutions which have prevailed through the administrations of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe & Jackson." Men may change, but principles endure, & he among us who follows men regardless of principles, is in constant danger of departing from the political faith which as Democratic Republican people, we in Tennessee have always professed & practiced. In these times when so many around us, are manifesting by their acts, their deliberate purpose to efface the old land-marks of party, which have heretofore separated Federalists from Republicans, and not only to amalgamate with former political enemies, but to engage actively with them in the work of detraction and calumny, heaped upon the head of our venerable chief magistrate, it becomes us to rally to his standard, and with [undiminished?]² and uncompromising firmness to continue in the support of the great principles and policy of his eminently successful administration, the rich fruits of which are to be found in the present unexampled prosperity of our country. It has become but too manifest, that the struggle now going on in Tennessee looks to objects beyond the pending Presidential election. Without the remotest hope of success in that election before the people, do not the circumstances around us warrant the belief, that some of our opponents, at

least by artfully availing themselves of the excitement which prevails, are seeking to place Tennessee in a false position, to seduce her unsuspecting people from their old political attachments, to place the state itself in an attitude of opposition; to form a state party, at war with our former political principles and with old political friends, the Republicans in the other States, at the head of which, they may stand wielding and directing our political destinies. That such is the design of some of our opponents I think we are warranted in believing from the facts before us. But they underrate the intelligence, patriotism and political consistency of our Republican people, if they hope ultimately to alienate them from their old Republican friends & principles, and transfer them to their old political enemies. They will find that whatever may be the result of the pending contest in the State, that our people are freemen, Republican freemen, and will continue to be adhering members of the great Republican party of the Union, to which they have always belonged.

With the expression of my regret, that I cannot be present at your dinner, I extend to you Gentlemen, and to those whom you represent, my thanks for this mark of their regard. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I enclose a sentiment which I hope may be acceptable to the company.

J. K. POLK

By J. K. Polk. Others change but principles endure. The people of Tennessee are old Republicans and will indignantly spurn any attempt to alienate them from their political attachments and principles, or to transfer them into the ranks of their old political enemies.

Marked "Copy" this is an unaddressed rough draft of the letter actually sent.

1. At the end of the letter and again on the cover sheet, Polk lists the following members of the committee: George C. Conrad, John Caulfield, Isaac Dortch, John S. Hutchinson, John C. McCrory, George Murphey, and Willis L. Norfleet.

2. At several points Polk's interlineations and strikethroughs make portions of the letter illegible.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My Dr Sir:

Nashville 30th Sept 1836

You'll see in this day's Banner a renewal of the question as to the amdt of the Constitution, on which I dropped you a line a few days since. How was the resolution of Mr Gilmer disposed of & why was Mr Gilmer made chairman?¹ Did he propose this to raise the Comtee? We want information, only to *preface* an article showing how the circular² is evaded & not *much*, for the defence agst it is rather feeble to join issue upon, which I cannot do save over some signature, & had as well sign my name. How does the address take? and what do you think of it. Only 6000 have been gotten out so far & we wish to issue during next week many as may be useful & to ascertain this advice fr. friends is necessary, true and critical advice, regardless of all eulogy, & blunt opinion. I wrote it, & have no wish Earthly but success. I had little time, & no help. If it strikes with you it will elsewhere, & we must issue 10,000, or any number required. Any thing said to me is *inter nos*.

Sent you some scraps—perhaps Mr Bell is too freely spoken of for your Columbia paper, you being at home. Strike out freely but publish. One of the scraps is Doc. Overton's,³ & could not be fitted into the circular & he has some pride to see it in print. Say so to Andw. Hays.

You thought truly when you said the Ball was in motion—it is, & more so than I thought ten days since. Let me hear from you in a couple of days.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The objective of this amendment was to prevent a presidential election from going to the House of Representatives for a final decision. A select committee to consider such an amendment was headed by George R. Gilmer of Georgia, who was not a Jackson man. The issue of the newspaper mentioned by Catron contained a speech by John Bell in which he accused Van Buren supporters, especially Polk, of posing as advocates of the amendment while actually using delaying tactics to prevent action by the House.

2. This refers to the "Address of the Davidson County Corresponding Committee to the Voters of Tennessee," dated September 19, 1836. This address, written by Catron, consisted of more than three newspaper columns.

It explained and justified the policies of the administration and favored the candidacy of Martin Van Buren.

3. Dr. James Overton of Nashville was prominent in medical affairs in the state for a long time. He was active in the Tennessee Medical Society and read several research papers before that body.

FROM SAMUEL MITCHELL

Dr Sir,

Shelbyville Sept. 30th 1836

We held a public meeting in this place on Monday last, at which it was determined to give you a free public dinner in Town on Saturday the 8th day of October. You must make your arrangements to be here, and if you could be here a day before the dinner it would be better for you and the cause, as you could learn from [Erwin J.] Frierson and others, the course pursued against you by the late Caravan of Politicians,¹ though the necessity of your coming might be superceded by his meeting you at Louisburg [Lewisburg] next week. From what I can ascertain they pursued nearly the same course here that they did in Maury, except that they were a little bolder, somewhat more personal and much more abusive, particularly of the old Chief. Their visit has had a most salutary affect upon the state of Politics in this County. Many went to the dinner warm White men and left it strong for Van Buren saying that they had always thought that Judge White was a warm friend of Genl. Jacksons and that he was supporting his administration and that they had been supporting him under the belief that if he was elected he would carry out the measures of the present administration, but that Messrs Bell and Peyton had convinced them that Judge White had abandoned Jackson and his administration and they would have to quit him. I think it would be a moderate calculation to say they had changed two hundred from White to Van Buren by their speeches in this County.

I want you to score them severely for interfering in the politics of your district. The impression is already out and will be kept up, that you were the object of their visit. that it was to prostrate you and not to promote Judge Whites election that brought them into your district, and the White party here are fearful of the effects and keep it dark from the people that they

come from Maury here or that they had been in Maury making speeches against you. I have not heard the first White man mention the Bigbyville dinner² since my return unless it was first mentioned by some of our friends, and there at they were not willing to talk about it.

Let me hear from the election between Smith and Martin.³ The result will have great influence upon the Presidential question throughout the State and I feel great anxiety to hear from it.

SAML. MITCHELL

Addressed to Columbia.

1. John Bell and Balie Peyton attended public dinners in various parts of the state, promoting the candidacy of White and attacking the administration faction, particularly Polk.

2. The White rally at Bigbyville in Maury County was held on September 20, 1836, with Bell, Peyton, and Ebenezer J. Shields as the featured speakers. From Bigbyville they moved on to Shelbyville, where on September 22, 1836, a similar affair was held.

3. Terry H. Cahal had resigned from the state senate to go on military duty to Florida. Williamson Smith beat Barkly Martin in a contest to fill out Cahal's term. Martin's father was an early settler in Maury County who had later moved to Georgia. The son returned to Maury County after taking an active part in politics in Harris County, Georgia.

FROM THOMAS L. HAMER

Dr Col.

West Union O.¹ Oct 1st 1836

You see I am from home; & for that reason your answer to the favor received a week ago, has been delayed till now. I have been on the stump every day for a week past, & almost all the time for four weeks. No fear of my own election induces this course, for that is safe—at least so all my friends say. But I go *for the cause*. We have a terrible conflict here, such as has never been seen in the State. The Whigs are moving all the powers of earth to defeat us.

I will now tell you how the West will go in the approaching contest. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Arkansas & Alabama are certain for Mr. Van Buren. Probably he will get Mississippi & Louisiana: they are doubtful. Judge White will get Tennessee & Gen. Harrison will get Kentucky. He who

makes a calculation which differs widely from this, will find himself deceived.

We shall send a majority to the next Congress favorable to Mr. Van Buren. The districts of Judge Crane, (Dayton) and of Mr. Spangler (Mount Vernon) will send Democrats. We have strong hopes of beating Mr. Storer (Cincinnati,) with a Democrat. It is not likely there will be other changes, though Mr. Allen may possibly beat Mr. Bond, (Chillicothe) & Gen. McLene (Columbus)² may possibly be turned out for voting against the "distribution" of the surplus revenue, *as I did*. My constituents sustain me triumphantly in my vote. "Distribution" is exceedingly unpopular with the whole Democratic party of this District. So much for our affairs here.

I pity you Van Buren men in Tennessee. You have a hard time of it. But your State will support the new Admn as it has done the present, provided Mr. Van Buren is elected, of which there cannot be a doubt.

As soon as the result is know here, I will write you; & do not forget to let me hear from Tennessee.

Remember me very kindly to Mrs. Polk. . . .

Th. L. HAMER

N.B. Excuse this scrawl, for you see that *I have neither pen, ink, nor paper*.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. West Union is located near the Ohio River, about sixty miles southeast of Cincinnati.

2. Joseph H. Crane, David Spangler, Bellamy Storer, and William K. Bond were all Whigs. William Allen of Chillicothe and Jeremiah McLene were Democrats. Crane, Spangler, and Storer declined renomination in 1836. Alexander Duncan, a Cincinnati Whig, replaced Storer in Congress. Bond defeated Allen for the congressional seat in the Twenty-fifth Congress. McLene also lost his bid to retain his congressional seat.

FROM WEST H. HUMPHREYS

Sir

[Nashville]¹ October 3rd 1836

On my arrival at this place I saw Mr. Nicholson who informed me that you had some hesitation about going to the district of another member of Congress.

I think I can safely say that your scruples are found more in your own delicacy than any impropriety in the act. When the affair assumes the aspect of a direct attack upon some particular individual as in the case of Col Bells inroads upon your district and when the meeting is got up with the especial object of making a victim of some obnoxious individual I should conceive the motives improper.

But sir such is not the object of your visit to the district. Your friends wish you to be present at a public Dinner in Fayette. The motives of that meeting are specified truly in the letter of invitation.

That Judge White was brought to my county for the especial object making me a victim I have no doubt; that the invitation to Bell and Peyton was a cloak I have just as little doubt. Your friends wish you to go to Fayette. Preparations are making to receive you. I saw Mr [Cave] Johnson yesterday and he told me he would be go[ing] in accordance with the invitation. Mr Grundy is doubtful. I shall probably be at the dinner on Saturday next at Springfield when I will see him again. He holds himself in readiness to go.

Under such circumstances I shall after what I have heard from Mr Nicholson and Col Johnson send word to Fayette and the surrounding counties that you will be present.

W. HUMPHREYS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The letter included no point of origin. It was postmarked at Nashville on October 4.

FROM SILAS WRIGHT JR.

My Dear Sir, Canton [New York] 3 October 1836

Your favor of the 14 Ult. came to me this evening. My residence is in a retired part of the Country and any political information therefore when at home is derived from the public papers and my correspondents. So far as I can judge from the information derived from these sources there is no cause to change the expectations I entertained when I left Washington as to the electoral votes in this quarter. I was never one of those

who entertained much expectation of carrying Vermont and my letters since their state election give me no hope of that State. I have seen nothing to create a doubt as to Maine or New Hampshire and the recent election in Rhode Island exhibits that State as much stronger than it has heretofore been. I never hoped, and, unless indispensable to success, never wished to carry Massachusetts. I did conjecture at one time that there was a design on the part of some of the friends of Webster that he should withdraw his name after their electors were elected and before they should vote and to leave them at liberty to give the vote of the State to Van Buren. If ever such an intention was entertained it is not now, in my opinion, but I do suspect that his name will be withdrawn at the time I supposed, to give the vote to Harrison. I have nothing from Connecticut to create any doubt as to that state, nor have I heard one word from New Jersey. I do not place perfect confidence in the stability of our strength there, but have no reason to doubt that we shall carry the State this fall, and indeed I think we shall as long as [Samuel L.] Southard remains in the Senate and perseveres in his disobedience to the instructions of the State. If my correspondents are not wholly mistaken and they are among those to whom we should all look for sound opinions, and if our portion of the press in Pennsylvania is at all to be relied upon the electoral vote of that state will be ours beyond any doubt. I cannot bring my own mind to doubt the result in that state, and certain I am if the same state of things existed in this state our people could not be prevented from carrying the state against the bank by an overwhelming vote. All my news from Ohio leads to the belief that there can be no reasonable doubt of our success in that State. Beyond this you will not desire my opinion, as your means of information as to the States south and west is superior to mine.

You do not speak as encouragingly of Tennessee as I had hoped. Yet I ought to say to you that I have had little hope of success in that State this fall. I have regretted and do most sincerely regret that Tennessee is to assume the position of an opposition State, because, although I do not doubt at all that she must and will come back to the republican fold, her moral force will be greatly weakened and, as her people are tenacious

in their feelings, it will take them a long time to acquire that cordiality without which their support will be doubtful or cold. That you were to have a most acrimonious fight during this summer and fall I never for a moment doubted, and that it must continue until you again take the ascendancy in the State I do not now doubt. I take two of your papers and witness the state of things among you with great interest. Still all I can do is to offer you the prayer which Forsyth gave to Frelinghuysen and Southard, "May God send you a safe deliverance."

