Correspondence of James K. Polk

VOLUME IV, 1837–1838
JAMES K. POLK

Painting by Miner K. Kellogg, ca. 1840; photograph of a copy in the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Correspondence of James K. Polk.

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The National Historical Publications and Records Commission
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To
the memory of William C. Binkley,
a master editor
The year 1837 began well enough for James K. Polk and the political cause to which he gave himself so fully. He had ample evidence that Andrew Jackson and fellow Democrats had defeated the corrupting influences of privilege and monopoly. Jacksonians had redeemed the national debt, dissolved the national bank, defused the nullification issue, and provided an orderly transfer of power to Martin Van Buren, leader of the northern branch of the Democracy. For more than two decades General Jackson's highly volatile personality had helped direct the course of political conflict in national affairs. Much to Polk's satisfaction, the United States Senate expunged its 1834 resolution condemning Jackson for removing federal deposits from the national bank. Perhaps in some degree Jackson's retirement to the Hermitage would muffle the shrill din of partisan warfare.

To Polk fell the honor of accompanying former President Jackson on his triumphant return to Tennessee. Always a physically taxing trip, the journey from Washington to Nashville was made exceptionally arduous by numerous and often large crowds of citizenry insistent upon one last demonstration of praise and affection for the General. Polk and his wife Sarah traveled on to Murfreesboro to visit relatives and enjoy a few days' tranquillity. None could have guessed that within a month Jackson's apotheosis would be eclipsed and political strife intensified by the twin alarms of economic collapse and fiscal bankruptcy.

From every section of the country came word of specie suspensions, credit contractions, and business failures. Specie all but disappeared, and state bank notes depreciated well below the rate of acceptable exchange. Panic and retrenchment swept all before it. Producer and trader alike could find neither market nor money. Seemingly, the people and their government would go broke together.

The Panic of 1837 brought the general government to the edge of
insolvency, for not only had business failures curtailed revenues from customs and land sales, but the federal Treasury held nothing but depreciated paper with which to pay its bills. Fiscal operations of the government were forced beyond the pale of law, one notable provision of which required that federal funds be deposited only in specie-paying banks. Faced with the necessity of revising federal deposit laws and securing a legal medium with which to meet governmental obligations, President Van Buren called a special session of Congress to meet in September.

Early on, Polk recognized that the Democracy was vulnerable to the charge that it had led the nation into financial ruin. Although unopposed in his bid for re-election to Congress, he spent two months canvassing his district and explaining the international origins and scope of the depression. He urged his constituents not to embrace Whig pleas for a new national bank financed by a new national debt. Polk upheld his hard-money doctrines as being the only sound basis upon which to order private and public finances. Above all else, he wished to prevent any future erosion of support in his home district; except for a brief period between sessions of Congress, he would be in Washington from September through July of 1838. No matter to what higher office he might aspire, Polk held fast to his political base in Middle Tennessee.

Hard times also brought great political pressure on Tennessee Democrats in other congressional districts and particularly in state elections scheduled for early August. Many of the most popular local figures declined the untimely opportunity of standing for election under the Democratic banner. Senator Felix Grundy and party leaders in Nashville decided to run General Robert Armstrong against incumbent Governor Newton Cannon. Armstrong's campaign strategy proved inadequate, for it represented a thinly veiled attempt to recover the support of John Bell and his splinter faction, which had carried Tennessee for Senator Hugh L. White in the 1836 presidential contest. Polk had his own plan for cultivating the White constituency, but it did not include the likes of Bell and Ephraim Foster. A distinction had to be made between those schismatics who had inspired the anti-Van Buren defection and those who had merely preferred Tennessee's native son. Grundy's rather foolish scheme alienated many loyal Jacksonians and gave the Whig candidate an easy win.

Perhaps Grundy hoped that by playing down party spirit, he could secure support for his re-election to the Senate. A more probable explanation, persuasively set forth by Polk biographer Charles Sellers, may be found in Grundy's and Bell's linkage with state banking
leaders, many of whom feared the election of a hard-money, Van Buren Democrat. Should suspension of specie payments become an explosive issue in the election for governor, public sentiment might solidify against the banks and force revocations of their charters. Armstrong was a safe candidate who could be depended upon to run a quiet campaign. Much to Polk's irritation, the Nashville postmaster went so far as to make an agreement with his opponent that neither would take to the stump. Even the Nashville Union temporized on party issues and provided only the blandest of copy for the Democratic papers following its lead. Apart from running an inept campaign, the Democratic candidate suffered a substantial decline in popularity, the circumstances of which were beyond his control.

In 1836, General Armstrong had been given command of Tennessee volunteers called to help put down Indian uprisings in Florida. The political worth of this high honor turned to dross, however, when the call to arms was oversubscribed and many militiamen were forced to return home, unpaid for their travel and equipage expenses. Results were quite predictable; Governor Cannon won re-election handily. Democrats lost heavily in state elections and won only three of Tennessee's thirteen Congressional seats. Among those defeated for Congress were some of Polk's closest associates, William C. Dunlap, William Trousdale, Granville S. Crockett, and Cave Johnson. Probably Polk felt Johnson's defeat most keenly, for the two were warm personal friends as well as political allies. After the election, General Jackson confided to Francis P. Blair that the party had been misled by the "imbecile councils of the Nashville politicians," that the Nashville Union had been "muzzled by some unseen hands," and that only Polk had "acted his part" in keeping faith with Democratic principles. Polk departed for the special session of Congress with a vivid example of what could happen to the national party should it try to trim its position on fundamental issues.

Upon the convening of the first session of the Twenty-fifth Congress, Polk won a second term as House Speaker by defeating arch rival John Bell in a test of party strength, 116 to 103. Conservative Democrats remained in line on that vote, but then parted company with administration friends over the selection of House printer. With the aid of Whig votes, Conservatives carried the decision for their own press, the newly established Washington Madisonian, published by Thomas Allen. The House then took the President's message under advisement, and Polk appointed Van Buren partisans to key committees and Whig-Conservative members to less important assignments. In his special message, Van Buren proposed what would become
the leading measure of his administration: the complete divorce of the federal government from the banking industry. The Independent Treasury Bill, sometimes known as the Divorce Bill, was taken up first in the Senate, where the proposal’s future was more promising, thanks to the backing of John C. Calhoun.

Although Calhoun's return to the Democracy was of the utmost significance in the development of national party alignments, his support of the Independent Treasury scheme did not come without reservation. He insisted upon and obtained an amendment stipulating that all payments to the Treasury must be made in gold or silver coin, "the Constitutional currency." This specie clause accorded with Polk's hard-money views, but some Democrats thought, quite correctly, that a specie restriction would turn conservatives against the Divorce Bill entirely. Unable to pass the Senate's version through the House, friends of the administration postponed further consideration until the regular session scheduled for December. To facilitate paying the government's bills, Congress voted to issue ten million dollars in Treasury notes. The special session served its limited purposes and no other.

Speaker Polk spent the following two-month recess in Tennessee, arranging strategies for revitalization of the state Democratic party. Meetings were held in Nashville to assess the situation, and it was agreed that a new editor for the Union must be hired to replace Samuel H. Laughlin. The job went to a young divinity student, John O. Bradford. Pro-administration public documents would be franked in increased numbers, and public meetings would be called to engender support for Van Buren's bank divorce. Little could be done immediately, however, to reverse the effects of Whig gains in the summer elections.

As expected, the Whigs decided to appoint one of their own number to replace Grundy in the Senate, even though two years remained to the incumbent's six-year term. News of Whig successes in New York's fall election created something of a sensation in Nashville and emboldened Whig members of the Tennessee Assembly to charter a new state bank and numerous schemes for internal improvement. The Democracy of Tennessee fell hapless and dispirited in the depression's wake; in that most difficult of years, Polk assumed primary leadership of his nearly broken party.

The nation's crisis of confidence intruded itself upon the daily deliberations of Congress's winter session of 1837–1838. Perhaps no Speaker of the House ever presided over a more distracted and emotionally charged session. Abolitionist William Slade of Vermont ignited an inflammatory debate on slavery, and, at one point, tempers became so heated that several members from the South openly avowed
support for secession. Cooler heads prevailed, and the House gagged further discussion of proabolition resolutions. In another tempestuous controversy, two Van Buren members from Mississippi lost their seats, thus further diminishing chances for passage of the Divorce Bill. The personal tragedy of Congressman Jonathan Cilley, shot to death in a duel with Representative William Graves, brought bitterness and recrimination that all but destroyed the comity of the People's House. Through it all, Speaker Polk ignored the abusive language frequently directed at him by Whig members of his own delegation. As for legislative achievement, the session was as barren as it was acrimonious. In neither house were proponents of an Independent Treasury successful in their efforts to include a specie provision, and accordingly Calhoun Democrats sent the legislation down to defeat. At the close of this traumatic session, Polk set aside political affairs and tended a matter of family concern that would bring pain and heartbreak to match that which he felt for his troubled country.

In January 1838, the Speaker's youngest brother, Sam, had been suspended from Yale College for participating in a student riot and had passed the spring term in Washington preparing for senior exams, which were to be taken in mid-August. By the end of June, it was evident that Sam suffered a serious physical malady and required the best medical advice that could be found. James and Sarah took Sam to Philadelphia for diagnosis, and it was confirmed that the young twenty-year-old lad did in fact suffer from tuberculosis. Polk sent word to the family that while Sam was in no immediate danger, his physicians had allowed little hope for arresting the disease. On the trip home to Columbia, the family circle was joined by Sam's cousins, Jane and Knox Walker. Jane had toured eastern cities that spring, and Knox had pursued his last year of studies at Yale. Having previously passed their "examinations for degrees," Sam and Knox would receive their collegiate awards in absentia. How different this sad journey must have seemed, as compared to the exhilaration of that when the "Old Hero" came home.

Arriving in Columbia in early August, Polk found that political trends in Tennessee were more promising than expected. The White coalition of 1836 had begun to fragment, and many states rights men now followed Calhoun's lead in returning to the Democracy. Polk spoke at large gatherings in Lewisburg and Shelbyville. On August 30, he announced in Murfreesboro his willingness to stand for governor in the following year's election.

Probably more by default than by design, Polk came to head the state Democratic ticket. General Jackson chose to remain in retirement, perhaps for reasons of political expediency as well as personal
preference. Senator Grundy resigned his "lame-duck" seat and went to Washington to fill a vacancy in the Cabinet. Because of poor health, former Governor William Carroll offered no prospect of conducting a strenuous campaign. Robert Armstrong contented himself with the unofficial but important position of campaign manager. United States Supreme Court Justice John Catron advised Polk privately on national and state politics, but, because of his judicial office, could take no part in public electioneering. Although the party's elder statesmen voiced their opinions and gave what assistance they could, the future of the Democratic cause in Tennessee passed into the hands of a new generation of leaders.

Unquestionably, Polk's candidacy was the party's best hope for winning the governorship, and that consideration counted heavily in the informal selection process. Yet there was some private design in Polk's decision to leave Congress. Whig victories in off-year congressional elections forecast Whig control of the House and Polk's certain defeat as Speaker; thus, by running for the governorship, Polk would avoid an unnecessary and damaging defeat in Washington. Rebuilding the party in Tennessee would not be easy, but it could be done. White partisans opposed to Henry Clay's banking and tariff record must be coaxed back into the fold. Someone more aggressive than Bradford's successor, Joshua Cunningham, must be retained to give life to the Union. And strong candidates for the state legislature must be selected and pressed into service.

Having received an enthusiastically favorable response to his decision to run for governor, Polk accepted numerous speaking engagements in Western District counties through which he would travel that fall while en route to and from his plantation in northern Mississippi. His travels in the Western District were followed by an equally heavy schedule of appointments in the Mountain District and in East Tennessee. This last foray he combined with his November trip to Washington to preside over his valedictory session as Speaker and member of Congress. For three months, Polk traveled the state and aroused his friends to hope and fight for victory. He gave no ground on the Independent Treasury issue and accused the Bell faction of attaching itself to the Whig party and its program of neo-Federalism. Polk insisted on strict party alignment, for he promised that, in 1839, Tennesseans would have to choose between measures as well as men.

This Volume

The change in quality of the correspondence from the last previous volume is not great. Letters to Polk still outnumber those that he
wrote. Family letters continue to be a significant segment of the correspondence. Those from his brothers-in-law were less numerous: James Walker was no longer involved in mail contracts that had been the subject of so many of his earlier letters; Dr. Silas W. Caldwell was no longer Polk's partner in agricultural ventures; Adlai O. Harris, after the death of his wife, spent most of his time in New Orleans, and his personal letters to Polk almost ceased. James W. Childress of Murfreesboro continued to write about politics and family matters, but his letters seem to reflect a diminishing interest in party matters. Dr. William R. Rucker, also of Murfreesboro, wrote to Polk fairly frequently and became one of his most dependable political advisers in Rutherford County. There are only a few letters to and from Polk's two remaining brothers, even though William H. Polk was a partner in the Mississippi plantation. Polk's growing political reputation, however, seemed to attract letters from nephews and cousins in ever-increasing numbers. John H. Bills of Bolivar, for example, became a frequent and knowledgeable reporter on politics in the western part of the state.

