From Samuel G. Smith, January 30, 1835

The time is near at hand when the Cherokees [sic] 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.

To Samuel H. Laughlin, April 28, 1835

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.

From Andrew Jackson, May 3, 1835

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.

To Felix Robertson et al., September 26, 1835

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.

From A. O. P. Nicholson, January 31, 1836

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 recall upon the movers of it…. The people are on the lookout and will not be deceived.

From George Gammon, December 28, 1836

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 make it an opposition state, and this is what we have now to war against.
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The correspondence to and from Polk in the years 1835 and 1836 shows his increasing political importance nationally and provides insight into the political struggles, often bitter and personal, of the time. During this period Polk began to receive rewards for his party regularity and loyalty to the Jackson administration. Elected Speaker of the House in 1835, a position he was to hold for four years, Polk presided when the Democratic party was split by southern supporters of slavery against defiant northerners petitioning Congress for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia; by Jackson's preference for Martin Van Buren as his successor against the supporters of Hugh L. White. Polk withstood personal attacks by enemies such as John Bell and Baliey Peyton of Tennessee, Henry A. Wise of Virginia, and the newly established Washington Sun. In the Presidential election of 1836, he seriously endangered his health in his efforts for Van Buren and for harmony in the Democratic party. Although Hugh L. White carried Tennessee, Polk emerged as the Democratic party leader of the state.

Among the important correspondents in the 690 letters of Volume III are President Andrew Jackson, Senator Felix Grundy (Dem., Tenn.), Congressman Cave Johnson (Dem., Tenn.), and the lawyer A. O. P. Nicholson, who helped Polk keep the Democratic party together in Tennessee and who later was elected to the U.S. Senate. Polk's brother-in-law James Walker is also a major correspondent—as a member of the family, as a business associate, and as a keen observer of the Tennessee political scene.

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