In this state the general battle will not be severe but in the detail we shall have an ugly fight and the chances are that the mad legislation of our friends last winter on the subject of Banks may loose us two or three members of Congress at the elections this fall.

I recd. a letter from Mr. Van Buren this evening but he expresses no apprehension of the general result. I presume the new courage which you witness among the opposition with you arises mostly from their confidence of success at home, and many of them no doubt fall into the common error of supposing that all the world is going as their state shall go.

I am sorry to be compelled to inform you that my wife has been very hard sick for the last two weeks and is yet very sick although recovering slowly and not now considered to be in danger. I write while watching over her, and you will therefore excuse a hasty and brief letter. Please give our best remembrances to Mrs. Polk. . . .

SILAS WRIGHT JR.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Samuel L. Southard and Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey were members of the United States Senate during the prolonged bank fight. Forsyth of Georgia was also in the Senate at that time. Forsyth opposed the bank while the other two supported it, and it is possible that his remark by Forsyth was made at that time.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir,

Nashville Octr 4th 1836

In answer to yours receivd. yesterday I have to say, I think you should accept the invitations in the District and attend

them. The difference in those cases and Bells & Peytons dinners in your District consists in this. You do not go into an enemy's District to injure him.¹ You must fix the day yourself, from the 20th to 25th, and write to [Cave] Johnson & myself immediately what day you fix. On next Saturday I shall be in Springfield at a Hurra in that place. I returned on Sunday from the Western District; I was in 7 or 8 Counties. Our strength is respectable, but not such as I could wish. We are in a minority but gaining evidently. I have seen and conversed with some members of the Legislature here. The White men seem quiet and I think low spirited. Our friends are in good spirits.

F GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Other advisers gave Polk similar advice. See West H. Humphreys to Polk, October 3, 1836.

FROM THOMAS J. LACY

Little Rock, Arkansas. October 4, 1836

Although he failed to obtain the federal judgeship that he sought, Lacy expresses appreciation for Polk's help. He is happy to report, however, that the state legislature has elected him by a large majority to serve as a member of the state supreme court.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

New Haven, Connecticut. October 8, 1836

Olmsted encloses a statement of the account of Samuel W. Polk. He thinks that Samuel should perhaps be allowed to manage his own finances and is sure that Samuel finds it distasteful to be accountable to Olmsted.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Samuel W. Polk to James K. Polk, June 19, 1836.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother.

New Haven Ct [Oct. 8?, 1836]¹

Mr Walker leaves here to day by whom I send you this, which contains my wish relative to my expenses each year, over three hundred dollars, the amount agreed upon. Three hundred

dollars I am confident will be an insufficient sum, to defray my yearly expenses. If I understand rightly, the matter stands thus; that I am to pay out of my own *pocket* the amount that shall exceed three hundred dollars each year, however great or Small that amount shall be. Now I am perfectly willing to do what is just and proper, but I am not sufficiently acquainted in these matters to know exactly how to act. I have talked the matter over, with Mr Walker, fully, and considering my inexperience in such matters, I leave you to act for me, in the way you think best and most conducive to my interest. You can follow the dictates of your understanding and whatever you may decide upon as the best course for me to pursue, I will not object to it when I shall come to act for myself.

SAMUEL W. POLK

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This letter is undated. An endorsement on the envelope, in Polk's handwriting, indicates that it was received on October 18, 1836. It was brought from New Haven to Columbia by James Walker. If he left there on the day the letter was written, as the writer says, and went directly to Columbia, the letter was probably written before October 10, 1836.

FROM SIDNEY C. POSEY¹

Dr Sir

Florence Ala 8th Octo 1836

I would have sooner acknowledged your much esteemed favor of the 2nd, but for the pressing engagements of a Court week. You have had a noble triumph in the election of Col [Williamson] Smith; under all the circumstances, it should, (I have no doubt it is) [be] gratifying to your feelings.

The White faction in Maury, must be well nigh *horse de combat* under the lead of Mr Bell; they made a violent assault and they have been shamefully beaten. I feel well satisfied that yr District is sound to the back bone, and that your enemies can make no impression upon you.

It was right, to give them their own, as you did at Webster's, Roseville &c; there is no temporizing with this White faction, for it is certainly the most vindictive and proscriptive of all

the opposing factions. You can expect no mercy from them, and your own safety will be best secured by crushing the whole White power in your District. This you are in a fair way to do, aided as you are, by their own violence and folly.

Yr friend J[oshua] L Martin was here to rejoice with Col John McKinley and myself at the result of yr Election. We felt a deep anxiety to hear from it, and your letter came most opportunely. I consider it a glorious triumph for you and for our cause. Besides, it will tell in the November Election.

Our friends in Tennessee may rest assured that Alabama will go for Van Buren from five to ten thousand majority, and that we have the power in the Legislature. We shall certainly elect a V.B. Speaker of the House, and probably a V B President of the Senate. That we shall elect a V B Senator, (if the Election is gone into) I have not the shadow of a doubt. It is expected that Mr Hopkins² will be the White candidate tho Judge Martin thinks he would be very reluctant to be run against McKinley.

From what I can learn since my return, I incline to the opinion, that Gov [Clement C.] Clay will not suffer his name to be used, especially if he sees that the doing so, would be the means of a division in our ranks, and perhaps a defeat.³

We reached home without any more accidents. Stopped a few moments with our friend *Lucius*.⁴ He did not seeme to me to talk as he did when here with the President. Yet he was evidently well satisfied as to what was the object of the movements of Jno Bell & Co. and seemed very indignant at the thrusts aimed at you by the White men. This feeling will bring him right, as soon as his pride will permit it.

Our respects to your estimable lady. We shall long remember *her* kindness and *yours*.⁵

S. C. POSEY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Posey was a native of South Carolina but had grown up in northern Alabama. After admission to the bar he moved to Florence, where he was prominent as a judge and politician. He served in both houses of the legislature of Alabama and in 1860 was a delegate to the Democratic Convention, where he supported Douglas.

2. Arthur F. Hopkins was an early settler in Alabama and served in the

convention that drew up the first state constitution. He was a Whig leader and was considered for the United States Senate more than once, but the legislature never elected him. Later he moved to Mobile, where he was president of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad.

3. The election of a senator did not come up until the next year, and Clay was elected. Meanwhile, McKinley was assured of appointment to a place on the United States Supreme Court.

4. Lucius J. Polk favored the candidacy of White for the presidency, but Posey obviously thought that he could be won over to Van Buren.

5. The contents of this letter make it clear that Posey had been a recent visitor to Maury County. His great familiarity with events there indicate that he had close ties there, but their nature has not been learned.

TO JOEL L. JONES ET AL.¹

Gentlemen

Columbia Oct 9th 1836

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 28th ultimo in which as "a committee appointed by a public meeting for that purpose" you "tender to me on behalf of a portion of the Citizens of Fayette County, a public dinner to be given at Somerville, at such time as may suit my convenience." My answer has been delayed until this time, in the hope that I might be enabled to ascertain on what day it would suit the convenience of the other gentlemen (whom you inform me in a postscript to your letter, have also been invited) to be present. This information I regret to say I have not yet obtained, and fear any day I may name will not be convenient to them and to you. I will have private business in the County of Haywood and expect to be there about the 25th of the present month, and if that day (the 25th of October) will be convenient to yourselves and the other gentlemen invited it will give me pleasure to meet you and those in whose behalf you act at Somerville at that time. If however any other day has been suggested by the other gentlemen; or will be more convenient to them, or to yourselves, I beg that you will not on my account alter or change, the day which may have been fixed upon for the occasion to which you have kindly invited me. I beg to return to you Gentlemen my thanks for the flattering terms in which you have been pleased to speak of "my services in Congress" and for the approbation you have expressed of my hum-

ble "efforts to secure to the people a republican successor to the present Chief Magistrate, against the machinations of Federalists, Nullifiers and New-Born Whigs."

With the assurance of the pleasure it would afford me, to meet my fellow citizens of the County of Fayette around the festive board I have also to tender to you the assurances of the high consideration with which . . .

JAMES K. POLK

This is a draft of a letter which was presumably sent to Somerville, although no envelope has been found.

1. Below his signature Polk listed seventeen names of the committee headed by Joel L. Jones.

TO JOHN H. BILLS

My Dear Sir

Columbia Oct 10th, 1836

Genl. Calvin Jones¹ wrote to me on the 22nd of August, that he was indebted to my father's estate a balance of \$45.61 for the locative interest in a tract of 274 acres in Maury sold by him, and that he was ready to pay it to me on my order. Will you do me the favour to receive it, give Genl. J. a receipt & hand the money to Dr. Caldwell.²

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Bolivar, Tennessee.

1. Calvin Jones had moved to Hardeman County in 1832 after a long, illustrious, and varied career in North Carolina.

2. Below Polk's signature, dated October 24, 1836, Caldwell wrote that he had received of Bills and McNeal \$45.61.

TO AUSTIN MILLER ET AL.¹

Gentlemen:

Columbia Oct 10th 1836

Your letter inviting me, in behalf of a public meeting of citizens of Hardeman County, to "partake of a public barbecue" at *Bolivar*, and requesting me to "appoint a day on which it will suit me to attend," has been received. My answer has been

delayed longer than I desired, because of the uncertainty as to the precise period at which I would visit your part of the State. I am now enabled to state, that private business will require my personal attention in the County of Haywood about the 25th of the present month, and it would give me sincere pleasure to meet my fellow citizens of Hardeman at their proposed entertainment on Thursday the 27th, if that be a day that will suit your and their convenience. I return to you Gentlemen my thanks for this mark of your regard, and for the flattering terms in which you have been pleased to express your approbation, of the support I have given to the leading principles and measures of the present administration, and the stand which I have felt it to be my duty to take, against the efforts now making by our political adversaries, to divide and destroy the Republican party & the Union. Be pleased gentlemen, to accept for yourselves & carry to my fellow-citizens whom you represent, assurances of the high regard with which . . .

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Bolivar, Tennessee, and marked "Copy."

1. Following his signature Polk listed four names of members of the committee: Austin Miller, Charles Fitzhugh, David Fentress, and E. C. Crisp.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Murfreesboro Oct 10th 1836

I had intended certainly to be at the dinner in Shelbyville on last Saturday, but the birth of a fine boy, which happened on Sunday morning, prevented me from doing so. We have not yet given it a name. Joanna¹ sent us word yesterday that it must be called Andrew Jackson or Martin Van Buren, but I suppose we will select some more humble appellation. The Caravan was with us on Friday last, and in imitation of the manner of shewing wild Beasts, were fed in presence of the Spectators. Messrs Bell, Peyton, Forrester, Shields, & Judge White were in attendance & made speeches. Bells & Peytons were I suppose (verbatim) the same they have made at all the dinners elsewhere. So say those who have heard them several times before. Judge White discussed the distribution Bill en-

tirely. The other two made speeches but were not known to the people even by name. The general impression is that they have done their cause no service in this county. There were about 700 persons at the dinner, and 150 or 200 of them Van Buren men. Indeed some say there were a majority in town with us. The people from the Knobs² were greatly disappointed in the Judge, and White men openly condemn Peytons speech as Buffoonery, & wanton abuse. Bell was known to the people before. I am clearly of the opinion we shall make 100 votes by the dinner. It has stirred up the friends of Grundy in this county to make some exertion. They talk of giving him a dinner. If it takes place you must certainly attend. The people are anxious to hear you speak, and I have no doubt now, the effect would be favorable. If there is a dinner it will be in the Miller neighborhood³ where we are strong. I think we are gaining a little in this county & will possibly be able to make out 1000 votes by Nov. [Hardy M.] Cryer & Hoover⁴ made Speeches 10 days since, evidently to our advantage. Cryer made Hoover acknowledge that Harrison was his second choice, & that White could not be elected by the people. The leaders here openly avow their preference for H. over V.B. The people begin to think about it & we find many now going for V.B. who have heretofore been silent. But I think we cannot in any event make out a majority or near at this late hour. The famous Ned Rucker⁵ on the morning after the White dinner came into town, "armed in panoply & cased in Steel" for the purpose of chastising the Honl. John Bell, but was dissuaded from it by Dr. Rucker. The fact is known only to one or two and it is desired that it should not be made public. Judge White left here for Shelbyville on Saturday. I have not yet heard from the dinner there. I would be glad you would write me an account of it and the prospects in Bedford. If the dinner at Millers should be concluded on, I will write you again in a few days. My respects to Sarah & Mary & tell them to write to me. If you should come to Rutherford they must come with you.

JOHN W. CHILDRESS

P.S. Let Mr Hays⁶ know the contents of this and say to him I will write him soon if anything interesting occurs.

J.W.C.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Johanna Rucker was a daughter of Dr. William R. Rucker and Susan Childress Rucker. At this time she was fourteen years old. The child was named James Polk Childress.

2. This probably refers to the area around Pilot Knob in the eastern part of Rutherford County.

3. This is probably the settlement in the southern part of Rutherford County where the name of the post office was changed from Stokely to Millersburg a few weeks after the date of this letter.