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 the first three volumes. 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 the documents. 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

Upon one’s retirement after almost twenty years of work on The Correspondence of James K. Polk, it is impossible to enumerate here all those persons who have so generously helped to achieve the pub­lication of four volumes of the series. Many of them have been men­tioned in earlier volumes, but whether or not they are mentioned by name, I extend my profound appreciation for their contributions. To Vanderbilt University, the National Historical Publication and Records Commission, the Tennessee Historical Commission, and the Polk Memorial Association, I am grateful for generous support, finan­cial and otherwise. I wish also to repeat the thanks that I have ex­pressed personally to my former associate editors, Paul H. Bergeron and Kermit L. Hall, not only for their co-operation and hard work, but also for the pleasure of their companionship.
Deans Wendell Holladay and V. Jacque Voegeli are to be thanked for their uniformly helpful attitude toward the whole project, and Professors Paul H. Hardacre, Charles F. Delzell, and Donald L. Winters, sometime chairmen of the Department of History, never ceased to offer their help in whatever form it was needed.

A special note of appreciation goes to Mrs. Lillian C. Swingley for typing the manuscript, and to Vice-Chancellor John Poindexter and Mrs. Jane Tinsley for their help in seeing the current volume through the press. Miss Martha Strayhorn, who served as copy editor, and Mr. Gary Gore, who designed this book, as well as earlier volumes in the series, merit my warmest gratitude.

After Volume III of this series had gone to press and while preliminary work on Volume IV was under way, Dr. Kermit L. Hall left the project in order to devote full time to research and teaching in his own field of specialization. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Earl J. Smith came to the project as an NHPRC Fellow, and his eagerness to learn and willingness to work overtime helped to keep the work moving along at a steady pace.

In July 1975, Dr. Wayne Cutler, formerly of the Henry Clay Papers, arrived to take over the project. While rounding out his staff and laying plans for the future, he lent his time and skill to preparing Volume IV for publication. In addition to retaining Dr. Smith, he obtained the services of Mrs. Carese Parker, who had spent several years with the Andrew Jackson Papers. The enthusiasm and talent of this team presage good years ahead for The Correspondence of James K. Polk.

Herbert Weaver

Nashville, Tennessee

September 1976
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Chronology of James K. Polk

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<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>November 2</td>
<td>Born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Moved to Maury County, Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Underwent major surgery by Dr. Ephraim McDowell in Danville, Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Began study under Robert Henderson at Zion Church Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Entered University of North Carolina as a sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Graduated from University of North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>Began reading law in office of Felix Grundy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>Elected clerk of the senate of Tennessee General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Admitted to the bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Elected to the lower house of Tennessee General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Married to Sarah Childress of Murfreesboro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Elected to United States House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Re-elected to House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>Death of his father, Samuel Polk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Re-elected to House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Death of his brother Franklin, aged 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Death of his brother Marshall, aged 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Re-elected to House of Representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>September 28</td>
<td>Death of his brother John, aged 24</td>
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<td>1833</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Re-elected to House of Representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>December</td>
<td>Became chairman, Ways and Means Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Defeated by John Bell for Speaker of the House</td>
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# Chronology of James K. Polk

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

VOLUME IV, 1837-1838
FROM JOHN C. MULLAY

Dear Sir, 

Jonesboro, E. Tenn. January 1st [1837]

Gen. Blair was kind enough a few days ago to favor me with the perusal of a private letter from yourself, on the subject of the Whig's movements in Congress and elsewhere, and with his consent I took the liberty of embodying your views (as expressed in the letter) in an editorial article in our last Wednesday's paper. I had prepared an article upon the same subject, but I was so much better pleased with your plain statement of the probable course of our enemies that I adopted your opinions, and omitted the article I had prepared. I should be much gratified, if you can at all spare the time, that you would occasionally write me some hints touching matters which may affect our next August Elections. You may rely with confidence upon the strictest secrecy. We are at a great loss here to determine who shall run against Carter. Gen. Blair assures me that it would be altogether incompatible with his present engagements in business to canvass for the place and we will have some difficulty to pitch upon any one else of sufficient strength to beat Carter. N. Gammon, Esq (a son of Col Gammon of Sullivan) has been spoken of, but he is timid and unwilling. Tom Arnold of Greene, a white-man, is considered already in the field, and he is throwing out his feelers for the support of our party, but I have advised our friends not to commit themselves to him in the slightest degree. He is knuckling to the Van Buren men in every part of the district, and says that he only voted for White in consideration of a pledge to the people of Jefferson county. But he is not the right sort of a man for the Van Buren party to unite upon. We shall have no difficulty in relation to a Senator, and State Assemblyman. Either Col. Shaver of Sullivan, or D. Kinney of this place will be nominated in good time. In this county, we can give the Democratic candidate for
Governor (whoever he may be) a majority of from 500 to 1000, and in Sullivan, he will obtain almost an unanimous vote. Greene will be several hundred stronger in August than at the last election.

I wrote to you some weeks ago enclosing a letter from friend [George] Gammon of Sullivan and I hope you have received my letter. By the last mail, I enclosed a letter from Hon. John Blair to Mr. Van Buren, (upon the same subject as my last letter to you) to the care of Cave Johnson, Esq. which I trust has got to hand. I flatter myself that through your good offices, and the letter of Mr. Blair that I shall not be disappointed in the hope I entertain of receiving the appointment of visitor to West Point. I forgot to request of you, in my other letter, that any communications which you may do me the honor to address to me, should be addressed by name, as letters and packages addressed to the "Editor of the Sentinel" simply are frequently carried to the printing office, and opened before I see them. The publisher, Mr. Gifford, might consider them letters of business with the office, and as I wish all communications in relation to my application for the visitorship to be strictly a matter of confidence between those who write to me and myself it would be proper that they should be directed particularly in my name. Will you, my dear sir, do me the favor to mention this circumstance to Mr. Van Buren and Mr. Johnson? Any letters or documents any of my political friends should be kind enough to send me, I wish them to direct in the manner I request.

I regret to see an announcement in the Knoxville Register that that print has been selected by Congress as public printer. Is this the fact, and is there no chance of having it changed to the Sentinel? I hope you will pardon me for thus trespassing upon your valuable time; but if a compliance with my requests are at all compatible with your convenience you may assure yourself of my lasting gratitude. No man in Tennessee enjoys to a greater extent the confidence of the democrats in this quarter than yourself, and I, as their organ, feel fully authorized in tendering to you their best wishes for your political and personal prosperity. In great haste, with the best wishes for your health and happiness. . . .

JOHN C. MULLAY

Addressed to Washington.

1. Mullay was the editor of the Tennessee Sentinel, a Van Buren newspaper published at Jonesboro by Lawson Gifford.

2. The county seat of Washington County, Jonesboro is generally recognized as the oldest town in Tennessee.

3. The writer omitted the year on this letter. The Library of Congress
January 2 1837

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tentatively placed it in 1836, but the contents of the letter make it clear that it belongs in 1837.

4. John Blair, a resident of Jonesboro, had served in the United States House of Representatives, 1823-35, but was beaten by William B. Carter in 1834. Carter, a consistent Whig, was a native of Elizabethton in Carter County and had presided over the Constitutional Convention in 1834.

5. George Gammon was a merchant from Blountville who had served in the General Assembly, 1823-25 and 1827-29. Nathan Gammon, his son, was frequently mentioned as a possible candidate, but never held elective office. Like his father, Nathan was a merchant, but resided in Jonesboro.

6. Thomas D. Arnold, a Knoxville lawyer, was a bitter anti-Jackson man who had recently moved to Greene County. He served in the House of Representatives, 1831-33 and 1841-43, and was a Whig elector in 1840.

7. Although the presidential contest in which Hugh L. White opposed Martin Van Buren was over, the designation of voters as supporting one or the other continued in Tennessee for months thereafter.

8. David Shaver was a prosperous farmer and a justice of the peace in Sullivan County. Daniel Kenney served one term in the General Assembly, 1843-44, representing Greene, Hawkins, and Washington counties.

9. See Mullay to Polk, September 26, 1836. The Gammon letter has not been found.

10. Cave Johnson of Clarksville was one of Polk's closest personal and political friends. He served in Congress, 1829-37 and 1839-43, and was Postmaster General in Polk's cabinet.

11. Lawson Gifford was publisher of the Jonesboro Tennessee Sentinel.

12. The Knoxville Register, edited by William B. A. Ramsey, had supported Hugh L. White in the recent presidential election.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Coin Murfreesborough 2 Jany 2, 1837

I have nothing to write about that will interest you except to excite in you & Sarah the remembrance of your friends in Rutherford. We have been fearfully alive to your interest occupying as you do the exalted situation of Speaker of the House of Representatives and being the object of envy & hatred of the leading opponents of President Jacksons Administration. We are aware that nothing will be left undone by your enemies to tarnish your reputation or injure your usefulness as presiding officer of the house. We were pleased to learn that you have not made any changes in the reappointment of the Committee. Your opponents I have no doubt were disappointed as they desired otherwise that they might have apparent cause for abuse. We are rejoiced however at the changes that were made in the Senate. It is an omen of the returning sanity of that August Body. We see the
certain *Expunction* of the Foul resolutions that were spread upon the Journal against one of the best & most Patriotic measures of President Jacksons administration. We are pleased to see that our friend Judge Grundy has been elected Chairman of the Judiciary Committee instead of the Post Office Committee. I always thought his former situation was unfortunate as the previous administration of the Post Office department was very imprudent not to say deservedly exceptionable. And the mismanagement of Mjr. Barry presented a breach through which the most gauling attacks were made upon the presidents government. Judge Grundy I have no doubt managed that matter very adroitly but I am confident the public will never fully appreciate the ability with which he parried the blows aimed at Genl Jacksons measures.

We have had rumors here that you would receive the superintendence of the War department from President Van Buren. Your friends here are speculating upon the propriety of your accepting the appointment. It would no doubt greatly mortify your enemies, but at the same time they would be pleased that you were no longer Presiding officer in the House of Representatives to which they anticipate that you would have no difficulty in a reelection at the succeeding Congress. For myself I feel great incompetency to give you any advice as I am not sufficiently informed of the reasons that ought to operate upon your mind in making your decisions.

Politicks here have measurably died away since the most shameful defeat of the people's candidate took place. Thousands are daily turning over to the Vanburens party. A great many honest White men say that they were cheated out of their votes by the misrepresentations of their leaders. They see now that White never did have any chance of being elected though they were at one time induced to believe that he would beat Vanburen. There will be a majority in this state in favor of Vanburens administration in despite of the lying & intrigues of his opponents. Bell, Peyton & Co will make great exertions to present it (as Mr Webster would say) through considerations personal to themselves, but their efforts will be unavailing. Coln. Rusworm of Williamson County told Mr. J. R. Laughlin that there were a great many changes in his county to Vanburen & he expressed his opinion that Mjr. Ledbetter ought not at this time to be a candidate for Congress as it was almost certain that his previous politicks would be the cause of his defeat. Rusworm you know was a White man & uncle to the Reverend Martin Clark the most devoted Bell men in this City.

We have as yet no candidates in the field either for the State Legislature or for Congress. It is the opinion of many that Charles
January 4, 1837

Ready Esqr. will be run for Congress but the announcement is not yet made. Colo. Crocket has been spoken of by the Vanites as their candidate. It is to be expected that Williamson will have her quota of candidates. Bob Foster, Maury & perhaps our cousin, Wm Childress, will be candidates. It will be good policy for the Republican party to run but one candidate but it is quite doubtful whom we should support. Wm Childress is said to be strong in Williamson but I am fearful we could not rally upon him with sufficient strength in Rutherford to elect him. Maury you know will be very strong in his own (Opposition) county. Williamson has perhaps more Federalists & anti Jackson men than any other county in Tennessee and they of course will be well satisfied with their Representative [Maury] in his late measures against the administration. There are fully half of that county that will vote for any man who is an enemy to Jackson or who will subserve the interest of Colo. Bell in his attempt to destroy the ascendency of Republicanism. Colo. Crocket if he should be a candidate can get a considerable majority of the votes in this county. I think he can beat Ready with considerable ease. But the probability of Maury being stronger than Ready might cause all the opposition votes of this county to be thrown upon Maury and of course there would be great danger of his being elected. It is uncertain who will be candidates for the Legislature. It is probably that Mr Yoakum will be. He is for Vanburen against Harrison & is opposed to the US Bank.

But I am spinning out this letter to an unnecessary length. Our friends are all well.

W. R. Rucker

Jany 4th 1837

Since writing the within letter I received your favor of the 22nd of December. We have been for some time engaged in the organization of our county politicks & measures. We believe that it is necessary to come to an understanding early & to have concert. But I am of opinion that it will be better for another cause. The oposition will not at all be benefitted by delaying the announcement of the candidates as the people are daily leaving their ranks. I have given you my opinions of candidates for Congress in the foregoing letter. I house no opposition to our kinsman W. G. Childress but I am fearful he has not the necessary popularity in Rutherford & of his power of speaking & thereby making friends I know nothing. Mjr. Childress has been corresponding with him but he has never thought it worth while to disclose to me the purport of the correspondence. I am of opinion that
Crocket could beat him in the district, but it is quite immaterial with me which of them is our candidate. I will go for either most heartily. I have not heard anything said about Carroll's being our candidate for Governor. I will be warm in his support if he is & will be greatly gratified at his election. Andrew L. Martin & Baily Peyton are talked by the Anti Vanburenites. They choose Peyton I suppose because he is such a good Theatrical Buffoon and so open & so shameless in his lying anecdotes about Genl. Jackson & the little magician. Carroll I am persuaded can beat them both together. The People will not now believe that it is unconstitutional for him to serve. I enclose you ten Dollars for the Globe; Semi Weekly Globe to me, Congressional Globe to Daniel Bowman, Henderson Yoakum Esqr, Fayette Burrus & Robt Morris & Appendix to Wm McMurry Esquire, all sent to Murfreesboro.15

Addressed to Washington.

1. Rucker was a Murfreesboro doctor who had married Susan Childress, a sister of Mrs. Polk. He became one of Polk's firmest political supporters in Rutherford County.