4. Andrew J. Hoover, a Whig, was elected to represent Rutherford County in the General Assembly, 1837-39, but died before completing his term.

5. Edmund Rucker, known for his role at the Baltimore Convention, was a cousin of William R. Rucker.

6. Probably Andrew C. Hays of Columbia.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Colo.

Murfreesboro Octr. 11th 1836

On the 7th was the White Dinner in this place. Our papers represent it as a very great affair. But the fact is it was but a sorry business considering the great preparation. They marched out to the Sand Spring¹ between 80 & 100 rank and file as I am informed. I was not myself in town at the time. Our friends say that there were about one thousand persons at the dinner composed as well of Vanburen as White men for the novelty of the business brought all parties together to hear the speeches. A good many White men were very much dissatisfied with the abuse that Bell & Peyton bestowed upon Genl. Jackson & Vanburen and many were mortified at the abuse that they gave you. Their course here has not resulted to their own advantage.

Next Monday is our Circuit Court and I think that it is probable that there will be a meeting of our friends for the purpose of getting up a great affair here for yrs. & Grundy's benefit & for the promotion of our cause. You must hold yrself in readiness for a dinner or Barbecue on the latter part of week after next. We can not do well without you, & if we send, you must be sure to attend. I have written word to Granville S. Crocket that Grundy must be there next week at Court as he usually attends our Courts, and if it should be deemed expedient that he must give us a speech on next Monday. It is likely after

a speech from him in vindication of himself and especially clearing up the charge of dictation against the President that our party will be better prepared for going heartily into the necessary arrangements for a great dinner. We are undecided where would be the most suitable place to have it, in town or the country. For my own part I think it would be best to have it in town as it will be the most central place for our friends who will attend from all parts of the County, but know we are weak in town and will need great assistance from the people in the country. There has been a good many changes of late in favor of Vanburen. Twelve months ago there were but 3 or 4 Vanburen men in town but we can now number nearly forty, and there has been a greater proportion of changes in the country. If you come to this County you must of course bring Sarah and let her remain till you go on to Washington.

W. R. RUCKER

P.S. I was very unwell for some time after my return from Nashville but I am now tolerably well but very much engaged. Sarah Childress, John's wife has a fine son. All friends are well.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This fresh-water spring was located just south of the center of town and east of the Shelbyville pike. For a short time, beginning in 1833, it was the source of the town's water supply.

FROM WALTER S. FRANKLIN

My dear Sir

York Pa. Oct 12th 1836

I herewith send you all the accounts I have of the result of yesterday's election. You will perceive that our candidates have upwards of 500 majority so far as heard from; it will be increased to about 1000. Last year Ritner¹ had a majority in this county of about 200 and the opposition county ticket was elected by about 150. From the enclosed extra² you will perceive that there has been a very great change also in the adjoining county of Dauphin. Harrisburg is our seat of Govern[ment] and the residence of the Governor, Heads of Departments &c. I have no doubt the same results have taken place all over the

State. I have just heard from two districts in Lancaster. The First or Lancaster district Van Buren majority 700. In Columbia, Lancr. County V B majority 80. Last year about the same the other way. The Van Buren majority in this State will not be less than 15,000 and I sincerely believe it will be twenty five thousand. The fate of the U.S. Bank of Penna. is sealed. The convention which is to assemble in May next will unquestionably repeal the Charter. The Bank cannot exist in this State; it is not congenial to our Soil. We are essentially democratic. Aristocracy may for a time by deception obtain the ascendancy but it cannot maintain it long. I will from time to time let you know how we progress. Logan's³ majority two years ago was 600; this year it is about 1000, and the election nothing like so large as in 1834. Please to present me respectfully to Mrs. Polk.

W. S. FRANKLIN

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Joseph Ritner, a Whig, won a three-way election involving the incumbent, George Wolf, and Henry A. P. Muhlenberg. See Andrew Beaumont to Polk, September 5, 1835.

2. Several bits of evidence indicate that the enclosure mentioned here is the clipping on which Henry Welsh wrote his note of October 13, 1835. The date of the clipping is right; there is no envelope for Welsh's letter; Franklin's letter was not postmarked until October 14, 1836; on the envelope of Franklin's letter the name Welsh is written; and in his letter Welsh makes no reference to the clipping on which it is written.

3. Henry Logan, a resident of York County and a Democrat, served in the House of Representatives for two terms, 1835-39.

FROM JESSE MILLER¹

My Dear Sir Harrisburg [Pennsylvania] 12 Octr 1836

I came here to night and hasten to give you the most glorious political news I have ever had the pleasure to communicate. I cannot give you particulars for want of time before the mail closes. Antimasonry Whiggery Bankism &c is routed so far as heard from in all their strong holds. I doubt whether they have elected out of the city of Phila[delphia] 15 members to the

Legislature, and I have no doubt we have gained several members of Congress. Democracy is *completely triumphant*. It is a Waterloo concern. In great haste.

J. MILLER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A Democratic member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. He resigned his position on October 30, 1836, to accept appointment by Jackson as First Auditor of the Treasury.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville 13th October 1836

Yours of the 9th recd to day. I do not think I can go to Somerville. I pressed Grundy very much to go with you. I hope he will. I wish to be in my district. I have some pride in getting a handsome majority & we have great excitement in Robertson & I expect to spend a week. I have never been at a larger or more substantial meeting in our small counties, than we had at Springfield last Saturday. I regretted your absence very much. Grundy made one of his happiest efforts I think. There must have been a thousand listeners. I have not heard from there since but shall know its effects next week. [Richard] Cheatham has been exceedingly eloquent. He brings tears *from himself* upon every occasion, describing the [toils?] & sufferings & persecutions of the good old man, White, and upon one occasion became so excited that he *actually puked*, so I am credibly informed. I have not heard him myself. That is quite equal to Grundy jurryman in Kentucky.¹ He has produced much excitement in Robertson, not much to his own advantage or his cause. He had spoke often in Robertson & upon some occasions his friends, hissed & coughed & beat drums to keep some Van Buren men from replying, which produced quite a crowd to hear us. I feel assured that we shall get the majority in Robertson. We will certainly have a close contest. There is but little opposition to us in Hickman. In Dickson our friends claim over two to one, in Stewart & Benton decided majorities, Humphreys doubtful, Montgomery agt. us. My impression is, if we can get

a tolerable turnout the majority in my district will not be much short of a thousand.² They have got the paper up here. I could not avoid it. Some dozen men here have done it.³

I shall expect you & Grundy certainly to go to Somerville. Whites movements there were intended to break down West Humphreys & he will have a severe contest & you & Grundy ought to help him. We shall find some difficulty in sustaining [William] Overton here but hope to do so.⁴

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. An extremely successful criminal lawyer, Grundy was noted for his ability to sway the emotions of juries. This particular incident remains obscure, but it probably occurred before Grundy moved to Tennessee.

2. Johnson was somewhat optimistic in his political estimates. His party lost Robertson and Stewart counties by a considerable margin, and the Democratic margin in the district was under three hundred.

3. The Clarksville *Chronicle* was edited by William Overton until 1835, when he gave it up to run for the legislature. It was acquired by the opposition, and Ewing P. McGinty was installed as editor.

4. Overton failed in his effort for a second term, losing to John H. Poston, a Whig.

FROM HENRY WELSH¹

York, Pennsylvania. October 13, 1836

In a note at the bottom of a newspaper reporting the results of the 1836 election in Pennsylvania, Welsh expresses great satisfaction. He is especially pleased at the defeat of Joel B. Sutherland.

Probably addressed to Columbia but the envelope has not been found.

1. A Pennsylvania newspaperman and a close friend of James Buchanan. See Walter S. Franklin to Polk, October 12, 1836, fn. 2.

FROM FRANCIS THOMAS

Dear Sir

Frederick [Maryland] Oct 14, 1836

I desire sincerely to see you triumph over all opposition in the effort to give the Electorals of Tennessee to Mr Van Buren, and would gladly do any thing in my power to ensure such a result to the contest in which you are engaged. It is nevertheless inconsistent with my judgment for me to interfere in the man-

ner you propose.¹ The conversation held between Mr Bell and myself to which I suppose you refer was not strictly confidential, but it was of such a character that I cannot with propriety give any part of it for political purposes. Mr. Cambreleng has certainly misunderstood the matter and imputed to me language never used when detailing to him a part of the conversation between Mr. Bell and myself.

I hope you will see the propriety of this course which I desire to pursue in this matter and not impute it to a feeling of indifference as to the issues of your election.

There is in Maryland so much political excitement at this time that I must speak with much doubt as to the probable issue of the Presidential election here. It appears to me that Van Buren will get the vote of Maryland by a small majority, say 2000. But I say this with some hesitation as it is possible that the contest now *raging* about our State constitution may diminish, contrary to my expectation, Van Burens vote.

FRANCIS THOMAS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Polk to Francis Thomas, September 20, 1836.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

My Dear Sir Waxhaws [Arkansas] Oct the 19th 1836

I have not received a word from you since the adjournment of Congress except a N Paper the Democrat of the 18th August. I have kept you & James Walker advised of the progress of your land business. I had on hand at the receipt of the Secty of the Treasurys order & have got of your money \$1039 unexpended. My agent has been employed in examination until a few weeks since. He has been very ill but will be able in a few weeks to resume his labours. His examination this fall will be on the Missi & Red Rivers. I received a letter from James Walker requesting that I would not draw on him until some change takes place about monied matters. You can say to him & Dr [John B.] Hays that I have not drawn upon either nor will I until I can receive information from my agent that good & valuable locations can be made & not until I consult with

them. Also say to Dr Hays I think it not necessary now to draw [. . .]¹ moneys now on Deposite, tho in his letter to me not long since he wished me to do so so soon as advantagous entries could be made &c.

I shall bring on your Certificates of entry that you may this Winter get some pattents for all the land I have entered. I have deposited with the Bank the balince of your money to be drawn when he called for. I have not written you I believe since my election. You will have learned before this I presume that I give the (*White*) Candidate my opponent *Charley*. My Majority is about 38 or 3900, tho I did not get the full vote of the Party owing to a local question, the *Basis* of representation in the convention. But in the North, my Circuit, my opponent made no run at all. I recd 3100 out of 3350. In my own County I recd 1217 of 2057. In the County of Green I recd 160, every vote in the County.² I have but little doubt of the Success of our electoral ticket if there is any thing like a turn out. Thats the danger. The time is short & our party rest on their strength, and I sometimes fear the result. A powerful effort will be made by the opposition to carry the tickett. They hope by their Success to force me to vote for White if the Election goes into the H R or to resign. And as that would seem to be an expression of public oppinion, tho I was elected on the Van tickett, I should be placed in rather an awkward predicament. But as I hold fully to the right of Instruction, in that event I should be compeled to resign for I can not vote for (*White*) in any event, even between White & Harrison, tho I hope that bitter cup will not be presented to me. If we are not greatly mistaken in our count *Van Buren* will be elected by the people, tho sometimes I have some misgivings about old Pennsylvania & Ohio, and as for old "*Vanwinkle*"³ I fear she has thrown herself into the arms of the opposition. I have as little confidence in Alabama & Mississippi.

I am truly glad I have got out of Tennessee. She is a bastard child of old N Carolina and will in future be tacked on to the *tail* of Kentucky and managed by the Clay polititons and a few of *you* will be able to sustain yourselves until you will become disgusted with the misrule & then I hope to see you become Citizens of Ark. This may hapen tho you think me Jestng.

You know my opinion of John Bell & have for several years. He has not disappointed me, nor has that little fellow his "striker" A[llen] A. Hall. Peyton is an other of his partizans but not to be ranked with Hall. I would sooner put in [John B.] *Forrester*, [Ebenezer] *Shields* [Abram P.] Maury & such likes.

I am pleased to see Nicholson take such high [. . .] ground. Should you go in to the *Cabinet* I hope he may succeed you.

Our Legislature has passed the Expunging resolution but it matters not, they⁴ are both good men & true. Ark is a full blooded Democratic state. Who we shall elect next August to Congress is uncertain. I think it more than likely I shall not be a candidate. Who we may run is uncertain. Some man that will vote for you for *Speaker*. I leave here in a day or two for Washington *via* Little Rock & up the River to Wheeling &c. My respts to Madam. . . .

A. YELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. A name at this point has not been deciphered.
2. Uncertain punctuation makes this paragraph quite difficult to interpret.
3. This reference remains obscure.
4. It is believed that at this point Yell was speaking of the two Senators from Arkansas.

FROM WILLIAMSON SMITH

My Dear Sir,

Nashville 21st Oct 1836

Yours of the 19th Inst. is now before me. I have given it due¹ consideration, and will so far as my aid can go, will give my undivided attention. Our friend Dean says he will act his part of the plan in Bedford & so says Nicholson & Thomas (with regard to Maury).² We are getting nearly through with the business of the Legislature. It is thought we shall adjourn on the 25th or 26th Inst. The surplus Revenue will be deposited in the Bank of this state at 5 per Ct. until the next Legislature shall adjourn. There has been under discussion for several days in lower house a bill to pay the Volunteers which were called

at the several calls of the Governor of this state and were not mustered into service. Which was to day requested. *A hard slap at the Governor.* The White party here intended at the commencement of the Session to make a grand move by investing the surplus Revenue permanently in Internal Improvements thereby making the deposits of Genl Government with the different States a permanent gift. This was opposed by the Van Buren Party and carried. The friends of Judge White are all here giving him [up] entirely and dividing out between Harrison & Van Buren. There is a large Majority of the members who are hunting some way to get [out] of the White ranks. R. Topp^s for Instance is open mouthed *against* White. Says after Traveling with him from Memphis to this place, *he is a damed old fool.* Miller from E[ast] T[ennessee], Wright E. T., Vernon^t Just ready to come out. Baily Peyton a few days ago in this place was called on to know in the event of the contest falling between Van Buren & Harrison which he would go for. He had pledged himself to go V. Buren. That it is thought here will give the State to V.B. in the event it should go to the house. From the information just rd. from Pennsylvania there is no doubt about its going for V.B.

I have just seen a bet made by West Humphreys & [Harvey M.] Waterson, \$100.00 upon the vote of Fayette County.⁵ You must do your best for Humphreys when you get to Summerville.

We shall appropriate the Interest of the surplus Revenue to making surveys in the various parts of the State and competent Engineers employed by the Govnor Comptroller & the Treasury for that purpose, to be continued in the service of the State until all such surveys as shall be thought expedient shall be made.

Nothing more occurs to me at present. I can only say that the Van Buren cause is more prosperous than my most sanguine expectations could have anticipated.

WILLIAMSON SMITH

P.S. Excuse bad diction & bad writing as it is written in the Senate while in Session, in part.

W.S.

I omitted to say the reason that Laughlin did not notice the

conduct of Judge [White] at Shelbyville is that he has been drunk for several days, a cursed bad show for an Editor.

W. SMITH

Addressed to Bolivar, Tennessee.

1. At several points the writer inserted words where they had been omitted. At this point he incorrectly inserted the word *it* after *due* instead of before.

2. Thomas Dean of Bedford and Nicholson and Thomas of Maury were members of the legislature. The details of their plan in these two counties have not been learned.

3. Robertson Topp, a Memphis lawyer, represented Shelby County in the General Assembly, 1835-39. A former resident of Columbia, he became a Whig leader in West Tennessee, where he was a prominent and wealthy businessman.

4. John Miller, Iredell D. Wright, and Miles Vernon were all members of the legislature from East Tennessee.

5. Humphreys lost the bet. White electors carried Fayette County by a vote of 886 to 879.

FROM HENRY HORN

Philadelphia. October 22, 1836

Although he knows that Haywood County is not in Polk's district, he asks for the name of some reputable lawyer from that county to whom he can entrust the collection of some debts there. He rejoices that Joel B. Sutherland has been defeated.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Clinton Mi[ssissippi] Oct 27th 1836

I am detained here waiting to close a trade which [M.A.] Price has made for a part of the line from Jackson to Natchez. He sold choice of 4 Teams out of 5 at \$700 pr Team and an old worn out coach at \$300 to be paid for by carrying the mail to 1st of January next and an accepted Bill to me for \$1920 payable 1st March next. The sale I think a good one as far as it goes, and would be glad to sell for Price & Co from Port Gibson to Natchez on the same terms, and the property below is much

better and expenses lighter. I find a very great loss of property here in the month of July and but little relief since Corn is worth in this neighborhood \$2 pr bushel, and gather it in the field. I would be glad indeed to wind up the business of Walker, Caruthers & Co to 1st of August and put up with the loss, if I must do so, but I cannot. Price never would have operated below Columbus, without my being interested in profit or loss, and I do not believe he will make what will pay him for his trouble. He has however upon Mr. Kendall's worst constructions answered me a valuable purpose and I must take care to save him, and do the best I can for myself &c. Price has fair & full possession of the lines, and is no further bound than to 1st January next. If Mr. Kendall's mails are carried after that time in this country *he pays for it*. My determination is as soon as I can with any safety get out of the business fully & clearly to do so. I have no desire to operate for any P M G whose sole aim is to build up his own reputation and utterly disregards the sufferings and losses of those who are faithfully and arduously serving the public. I confess that I do not understand the Department, but I am preparing for any contingency. If I find Mr. Kendall strictly pursuing the law & individually desirous of seeing equity prevail, I can have no other than a feeling of respect for him. Whatever his decisions may be they are indeed hard to be patiently [. . .] with.

I have procured the affidavits of all the agents proving that mail has averaged more than three times the weight since the 1st of July 1834 to what it was up to that time sustained by the certificates of every Post Master on the road and I am informed that your friend Mr [John F. H.] Claiborne (who our agents say is a first rate man) will make a statement of fact within his own knowledge that will be of much service to us. I have taken the certificates of the agents as to the actual expenses & losses in the month of July. This is all the proof I can obtain on that point unless their account would be regarded as evidence. The only matter I think hard of Mr. Kendall about is the decision as respects operations since the 1st of July. About this I may hereafter be better satisfied. I shall go up the river from Natchez, and in Arkansas endeavor to know how to operate with Yell to whatever extent I can be assured will be

profitable, from there to my plantation & to Pontitoc. I cannot possibly reach home before you leave. The condition of my family renders it a little uncertain when I can leave home for Washington. I shall leave home for Washington as soon as I can feel satisfied to do so, determined to make a fair effort to get what I think we are equitably entitled to. If my application to Congress fails I must put up with the misfortune, endeavor to find more profitable employment and be cautious how I get into such scrapes.

I think Mississippi politics are uncertain; the upper part of the state is for Van Buren, here White is the Strongest. The vote of the State is uncertain—chances for V.B. When I next see you this vexed question will be settled and I hope we shall have more quiet times, and things to go on their merits.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Columbia. This letter is blotted badly and is very difficult to decipher.

FROM WILLIAM FREDERICK McREE¹

Dear Sir

Princeton N.J. Oct 29th 1836

While the leisure of a short time offers I shall take the privilege to address you a letter, not that *I flatter myself* you are wishing to hear from me, but because I have some news of the political affairs of this state which may be of some interest to you & as I am going to address you it will save me the bestowal of a small favor from you & that is, I wish you upon the reception of this letter to have the Tenn. Democrat sent to me immediately. I have not seen a Tennessee paper since I came to the State & you may know how much I desire to get it. Have my name subscribed & I will have it paid for some time next year & you will oblige your friend W.F.M.

In the first place I will tell you how it happens I have so much mingled with politics since I came to New Jersey. The vacation in the Seminary has now been four weeks, which time I have spent mostly in the country with a cousin of mine Mr. Cruser,² who has twice represented this cty. in the State Legis-

lature & three years Sheriff. He runing for council on the democratic ticket. I have been at the elections & State convention to nominate Congressmen & Electors for the Democratic party. From what I can learn, I tell you Van Buren must get N.J. by 4000 majority. I have relations here at the head of the Democracy in two counties & the gentleman I now spend the vacation with is one of the first men I knew in any country.

I will tax you with reading a short history of my own humble political course & present opinion in relation to the politics of the day. When the mind comes to a conclusion it is ever loath to retract. When Judge White first came before the people a candidate for Pres. from his former course in life being born in the same cty. N.C. raised in the same state with myself, I was decided for him yet knowing my limited acquaintance with the politics of our country I was silent to some digree. Hearing your speech at the memorable dinner at Moresville together with my suspicion of a matter which I now firmly believe, that *Judge White* came to Columbia at the time he did to injure you, "*set me on the fence.*" After that sometimes for diversion & information I opposed individuals enthusiastic for any one. Since I came here I have taken the time to examine & study with some deliberation the lifes of the three candidates for Pres. I have been to New York City & West Point & have had frequent chances to converse with individuals personally know to M. Van Buren. Now I am decided for Van Buren & would have been long since had I been sensible of the true character of the man, for his principles are certainly those which we both must love.

Gen. Harrison was in Princeton the day of commencement, telling the people he got from N.J. one of the best of *wives*. The imbecile old man!! if possible a worse looking chance than the Judge.

But few of my White friends about Columbia have any need to change their opinion of my political sentiments though there is some change, for they would never own me as a White-man, because I advocated your course as honest & independant. My feelings were excited several times by the sneers of some of my associates for the crime of being a Polk man. When I believe it necessary I will applaud what I believe to be right, though

earth & hell should wage a war of extermination. I hope Tenn. is redeeming herself. She is certainly a republican state & will not countenance the runing of sectional candidates to put in an opposition man for Pres. Enough of politics.

Remember me most affectionately to your Dear Mother, Sister Caldwell, the Dr. & your Lady (Mrs. Polk). Tell them my health is reasonable at present, considering about ten days since I had an attact of the dispepsia (my old disease), but will I trust be able to return in two weeks to the Seminary & begin another session with renewed energy. It would be a satisfaction to me to get a letter from you or any of the family at any time.

Except my earnest wishes for your political success, present & eternal happiness.

W. F. McREE

Addressed to Washington.

1. William F. McRee, a native of North Carolina, was studying at the Princeton Theological Seminary. The McRee family had been active in Maury County since the early days of settlement, but William F. McRee's connection with the Maury County family has not been established.
2. Not further identified.

FROM GEORGE W. OWENS¹

Clarksville, Georgia. October 29, 1836

Owens reports that he has been re-elected to the House of Representatives by a small margin. The electoral ticket is still in doubt, partially because Thomas Glascock of Augusta is supporting the anti-Van Buren forces.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A lawyer from Savannah, Georgia who served from 1835 to 1839 in the House of Representatives. He was educated at Harrow and Cambridge in England and read law in London before beginning practice in Savannah.

FROM ALVAN CULLOM¹

Livingston, Tennessee. October 31, 1836

Cullom asks that Polk use his influence to obtain the removal of Thomas Champlin, the postmaster at Livingston. Champlin, he declares, is not only a

violent antiadministration partisan, but uses his office unscrupulously to promote anti-Jackson and anti-Polk politicians.

Addressed to Washington.

1. At this time Cullom was representing Overton County in the General Assembly. Later he served two terms, 1843-47, in the House of Representatives. He became a member of the Washington Peace Conference in 1861.

FROM GREENVILLE COOK

Dr. Sr.

Shelbyville Nov 2, 1836

I received yours in due time, and attended to the various matters mentioned in your letter. The speech of Mr. [Jonas E.] Thomas has done a great deal of good in this part of the political vineyard, and I think will do a great deal more.¹

I have spoken to several of your friends upon the subject of your coming up to the county court, and they all seem anxious for you to come, but you can best judge of the propriety of the measure yourself. Mr. [Theodorick F.] Bradford has been absent for several days on an electioneering campaign, and will very probably address the people here on the day of the county court, and I think if you could be here to answer him, it would be well enough.

At this particular season of the year, money is very scarce in [this] part of the country. I have a good deal of money owing to me, which is not due until the first of January. The state of my finances is very low at this time, and if you can spare one hundred dollars until you return from Washington, I will then be able to refund it.

GREENVILLE COOK

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. After having favored the candidacy of Hugh L. White, Thomas publicly declared that he did not think White could be elected and that henceforth he would support Van Buren.

FROM THOMAS DAVIS

My Dear Sir

Shelbyville Nov. 2d 1836

I recd. yours of the 19th ult. in due time. I have used every exertion to distribute the papers sent from the office of the

Democrat.¹ I have handed them all out and I hope they have had a good effect, tho I am afraid of this County going for White. It appears from Bradfords warm friends they care not for White alone. It is nearly to sustain Bradford. They are well assured if he should get beaten for Election he will be politically dead but if they can Sustain him in this Election perhaps he may rise again. As to your being here on Monday next you will have to answer your own Judgment. Some of your friends think perhaps you had better not come while others think perhaps it would be best for fear Bradford might be here and make a speech and it would be best for you to be here. My own opinion would be your enemies would say you were interfering in the Presidential Election. You can use your own good pleasure. The tickets will be out in due time.

THOMAS DAVIS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This appears to be a reference to the *Tennessee Democrat* of Columbia.

TO A. O. P. NICHOLSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia Nov. 3rd. 1836

I returned from the District on yesterday, & have to attend a barbecue in Bedford on Saturday, and will probably be at Shelbyville at Court on Monday. If I am absent, as I think I shall be, it is vastly important, that you should be here on Monday next, for if we are both absent our opponents will speak. I have heard it said that you were expected in Waynesboro' on that day. I insist upon it that this shall not be. It is all important that you should be here on Monday and on the day of the Election. Our great difficulty will be to get our friends out to the polls. The *White* [fans?] will all be out, and I have heard a report to day, that great efforts are making to bring over many *Williamson men*¹ to vote in Maury, so as to carry this Congressional District for White. That is now a great object with our opponents out of the District. I hope you will return immediately and remain here until the fight is over. If I go to Shelbyville I will endeavour to be here on Tuesday

morning by the time the polls open. As you pass Spring Hill see Dr. McKissick² and impress on him the importance of inducing our friends to attend the polls.