2. Murfreesboro, once the capital of Tennessee, was the county seat of Rutherford County. It was here that Sarah and Susan Childress were reared.

3. In March 1834, the United States Senate passed resolutions, introduced by Henry Clay, censuring Andrew Jackson for removing the deposits from the Bank of the United States. Since that time, Jackson's friends in the Senate, led by Thomas Hart Benton, had endeavored to have the resolutions removed from the record. The "expunging" was finally accomplished a few days after this letter was written.

4. Felix Grundy, veteran Tennessee political figure, was a staunch Jackson supporter. At this time he was in the Senate, where he was a colleague of Hugh L. White.

5. William T. Barry of Kentucky had served as Postmaster General under Jackson. He was lax in his management of the department, and he resigned under pressure. He died in 1835 while en route to Spain to take a diplomatic assignment to which he had been appointed.

6. From the time of Van Buren's election there had been rumors that Polk would be appointed to a place in the cabinet.

7. John Bell and Balie Peyton, Tennessee members of the lower house of Congress, were bitter critics of Jackson and Polk. Bell was generally acknowledged to be the leader of the faction in Tennessee that had supported Hugh L. White in his presidential effort.

8. John S. Russwurm, son of a German who had served under Count Pulaski during the Revolution, was a well-to-do landowner and merchant of Williamson County. He moved to Rutherford County, where he owned a spinning factory, and remained there until his death in 1860. John R. Laugh-
lin was a brother of Samuel H. Laughlin, editor of the Nashville Union. William Ledbetter and Martin Clark were leading Methodists in Rutherford County. Ledbetter served in the Constitutional Convention of 1834 and was in the state senate, 1835–39 and 1841–43. Clark was active in local politics but never held important elective offices. He moved to Texas and for a while ran a tavern in Austin. Later he returned to Murfreesboro, where he resumed his interrupted career as a Methodist minister. Both Ledbetter and Clark were consistently opposed to Polk and Jackson.

9. Charles Ready, a Murfreesboro lawyer, served in the General Assembly, 1835–36, and was thrice mayor of the town. He was elected to the House of Representatives as a Whig and served, 1853–59. Granville S. Crockett was a prominent farmer who lived near Murfreesboro. He was sheriff of the county, 1834–36, and immediately thereafter served a term in the legislature. Robert C. Foster Jr., a brother of Ephraim H. Foster of Nashville, served in the state legislature, 1829–31, 1833–35, and 1839–43. He was at one time speaker of the senate. Abram P. Maury, a Whig, served in the General Assembly, 1831–33 and 1843–47. He also served two terms in Congress, 1835–39. William G. Childress, a cousin of Sarah Childress Polk, had served as sheriff of Williamson County and as a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1834. He was in the General Assembly, 1835–37, and in 1844 was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, where he worked for Polk's nomination.

10. Henderson K. Yoakum, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, moved to Murfreesboro in 1833. He served in the state senate, 1839–40, and was mayor of Murfreesboro, 1837–43. In 1845 he moved to Texas, where he practiced law. He was the author of a two-volume history of Texas published in 1855.

11. This letter has not been found.

12. John W. Childress, brother of Sarah Polk and Susan Rucker, was a Murfreesboro lawyer.

13. William Carroll had been governor of Tennessee, 1821–27 and 1829–35, but had been defeated by Newton Cannon in 1835. His defeat, in addition to bad health, made him a political liability.

14. Andrew L. Martin was a lawyer at Jackson, Tennessee. He served in the legislature, 1829–31 and 1835–39, and later moved to Mississippi.

15. Daniel Bowman was a justice of the peace who had served as a Jackson elector in 1832. Burrus, Morris, and McMurry are not further identified.

FROM HOPKINS L. TURNNEY

Dear Sir

Winchester January the 4th 1837

I this day received your friendly letter of the 18th of Dec. last & for which I feel under many obligations to you for the useful intelligence and wise suggestions you was pleased to give me. Since
the presidential election I have been mixing a good deal with the people, not only in my own counties but in the different counties in which I have had business and I feel confident that Van Burin has gained more strength since the election than he did at any period in the same length of time before the election, owing as I believe mainly, to the vote of the State having been given to Tyler the Nullie. The people say they did not vote for him & when they are told that him and White were partners running on the same ticket they swear that they were swindled out of their votes, and that they have been made to vote for a Nullifyar contrary to their wishes and without their knowledge.

I entertained the same views expressed in your letter in relation to bringing out our candidates at an early period, and have some time since had the matter arranged in all of the adjoining counties.

There will be a deathly effort made to beat me. The opposition men in the district are insidiously engaged in trying to get up a second Van Burin candidate and I have fears that they will succeed, though I hope they may fail. I had hoped and believed that no successful attempt of the kind could have been made with the man I apprehend danger from, as he was one of the first & the most active in soliciting me to run. I cannot yet believe however, that he will consent to run unless they will give him the field, and in that event it will make not much difference to the country which of us should be elected. Still I do not think the Whiteites will agree to have no candidate. They will run some man of their own party. Two I think are in keeping. The celebrated Kentucky horse Micah and the distinguished ram J.B.F. either of which in a single contest can I think, be easily beaten.

I am truly glad to hear that the newborn Whigs of this State are determined to persevere in their opposition to the Republican party & its principles for sir, in my opinion nothing could have a more salutary effect upon the public mind in utterly prostrateing their leaders and restoreing Tennessee to her former democratic republican principles, which no doubt will characterise the coming administration. I do therefore sincerely hope that the White Whigs in Congress from this State may so far commit themselves with the opposition, that they cannot retract after they return home.

I hope that you will not let this be the last communication you make me, as I have no representative. I feel under the greater obligations to you for any thing you may be pleased to send me and especially any information you may be enable to give on the movements of no party party.  

Hop. L. Turney
Addressed to Washington.

1. Hopkins L. Turney began practicing law at Jasper, Marion County, in 1825. He served two terms in the state legislature before moving to Franklin County, where he was again elected to the legislature, 1835–36. At the time this letter was written, he was a member of the House of Representatives, where he served from 1837 to 1843. He was subsequently elected to the Senate, serving 1845–51.

2. Winchester was the county seat of Franklin County, Tennessee.

3. In Tennessee many White supporters had resented the fact that party leaders selected John Tyler to run for Vice-President on the White ticket.

4. Micah Taul, a Winchester lawyer, had moved from Kentucky where he had been elected to a single term in Congress. He later moved to Alabama.

5. John B. Forester, a McMinnville lawyer, served in the House of Representatives, 1833–37. He had recently been defeated for re-election by Turney.

6. Just before the Whig party came into being, the opposition leaders decried excessive partisanship by the Jacksonians. The Jacksonians facetiously referred to them as the “no-party party.”

FROM CAREY A. HARRIS¹

Washington. January 5, 1837

Harris acknowledges a letter from Polk and Grundy recommending Nathaniel Smith² to superintend the Cherokee removal and notifies them that Smith had been appointed to that post.

Addressed to Washington. This is a clerk's copy in Letters Sent 1824–86, Indian Affairs (RG 75), National Archives.

1. A resident of Williamson County, Harris was at this time chief clerk in the office of the Secretary of War.

2. Nathaniel Smith had served with Jackson at Horseshoe Bend and was at this time a general in the militia. He succeeded Benjamin F. Currey, who had recently died.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN³

Nashville, January 5, 1837

My dear Sir,

The time is at hand here when we must be prepared to take the field with our candidates for the Legislature, Congress, Governor &c. preparatory to next Summer's campaign. You will see by the Union of to-day, that we are taking steps to bring Gen. Carroll again before the people. This is done on authority of information received from himself by our friend John McIntosh, and from J. L. Brown,² who has just returned from Pontotoc.

Here, we are determined, at least a majority of our friends seem
determined, and I agree with them most cordially, to run Maj. J. P. Hickman and Col. J. P. Grundy for the House of Representatives; but as to Senator, we are not so well agreed. As to Congress we are at fault. Carroll can beat Bell, but his wishes are to run for Governor as we understand. Caruthers is willing to be run by us, and, I understand, to renounce Bell and promise to support the new Administration; but still he is a dose rather hard to swallow. Who can confide in him? I am fully persuaded he can beat Bell; but if possible, we must have a better man. Craighead could not beat Bell, and if he could, is he one jot sounder than Caruthers? For myself, I do not believe he is. He is a cold, purse proud selfish aristocrat, who has never been hearty in our cause as I understand him. Trousdale, it is generally understood will be selected to beat Balie Peyton. He has strong connexions in Smith which Col. Guild has not, and besides, Guild rendered himself unpopular in the Assembly in the upper part of Sumner and lower part of Smith, by failing, as they charge him, to support some new county project, having Hartsville for its seat of justice. We want Col. Guild in the Legislature, and there we must have him.

[William] Ledbetter and [Charles] Ready are both in training for Congress in Maury's district. [William G.] Childress' friends, and I have gotten them to unite in Rutherford, are waiting for the New Borns to show their hands, and then take the field. I have perfect and full understanding with Childress, and communicate myself, with [William R.] Rucker, Gowen, Reeves, [John R.] Laughlin, Ridley and others in Rutherford.

Col. J. Talbot has gotten the Jackson Truth Teller in the name of J. L. Talbot, and some persons under the auspices of West Humphreys, David Fentress and others, have proposals out for a paper at Somerville. The Athens paper will be continued as the Athens Courier, and instead of being an exclusively religious and literary paper, will take sides in politics with us under the patronage of J. E. Blackwell. I am now endeavoring to furnish some new materials for the establishment. A Mr. Ross of the Cumberland Presbyterian office, has proposals out for a new paper at Lebanon, which, if he succeeds, will be with us in politics. One thing I am sorry to see. The Paris paper, the West-Tennessean, has again passed into the hands of Gates, and will, no doubt, resume its old course under the charge of a fellow named Hankins, I think. So we go.

There seems to be an understanding here, that Gen. Armstrong will resign his office and move to Arkansas where his daughter is married and living, for the purpose of doing like most emigrants to the South—making a fortune. If this turns out so, who is to be our Post-
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master? I have a man in my eye, who has been ever true and faithful, of superior claims in all respects to all others. He is capable, exact in all his duties, and honest as Thomas Crutcher. There are others of as much personal merit, but they do not need the office, being already rich in the goods of this world. The man I allude to is, like myself, poor and has a growing and increasing family. In short, I mean Joel M. Smith, a man who unites in his claims as large a share of the public confidence of this community as any man living in it. He has been with our cause in every trouble, and with me in more than seven of the troubles, privations, losses and difficulties I have had to encounter in getting on with my insolvent establishment since it has been under my entire control. Without his aid, I should frequently have had to give up in despair, while others, possessed of idle thousands, have stood aloof. He and Judge Catron in all my most trying emergencies, have been my mainstays—and when they have not been present, Timothy Kezer has never let me lack daily means of getting on, having altogether, loaned me more money than any one man. You may judge then of the solicitude I feel for Mr. Smith's prosperity, and for the success of Judge Catron in any thing to which his wishes may aspire. Mr. S. is devoted to yourself, Mr. Grundy and Mr. Johnson, as a warm personal as well as political friend, and will look to you all with the hope of aid if the vacancy happens.

I have just had a long conference with Col. Weakley and others of Long's creditors in the $1600 debt he contracted to them in his time; and he is agreed, as I suggested to Judge Catron, to have a consultation with all the parties to the debt in the spring, and then do what may be liberal and just. He has no knowledge of your interest, or that of Messrs. G. and J. & D. He only knows of my own claims. If the establishment continues loaded to insolvency after the spring with old debts, for which I never eat, drank or wore a cents worth, I shall give up mine in despair, loose it all at once, and leave the state or go to work. I had better be breaking stone for one of our Turnpikes, hammer in hand, at two cents per bushel, than attempt any longer the Augean task of cleaning out such a stable of debts by my feeble labor. If I must work, it ought to be for bread for my children, rather than to pay what I never spent. Kezer and myself (I paid $100 of it because Kezer endorsed on my account) on yesterday paid $125 for balance of rent of private house for late proprietor, and I paid it of money I borrowed from Judge Catron, the office affording no means. So I have to get on, while every man arround me is getting on profitably in the world. I have the concern now established within its expenses, if I can make collections. I am sure of this, and when the accursed "load of
debt”—“worse than poverty”" as Mr. Kendall\textsuperscript{22} once said in a letter which was published—I can have some hope; but at present I have none, and am playing the desperate game of one who is waded in so deep, that it is as easy to drown in wading on as in attempting to go back. And then I am bound to friends, party, and principles—besides the disgraceful hell of surrendering—being whipt, disgraced and driven out by my enemies, the enemies of my party and friends, against whom I have contended with some success so long. Let what may come I will show that I can submit as becomes me.

Please make my respectful compliments to Mesdames Polk and Catron. Remember me kindly to the President, and to Messrs. Grundy, Johnson and Catron.

You will see that I am pursuing my Prospect before us,\textsuperscript{24} and that I am out upon the question, who will Judge White vote for for the Vice President?\textsuperscript{25}

S. H. LAUGHLIN

P.S. I have not time to read over and correct—I am now my own clerk by day, and Editor by night.

Addressed to Washington and marked “Private.”

1. A lawyer, Laughlin was at this time editor of the Nashville Union. He was a loyal supporter of Jackson and Polk, but his long drinking bouts had limited his effectiveness as an editor.

2. McIntosh was at one time keeper of the Tennessee state prison. John Lucian Brown, a brother of Judge William T. Brown, graduated from the University of North Carolina and studied law, but never practiced. An admirer of Jackson, Brown served in the Mexican War and the Civil War.