JAMES K. POLK

N.B. I have not seen Thomas or Smith³ since my return, but understand that Smith is off for Mississippi to day. That is bad.

J.K.P.

Presumably addressed to Nashville, although no envelope has been found. Marked "Private," this letter is in the New York Historical Society. It has been published in Parks, editor, "Polk-Nicholson Letters," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, III, 69.

1. This refers to men of Williamson County, a Whig stronghold. Spring Hill, mentioned below, lies in Maury County quite near the Williamson line.

2. Dr. Spivey McKissick, a brother of William McKissick of Bedford County, was an old resident of Spring Hill. He was probably the town's first merchant and served as its first mayor.

3. Jonas E. Thomas and Williamson Smith, Maury County members of the state legislature, had just returned to the county after that body adjourned.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Sir,

Bolivar Ten Nov 4 1836

On the Evening after I addressed you, George Moore sent in the *Sentiment* offered by you on the day of our festivities here.

I feel much gratification at the Result of our proceedings here. All went off well. The best of Results may be anticipated. All were pleased with the speech and many, *very many* who did not turn out now Express their Regrets since hearing the Reports of their neighbours. I feel much confidence that *good* has been done, and that Tuesday next will show it by the votes of the people. Let the vote of our County go as it will, we cannot be *transferred*. I am now Satisfied of that fact.

Genl. Rufus P. Neely¹ is yet in bed, but slowly Recovering. All other friends up. Mrs. Caldwell² has spent the week in the Country, but will Return this Evening. Dr. Hardin³ intending

to preach in town tomorrow Evening & Sunday. My best Regards to Mrs. Polk.

JNO. H. BILLS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Neely was a cousin of James K. Polk. His mother was Louisa Polk, daughter of Ezekiel Polk and sister of Samuel Polk. Neely was born in Maury county but moved in 1821 to Hardeman county. A Democrat in politics, he held various county offices as well as serving as a brigadier general in the militia.

2. This was Lydia Eliza Polk, the sister of James K. Polk and wife of Dr. Silas M. Caldwell.

3. Unidentified.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville Nov. 4th [1836]¹

I expect to start immediately after the election and think of going to Smithland to take a Boat.² I am told the Ohio is in good order.

I have but little doubt of a majority in my Congressional District. The Electoral district is doubtful. They will turn out much better in Robertson & Montgomery, where there is a good deal of excitement & where White is the strongest, than in the other Counties.

I hear it said here as coming from the Cheathams that Peyton has written Wise, that you have been abusing him exceedingly & that you will be compelled to fight him a duel or be caned. I expect you had best prepare yourself well. I have no doubt they will undertake any thing and do every thing to get you into a difficulty, and I shall not be surprised, if the same spirit extends to me. I understand they said nothing disrespectful of me at Springfield & abused Van & G and yourself.

Suppose you join me by the mouth & take a steam boat—it is greatly preferable to going to Louisville. If so start immediately after the election. Write me.

C. JOHNSON

Presumably addressed to Columbia, but no envelope has been found.

1. There is no indication of the year in which the letter was written, but internal evidence suggests 1836.

2. Smithland, Kentucky, is located on the lower Ohio River at the mouth of the Cumberland River. Because of the treacherous falls of the lower Ohio during low water, travel upriver usually commenced at Louisville.

FROM SAMUEL MITCHELL

Shelbyville. November 8, 1836

Despite the fact that several hundred Democrats did not go to the polls, Mitchell reports that they carried Bedford County by more than a hundred votes.

Addressed to Nashville and forwarded to Washington.

FROM WILLIAM GAMMON

Dear Sir

Blountville Nov 9 1836

Our elections are over. Believing you would be anxious to hear the result I have thought it advisable to give you the information. The democratic Van Buren & Johnson ticket has gloriously triumphed in old Sullivan, by three to one. White Whigery is now at an end in the county. Our county could vote about 1500 but we have only voted 1200 in this case, nearly the whole White strength voting. We have about 800 of a majority when the whole strength votes. The western counties of Virginia adjoining the state now has succeeded by overwhelming majorities, more than 8 to one. Before I close I will hear from Washington County and Hawkins, both of which I will give you. If I am not greatly mistaken Van Buren will get in East Tennessee from six to eight thousand votes out of twenty or twenty two thousand. I only judge from what I have heard from other counties. I hope your end of the state will give a sufficient majty to insure the election of our candidate. Great exertions have been made in this end of the state by the new born White Whigs to prostrate both Jackson and Van Buren, but every effort so far has been only to sink them lower and lower in the estimation of the common people. The Republican party have this consolation, that if we are beaten it

cant always be the case. Our cause is constantly and rapidly increasing and ere long the Jacksonian republican principal will float once more triumphantly over good old republican Tennessee.

The people of this state are true republicans and will not submit to be duped by such intriguing men as John Bell &c who have apostatized from their party of principles.

I have witnessed with a great deal of delight your successful combats with the new born Whigs, and you have best wishes for your success. . . .

WM. GAMMON

P.S. If yourself and lady pass through this county I would be very happy for you to call and see us.

Sullivan County vote as follows

Van Buren & Johnson	940	
White	302	Vans maj. 638

A glorious vote indeed out of 1242 votes. This is the official return. No doubt now remains in my opinion as to the result of the presidential election. Van is the president in spite of all the double dealings of Whigs.

WM. GAMMON

Give the Editor of the Democrat the vote of this county. Vans Majority in Washington County is between 400 & 500 votes. Van Recd about 1000 votes.

Addressed to Columbia and forwarded to Washington.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL¹

Bolivar, Tennessee. November 10, 1836

McNeal informs Polk that Van Buren has carried Hardeman County and lost Fayette by only six votes. He attributes Van Buren's success to a rally held by Democrats of the county late in October.

Addressed to Washington.

1. McNeal was Polk's first cousin and a brother-in-law of John H. Bills. He had a mercantile business in Bolivar and also engaged in extensive farming.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr. Sir

Bolivar Nov. 11th 1836

I got here last night from Miss. When I got down I found some of the Negroes Sick, and the Overseer. They had made a Tolerable good Crop of Cotton but a very indifferent Crop of Corn. The overseer had got out but about fifteen Bales of Cotton. I discharged him and employed another.¹ I Bot \$500 worth of corn. It will require that amount beside what is made on the place. I had to pay \$150 down which money I had to borrow. The corn is to be paid for on the first of January. You had better write William² to come prepared to pay for the corn. You had better write to him as soon as you [receive] this. He ought [to] be at Bolivar by the 20th of Next month. He ought to start with the Negroes from Haywood on the 22nd. It will take Eight days to move down. *Reuben* is not well. He has had chills & fever this fall. He is willing to come to Tennessee. I think you had better have him Brot up. We will make fifty Bales of Cotton in Miss. I think perhaps some more [of] our Bagging & Rope had got there. *Vanburen* Beat White 73 votes in this County. Got Beat 6 votes in *Fayette*. Other Counties not heard from.

I Start to day to Haywood.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in *Bassett, Plantation Overseer*, 101.

1. The overseer discharged was named Mayo, but the name of the new overseer has not been learned. He was apparently hired on a temporary basis, for he was soon succeeded by George W. Bratton, whose services were acquired through the agency of George Moore.

2. William H. Polk, just turned twenty-one, had made a trade whereby he acquired Dr. Caldwell's share of the Mississippi plantation, thus becoming a partner of his older brother.

FROM GEORGE GAMMON

Mount Pleasant S[ullivan] Cty.

Dr Sir

Nov. 11th 1836

Our election is over the result in the county is as follows: for Van Buren 934 White 302 Maj 632. We confidently claim 200

votes for Van that did not turn out and 95 thorough going Van Buren men in the service by which you will see this county is decidedly and by an overwhelming majority opposed to Whiteism, Federalism, Nullification, Bankism &c. It has been a tedious war but on the 8th every thing was done decently and in good order. I have not the full returns from Washington County but think Van maj. will be about 300 in the latter county. It has been a warm contest & hard fought battle but victory is ours & the Whigs badly whiped. I know but little from Grai[nger] & Hawkins. I encline to think their majority will be lean if we do not succeed. We was unfortunate in the selection of our candidates for electors. The[y] faild to discuss the subject before the people which I have no doubt caused us in these two upper districts to loose over 2000 votes, but still hope, though I fear Van will loose this state.

I wrote several weeks ago but have recd no answer but I know you have been engaged.

Write me soon. You have my best wishes for prosperity. In haste.

GEO. GAMMON

P.S. I have not the official returns but as to this county I am very near correct.

Addressed to Columbia and forwarded to Washington.

FROM THOMAS DAVIS

My Dear Sir

Shelbyville Nov. 12 1836

I wrote you on the 9th Instant to Nashville but through a mistake in the drivers the[y] misplaced the mail bags and took the mail for Nashville on to Fayetteville and did not return back until last evening. Owing to that circumstance you did not receive my letter. I wish you would state this mistake in the mail drivers to the Post office department as there may be information given to the department relative to the mistake [. . .] with it. I enclose you the result of the election in Old Bedford as well as Coffee & Marshall which you will find satisfactory to you I hope.¹ We have heard from Lincoln which gives

Van buren a majority of 727. The vote was Vanburen 1479 White 752. Franklin has done likewise. Vanburen majority 803. Rutherford, White a small majority. I have not heard from any other County but I hope all will do likewise. In fact I am almost persuaded that Mr. Vanburen will get the State of Tennessee. I hope so. Write me how the East are when convenient, and accept my best wishes for your success.

THOMAS DAVIS

NB. The White folks has mighty long faces not excluding Theo. F. Bradford. He is beaten. Our man [William H.] Wisener has almost disappeared. Steel² has not been in town since the election, poor fellow.

T. D

Addressed to Washington.

1. This enclosure has not been found.

2. Both Volney H. Steel and Carlo D. Steel were active in politics in Bedford County and it is not certain which one of them is meant here.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My Dear Sir

Louisville [Kentucky] Novr 14, 1836

It is certain that Ohio and Indiana have gone for Harrison. The contest in Pennsylvania has been unexpectedly close. The Whigs claim the state. I have just conversed with Penn the Editor of the Advertiser, who thinks the state has gone for V. Buren. He says the Whig's claim a majority from the Counties heard from of 7,243, (though he has not confidence in the accuracy of their information) whilst the majority given to the V.B. ticket in October in the Counties not heard from was 9,739, so that if V.B. has not lost in those Counties, he will still carry the State by a small majority. I will drop you a line from Cincinnati where I will probably hear the result with certainty. Nothing of consequence has been heard from Illinois & Missouri. No doubt however seems to be entertained but that those states have gone for V. Buren. Only 4 Counties from Western Va. heard from, in which the vote is about as heretofore in the same counties.

I reached this to night at dark and will take a Boat for Cincinnati in the morning.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN¹

Dear Sir

Louisville Nov. 15th 1836

The information this morning is that V. Buren has carried Pennsylvania by about 6,000. I have seen a letter from a Whig at Pittsburg giving it up by about that majority. Confirmatory [to] this, a paper printed at Washington Pennsylvania gives the actual returns from all but 13 Counties—V. B. 3,000 ahead, and of the 13 Counties to be heard from but one has been heretofore a Whig County. I will learn the certain result at Cincinnati and write you.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Nashville, but no envelope has been found. The letter is in the New York Public Library.

1. The letter was probably written to Samuel H. Laughlin of Nashville and enclosed with the letter from Polk to Laughlin of November 14, 1836. The envelope carrying the letter of the 14th was postmarked November 16 at Louisville. This would have afforded Polk the opportunity to enclose the letter of November 15. This also would explain the absence of an envelope for the second letter. Apparently, Polk was anxious to confirm his earlier hopes for Van Buren's success in Pennsylvania.

FROM WILLIAM GILCHRIST

Dr Sir

Shelbyville Novr 16th 1836

I have just reached home & the only public news is the result of the election for president & vice president in your district & the adjoining Counties, which you will no doubt have heard before this reaches you. It is however truly Gratifying to every friend of Jacksonism & Republicanism.

No news has reached us from any adjoining State.

The object of this letter is to say to you that our mutual

friend Wm J Whitthorne has reached Farmington & intends residing hereafter in Lewisbourg, the County Cite for Marshal County; also that he is very anxious to receive the appointment of postmaster at that place.¹ I need not say anything to you about him; he is well known to you. If no other applications are made to you, claiming your attention or promise, I hope you will advocate his claims before the Post Master General & have him appointed.

I passed through Mississippi during the election for president &c. I have no doubt it will be for V Burin. Arkansas is more than safe. Permit me to say to you & my friend Yell, that I have purchased property in Pulaski County Arkansas & expect to move my hands there this Winter; also that I have purchased a Block of Lots in Little Rock & will be a citizen of that place in 12 months from this time. Please write to me & tell Yell to do the same.

WM. GILCHRIST

Addressed to Washington.