3. John P. Hickman was serving a single term in the General Assembly from Davidson County. A son of Edwin Hickman, for whom Hickman County was named, he had served in the Creek War and in the 1818 Seminole War. James P. Grundy, a son of Felix Grundy, was a well-known Nash­ville lawyer.

4. One of the most learned jurists of the state, Robert L. Caruthers was serving in the General Assembly from Wilson County. He was elected as a Whig to Congress, 1841–43, and was a Whig elector in 1844. He was for many years a member of the state supreme court.

5. David Craighead, son of Thomas B. Craighead, was educated as a lawyer, but he seldom practiced. He was a member of the state senate, 1835–37.

6. William Trousdale served in every important war from 1812 through the Mexican War and had recently resigned from the state legislature to serve against the Seminoles in Florida. A faithful Democrat, Trousdale was an unsuccessful candidate for Congress in 1837, 1839, and 1845. He was governor of Tennessee, 1849–51.

7. Josephus C. Guild, a Sumner County lawyer, served four nonconsecu-
tive terms in the General Assembly, and part of a fifth. A Democrat, he became a noted lawyer and judge, but perhaps he is best remembered as the author of *Old Times in Tennessee*.

8. Hartsville was in the southeastern part of Sumner County. When Trousdale County was created in 1870, Hartsville became its county seat.

9. Many democrats who supported Hugh L. White still claimed to be Democrats. When, after White's defeat, they joined the Whigs, the Democrats derisively called them "New-Borns."

10. Gowen is unidentified. There were perhaps half a dozen men of that name living in Rutherford County at this time. Moses G. Reeves had been register for Rutherford County, 1824–36. Bromfield Ridley was serving in the General Assembly from Warren County. A graduate of the University of North Carolina, Ridley became a noted judge.

11. Joseph H. Talbot, brother of Eli Talbot of Williamson County, had practiced law in Gibson County prior to settling in Madison County. He was clerk of the state supreme court, 1834–40. James L. Talbot, also a lawyer, was only about twenty-two years old when he became editor of the Jackson paper. The *Truth Teller* had been hostile to the administration while James H. McMahon edited it, 1833–36, but young Talbot changed its name and made it decidedly Democratic.

12. West H. Humphreys, a son of Parry W. Humphreys, had been a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1834 and was a member of the state legislature, 1835–37. David Fentress was a resident of Hardeman County. An active promoter of a railroad from the Tennessee River to Memphis, he served a single term in the legislature, 1841–43. Somerville was the county seat of Fayette County, where Polk had formerly owned a plantation.

13. Although the initials of this man were clearly written, it appears that Laughlin was writing of Julius W. Blackwell, a Van Buren Democrat who was elected to Congress in 1839.

14. Unidentified.

15. Gates and Hankins are not further identified.

16. Robert Armstrong, postmaster at Nashville, 1829–45, commanded Tennessee volunteers in the Seminole War. His daughter Susan had recently married an army officer at the home of William Armstrong, Robert's brother, in Arkansas. William had succeeded another brother, Francis W. Armstrong, deceased, as agent to the Choctaws. In August 1837, Robert Armstrong was defeated in the gubernatorial election by Newton Cannon.

17. Thomas Crutcher was an older Nashvillian who had once been treasurer of the state and had served for ten years as mayor of Nashville. He was universally respected and was considered the soul of honor.

18. Joel M. Smith was a printer and part owner of the Nashville *Union*. He was inspector of revenue for the port of Nashville.

19. John Catron, a Nashville lawyer, had helped to finance the administration paper, the Nashville *Union*, and in the absence of Laughlin had written many editorials for it. Within a few weeks, Catron was appointed to the United States Supreme Court.
20. Timothy Kezer, a Nashville merchant, had married Cora Laughlin, a daughter of Samuel H. Laughlin.

21. Robert Weakley, a wealthy Davidson County landowner, was a strong Democrat. He was John P. Hickman’s father-in-law. Medicus A. Long, who had edited a paper in Sparta, was publisher of the Nashville Union, 1835–36. When the paper got in financial trouble, he became discouraged and gave it up. He lived for a while in Shelbyville and then moved to Florida, whose territorial governor, Richard Keith Call, was his father-in-law.

22. This is a reference to Felix Grundy, Cave Johnson, and Andrew Jackson Donelson. Donelson, who served as President Jackson’s private secretary, was Rachel Jackson’s nephew.

23. Amos Kendall, a former newspaperman and a member of the Kitchen Cabinet, had succeeded Barry as Postmaster General.

24. This was a feature of the Nashville Union in which Laughlin discussed political prospects in Tennessee.

25. No vice-presidential candidate received a majority of the electoral votes, and for the first time in our history the election went to the Senate. Richard M. Johnson was elected over Francis Granger, with White absent.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir Nashville, Tennessee 8 January, 1837

I have really been so busy that although urged by interest and inclination to write, I have not this winter sent a word to you or any one else at the City.

The enclosed document is on the subject of my claim for making the Land report seven years ago and the letter secured to the copies will do to accompany them to the Commissioner. You will make such statement to him in transmitting the copies as you may deem fit.

You have opened the Session with the usual aspersity and acrimony of the small fry Peyton, Wise, et id omne. The larger fish will look about them and not make a serious onset until they can get some new recruits from the ranks of disappointment. Van B. has a difficult task to perform and it will require all his discretion, tact, & prudence to give satisfaction to his own friends, and at the same time avoid just cause of complaint by the opposition.

'Tis said that Carroll is still an expectant; Balch will be on in the spring after the inauguration, and Catron is already with you. Grundy is doubtless looking with anxiety to the doings in Tennessee as his election will certainly be brought on by the next assembly if they find themselves strong enough to beat him. The notion here now is that if Bells prospect of the Speakership should not be good with the next Congress he will covenant with [Robert L.] Caruthers to beat Grundy for the Senate & then let Caruthers come in to supply his place
in the H. Reps. This will at least have the effect of keeping Caruthers off his shoulders in Augt. which is sometimes spoken of. He dealt successfully in the same way with Burton6 some years ago.

I am very busy. Shall be off in a week to Knoxville where I shall be until 15 Feby. and shall be glad to hear from you there or here. How about the Presidents health?

Daniel Graham

Addressed to Washington.

1. A resident of Murfreesboro, Graham was secretary of state for Tennessee, 1818–30, and state comptroller, 1836–43. He was frequently spoken of as a possible candidate for governor.

2. In 1829 Congress passed a resolution offered by Polk, directing the Secretary of the Treasury to report on the status of federal land holdings in West Tennessee. Polk requested Graham, as secretary of state for Tennessee, to report to the Commissioner of the General Land Office on the value and disposition of the federal lands in that area. The enclosure has not been found.

3. This appears to be an abbreviated version of *et id genus omne,* "and all others of the kind." Henry A. Wise of Virginia had joined Balie Peyton in harassing Polk during his first term as speaker. Wise was believed to have tried to provoke Polk into issuing a challenge to a duel.

4. Alfred Balch, a Nashville lawyer who, though never a candidate, was an active political schemer.

5. Robert M. Burton, a graduate of the University of North Carolina, represented Wilson County at the 1834 Constitutional Convention. On several occasions he gave promise of becoming a political power in his district but never did.

From John Blair

Jonesborough 9th Janry 1837

I received your highly esteemed favour (marked confidential) & hasten to reply to the same with the like frankness manifested by you. 1st. and principally because it relates to myself I can say that I am wholly unable to become a candidate.1 I am [in] a heavy business operating to the extent of five hundred dollars per day with arrangements sufficiently hard to occupy some seven or eight hands, & myself alone to keep the machinery in motion. With but ordinary attention our business will net 20 thousand this year, & from your experience in public life who would surrender that for *that which proffiteth little.* I however feel with you the importance to our party of meeting our opponents on the field in August, & to do so with effect, concert & early arrangement should be brought about. I cannot believe that Tennessee will long stand on oposition ground. True she gave the vote to Judge
White, but it was from state pride & local predilection. This, my native Washington, would some two months before the election have given the Judge ten to one, but the people only wanted to see that they were not benefiting White, but the oposition to turn & give a large majority to Mr V Buren. I feel confident the question now will carry the candidate rather than the candidate aid the cause. The people within my acquaintance see that Judge White is not the beneficiary & for Harrison they cannot vote. I am unable to say whether or not we can get a candidate to run upon the Van Buren ticket for Congress. I need not tell you that the politicians who would offer have taken the oposite [street?] Mr Nathan Gammon is talked of & would best be sustained of any one within my knowledge but he thus far declines the contest.

I gave the sentiments contained in your letter to Major Mullay the editor of our paper & he has incorporated them in his editorial column, as you will see, respecting the necessity of arrangements &c for August.

I am requested by Mr [Lawson] Gifford to say that Mr Grundy was addressed respecting the necessity of getting a slice for this paper in the way of publishing the laws. Could not something of the kind be done?

Mullay wants to visit West Point Academy, & says he wrote you. If you see any probability of his getting the appointment, it would serve him & he is well qualified, which you may say upon authority.

I would be pleased to hear from you when convenient. Give my kind respects to my ever venerated friend the President, and say to him that I hope he may live to see his views fully consummated in the administration of his successor—likewise to the President elect, & Old Felix, & accept for yourself my assurance of continued esteem.

JOHN BLAIR

Addressed to Washington.
1. John Blair was being encouraged to try to regain a place in the House of Representatives.
2. See John C. Mullay to Polk, January 1, 1837.
3. Although the writer seems to have abbreviated this name, it is clear from the context that he referred to Mullay.

FROM JOHN H. DEW

Dear Sir: Columbia Tenne. Janry 9th 1837

I wrote you a few lines from Carthage during the setting of the Circuit Court for Smith County in Dec'r last in which I promised to
write to you again from this place. I have been here better than a week, have mixed freely with your Constituents, and have learned the extent and influence of your political enemies in this Congressional district, the Circuit Court being in Session. I was not so perfectly aware of the facts before this visit, that you was some 700 or 1000 votes in Bedford and nearly in the same ratio stronger than the question "Who should be the successor of the illustrious Jackson". I was truly pleased to find this to be the prevailing opinion in this district. Not that I feared that you would be defeated at the next election but, that your popularity was so stationary & perfectly overwhelming.

I see that the co-workers Bell, Wise & Peyton are again venting their malignant & ungenerous spleen against the administration and the republican party. Mr. Peyton's speech is nothing more than a revised edition of his numerous filthy dinner anecdotes so often repeated during the past Summer & fall; but poor fellows let them cry wolf, wolf. They have deceived the people too often to deceive them now, even if their has been malversations, malfeasance or other abuses in the respective departments of the government. I think the Van Buren delegation in Congress should studiously avoid noticing any thing they may say or do, and let them cry abuses as much as they please until they become more temperate & respectful. It looks very immodest I think where he speaks of Van's bald pate & Grundy's read eyes, he being so young a man and speaking so harshly of men of their advanced age in life & respectability.

I was very much pleased to see my good friend Hon. E. J. Shields voting with the republicans upon Col Dunlap's motion. I charitably hope he has ascertained the errors he has been induced to commit, has heartily repented and has promised and resolved to go and sin no more, against light and knowledge. Surely his constituents are too magnanimous and patriotic not to forgive him and reward him according to his recent merits. Col Dunlap deserves the highest commendation for his bold & manly effort to strangle the monster in his infancy.

Col. Benton's Expunging resolutions that are so exceedly offensive to my friend Col. Peyton I sincerely hope will be adopted by a handsome majority of the Senate during the present Congress. Surely in reference to the foul attempt to traduce the good name, fame and credits of the great patriot Prst. Jackson has received the condemnatory notice of the American people, and nothing will satisfy them but Expunged from the Senate's Journal, Col P.s loathing to the contrary notwithstanding.

All things seem to sleep upon the subjects of the Presidency & V.P.
and the subject of who shall succeed the truly unfortunate White Whig. No party party Governor Newton Cannon⁵ is beginning to attract frequent remarks from the people & several of the Tennessee periodicals. The Democrat here, & the Union at Nashville have nominated ex Gov. Carroll. He is in Mississippi at the present, making money it is rumored, and has not been heard from on the subject. If he consents for his name to run we will go for him: if he does not run we shall go against Cannon any way if he has opposition at all.

I learn since here that Jonas E. Thomas is a candidate for reelection, but have not heard what Nicholson intends to do. Some say Col. Cahal will oppose Nicholson for the H. R., some you for Congress.⁶ I beg to be respectfully remembered to Mr Van Burin. Although we are not personally acquainted, I know him by character and have always been his political friend in every contest when I had it in my power to be of service to him. The White Whigs were exceedingly wrathy when we counted out of the ballot boxes near six hundred votes for Mr V. B. in Wilson County.⁷ Rumor had gone abroad & industriously circulated by Mr Bell, Peyton & others that Col. [Robert M.] Burton the elector & myself were nearly all the votes White would loose in that County. In defending you against the charges of oppression & tyranny towards Mr Bell & supporting Mr V. B. for the Presidency I lost much of my former popularity there, but all's well that ends well & the people now begin to see who it was that deceived them.

My respects to Maj Shields, Col Dunlap, Huntsman,⁸ [Cave] Johnson & all the good & true Jackson democrats.

I saw your old mother⁹ at the Presbyterian Church performing her Christian & devotional sabbath day exercises yesterday. Said she felt very well and seemed to enjoy much good religious feelings & great anxiety for the prosperity of the church. I learned that your friends are generally well.

I have endeavored to purchase property here, with a determination to settle here, but find it difficult to find for sale such as I would like to purchase. I shall still remain here a day or so longer & see what can be done. Mrs. Dew asks to be remembered to her good friends Col Polk & lady. I shall expect an answer from you as soon as you find it convenient. A letter from Mrs. P. to Mrs. D. would be thankfully acknowledged.