1. Abner Houston received the appointment of postmaster over Whitthorne.

FROM ZADOCK MOTLOW¹

Lynchburg, Tennessee. November 20, 1836

Motlow asks Polk to investigate the possibility of gaining compensation from the government for an old claim by his father that arose from Indian depredations.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Zadock Motlow was one of five brothers who moved with their mother to Lynchburg about 1810. The mother, Agnes Motlow, was a widow of a Revolutionary War veteran.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Bolivar, Tennessee. November 21, 1836

Bills urges Polk to support Samuel McNeal¹ for postmaster at Ripley, Mississippi.² He says that he raised McNeal in the post office at Bolivar and that McNeal is now permanently settled as a merchant at Ripley.

Addressed to Washington.

1. McNeal was a younger brother of Bills's wife and of Ezekiel P. McNeal.
2. Although Ripley was in a different state it was only a short distance from Bolivar.

FROM ADLAI O. HARRIS

My Dear Sir

Columbia 22 Nov 1836

I hand you herewith the Letter of Authority for \$5000 as requested at Nashville.

We get Election returns very slowly at this place. Have not heard from all the counties of the state yet. 47 or 48 counties give White a majority of a little over 7000 votes.

We have official returns from six counties only in Alabama, in each of which Van Buren gets majorities and some of them very large. In Jackson County for instance the vote stood for V.B. 1228 White 58. In three precincts in this county not heard from, the difference will no doubt be about the same proportion.

Pennsylvania seemd lost for a few days since the Western Counties gave Harrison such large majorities that the White folks here exulted beyond measure, but the last day or two has brought us news that changes their tone very much. The majorities for VB at the East end of the state, have completely changed the tables on them.

William [H. Polk] calculates on going to the District in a few days—so soon as some monied arrangements can be made for him, & this I hope to effect for him at Nashville on Friday, next, the 25 Inst.

Nothing new here. The Cotton market has sustained itself remarkably well this season until about the 10th Inst. The sales from the 8th to the 16th inclusive were at a decline of about 1¢ reducing Tennessees from 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ to about 15 $\frac{3}{4}$. The Money Market at N. Orleans was improving & may be said to have been in quite a healthy state at our last date.

Our Banks are still lockd. up here as to business. The favourable change at N. Orleans will I hope find its way up here.

My best respects to Mrs. Polk. Please write me as frequently as you may have a leisure moment not otherwise appropriated.

A. O. HARRIS

Addressed to Washington.

FROM RICHARD WARNER

Fishing Ford, Tennessee. November 22, 1836

A Bedford County political friend urges Polk to support an enclosed petition for reimbursement for men who were called to military duty by the governor of Tennessee during recent months,¹ even though the men were not accepted for actual service. He also asks Polk to expedite a change in the postal route between Shelbyville and Chapel Hill.

Addressed to Washington.

1. The enclosure has not been found.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My dr Sir:

Nashville Nov. 24 1836

The Whigs have by petty [. . .] much disappointed their friends here. For days, they believed Harrison had recd the vote of Penna, & even yesterday lists were made to this effect. They came out fairly and *anxiously* for Harrison, not mentioning White, save in reproach for his weak and sickly effort, even at home. Last night's mail brought the Pennsylvania news in the Whig papers, and to day all is flat despair. A change is shortly to come over us, judging from the tone and temper manifest in reference to Judge White.

Of the Union Press I spoke to you my anticipations—viz—that very soon the sole proprietor and Editor of a paper published four times each week, would leave it to chance, for some three weeks, when it would cease to be published, as no one would pay the charges and edit the paper. That time has occurred, & Mr. [James] Gwin assures me a sale must take place, & *shall*. He has the power to force a sale in some shape. All the friends have become convinced of this necessity. How it can be managed it is impossible to say at present. There will be no difficulty it is believed on the score of purchasers. An Editor must be sought out. My thoughts, and yours, of course must rest with ourselves. It is a sore affliction with me to give up a man for such an infirmity, but a tri-weekly paper requires management hardly within the compass of any man poor as our fr[ien]d L[oughlin] even were he capable in all respects, & of

other habits. Mr. L. is unfit for the finance department when sober, & with his intemperance is unfit for any duty, save now and then to write. Look about you for an Editor & say to Mr. Grundy to do so. Such a person may be needed shortly, & I think surely will be by Christmas.

Of the Courts: A circuit of Tennessee, Illinois, Missouri, & Arkansas, would be in accordance to the Circuit about to be established in Mr. [John Quincy] Adams's time¹ and would be satisfactory to us, I should think. I would like to know Judge [John] McLean's wishes and views on the matter. He no doubt would not be willing to have the three large and old States of Ten., Ken., & Ohio, (with perhaps Michigan added,) in his circuit, if he could get Indiana substituted for Tennessee. In this State he has two courts to hold, & is very sore of the East Ten. duties. From any part of the Ohio, or from here, a Judge could go by *water* much more conveniently to St. Louis, to Little Rock, or to opposite Vandalia, & out by Stage, than to go to Knoxville from Cincinnati. Ohio, Kentucky, & Indiana, will make a very compact circuit, but of entire *land* travel. I would prefer much Tennessee, instead of Indiana, so far as travelling is concerned. Ala. Missi. & Louisiana, must form a circuit & it will have a very heavy business. Arkansas must be attached to the northern, were the States of Inda., Ill., Mo., & Arks., to form a circuit, and it would be just as mis-shapen as if Ten. were substituted for Inda.² Whereas, the Mississippi river will connect Tennessee much better than Inda. with the new circuit. I should like you or Mr. Grundy would consult Judge McLean on the subject—the Arkansas, Mo. & Ills. representation of course you will.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Washington.

1. The Judiciary Act of 1807 extended the circuit court system to Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio through creation of the Seventh Circuit. As new states joined the union from the Mississippi Valley, however, they were not immediately given circuit courts presided over by justices of the Supreme Court. Instead, district court judges assumed the responsibilities of the circuit courts. In 1826 the Adams administration, at the urging of Western spokesmen in Congress led by Hugh Lawson White, proposed creation of three new circuits in the West with an increase of Supreme Court justices to ten. The

effort faltered in the Senate when antiadministration forces, under the leadership of Van Buren, refused to accept what they considered a patronage plum for the administration.

2. Western demands for circuit-court reform were finally met in the waning days of the Jackson administration. With the election of Van Buren guaranteeing four more years of Democratic rule and the appointment of Democratic judges, the administration supported the Judiciary Act of 1837. The act mapped out new circuits throughout the country, providing three in the Mississippi Valley. The new Western circuits were similar to those proposed by Catron:

7th Circuit—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan.

8th Circuit—Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri.

9th Circuit—Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas. Jackson appointed Catron to fill the new position on the Supreme Court from the 8th Circuit.

FROM WILLIAM MARTIN

Nashville. November 28, 1836

Martin informs Polk of his desire to obtain the position of postmaster at Franklin. He also denies reports that he is unfit for office.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia Nov 29th 1836

As Mother wishes to enclose a letter to Aunt *Sally*,¹ she has given me permission to write you a few lines. Politics has been the only subject of conversation since you left. For a short time your *particular* "White" friends about town had the ascendancy; Pennsylvania was reported to have gone for *Harrison* and of course they (Genl. Brown² and such others) laid *old White* on the *shelf* and shouted *Huzza* for the "Hero of the Under garment."³

SAML. P. WALKER

The Boot is now on the other leg.

Addressed to Washington.

1. This refers to Sarah Polk, the wife of James K. Polk and sister-in-law of Jane Maria (Polk) Walker.

2. Allen Brown was a resident of Maury County and a brigadier general in the Tennessee militia.
3. The significance of this phrase has not been learned.

FROM WILLIAM BOBBITT

Dear Col. Binton¹ [Tennessee] November 30th 1836

Nothing of great interest has occurred here since you left. I have no apology to offer for not writing sooner than the effect produced by the false statements of the opposition prints, claiming for Harrison Ohio, Penn. Indiana &c &c which you may imagine produced an effect more easily felt than described. On the strength of the supposed triumph in Penn. of Whiggery over Democracy I am told the Anties in Columbia got drunk on Champaign, & finding out the next day their sad mistake, they Cooled off on Whiskey!

Our state is already ashamed of what she has done and if she had it to try over I hazzard nothing in the assertion that Van Buren would get the vote of Tenn. One thing is certain, & I am fully satisfied from recent developments in Middle Tenn. that the days of the great J____B____ are numbered. The big Gen. A____B____² in his great shagrin told me to day that as things had turned out he would be d____d if he did not wish Van Buren had got this state.

You will please, if you have not already done so, direct the [President's] Message to:³

Danl. E. Slayden	Wm Edmonson Esqr.
Saml Woody Senr	Eli Hope
Lemuel Thomas	Capt M. H. Mays
Col T. G. Hunter	Maj. J. W. Weatherspoon
Capt. S. Skelly	Eli Dodson
Robt. A. Reaves	George Tate
Capt. Jos. A. Reaves	Moses Holms
Jas. Coughran Esqr.	Doc. John Fly
Capt. Jas. Fox	Abner Brooks
Ishmael Stephens Esqr	Jno. Robison
W. D. Williams Esqr	Andw. Baker
Sam. Oliphant Esqr	Benj. Johnson

If you please, write to me as soon as convenient & let me know how the U.S. Senate stands with regard to the Administration & whether Benton's Expunging Resolution will pass this session. I desire nothing more than that the "Old Chief's" sun may set a cloud.

If it will be no inconvenience to you to forward me the Congressional Globe you will confer an obligation and I shall at all times feel disposed to reciprocate the favor & refund the money as soon as your return.

WILLIAM BOBBITT

Addressed to Columbia and forwarded to Washington. The forwarding address is in the handwriting of Andrew C. Hays, postmaster at Columbia.

1. Bobbitt probably meant Benton instead of Binton.
2. These probably refer to John Bell and Allen Brown.
3. This list of names was probably sent to Polk at his own request. On the envelope Polk made a notation, "Direct to the names marked thus X to Snow Creek, Maury County, Tennessee." Three names, Slayden, Williams, and Oliphant, were not so marked. It would seem that Polk was seeking to take advantage of the recent show of friendliness in a part of the county where he had not been particularly strong.

FROM WILLIAM ARMOUR

Jackson, Tennessee. December 1, 1836

In order to plan his business affairs, Armour wants to know whether the law distributing the government surplus and providing for deposit of government funds in state banks will be amended during the next session of Congress. While opposing distribution because it gives too much of the federal surplus to the Northern states, Armour believes the deposit provision necessary to the health of the cotton-exporting business in Tennessee.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD

My dear Sir Raleigh, [North Carolina] 2 Dec 1836

Do me the favor to procure without delay a certificate of the Post Master General to prove that the persons whose names are underwritten are Post Masters & the date of their appointment. The certificate must contain the fact that they are now post masters & when appointed. If the fact be not so let it set forth

the date of their resignation & the date of acceptance thereof at Department. I wish a separate certificate for each one & although it will cost something I desire that you will send them to me by *Express Mail* & call on [Bedford] Brown to pay the *postage*. Between us there are no political secrets. These men are members of our Assembly and if post masters they are disqualified to serve. Fortunately they are all opposed to us in politics & my purpose is to have them *ousted*.¹ Of course the certificates will be made without naming me and I will give them a proper direction.

I do not address B Brown directly because I am not sure he has reached W. City.

Pray do not delay an hour as every thing may depend on a speedy reply to this letter.

Alfred Dockery—P.M. Dockery's Store Richmond Co N.C.

**Edmund Jones*—P.M. Fort Defiance Walker Co N.C.

James M.D. Carson P.M. Green River Rutherford Co N.C.

Meshack Pinkston P.M. Jersey Settlement Rowan Co N.C.

John Clayton P.M. Mill River Buncombe Co N.C.

Wm Harris P.M. Narrowsville Montgomery Co. N.C.

W. J. T. Miller P.M. Poplar Row Rutherford Co N.C.

**Edmund Jones* may appear on Books to be *Edward Jones* but look to the *Bond* and you will see it is *Edmund*.

It is not necessary to take a whole sheet for each p m. I presume a separate certificate for each of 4 may be written on one Sheet to save postage.

I am sick to day & nearly broken down in the service. But help me as requested above & we will give you another & good account of us in N.C. *I wrote to you at Columbia*. Mrs H. joins me in kind remembrance to Mrs Polk. Show this letter to Brown. Act promptly for there is no time to lose & keep secrets.

[WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD]²

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVII, 265-266.

1. The North Carolina Constitution provided that men who held other public offices of trust or profit could not be members of the state legislature. Haywood thought that this tactic would weaken the Whigs but when the Whigs counterattacked with their own charges of dual office holding, the Democrats subsided.

2. The signature has been torn away but a notation on the envelope identifies Haywood as the writer.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

New Haven, Connecticut. December 2, 1836

Olmsted notifies Polk that funds deposited with him to defray expenses of Samuel W. Polk are overdrawn, partially because of the purchase of a supply of winter clothing, and asks that an additional \$200 be sent him as soon as possible.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JACOB GREER

Bedford County. December 3, 1836

In a long and often rambling letter, Greer discusses the evolution of his political attitudes from being a strong supporter of Jackson to endorsing Hugh Lawson White. He notes that although he still supports Jackson, he has become disenchanted with Van Buren, Carroll, and Cannon, believing White to be the only man, along with Polk, who retains a true sense of the original Jacksonian movement. Greer pointedly reminds Polk that in the 1833 contest for the House of Representatives he supported Polk against Theodorick Bradford, but that the Democratic party never properly rewarded him for that support.