My best wishes attend you, for the final triumph of the course you have so uniformly & able sustained. May your life be a long and useful one. May you be prosperous & happy in life & finally have a happy & safe admittance into the paradise above is the earnest wish & sincere prayer of your friend & humble servant.

JNO. H. DEW
Addressed to Washington.

1. Dew, a lawyer, had represented Wilson County in the state legislature for two terms, 1831–35. In 1836 he married a daughter of Joseph Herndon of Columbia and shortly thereafter moved to Columbia, where he began to practice law. A Democrat, he later represented Maury County in the General Assembly, 1841–43.

2. Lying on the north side of the Cumberland River, Carthage was the county seat of Smith County.

3. This speech was made in the House of Representatives on December 15, 1836, in support of a resolution by Henry A. Wise of Virginia that a select committee be appointed to investigate all the executive departments. In his tirade, Peyton struck out at several other Democrats, and in one place referred to Dutee J. Pearce “squealing around like an old pig for whom there is no teat, hunting a place to crawl in at.”

4. Ebenezer J. Shields of Pulaski and William C. Dunlap of Bolivar were members of the Tennessee congressional delegation. In the recent presidential campaign, Dunlap had supported Van Buren, and Shields had voted for White. Dunlap’s motion called for tabling a resolution by Mercer of Virginia to amend the Deposits Act passed at the last session. Dunlap argued that time was too short and that consideration of the resolution would prevent taking up matters of more immediate importance. Dunlap’s motion carried by a large margin.

5. Newton Cannon, a Williamson County Whig, was a veteran of Tennessee politics. He had served in the state legislature and in Congress. He had run unsuccessfully for governor in 1827 against Sam Houston, but won that office in 1835. Cannon was re-elected a few months after this letter was written.

6. Jonas E. Thomas, a farmer of the Bigbyville area, and A. O. P. Nicholson, a Columbia lawyer, were currently members of the lower house of the legislature. Terry H. Cahal, another Columbia lawyer and an antiadministration man, had been elected to the state senate, but had resigned to serve in the Seminole War. Cahal was frequently spoken of as a Whig candidate to oppose Polk for Congress.

7. The Wilson County election favored White over Van Buren by a vote of 1610 to 553.

8. Adam Huntsman, a resident of Jackson, Tennessee, was a lame-duck incumbent in the House of Representatives.

9. Jane Knox Polk, widow of Samuel Polk, was a devout Presbyterian.

FROM WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir,

Franklin¹ January 10th 1837

Your polite favour bearing date 18th ult has been duly received,² upon the subject of the late Presidential Election and the anticipated result, by me. I had until the reception of your letter been under the impression that you was fully in possession of my situation during the
canvass and the circumstances that lead to the same, and that you was in possession of the fact that my feelings was with you, although I was compelled to vote for White, & I would now give you the particulars but for the circumstance of making this a voluminous paper. Suffice it then to say when a member of the Convention at Nashville to revise & amend the Constitution of the State I was then opposed to the resolution about to be offered nominating Judge White as a suitable candidate for the Presidency, having learned that at the session of the Legislature 1833 the Judge himself prevented an offer of similar resolution upon the ground that his name should not be used for the purpose of dividing the Republican party. I was told by some of his East Tennessee friends during the sitting of the convention that he was still of the same opinion and hence they would oppose the adoption of such resolution. I had drawn up a preamble & resolution that I designed offering in lieu of those about to be offered by the antiadministration party, which would, as I thought, leave the Judge on higher ground than those of the opposition, but they became alarmed and produced no action.

Upon my return home & in the latter part of the [ . . . ] the subject of the Judge running seemed to be pressed with some zeal by some of his friends, and the opposition to me ridiculing his claims and [saying] that it was absurd to say that he was no partisan. Then referring to his adhesion to the measures of the administration I as a warm friend to the administration & then a personal friend to the Judge, having the greatest & most unbounded confidence in his honesty & integrity, believing firmly that he would not permit his name to be run, I advocated & espoused his cause & in fact had some sharp shooting with my friend Perkins some short time previous to the celebrated caucus in Washington, & at which H.L.W. was regularly nominated. Upon the reception of the news giving the result of this meeting of the delegation from Tennessee save two or three of them, this very opposition to me, & previously to Judge White, was then loudest in singing hosannas to his praise & then charging secretly that I was a Van buren man so as to prejudice my election, & continued to be secret until I voted to lay the celebrated preamble and resolution on the table. Then they became publick & vociferous, that I was a White man until elected & then acted out the Van principle & then it was I could & would have got out but for the interference of my friends. After that opportunity passed by I thought it better to remain silent & vote for White. When & where I dare speak I did privately to my friends, & out of the number of votes in this county given to Van buren I have no hesitency in saying that there was not more than
twenty five or thirty of them who was not my warm & devoted friends, my own neighbourhood at least. Yet prudence would require all this to be confidential & it is so given. But upon the subject of the next election and the position Tennessee is to occupy in relation to the coming administration I am of the opinion that the success of Bell depends pretty much upon the contingency of the State being thrown in the opposition, and hence every exertion will be made on their part to bring about such a state of politicks in Democratic Tennessee. This I have predicted some time ago, and they are gradually developing the fact. Is it possible that the time is to come or is near at hand when Republican Tennessee is to act in concert & to fight side by side with the Federalists, the abolitionists, nullifiers & the old Bank party & against the pure and undefiled republican, denying those principles that has ever been her principal characteristic? I hope & trust in God not, and to avert that turn & day I am willing to make bare my bosom to the enemy. I am willing to spill my blood in defense of those doctrines and principles which was purchased with the blood of the conscript fathers of the revolution. Upon the subject of the publicity of the political opinions I may intertain, I presume they have been sufficiently promulgated in this section of country, that is, in the county of Williamson. It is no secret here that I shall be an advocate of Mr Van burens administration provided it be based upon the republican principles of the country which I doubt not will be the fact. If, by the by, he should advance doctrines that I believe to be unsound and antirepublican I shall be found in the opposition to all such measures, let them emanate from the purest of Fountains. But then they should be palpable; I hold it to be the true doctrine of this country to give support to an administration that is attempted to be administered upon republican principles, for the soundest head may err but the heart is always presumed to be sound. Then if it be palpable, here is sufficient ground to suspect the heart. But upon the subject of my being a candidate for a seat in the Congress of the U. S. I will not deny but that it would be gratifying my vanity to be honoured with so conspicuous a station, yet my predilections are not so great as with others professing the same principles.

I have understood our friend Col. [Granville S.] Crockett in Rutherford would like & is desirious of pressing his claims upon the voters of this Congressional district. As to his probable prospects I cannot speak, but am of opinion, bad in this county. It is true I have been urged by many in this county and some in Rutherford to be a candidate. I am inclined to the opinion that I can beat [Abram P.] Maury in this county perhaps easy. He may have acquired some
strength from his great zeal in the White cause as it is termed; but for that circumstance I could double him. When we run for a seat in the Convention I had three to his one. Some of my friends tell me I am much stronger now than at the last election. I then carried the new constitution which was dead weight, having been rejected in this county by a majority of one thousand. Its operation has produced I think a reaction in some parts of the county. The Bell party & the Perkins party are fearful that I will run and from some I learn they think me more dangerous than any other opponent to them.

Some time ago I gave the Van buren party to understand I would run if I was to have a clear field. I am inclined to the opinion it is the best policy to let the other side come out first; let them take ground & show their hands. We will then know how to oppose & to defend. Mr. [Charles] Ready has been here. Though he is secret I think he is determined to run. He believes there will be an administration man run & he prefers that he should be from this county, believing there his chance better than Maury's, & in the event of a hard contest that a greater portion of the White party will unite upon the strongest. The fact is the Van buren strength is in Rutherford & if they will unite upon a man that can divide the White strength in this county then they are safe, but I am resolved not to run unless I have a clear field. I will not be the means of dividing the party which will ensure defeat. You will understand there is six thousand voters & upward in the two counties. I am well satisfied that I can beat any man in this county (perhaps easily) but in Rutherford I cannot speak. It may be that County pride may have more influence with them than their general politicks. I know this will be attempted if Ready alone runs. If him & [William] Ledbetter should both run then I would have no difficulty. I have not seen any of those gentlemen mentioned by you in Rutherford. Mr Jones was down a day or two ago from there insisting on me to run. He said in his neighbourhood they had been looking for my announcement for some time. He is thorough Van buren. He lives towards Jefferson. I have said & written lengthy and perhaps by the time you get through you will pronounce it unintelligible. It is done in haste.

Let me again trouble you to pay my advance subscription to the Globe. I think I saw a prospectus of the Globe for publishing the debates in Congress and perhaps the price not more than one or two dollars for a copy of the debates covering ____ pages. If you think it worthy of patronage pay for that also & if I should not forward you the money I will pay it on sight. I have no bank paper by me that would be current there.
I will be much pleased to hear from you often giving the particulars of matters and things generally, and more especially how John the Apostle\(^8\) gets along there now. From what I have discover[ed] he is as still as death. Is there no lunatick Hospital or asylum in the city. I had [hereto] believed that there was one, but from the circumstance of [Henry A.] Wise going at large I am bound to change my opinion. I will close with saying in the event I become a candidate I expect to fight the battle up to the knife. I am aware that I shall have to com­pete with at least two of the bitterest and most vindictive enemies to the present administration, to wit Maury & Ready. They are now with the modern Whigs whose politicks is a compound of the Federal, Nullifiers & Bankites, all of which are antirepublican, and of course they will be equally as violent against Van buren administration. Mary\(^9\) unites with me in presenting our kind regards to Cousin Sarah.

W. G. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Franklin was the county seat of Williamson County. It lay between Nashville and Columbia, slightly nearer to Nashville.
2. This letter has not been found.
3. In the transition from one page to another, a word was omitted.
4. It has been impossible to determine which of the large Perkins connection was intended here.
5. Unidentified.
6. Jefferson was a village in Rutherford County. It lay a few miles north­west of Murfreesboro.
7. Apparently the writer expected to insert the number of pages, but the blank was not filled in.
8. John Bell.
9. This is probably a reference to Childress's wife, Mary Berkley. They were married in 1818.

FROM GEORGE MOORE\(^1\)

Dear Sir

Hardeman County\(^2\) Jany 10th, 1837

After my respects you & Lady I will inform you that William H Polk\(^3\) is now in Mississippi at your plantation. He will be up in a few days. I never was more agreeable disapointed in a man in my Life than I hav ben in Bill. I expected he would be in sutch a hurry to get back to Columbia that he would hardly take time to attend to any thing, but he has taken evry thing quite patintly & was vary perticular in making the Division with Caldwell\(^4\) & appears to hav his mind
entirely devoted to his farm & will I hav no doubt devote a grate portion
of his time on his planation. I could not get C. C. Jones5 to go to
Mississippi for you but employed a man by the name of G. W. Brat-
ton,6 that has followed the Business of overseeing for several years &
has considerable standing as a planter & man[ager]. W. H. P. left my
house a few days before Cristmas for Mississ in order to attend to all
the business down there by the time the overseer & negroes got there.
I started the negroes & overseer from my house on Thursday 29th. of
Dcr. I bought 3500 lbs of Pork for you & Doctr Caldwell. Let you hav
1100 pounds; in all 4600 pounds. William said he would if needed buy
the balance down there. Please in form me what disposition will be
made of Texas, also of the auctapants in the District &c. Our White
friends is as cool as the senter sead of a cucumber. Ther is no chanc
for Messrs Robertson & Tarver to get back to Nashville.7 The people
speaks of runng R. P. Neely against Tarver if they can get his consent
& L. C. Crisp against Robertson.8 I think the two men spoken of is
able to use up the old membrs. Say to Mrs Polk that Mrs Caldwell9
is well & quite well pleased. On the reception of this please give me
the information asked for & oblige. 

GEORGE MOORE

Probably addressed to Washington, but the address on the envelope has
been obscured. Except for the last few lines, this letter has been published in
John Spencer Bassett, The Southern Plantation Overseer as Revealed in His
Letters (Northampton, Mass.: Smith College, 1925), pp. 103–104.
1. A resident of southwest Tennessee, Moore was a trusted friend of the
Polk connection. He had acted as an unofficial overseer for Polk while the
latter was operating in absentia a plantation in Fayette County.
2. Lying just east of Fayette, and south of Haywood and Madison coun-
ties, Hardeman County was created in 1823. The following year, Bolivar be-
came the county seat. It was in Hardeman County that Ezekiel Polk last re-
sided.
3. William H. Polk, twenty-one years of age, was Polk's oldest surviving
brother. The two brothers had recently purchased Silas M. Caldwell's half of
the plantation in Mississippi and were partners in its operation.
4. Silas M. Caldwell was Polk's brother-in-law, as well as his business
partner. William H. Polk had been somewhat irresponsible and very much a
spendthrift while in college. Thus Moore was surprised by his attention to
details.
5. Claudius C. Jones had a good reputation as an overseer. At one time
he had been overseer on Caldwell's plantation in West Tennessee.
6. George W. Bratton proved to be a fine overseer. He remained on the
Polk plantation in Mississippi until he died in July 1839.
7. Julius C. N. Robertson and Edward D. Tarver were members of the General Assembly who had favored White over Van Buren.

8. Rufus P. Neely was Polk's first cousin and also a grandson of Ezekiel Polk. Despite the initial as written here, this reference was to Elihu C. Crisp. Crisp did not oppose Robertson, but defeated Tarver for a seat in the lower house. Neely did not run, and the senate spot formerly held by Robertson was won by Levin H. Coe of Somerville, Fayette County.

9. Lydia Eliza Caldwell was Polk's second-oldest sister.

FROM HUMPHREY H. LEAVITT

Steubenville, Ohio. January 11, 1837

A former Ohio Congressman, who in 1834 resigned from the House of Representatives to become a federal judge, Leavitt complains that his salary is not adequate to support his family and suggests that Polk use his influence to bring about an increase. Leavitt points out that federal judges of the same rank in neighboring states receive higher salaries and says that that disparity should be removed. He thinks that Polk will be invited to become a member of Van Buren's cabinet and wishes him well. He closes by predicting that, in the next election, Ohio will again be found in the Democratic fold.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

My dear Sir. Northampton [Virginia], Jany. 11th 1837

I enclose you a notification that I have resigned my seat in the House. I cannot permit the opportunity to pass without assuring you of my high esteem & respect, and warm personal friendship. No friend wishes you more of happiness and prosperity than I do. I have suffered during the last five months with a most distressing and dangerous affection of the windpipe, produced by cold, & high inflammation of that delicate organ. When I was requested by some of my friends in the Legislature, to consent to be put in nomination for the office to which the Genl. Assembly subsequently elected me, I consented with a reservation, that I should serve out the present session of Congress. I indulged the hope that I might be able to do so until this time, but the weather has been so bad, that I was advised against undertaking the journey, and I am called on for the discharge of Judicial duties. Under these circumstances I have felt it to [be] my duty to resign.

In taking leave of you, my wife desires with me to be most affectionately remembered to Mrs. Polk & yourself. I must also ask that
you will present to our venerable friend, Genl. Jackson, my sincere sympathies in his affliction and my most ardent hopes for his recovery of health, for his prolonged life & his perfect happiness; “Take him all in in all, rely on it, we ne'er shall see his like again.”

J. Y. MASON

Addressed to Washington and marked “Private.”

1. A schoolmate of Polk at Chapel Hill, Mason had served as a Democrat from Virginia in the House of Representatives, 1831–37. Later he was a member of Polk’s cabinet.

2. After he determined to resign from the House, Mason was chosen as judge of the Virginia General Court.

3. The quotation is a corrupted passage from Shakespeare’s Hamlet. The source reads: “He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again.”

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir, Nashville, Tenn. 12 January 1837

Within a day after sending off my packet of the 8th I received yours of the 20 ult in which you say nothing of the health of the President. Yesterday Maj A. J. Donelson was in town & received a letter from the President himself of the 30, which has relieved us much. It is of much importance that he should come home to Tennessee in the fullness of his strength of body & mind. The adversaries of his fame & reputation have been looking to his closing scenes of political life with intense feeling, & have made much of their calculation for success on his probable death or prostration of mental powers. The estimates are natural and we must admit that there will be much division in the ranks should the magic of his name and influence be withdrawn before the disturbed elements of his party [are] sufficiently reunited.

In Tennessee we can expect little concert of action without him & be sustained in the lead. Opposition will cohere whilst affirmative individuals act singly. Carroll though now ostensible, at the head of the administration party with us has many points of opposition to the ancient household. Grundy is still obnoxious to the old charge of perilling nothing for his friends, whilst the quiet which he purchases from his enemies is of little value & will never stand him in stead but in trivial cases where the boon granted is not worth contending for. They will not concede him a vote in the Legislature next fall neither for putting off nor bringing on the election, nor in the election when brought on, unless it is in opposition to one of his own party.
Carrolls position toward the Genl Admr. cannot be satisfactory to himself nor to them altho his influence was felt in swelling the minority in the last state election & in the Electoral. Still success was wanting and I apprehend that both Jackson & Van B. expected that as head of the electoral ticket he should have come home & stirred a little in E Ten. at least. In the mountain district [Hopkins L.] Turney has opened with very good prospects against [John B.] Forrester and he is a man of too much resources to permit a retrograde. Marchbanks² would have been the better selection. He is a man of more moral force of character but he is a young politician & the post was due to Turney.

Kincannon³ starts under good auspices and has industry and address, but I know not to what extent his pecuniary embarrassment will affect him. Some of his best friends, those who have suffered by his failures are doubtless paralyzed. A. V. Brown⁴ is pottering about among the Choctaw floats, feathering his own nest and is too anxious to make money to be of any service to his friends or of deference to his enemies. You have faith in [Adam] Huntsman. Be it so. I see nothing to change my opinion of the course that Bell means to pursue as indicated in my last. He wishes for Jackson's death more than does any man living. The opposition to Peyton will mainly depend upon the impress which [William] Trousdale may think he has made upon his Seminole regiment. The arrangement, or rather want of arrangement in [Abram P.] Maury's district will be badly handled. All the late assembly from Rutherford are looking to the place. [Charles] Ready will finally back out & I would not be surprised to see [Granville S.] Crockett announced in a few weeks. The aspiring men of those two Counties are so impatient of preferment that instead of sacrificing anything to a party to which they may profess to belong they would play the modern game of ploughing with the heifer of the adversary to secure temporary personal gratification. All who value concert of action would upon the whole prefer [William G.] Childress, though he is not always in place. The Cannon party are for [William] Ledbetter of course & the Bells are for holding up Maury by the chin in their left hand whilst they have the right ready to duck him under whenever Davy's men lead that way.

I expect to leave here early next week for Knoxville and shall stay a day or two in Murfreesboro where I shall see [Moses G.] Reaves who knows generally how the under current of County politics is working. I shall pass through Forrester's & Standifer's districts & shall probably see every sheriff of East Tennessee, professionally at Knox.

We hear very little from Congress, through the newspapers or
otherwise and yours is the only letter I have seen from the City this session. From the few evidences I saw, I am afraid that the Senate will give way on the question of the Specie Circular. I shall regret it on several accounts. The order was in true policy and a rescinding act or resolution would inflict a wound where it ought not to be given. 

What is doing about the expunging resolution? I had but little feeling about it at first, but it has become [a] matter of substance, & I now have more anxiety about it than any Collateral matter there has ever been agitated in either house. They are certainly strong enough to carry the question in Senate now; if not you should let Michigan in as soon as possible. Her senators I presume are right.

The leaders & followers of either party amongst you have unenviable difficulties to encounter. Van B. himself is of all others called to act the more difficult part. If he is honest & straight forward in his course he will disoblige many of the hollow hearted & unprincipled hangers on from which no party is exempt, and if he has a tithe of the sinister purpose assigned to him by his exfriends, it will be difficult to avoid a palpable manifestation of it in the eyes of his more honest partizans. A rasping between him & the old chief would place you all in awkward position. He should pay great deference to Jacksons feelings & the President on his part should bear much when the motives are good & tendencies not evidently of serious prejudice. The Three Chieftains of opposition would consult their true policy to make no points this Session, but I see that Calhoun is witless and gives proofs of a permanently injured temper. Poor White can take no course to please any body on a large scale. He may now & then do a petulant thing to gratify the malignity of Bell or the plebean asperities of Peyton, but he can do nothing to gratify himself further than to relieve his stomach of the green bile of which it will generate overflowing quantities during the balance of his life. You have doubtless seen the address of our White Electors concocted by Bradford, Anderson, & Eph. I expected their object was to show excuses for voting for Tyler but they dont mention him. 'Tis a mere tissue of common-place Twaddle.

D. Graham

Addressed to Washington.

1. This letter has not been found.

2. Andrew J. Marchbanks was a young McMinnville lawyer of great promise. He served part of one term in the General Assembly, 1836–37, and then became a judge of the thirteenth circuit, where he served until the Civil War.
3. Andrew A. Kincannon, a Lincoln County lawyer, had been sheriff of the county and a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1834. He had recently lost in a congressional election and soon moved to Mississippi, where he achieved considerable prominence in political and educational circles.

4. Aaron V. Brown of Giles County was at one time Polk's law partner. Brown was interested in politics, but made some of his friends impatient because he refused to concentrate on political affairs.

5. David W. Dickinson, a Murfreesboro lawyer, served in the House of Representatives for one term, 1833–35. His sister was John Bell's first wife, and Dickinson was a Bell-White partisan.

6. James Standifer was a veteran politician from Bledsoe County. He was in the General Assembly, 1815–23, and in the House of Representatives, 1829–37. He became a Whig in his later years. He died in August 1837, on route from his home to Washington.

7. The Specie Circular was issued on July 11, 1836, by Secretary of the Treasury Levi Woodbury, under instructions from President Jackson. It prohibited federal receivers of money from accepting anything but specie in payment for public lands. Issued as a means of controlling inflation and wild land speculation, the circular was often blamed for bringing on and intensifying the Panic of 1837. Using the pocket veto, Jackson prevented Congress from rescinding the circular, but it was finally rescinded by joint resolution in May 1838.

8. Theodorick F. Bradford, William E. Anderson, and Ephraim H. Foster were antiadministration men who had heartily supported the candidacy of Hugh L. White. Bradford was a resident of Bedford County and had been beaten by Polk in his attempt to go to Congress. Anderson and Foster were living in Nashville, where they practiced law.

FROM WILLIAM J. WHITTHORNE

My Dear Sir

Farmington Ten Jany 13th, 1837

I have returned from Alabama and located myself for some time at Farmington where I have commenced Business. I got here about the time the presidential Election came on and was really astonished to see our good old republican precinct, give a majority for White. The cause was the post master at Farmington used all and Every means to give circulation to the two Notorious, anti Jackson papers at Nashville the Republican and Banner. I dont want This to be the case again. I want Brantly Removed. I would Receive the appointment myself. It is really necessary that Some good & true man should have the office at this place. It would give me and our party great satisfaction to see this alteration made, then we would soon have a fair share of shedding light to the people by the circulation of papers friendly to the cause of the people, the cause of General Jackson, the cause of Tom Jeffer-
son, and the cause of all true patriots all over the whole world. My Dear Sir it is not interest that makes me wish for the appointment. If it was I could have retained it to the present moment. When I resigned the appointment at this place I thought I was getting a good democrat to fill the office. I recommended Brantly and am at this time one of his Security's but I was deceived in the man. Dont fail if possible to have him removed. Write to me immediately and let me Know what can be done on the subject. Remove the cause and Judge White, Jno. Bell, Baily Peyton and all the whole crew cannot Beat us next Election. . . .

W. J. Whitthorne

Addressed to Washington.

1. Whitthorne was a merchant at Farmington and one of Polk's most loyal supporters.

2. Farmington, a town about sixteen miles west of Shelbyville, was in Bedford County until Marshall County was created. Lewisburg, county seat of the new county, was located about five miles southwest of Farmington.

3. Benjamin C. Brantly was appointed postmaster in 1830 and was, indeed, removed during 1837.

FROM JOSEPH BROWN

Cave Spring. January 14, 1837

An early settler of Maury County requests Polk to help him obtain financial relief for property—especially horses—lost during the Seminole campaign of 1818. Brown blames John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War when the expedition took place, for delaying action on such claims.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Brown's family had gained notoriety because of their Indian experiences. The family had been captured and held prisoner for many months before being released. Brown's son, James Brown, and Polk's father had been associated in land surveying in the Western District.

2. Cave Spring lay about sixteen miles south of Columbia, on the road leading to Pulaski.

TO BOLING GORDON

Dear Sir Washington City 10 O'Clock P.M. Jany 16th 1837

I have only time to inform you, that Col. Benton's Expelling Resolutions passed the Senate this evening, and the foul blot has been actually expunged in the face of the Senate & crowded galleries. The
vote was, ayes 24, noes 19. Grundy voted in the affirmative & White in the negative.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Williamsport, Tennessee. This letter, formerly in the possession of Miss Elizabeth Queener, Nashville, Tennessee, is now in the Manuscripts Division, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

1. A resident of Hickman County, Gordon had served several terms in the General Assembly. A political friend of Polk, he was a Van Buren elector in 1836 and 1840. His brother, Powhatan Gordon, lived in the vicinity of Williamsport in Maury County.

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Washington City, 10 o'clock P.M. January 16, 1837

I have only to say, that Col Benton's Expunging Resolutions passed the Senate this evening; and that the foul blot (Clay's Resolution condemning the President without a hearing for removing the Deposites) has been actually expunged in the face of the Senate. The vote was ayes 24, noes 19.

JAMES K. POLK

This letter appeared in the Nashville Union, January 28, 1837. The original has not been found.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Murfreesboro, Jany 17 1836 [1837]\(^1\)

I received yours upon the subject of the election of a member to Congress from this District, upon my return from Ala, and have delayed an answer that it might be more satisfactory. I find that our friends in this county are not altogether willing to take up W.[illiam] G.Childress as their candidate. They say he has adhered to the White party upon all occasions in the Legislature and out of it, and has not even yet, by any thing he has said or done publicly, intimated that he would not still adhere.\(^2\) Those who know him are satisfied as regards his feelings and opinions, but the people here do not and they say they want a 'Whole hog' candidate, one who will not temporise, equivocate, or yield an inch of ground. Perhaps this state of feeling may be the result of a general disposition on the part of the Van Buren party in
Correspondence of James K. Polk

this county, to give their support to Col. [Granville S.] Crockett, who will probably be announced in the papers this week. Some attempts have been made to prostrate him in this county, because of his course in the Legislature upon the expunging resolutions and since then his open avowal of a preference for V. B. and his open vote at the election. Crockett has said that he will be a candidate, and W.G.Childress through his Williamson friends, says that if the people prefer that another should run, he will yield. I am well satisfied that he can get 300 or 400 more votes in the District than Crockett provided the V. B. party in this county would unite upon him, and I am very anxious that he should be the candidate, but Crockett's friends urge his claims as superior, and seem determined to start him at all hazards. He lacks talents but has great popularity. It is said Mr [Charles] Ready has declined any notion of running, and that [William] Ledbetter will not unless he is the only candidate in this county. [Abram P.] Maury and [Robert C.] Foster are considered as certain for the race which will give Crockett a decided advantage and if all things go on well, between his friends & Childress', his prospect is very good. He is now so far committed that any attempt to dissuade him would be useless and might do harm. I have tonight written to W.G. Childress upon the subject, and will soon know what he will determine upon, and will advise you so soon as I get an answer.