Addressed to Washington. This letter is a copy forwarded by Greer to Polk at the end of December 1836. The original has not been found.

FROM JESSE SPEIGHT

Stantonsburg, North Carolina. December 3, 1836

Speight explains that bad weather and illness have delayed his arrival in Washington and says that he should be there in about a month. He is pleased that Van Buren carried North Carolina but fears that Tennessee will go for White.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM H. W. K. MYRICK¹

St. Augustine, Texas. December 8, 1836

Having arrived in Texas safely with his party, Myrick wishes to know the attitude of Jackson and of Congress toward annexing Texas. He says that sentiment among Texans is overwhelmingly in favor of joining the United States and predicts that the man responsible for such an arrangement will gain strong support among them.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Myrick had been postmaster at Mooresville just prior to his departure for Texas. He was a strong Polk adherent.

FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT¹

Dear Sir,

Jackson [Tennessee] Decr. 10th, 1836

It seems our White friends are not disposed to submit quietly to their late beating. I discovered they were making arrangement to commence a hot [. . .] upon Mr. Van Burens administration. And in this place the leaders of them possess an abundant share of the old Judges cunning malignaty. With these impressions and having learned from experience, that they were enabled to carry this state at the last elections by getting possession in advance of the most influential newspapers in the state, I have purchased the paper printed here entitled "The Truth teller,"² and the next number will issue as edited by James L. Talbot,³ my nephew. I had to pay a very high price, \$3500 for a printing establishment worth about \$500. But as it had a patronage and I believed I could extend it, I thought it better policy to purchase it, than to attempt setting up an opposition press. By the purchase I have no opposition, and have those of whom I purchased bound to set up no paper here for the next ten years. In this matter I have no personal interest, and individually expect to gain nothing from Mr. Van Buren. But I think I have a right to call upon my political friends to sustain me, by subscriptions, contributions and what patronage they may have fairly at their disposal. You are aware that in this County our party are a very small minority, and attempts will be made to break me down at the start, by setting up an opposition paper and should they succede in making the estab-

lishment a losing business, while I am saddled with the high price I have given for it, I should indeed be in a woful condition for a man of my moderate fortune. Under these circumstances I hope you will pardon me for this appeal. If the Government have any printing to be done in this country the central position of this place ought of itself to give it preference. At present the *Memphis Gazette*⁴ prints the laws of Congress, but I am told that press is about to sink, if it has not already gone down. They have not issued a number for the last 6 weeks. For the last two years I have had to stand up here almost alone. The few who were on my side in the place being merchants, were unwilling to identify themselves to any extent, lest it might "injure their business." And I feel sensible I must look for support elsewhere, until ours becomes the strong side, then I will have plenty of friends. I have marked this confidential. You can show it to our political friends [Cave] Johnson and Grundy.

JOS. H. TALBOT

P.S. By my Nephew assuming the editorial chair, he has resigned the office of Post Master, and two very worthy as well as needy citizens are getting up recommendations, Mr. Darby and Mr. Wood.⁵ The latter I would like to have it, because the White party have thought it advisable to make it a party question, and by that means procure a recommendation of more names for Mr. Darby, as that party are the majority in Town. Some of them before they got [. . .] solicited Mr. Wood to apply and then either authorized their signatures or signed the other paper. You can say to Mr. [Amos] Kendal that I vouch for Mr. Wood being as well qualified as the other applicant, he is my political friend, and as he has been treated badly by some I feel interested he should get it.

JOS. H. TALBOT

Addressed to Washington and marked "Confidential."

1. A prominent lawyer in Jackson, he was the son of Eli Talbot of Williamson County. He served as circuit court clerk for Madison County from 1836 to 1840. In addition, he was active in militia affairs, holding the rank of colonel.

2. The *Truth Teller* was an antiadministration paper edited by James H. McMahon, who sold his interest in the enterprise to fight in the Seminole War. The paper retained its name under the editorship of Talbot.

3. James L. Talbot was a lawyer and farmer in Jackson. After serving as editor of the *Truth Teller* he became prominent in county affairs, serving as a director of the Jackson branch of the Union Bank of Tennessee and a trustee of West Tennessee College.

4. Edited by Pendleton G. Gaines, the pro-Jackson paper ceased publication in 1838.

5. Robert J. Chester, a close friend of Andrew Jackson and Democratic stalwart in West Tennessee, received the appointment of postmaster. In August 1838 he was replaced by Moses Wood, who held the office until 1841. Both Wood and James V. Darby, a young immigrant from Virginia, were selected to serve as entry takers for the Madison County court.

TO CALEB CUSHING

Dear Sir

Washington City Decr 16th, 1836

I accept with much pleasure your esteemed present of "Reminiscences in Spain" and "Review of the late Revolutions in Europe,"¹ and beg to assure you that it will give me equal pleasure to give to an acquisition so valuable, as will an account of the merit of the works themselves, as the high estimation in which I hold the author personally, a place in my library. With the tender of my thanks, for this mark of regard. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This is a copy in Polk's handwriting.

1. Cushing was the author of two books that were published in 1833: *Reminiscences of Spain*, and *Review Historical and Political of the Late Revolution in France*.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother

New Haven Dec 17th 1836

I received your letter yesterday,¹ to which I now give an answer. Prof. Olmstead received the draft you sent and will write to you as soon as he has an opportunity of conversing with James Walker.² In your letter you mentioned that my expenses at the North had been greater than was anticipated before I left home. And lest there is some mistake about my spending more money than you think I should, I will try if I cannot give a satisfactory explanation.

That I should limit my expenses, to as small a sum as will make me comfortable, and respectable, and at the same time not stinting myself to much, I acknowledge. I ask for no more. Now what is necessary to render me respectable and comfortable? Some of the students can make themselves respectable and comfortable, without spending any money almost. That is they can pass through the collegiate course, with \$200 or 300 a year. Others will spend an unreasonable sum. That I have pursued neither of these courses—have been neither extravagant or economical will I think appear evident from my expenses.

That I have spent from \$800 to 1000 this year, I cannot conceive, unless my travelling expenses are taken into account, which certainly should not be. That is, these should not [be] considered in my yearly allowance. My travelling expenses have I believe been this year from \$150 to 200, which if taken from \$800 will leave six hundred. If you will say that six hundred dollars is a greater sum than a college *boy* should spend annually, you cannot certainly know what my necessary annual expenses should be. When I received your letter, I immediately went to Prof. Olmstead to enquire what I had spent this year, and he informed me, that during this year you had sent him drafts to the amount of \$800. And he also said that a part of this sum was taken to settle my debts, not for this year, but for the last; and that taking this and my travelling expenses from the \$800 would leave about \$600, which he did not think was greater than I should spend yearly and appear respectable, including board in vacations. And to remain here (in itself not very agreeable) with less than \$600 each year, a small allowance, when every thing is considered, I am unwilling to consent to.

I felt as much in duty bound not to pass beyond reasonable limits in my expenses, when I imagined that my expenses did not in the least diminish my own personal estate, as I do now, knowing that half or more than half of the money I spend here, must be drawn from my own individual estate. If I am to stay here and finish my collegiate course I expect not to be denied a sufficiency (even if it all should come from my own *pockets*) to defray my expenses, should they not prove unreasonable; which I cannot think has been the case. Since I left home, I do not think that what I have spent should cause complaint, therefore

I have thought it best to explain the matter, and if I should not explain it satisfactorily, you have to decide what course to pursue.

I hope you will not consider that I have presumed to much in this letter but consider me as expressing my mind plainly and with freedom.

I will answer Sister Sarah's letter the first leisure time I have.

SAMUEL W. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. This letter has not been found.

2. James H. Walker, second son of James Walker of Columbia, was a student at Yale. See Denison Olmsted to Polk, December 19, 1836, for events surrounding Walker's academic career.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother

George Moore's¹ December 17th 1836

I received your letter this morning,² it having been forwarded to Bolivar. I have seen *Dr. Caldwell*, and conversed with him concerning the division;³ it is my opinion that we will settle without any difficulty. He seems disposed to act upon equitable principles. I have him to understand, in the outset, that he must toe the mark of justice, and that nothing else would satisfy me. I showed him the directions which you gave me, which will I have no doubt influence him in the division.

George Moore and Mr Walker had employed a man to attend to our business, before I got down. He comes highly recommended, and Moore knows him personally, he having attended to buisness the present year for Natl. B. Smith who lives at Uncle Billy's old place.⁴ Moore says, and I trust somewhat to his judgement, that he has made Smith a fine crop and is a study [steady] man, on whom we can with safety rely.

Myself and Dr. will go into a division of the property on Monday next. The Negroes will all start on the day after Christmas. I will start with the Dr two days before the *hands* so as to make the necessary arrangements for them by the time they get

there. *Eve* will not be able to go with the ballance of the hands. I will leave her behind and make some arrangement to have her carried down as soon as she is able. I will remain in Mississippi until I see every thing properly under headway. I will take *Reuben* home with me, and leave *Julius*, keeping him at [. . .] rates for *hire*. You may rest assured that I will do everything in my power to have things carried on in a proper manner.

I am decidedly in favour of your getting Judge Yell, to purchase for us, a plantation if it can be done in a good *Cotton region*.⁵

I will write you again as soon as I arrive at the Plantation. The people seem all to be much gratified at Mr V.B.'s election.

Give my love to Sister Sarah.

WM. H. POLK

P.S. Your Negroes, all seem willing to go to Mississippi.

BILL

Addressed to Washington. Except for the last few lines this letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, 102-103.

1. George Moore had been living in Fayette County. This letter indicates that he had either moved to Hardeman County or lived in the extreme eastern part of Fayette, near the Hardeman County line. This letter was posted at Bolivar.

2. This letter has not been found.

3. It will be remembered that Caldwell and William H. Polk had recently made a land trade by which Caldwell gave up his share in the Mississippi plantation.

4. The man employed was George W. Bratton. Smith is not otherwise identified. The Uncle Billy was probably William Wilson Polk, a son of Ezekiel Polk.

5. See Archibald Yell to Polk, October 19, 1836.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

Dear Sir,

Yale College Dec 19 1836

I requested your brother to inform you of the safe arrival of yours of the 10th (enclosing a check for 200 dollr. on his account) as I wished to see James Walker¹ before I wrote. I have sent him a particular request to call & see me at two different times but I have not yet had an opportunity to communicate

your message. Probably having learned from his brother what the purport of it is, and determined not to go to Washington, he thinks it will be unnecessary to come to see me. He has for a long time shown a singular aversion to society, scarcely speaking to any one even of his most familiar friends. This in connexion with some other things led us to fear a few weeks since that his mind was not perfectly sound. I have had several interviews with him however, & could never discover the least sign of mental aberration. He was determined to leave college & instead of asking for a dismissal adopted such a course of treatment towards his Tutor as he thought would ensure his object. The faculty would not inflict any censure upon one whose sanity they had the least reason to doubt, but directed that his father be requested to withdraw him. He is now at a private room near by and appears to be much improved in his appearance but is still little inclined to society. On receiving a letter from his brother² a few days since I consulted with his young friends with respect to his going to Washington or returning home. They were of opinion that he would be unwilling to go to Washington, and thought it might be best for him to remain as he is till the arrival of his father.

D. OLMSTED.

Addressed to Washington.

1. James H. Walker, a student at Yale.

2. This probably refers to Joseph Knox Walker, also a student at Yale.

TO JAMES L. EDWARDS

Sir

Washington City Decr 20th 1836

Enclosed is the Declaration of *Samuel Hillis* for a pension, and also the explanatory deposition of *Isaac Rainey*.¹ It is proper to state that Mr *Rainey* died subsequent to the time of making the enclosed deposition, but at what precise period I am unable to state. In the case of Mr *Samuel Hillis*, the former Declaration prepared by him, from the inattention or negligence of the agent who prepared the papers for him, or from some other cause, has failed to reach your office, and he has been

therefore compelled to make a new declaration.² I know him personally. He is a man of fair character, is in very indigent circumstances, & perfectly blind. Should a pension be granted to him, send the certificate to me.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Revolutionary War Pension File S2314 (RG 15), National Archives.

1. A soldier in the Revolutionary War who saw service in North Carolina, he was a resident of Richland Post Office, Giles County, Tennessee.

2. See Polk to Edwards, August 8, 1836.

FROM JAMES L. EDWARDS

Washington. December 23, 1836

Edwards says that a pension has been granted to Samuel Hillis but that the petition of Isaac Rainey,¹ now deceased, cannot be acted upon until his widow legally confirms her relationship to him.

Addressed to the House of Representatives and delivered by hand.