I would again ask your attention to the letter of John C. Whitsitt of Alabama, as the subject of it is of some importance to him, and he and others of our relations in Ala. have a right to complain that you have not bestowed even a passing notice upon them. They are of the right faith in politics and some of them, particularly John C. Whitsitt have popularity & influence.

Tell Sarah my next letter shall certainly be written to her. We are all well & Sarah desires to be remembered to you both.

JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Although this letter is clearly dated 1836, content shows that it was written in 1837.
2. See William G. Childress to Polk, January 10, 1837, for Childress’s explanation of his actions.
3. This letter has not been found. John C. Whitsitt, a cousin of John W. Childress, was a merchant in Sumter County, Alabama, and served three terms in the legislature of that state.
4. See John W. Childress to Polk, December 28, 1836.
5. This is a reference to the writer’s wife, the former Sarah Williams, whom he had married in June 1831.
FROM GREENVILLE COOK

Dr. Sr. Shelbyville, January 17, 1837

I read yours in due time. You desire to know how "our opponents bear their defeat." They don't have a word to say—you never hear a White man open his chops about the election, Judge White, or any thing connected with him. On the day of the election, the White men hoisted their White flag, which fitfully fluttered in the wind throughout the day, but all to no effect—the people would do as they please. You must know that our Sheriff is a Van Buren man; he, in courtesy to the other party, appointed White Judges of the election. The different parties voted as shad generally run—in shoals. A squad of White men would come in and vote, which would produce great merriment on the White side, and then the Van Buren men would march in by scores, which would turn the tune, and the Van Buren men would have the sport. The flag stood until the votes were counted out, but was taken down in ten minutes afterwards.

GREENVILLE COOK

Addressed to Washington.
1. Greenville Cook was editor of the Shelbyville Western Star, a Democratic newspaper in Shelbyville.
2. Located on the Duck River southeast of Columbia, Shelbyville was the county seat of Bedford County.
3. To their surprise, the Whigs lost Bedford County to the Democrats by 114 votes.
4. In March 1836, Darling D. Arnold, an avowed supporter of Van Buren, defeated Volney Steele for sheriff of Bedford County.

FROM WILLIAM D. MOSELEY


You are no doubt perfectly aware of the fact, that although in the recent election in this state for President of the United States, Mr V Buren red. the electoral vote, there was a decided majority against us, had the Whigs (as they are called) have been as active in bringing out their forces, as we were ours. Their apathy may doubtless be attributable, to their then recent victory, in the election of Governor. Whatever may have been the cause of their inactivity, it is morally certain that that, together with our strong and united effort, secured us the victory; contrary to the expectations of the most sanguine of
our party, and certainly against King numbers. Of this, we are all perfectly sensible, the flourishes of our journals to the contrary notwithstanding. It becomes us then as prudent tacticians, to take time by the forelock, and to endeavour in a future emergency to have the advantage of numbers; otherwise, our united and manly efforts in a future campaign, may not be crowned with that signal success, which they have so recently produced.

I have ventured to make the suggestion to several of the leading members of our party, now in the Legislature, and have also intimated to Senator Strange and Dr. Montgomery of the house of Representatives, the propriety of the north state, putting in a claim for a seat in the cabinet of the President elect. So far as the matter has been agitated here, there is but one opinion, and that is unanimous in its favour. We are very far from wishing to embarrass Mr. V Buren in the selection of his Cabinet or in filling any other high and honorary appointments; nor would we even express a wish upon the subject, however desirable such an event may be, could we suppose, that such an expression of our wishes, would be calculated in the slightest degree to interfere with any arrangement which he (the President) may have already made & which in his judgment, may secure a more harmonious action of the party. What we wish to be understood to say is this, that North Carolina would be proud of such an appointment, and we think, that it would have a salutary effect, in increasing our numbers; but that we are unwilling to press the matter, if in doing so, it would affect us as a party, more seriously elsewhere.

We have had no difficulty in selecting Mr Speaker Haywood, as the most suitable person, on whom the appointment should be conferred, provided a selection shall be made from our State. He is a gentleman of the first order of talents, of untiring industry, of irreproachable moral character, and in the most comprehensive sense of the term a perfectly practical man; in fine Sir, he would discharge the duties of any office within the gift of the President, in a manner alike honorable to himself and gratifying to his native state. His great exertions in the late campaign made him the favorite of his party. His recent brilliant display of talent, and Statesman like conduct in the Legislature, have secured the respect and admiration of all, both Whig and Democrat. Such an appointment would not only be highly acceptable to the Democrats of North Carolina, (and even the whigs, if they did not openly oppose, could not in their conscience condemn it) but would give more solid strength to the party here, and have a greater tendency to remove false impressions, as regards Mr V. Burens sincerity towards the South, than any that could be made within the
January 17 1837

limits of the State. I have communicated this matter to you, upon
the supposition that you are not only friendly, but on terms of the
closest intimacy with Mr Van Buren; and that being a native yourself
of this good old, honest, unassuming independent sovereignty, you
would not feel other than a deep interest in the promotion of any of
her sons.

Our Legislature will certainly adjourn in a few days; I am fearful
without effecting any great object of internal improvement. The proper
disposition of the surplus has already produced so much anxiety and
bitter feelings among the members, that I have almost come to the
conclusion that its acceptance is more likely to produce evil than good.
We have also chartered the Charleston & Cincinatti rail road [with
private banking privileges]. This measure received my vote in the
Senate, but I must candidly acknowledge, that it was not done, with­
out some slight apprehension, that such a vote, might eventually prove
injudicious. The charter is however very well guarded, and very limited
in its duration. My deliberate convictions were then, as they now are,
that in as much as the bank could not go into full operation before
the completion of the road, and then only, for a very limited time, that
it was well guarded, and was an object peculiarly desirable to the
western part of the State, that more permanent good would result to
my state from the road, than injury from the bank. As a matter of
state policy I thought it was my duty to vote for it, which I did ac­
cordingly. Time alone can now determine the correctness of my judg­
ment. It was opposed by some upon the ground, as they observed, that
it was (to use their own language) "The infant daughter of the old
U.S. Bank." Could I have supposed so, I need not say that it would
have met my most decided opposition. It was supported in both
branches of our Legislature, by a distinguished member of the Union
party of S. Carolina, who in both instances, did great credit to his
state. It has also to receive the sanction of one other state, either
Tennessee, Kentucky, or Ohio, before it becomes the law here, or els­
where.

I expect in a few days to retire forever from the cares & anxieties
of a public life. In this attempt I hope to be successfull. The little
spark of ambition for political distinction which once had a place in
my bosom, has been extinguished forever. I need not say how this was
done, or by whom; the fact is so. I do not know that I have cause to
regret it. Of one thing I am conscious, and it is now, and ever will be,
a source of high consolation, that there is no act of my public life,
which upon the most deliberate & calm reflection, my conscience does
not approve. Whether those who have been instrumental in bringing
me to my present determination, are alike conscious of the rectitude of [ . . . ]\(^9\) is a matter for them and not for me to determine.

W. D. Moseley

P.S. Remember me kindly to Messrs Strange & Montgom[ery].

Addressed to Washington.

1. Moseley had been Polk’s roommate at Chapel Hill. He was a lawyer from Lenoir County and served in the North Carolina senate, 1829–37, being speaker from 1832 to 1835. Later he became the first governor of the state of Florida.


3. Robert Strange of Fayetteville had been elected to finish out the term of Willie P. Mangum in the United States Senate and had taken his seat only a month before this letter was written. William Montgomery, a physician, was elected as a Democrat to the House of Representatives where he served, 1835–41.

4. William Henry Haywood Jr., after graduation from the University of North Carolina, practiced law in Raleigh. He served several terms in the House of Commons and was at one time speaker. Later he was a member of the United States Senate. Van Buren offered him a lesser diplomatic post in Belgium, which he declined. No North Carolinian was appointed to Van Buren’s cabinet.

5. The writer drew a line completely encircling the words here enclosed in parentheses.

6. The surplus revenue provisions of the Deposit Act of 1836 brought to North Carolina about a million and a half dollars. Various factions favored using the money to provide tax reductions, to underwrite education, or to make internal improvements.

7. Flaking along a fold in the letter makes some words here almost entirely illegible. From the context, however, it is believed that the version given here is correct.

8. Christopher G. Memminger.

9. At this point a fold has rendered illegible at least two words.

FROM WILLIAM YANCEY\(^1\)

Spring Hill.\(^2\) January 19, 1837

After giving a report on the political situation in Maury County, Yancey says that Polk is stronger in his district than ever before. He also asks Polk to remind Cave Johnson to send him whatever he deems reasonable for the part that Yancey played in a law suit involving the Johnson family.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Yancey was an early settler in Maury County and had maintained his
interest in politics. He served two terms in the General Assembly, 1819–23, being replaced by Polk himself.

2. Spring Hill was a small town located about twelve miles north of Columbia on the road to Franklin. It was in Maury County but was only a short distance from the Williamson County line.

FROM JOSEPH W. CHINN

Lion House, near Farnham Post Office

Dr. Sir

Richmond Cty, Va. Jany. 20th 1837

Neither Mrs. Chinn nor I can consent that you & Mrs. Polk shall again return to Tennessee without offering the assurance of our kindest remembrance. Each of us have often intended this and can only wonder that it has been so long neglected. But we have both rejoiced in the certainty that you were both well & happy, and enjoying the high and distinguished confidence of yr. political associates.

If I have a single regret in my retirement from public life, it arises solely from the interruption of those private friendships in which I so much delighted, and which now form the source of so much pleasant & gratifying reflection. As you & I so fully concur in political sentiment, I shall observe a rule, which so happily regulated our mess, “discard political topics.” If we are worth remembering, you will not be uninterested in our private history since we parted. I then have sold my former residence eighteen months since, after arranging it most comfortably, & have purchased this larger estate, which requires new buildings &c but which I think I can make most profitable; for you must know that beside Gertrude, who is well, and who frequently speaks of you & Mrs. P, we have a very fine boy eleven months old and I must of course think more of accumulating. Mrs. Chinn's health is much as when we were with you, but my own is far worse. For the last five months I have suffered severely & fearfully, generally confined to my house, often to my bed. I visited Phila. in the fall with my family and took the best medical advice, but I have as yet reed. but little benefit. I am now confined to the house.

May we now ask an outline of yr private history? May we also inquire something of poor Mardis & his wife. We are apprised of his death, but the fate of Mrs. M. is unknown to us. Often and again have the scenes through which we passed with you been the subject of a winter nights conversation.

I need not assure you how much we shall be pleased to hear from you & Mrs. P. and if yr time permit any political news not found in the public journals will be gratifying to me, especially in my present
confined condition. Is there any caste of the new cabinet? How much depends on the selection! Mrs. C., Gertrude & myself unite in kindest remembrance to Mrs. Polk.

J. W. CHINN

Addressed to Washington.
1. Chinn was a Virginia lawyer who had served in the House of Representatives with Polk for two terms, 1831–35.
2. Richmond County was in eastern Virginia, lying on the north side of the Rappahannock River and a few miles south of the Potomac.
3. Gertrude was a daughter of the Chinns.
4. Samuel W. Mardis, a member of the House from Alabama, served for the same two terms that Chinn was present. A promising young man, Mardis died of tuberculosis on November 14, 1836, at Talladega, Alabama.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Colonel

Murfreesboro 20th January 1837

I received your letter of the 26th December and hasten to answer it, after attending to the matters contained in it. Coln. [Granville S.] Crocket whose health is entirely restored is now openly in the field for Congress at the pressing solicitations of his numerous friends in Rutherford. I should have prefered that he had waited a few days longer for a consultation between his & Majr. [John W.] Childress friends before his name was announced, but Crocket's friends believe he can beat [William G.] Childress in the district and would not consent that his name should be any longer withheld from the Public. I received a letter a few days since from The Revd Hardy M. Cryer a copy of which I will enclose you together with my answer.¹ You may rest assured that I have no objection that Mr. Childress should be our candidate but I do really believe that if He & Majr. [Abram P.] Maury were to be Candidates of Williamson that Maj. [William] Ledbetter or Mr. [Charles] Ready of this County could beat them both. County pride & prejudice would operate strong enough to produce that effect in favor of either of them, especially when we take into consideration the former public competition of at least three fourths of the voters of this county. They would forgive the enemies of Vanburen especially as a majority of them were formerly of the same faith. As Crocket is now a Candidate I think it is most likely that he will have no opposition in this County. He will get a sweeping majority in Rutherford & if Mr. Childress should run for Senator in Williamson Crocket will get nearly or [ . . . ] half in that County. Crocket is an able man on the stump and will wield a great influence wherever he goes.
January 20 1831

We have as yet no Candidate for the Legislature in this County. But we are feeling about and calculate on having some out in a few days. Lewis Garner Esqr. has been spoken of by our friends. He is Son in law to Coln. Ridley and is supposed to be very strong. His talents are very respectable & his connexion powerful. We would be glad to run Ridley himself but he is obliged to be absent in Mississippi at the most critical time to attend to his Brothers estate there. He will however be able to bestow a great support upon his Son in law if he should run. Mjr. John W. Childress has likewise been talked of & likewise Coln. John W. Rucker. There will however be no collision between them. Mjr. Moses G. Reeves could be elected Senator if we could get him to run but I think it is doubtful whether he can be prevailed upon to resign his office of Register for that purpose. We have some notion of runing Captain Henderson Yoakum if Reeves does not. Yoakum is quite popular wants to come out for Congress, but he is obnoxious to the anties because Vanburen was his second choice. I think it would be good policy for the Vanburen party to take him up especially as he is wishing to go with us and if we were to throw him off he might be in our way.