1. See Polk to Edwards, July 31, 1834, August 8, and December 20, 1836; and Edwards to Polk, August 11, 1834.

FROM GEORGE R. POWEL

Dear Col.

Rogersville T. 23rd Dec 1836

Since I last had the pleasure of seeing you at Columbia I have not written you or heard from you except thro' Nicholson who wrote me your family were well.

You doubtless have seen the result of my two Counties in the Presidential contest, and in the Language of the Globe, you have seen I have "Kept the reckoning right." Many of the strongest White men here, now as the Election is over come out for Van & say as he is a Republican & elected they will not captiously oppose his Administration. The Vice President I see will go to the senate, & will be narrowed down to Johnson or Granger. Which will the Judge choose. As Richie¹ says "nous verrons." I predict he will not be found at the balloting. The Intelligencer of yesterday contains an article to this purport, that Mr Forsythe & some others of the cabinet makes the Dismissal of Amos Kendall an indispensable condition to their

coming into the new Cabinet. I give no credit to the report, owing to the source, but you can inform me & also who will constitute the new Cabinet.

I see some speculations in the Banner as to who Mr Grundy will give his vote for for Vice President. As between Johnson & Granger there can be no doubt as to who Tennessee would be for. I can speak for Hawkins & Sullivan. I am convinced that there would be four votes to one for Johnson. Some of our citizens forwarded to the Secrty. of War by our Rep., Col. [Samuel] Bunch, an application for one of my little Brothers to situation at the Military Academy at West Point. Your kind interposition in his behalf would be thankfully received.² Will you please name the subject to Mr Grundy & ask his friendly aid. The Presidents Message I think meets with the cordial approbation of every body here except Interested Partizans.

If you can conveniently send all Genl Jacksons messages from the commencement of his Adm to this time you will oblige me by sending them. Write me who will be in the new Cabinet & the news Generally.

GEO R. POWEL

Addressed to Washington.

1. Thomas Ritchie, editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*.

2. Oliver H. P. Powel was admitted to the United States Military Academy a few months later.

FROM JOHN H. DEW¹

Dear Sir

Carthage Tennessee December 25, 1836

The Presidents Message has been received and attentively and extensively read. I am well pleased with that Executive State paper. I was however, somewhat disappointed; I had expected that he would review [and?] retrospect the principle measures and acts of illustrious and splendid administration. Perhaps he intends presenting to the American people a valedictory at the close of his administration. The "*New born Whigs*" in Tennessee are up in arms against that portion of the message upon the subject of the revenue, and the deposite and

distribution of the surplus revenue. Some of them charge that it is not the work of the old Chief, but the sickly work of the demagogue and Magician Mr. Van Buren. They say no man living ever contended for what the President recommends not to be done, to levy taxes to be distributed among the states. The truth is the opposition were promising themselves the advantage of appropriating the surplus revenue on deposit in the States in splendid works of Internal Improvements; but they now feel satisfied the President has defeated their wild and visionary schemes. The President seems suited and prepared for any and every emergency; and he has never entered his veto upon any measure that has not wilted and died, and advocated any leading measure of public policy that has not prospered and prevailed with people. I am highly pleased with the present prospects. The republican party have sustained themselves and their principles admirably well. Our victory is triumphant & decisive. The past contest will operate as a most valuable lesson to the party in future contests.

Confidential

Already the subject of the Senatorial election before the Legislature of Tennessee in the place of Mr. Grundy is becoming the subject of remark in Middle Tennessee. Some suggest that Mr. G. will be provided for and that you & Col Bell will be put in nomination. Others that Mr. G. will be candidate for reelection and will be opposed by Col. B[ell]. Have you any information of the movements & intentions of the parties upon the subject? If so I should like to be advised of it in time for reasons that are obvious, particularly your own wishes on the subject. Will you suffer your name to be run? is the question I wish to understand and your suggestion shall be confidential. Wilson County is decidedly White & Bell at the present, but my opinion is it can be made to go right if the proper exertions are used in time. I am apprehensive Mr. G. will find it very difficult to get reelected. I will wait your answer & then advise you most particularly why I ask this information of you.

I am now attending the Circuit Court of Smith County, and shall go to Columbia the first of January. I have pretty well determined to remove to & to settle in Columbia. My wife's relations all live there² and she is very anxious and solicitous for the

location and I am inclined to think the practice of Law there can be made respectable. I mean I can obtain a respectable share of it. All things considered I am nearly persuaded to make the experiment. What think you? I will determine whilst there and advise you accordingly.

I should be pleased to receive a regular file of the public speeches & documents from you if arduous duties will permit you the time & trouble. Our immediate Representative^s knowing my opposition to him will I presume as he has heretofore done neglect & overlook me.

You will please at the rise of the present session of Congress pay off my arrearage to the proprietor of the Globe and stop the paper. I have determined to curtail my newspaper expenditures. We have no news, except what you will receive relative to the movements of our troops in Florida & the Texas proceedings. Things augur well for us I think.

Present me very respectfully to Mrs. Polk and all the affectionate regard of my wife both for yourself & Mrs. Polk.

Let me hear from you very soon. Will the President Mr. V. B. after his inauguration will he make an appointment of District Attorney in the place now held by Col [James P.] Grundy. I should like to receive the appointment. Accept assurances of the high regard & esteem. . . .

JNO. H. DEW

Addressed to Washington.

1. Dew was a resident of Wilson County at this time. A lawyer, he served two terms in the General Assembly and was also clerk and master of the chancery court for several years. Not long after this letter was written he moved to Maury County, where he was again elected to the General Assembly. He died in 1844 at the age of 41.

2. During 1836 Dew had married a daughter of Joseph C. Herndon of Columbia.

3. John Bell.

FROM GEORGE R. FALL

Jackson, Mississippi. December 25, 1836

A former resident of Tennessee who had served the Democrats well by editing one of the leading newspapers in Mississippi, Fall asks Polk's assist-

ance in obtaining appointment as United States Marshal for Mississippi. He has recently learned that the incumbent, William M. Gwin, intends to resign.

Addressed to Washington.

TO WILLIAM R. RUCKER

My Dear Sir

Washington City Decr 26th 1836

Since I wrote you last, I have received a letter from Majr. [John W.] Childress, who I suppose is now absent in Alabama, and therefore I do not write to him. He writes me, that in consequence of the neutral position which Wm. G. Childress has occupied he is afraid the V. Buren men in Rutherford are not inclined to take him up.¹ His course was no doubt taken during the rage of *Whitism*, from motives of policy, as well as from his honest convictions before he had a full knowledge of the facts. Having committed himself early, and been elected to the Senate, he probably felt himself bound by his pledges, and found it difficult to change his position. He is now in feeling with us and I have no doubt, will openly and boldly avow his intention to support Mr V. B's administration. No man can probably succeed on our side, who cannot carry a majority in Williamson. To insure success you must therefore look to a Williamson man, and I know of no one, who can so certainly beat all opposition in that County as Childress. If our V. Buren friends in Rutherford would at once take him up, I have no doubt he will run and as little doubt that he will be elected. To run any man in Rutherford, the chances will be greatly against us. But whatever may be [. . .] upon, you ought to act early, and by all means avoid collision and consequent division among our friends. My judgment is, that Childress is our man. He has always been a Jackson man, and I have no doubt, will hereafter act with us as firmly as any man in the State. I hope our friends may agree to unite upon him. Write me what is likely to be done.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. You will of course regard this, as strictly *confidential*, and as intended for your own eye alone.

J.K.P.

N.B. The views and opinions I have given you in this and my

former letters, as such as I am enabled to form at this distance, and from a general knowledge of the existing state of things in your District. Being in the State, you have of course better information that I can have, and [I] would be much gratified to have your views fully.

It should not be known by any one that I have written you on the subject.²

J.K.P.

Addressed to Murfreesboro and marked "Private."

1. This obviously concerns the approaching congressional election. Abram P. Maury was the incumbent.

2. Polk's desire that his letter be kept secret probably stems from the fact that he had made much of the interference of one representative in the district of another. It would therefore be somewhat embarrassing if the opposition found him doing the same thing.

FROM NATHAN GAITHER

Hopkinsville, Kentucky. December 27, 1836

Gaither, a former colleague in the House, rejoices at the recent Democratic victory and congratulates Polk for his political achievements. Knowing that his political enemies have him blocked and believing that Texas will soon be annexed, Gaither asks Polk to use his influence with Jackson to get for him any opening that becomes available there.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Havannah Al. Dec 28th, [1836]¹

I am here attending to the business of my mother in relation to the Estate of her decd. brother.² The whole of the property was sold yesterday and the day before for about \$60,000. I shall set out home tomorrow. My relation John C. Whitsitt³ has addressed you a letter today requesting your attention to some Land investigation. It is a matter of considerable importance to him and you will confer a great favor by giving it some attention. He says he has written you several letters and received no answers. He is an honorable clever man and has an immense in-

fluence in this and several adjoining counties, and you would do well to pay his business some attention if compatible with your own engagements. He says the persons he is contending with will resort to any kind of frauds, and all he wants is a thorough investigation.

JNO. W. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.

1. The year has been supplied on the basis of the content of this letter and of that from Polk to William R. Rucker, December 26, 1836.

2. This is probably Will H. Whitsitt of Demopolis, who had some land dealings with Polk and the Childresses at an earlier date.

3. John C. Whitsitt and Will H. Whitsitt lived in adjoining counties, only a few miles apart.

FROM GEORGE GAMMON

Mount Pleasant [Sullivan County]

Dr Sir

December 28th 1836

Some time has elapsed since I had the pleasure of receiving a line from you although I wrote you some several times previous to the election, but knowing your responsible station and devotedness to Republican men and principals, is a sufficient apology for the omission. You will permit me to congratulate you on the glorious result of the election. It is a victory over a combined coalition of which every Republican and friend of his country has great cause to rejoice. Although one important victory is gained the war is not over, and particularly in Tennessee. Bell and his understrappers will now attempt to do in this state what Calhoun & Clay have done in S. Carolina and Kentucky, viz. to make it an opposition state, and this is what we have now to war against. I know we have a large portion of the leading politicians to contend with. Still I feel strong in the faith of a good cause and I have no doubt but our good cause will prevail.

I understand there are two visitors to West Point to be appointed from Tennessee the ensuing spring. You will permit me to introduce to you my friend Maj John C. Mullay as an applicant for the appointment. This gentleman is the editor of the "Sentinel," published at Jonesbo[ro]. This paper came into

existence as principally on the credit of our party, and I feel assured that my friend in a pecuniary point of view, has been the looser by his connexion with the paper, and has made many sacrifices, and used every exertion to promote the cause for which you and I were struggling. This consideration, with others entitles him to some favours at the hand of the Republican party. I am very desirous that the Sentinel should be continued, and in order that it should be useful, it is altogether important that Maj Mullay should be continued as editor. His circumstances being moderate, and his compensation so small that barely affords him a support and in order to retain his services, I am very anxious that he should have some favours extended to him. He is a young man of promise and fine talents, and the fact too of his having been connected with the higher departments of the Militia for several years would entitle him to some special claims for the situation of a visitor to a military school. My friend has been one among us who has fought and struggled hard for the cause in this section of the country. He has been wickedly and violently assailed by the modern whigs. He has sustained himself and the cause triumphantly which you may discover by the votes in these counties, and in addition he has completely prostrated the old federal Judge Emmerson and his associates, and I have no doubt if Maj Mullay should be so fortunate as to have the appointment conferred on him, he will discharge the duties with fidelity to his country and credit to his friends, and any notice that you may deem proper to bestow on my friend, will be gratefully acknowledged and added to the many favours heretofore conferred. You will please mention this subject to Mr Van Buren, and write me what you think will be the probable result.

GEO. GAMMON

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOHN C. WHITSITT

Havana, Alabama. December 28, 1836

Whitsitt alleges that Thomas J. Kennedy's action in seeking a right of pre-emption to certain lands in Alabama is fraudulent. A resident of Lincoln

County, Tennessee, Kennedy has sold the land to Whitsitt, and after finding that improvements have been made on the land, he is trying to repossess it. Whitsitt urges Polk to send Kennedy's petition to the land office in Tuscaloosa, where the claim has already been denied, before forwarding it to the General Land Office.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. See John W. Childress to Polk, December 28, 1836.

FROM JOHN C. MULLAY

Jonesboro, Tennessee. December 29, 1836

The editor of the *Tennessee Sentinel*, a Democratic paper, asks Polk to help him obtain appointment as a visitor to the United States Military Academy.¹ He has heard rumors that Bell will oppose Grundy for the United States Senate during the next session of the legislature.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See George Gammon to Polk, December 28, 1836.

FROM JACOB GREER

Bedford County. December, 1836¹

Greer encloses copies of four letters, three addressed to Polk and one to Jackson, that he has sent to Washington during the past year. Indicating that he has never received any indication that the originals reached Washington, he asks Polk to acknowledge receipt of these copies.

Addressed to Washington.

1. The day and month of this letter are not legible. Greer probably wrote the letter sometime after December 3, 1836, which is the date of the last enclosure to this letter.

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