When the Candidates are all out I will write you more fully on the subject. I send you five Dollars for TriWeekly Globe to be sent to Richard Blair in Murfreesborough to be discontinued after the year unless ordered otherwise.

You will presume by the late Unions that the Editor of our Murfreesboro paper and a Vanite have had some sparing on the subject of the Presidential election in this place. It eventuated a few days ago in a street fight between Mr Sneed the Editor & John R. Laughlin the Vanite. Mr Sneed undertook to cane him but Lochlin disarmed him, threw away his cane and draged him by the hair into the mud & was about to beat him severely when he was pulled away from him by one of his enemies. He used Mjr. Drury Dance’s cane to fight with. Mrs Laughlin met Mjr. Dance [the] next day & informed him that if Mr Sneed [’s friends had] not enough canes to lend him to whip Mr Laughlin if they would send to her house she would lend them two or three, for her Husband as small as he was could whip Mr Sneed with all the canes he could procure. Sara joins me in sending our respects. But [she] will insist that I have no business with politics.

W. R. RUCKER

Dr Johns a Vanburinite will next week take charge of the Editorial Department of the Monitor. Blair ought to encourage him by interchanging papers with him. Laughlins fight will greatly upset the party. Sneed is very unpopular.
Addressed to Washington.

1. A Methodist minister, Cryer had been associated with Andrew Jackson in breeding race horses. Cryer's letter, written at Franklin, where he seems to have resided for a short time, was in support of William G. Childress for Congress and expressed anxiety that the party might be divided by having a candidate from Rutherford. Rucker's reply summarized the political situation in the district much as he outlined it to Polk.

2. A Rutherford County farmer, Garner married Louisa A. Ridley on April 2, 1835.

3. Moses Ridley, a brother of Henry Ridley and James Ridley, was a personal friend and a loyal supporter of Andrew Jackson.

4. John W. Rucker was a brother of Dr. William R. Rucker.

5. Richard Blair is not otherwise identified.

6. A Murfreesboro lawyer, William H. Sneed served in the state senate, 1843-45. Before his senate term expired, he moved to Greene County and within a year removed to Knoxville. He served a single term in Congress, 1855-57.

7. A Rutherford County farmer, Drury Dance was probably a close relative of Russell Dance, Polk's successor as clerk of the state senate, but their exact relationship has not been ascertained.

8. Dr. Stephen B. Johns, a graduate of the University of Nashville, was editor of the Murfreesboro Weekly Times for only a short time. The change from Monitor to Weekly Times probably was made at the time he became editor.

9. Francis P. Blair was the editor of the influential administration newspaper, the Washington Globe.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Columbia January 22nd 1837

It affords me pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of Dec. 27th, which came to hand only two days since. With the sentiments contained in it and the suggestions made I most cordially concur. I had come to the conclusion that war uncompromising and indiscriminate was resolved upon among the leaders in the opposition. Mr. Van Buren is not ever to enjoy the privilege of being judged by his acts, but he is to be condemned, denounced and prostrated, even though his policy be ever so salutary. When such a relentless spirit is evinced it is incumbent on his supporters to stand to their arms and fight manfully. The prominent White men in Tennessee have abated nothing of their opposition to Mr. V.B. They have hoisted the banner of opposition and are resolved upon retaining their ascendancy. In my judgment it is not so with the people generally. They never were excited, they never had any inducement to join the opposition, they never con-
January 22, 1837

sidered themselves as abandoning the republican party. Hence the people are perfectly still and will act upon their old principles, when the next struggle comes. Little, indeed almost nothing, is said by any about White. He has sunk so low that his name is rather a by-word than a rallying point. I do not believe the opposition can bring his name to bear upon us hereafter. I doubt whether they will even attempt it. I am inclined to the opinion, that the policy will be to keep up an uncommitted opposition to Mr. V.B. to render him odious without taking ground for any one as his successor. We are unfortunately situated as to the means of sustaining him. The [Nashville] Union which ought to be our organ is a mere drivelling starveling, conducted without spirit, judgment or ability. In this opinion I may differ from others, but it is my honest sentiment. In this state of things we must rely upon the force of stump speeches, and must have our cause sustained by our best men. So far as my own influence and exertions could go, I have been urging the necessity of bringing forward our strongest men throughout the state, ever since the called session of the Legislature. I wrote to Gov. Carroll a few weeks since and drew from him authority to place his name before the people for Governor. You have probably seen the article announcing him in the Democrat.² So far as the Governor is concerned we have our arrangements made—Carroll is the man—and I even doubt whether he will have opposition. As to Congress I have no information as to Bell and Peyton's districts. My opinion is that Trousdale will oppose Peyton, but who will oppose Bell I have no idea. Turney is out against Forrester and Kincannon against Shields.³ The conductors of the Observer, you see, occasionally hold up Cahal for your benefit, but it don't take—his most clamorous friends don't pretend to urge it. Some of them are threatening to bring him down to the House of Representatives for my benefit. They are in trouble what to do. I have very little information as to candidates for the Legislature. In Bedford I understand that Dean and Warner will run and Mitchell for the Senate. Watterson will not run and he tells me that Dean and Warner will be elected.⁴ In this county the managers are in a quandary. Their great object is to arrange things so as to cut me out, but how to work it is still a matter undecided. [Jonas E.] Thomas will run again. As to Smith⁵ we have no information—he is in Mis. and we have heard nothing from him. I think it doubtful whether we will have any candidates out before you return. I can see no plan by which our enemies here can effect a doubt of our success except by entering our ranks and seducing some of our own men. We have some that I think capable of biting at the hook, and if it is offered to them I should not be surprised at their
seizing it. I think I know of one such and I have long since had my eye on him. As this is all in strict confidence I will say to you that I believe our only danger of division is from our General. At a meeting here the other day to make arrangements for naming the Volunteers he was the leading man and offered a string of resolutions, among them was one censuring those high in office who had the control of the Florida war for its failure. He said he alluded to Mr. [Lewis] Cass. The resolution was objected to and voted out. This occurrence struck some of the V.B. men with surprise and caused [ . . . ] as to his object. Very extensive preparations are [ . . . ] giving the volunteers a grand reception. The prominent actors in the matter are our strongest foes and I doubt not, they calculate upon effecting much towards our prostration. The V. B. men however will not be induced from the ulterior purposes of our enemies to withhold from the volunteers the expression of a hearty welcome. All are united in the work and I calculate that the display will be grand and imposing.

The Democrat is rather dragging. Bynum is incapable of managing. His subscription list is still increasing. The list of the Observer is diminishing and I think there will be a change there soon. From Bedford I learn upon good authority that our cause has increased with rapid pace since the election. Write often.

A. O. P. Nicholson

Addressed to Washington.
1. This letter has not been found.
2. The Democrat and the Observer, mentioned a few lines further on in this letter, were the Columbia Tennessee Democrat and the Columbia Observer. Various persons, including Nicholson, James Walker, and Andrew C. Hays, wrote editorials for the Democrat; Felix K. Zollicoffer was editor of the Observer, a Whig paper.
4. Thomas Dean, Richard Warner, Samuel Mitchell, and Harvey M. Watterson were men of prominence in Bedford County politics. All were Jacksonians, although Watterson was wavering. As predicted here, Dean and Warner were elected to the lower house and Mitchell won a seat in the senate.
5. Williamson Smith was elected to finish the term of Terry H. Cahal in the senate when Cahal resigned to take part in the Seminole War. After serving another term in the Tennessee General Assembly, Smith removed to Mississippi.
January 24 [1837]

6. General Robert Armstrong. Although Nicholson and others were somewhat suspicious of his political dependability, Armstrong was the Democratic candidate for governor in the next election.

7. Lewis Cass was United States Secretary of War during the Seminole War.

8. This ellipsis and the one immediately following represent a tear in the manuscript.

9. Chesley P. Bynum, a resident of Maury County, was one of the publishers of the Columbia *Tennessee Democrat*.

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FROM ANDREW C. HAYS

Mr. Barckley Martin requests me to say to you that if you will pay for, and have forwarded to him, from the commencement of the Session, the *Debates* in Congress, he will refund you the money on your return home, and will be much obliged to you for the favor.

No news worthy your attention except that your enemies at Washington are flooding the mails with free letters, Wise's, Peyton's & other speeches as usual. Great efforts are making to get up a war excitement with the view to beat you with Cabal &c. My opinion is that Cabal will not run. He has not returned; 10 or 15 of the volunteers are at home and are arriving daily.

Tell Walker his family are well & that James got home yesterday. My health is still bad.

My best respects to Mrs. Polk. In haste.

A. C. Hays

I would say more but Nicholson wrote you (I presume all the political news) a few days since.

Tell Walker, if possible, to get some suitable person to manage the D. office.

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1. Hays was a first cousin of two of Polk's brothers-in-law, Dr. John B. Hays and James Walker. He had once been associated with Walker in publishing a newspaper at Columbia and still wrote editorials for the Columbia *Tennessee Democrat*. He was postmaster at Columbia at the time that this letter was written.

2. The Library of Congress tentatively assigned this letter to 1838, but the contents clearly place it in 1837.

3. Martin's father, of the same name, had been an early settler in Middle Tennessee but subsequently moved to Georgia. The younger Martin returned.
to Tennessee and in 1836 ran unsuccessfully against Williamson Smith for a
state senate seat vacated by Terry H. Cahal, who resigned to participate in
the Seminole War.

4. James H. Walker, second son of James Walker, had recently dropped
out of Yale because of psychological problems.

5. The "D." refers to the Columbia Tennessee Democrat. See Andrew C.
Hays to Polk, February 8, 1837.

FROM RICHARD WARNER

[Chapel Hill, Tennessee]¹

Esteemed sir

January 24th 1837

I received your kind favor of 29th Deer. inclosing Mr Jefferson's
Manuel, the articles of war and plan of the H. of R. on the 15th Inst
for which favor you have my kindest respects, but I did not receive
your two letters of the 24th Decr. until 22nd Instant.²

Matters are not politically arranged here yet though Dean or
Coffee³ will be to all probability the Republican candidate in old
Bedford for the H. of R. Robt. G. Morgan Esqr.⁴ V. B. is already a
candidate and will be some in the way though no chance to succeed.
I have no doubt but D . . . is the strong man and Coffee next in
Bedford. I say nothing about a candidate from Marshall or his strength
as you know how that matter stands.⁵ I will give you the names of
those spoken of as probable candidates in original Bedford—for Senate
V. B.; Steele, Mullings and Marbury W.; though I think it quite
doubtful wheather or not half of the above will offer.⁶ I will see
Mitchell so soon as convenient and show him your [ . . . ] and as
soon as matters are understood will write you.

I dont hear a word about a candidate for Congress and give my
opinion pretty certain you will have no opposition. Should this be
correct your friends will still expect you to take the field in order to
explain matters and place them in their proper light. I think the V.
party if matters are properly arranged will all succeed, however in
Senate it will be a warm contest. In the lower branch at this time I
have no doubt but Steele is the strongest opposition candidate. Still
D. can be easily made stronger than S. You know however a difficulty
exists between my[self] and D____ and unless that is reconciled
I cannot I will not extend friendship. My own character is more sacred
dear than any office and I cannot seek the reconciliation though I
assure you I will not retard or obstruct it.

I have wrote in some degree of confusion and hurry as our old
friend Benjamin Pyland came in and bothered me some while writing however I determined to go through & send to the office as it would be a week before I could write again. Do remember Mr Pyland at Farmington, Capt Moses Oneal, Charles Hopper, Geo W. Ogilvie, Thos Long Esqr, John Penn, Thos. Hopper, John Stallions &c.

RICHARD WARNER

P.S. Please write on every opportunity. R.W.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Chapel Hill, Tennessee, lay just north of the Duck River, about eighteen miles east of Columbia. It was in Bedford County until Marshall County was created, which placed it in the northern part of the new county.

2. These three letters have not been found.

3. Thomas Dean and Henry B. Coffey were Polk's friends and had supported Van Buren. During the election discussed here, Dean was elected, as was Warner. Coffey was elected in the succeeding canvass. Coffey lived at War Trace, a few miles east of Shelbyville.

4. A resident of the Fairfield community in eastern Bedford County, Morgan did not enter the race.

5. The nature of the trouble between Dean and Warner, mentioned here and in a later paragraph, has not been ascertained.

6. Joseph Kincaid was a physician who had opposed the Jackson-Polk faction for a long time. Carlo D. Steele and Leonard W. Marbury had been prospective candidates in earlier elections. Mullings is unidentified.

7. Little has been learned about any of the persons named here.

FROM JOHN S. YOUNG

Calhoun. January 24, 1837

Writing from the Cherokee Agency, Young reports that he has been chosen to supervise the removal of a detachment of Cherokees to the West and expresses his appreciation to Polk for helping him get the appointment.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Young moved from Virginia to Warren County, Tennessee, about 1830. A doctor, he later was secretary of state for Tennessee, 1839–47.

2. Calhoun was a small town on the Hiwassee River in McMinn County. It was about fourteen miles south of Athens.

FROM SAMUEL MITCHELL

Dear Sir

War Trace January 25th 1837

Your favour of the 24th of December was read a few days ago, and its contents have been duly considered, and I am sorry it is not in my power to give you more satisfaction in relation to our county affairs.
than I am prepared to do at the present time. As yet, no steps have been taken to organize matters for the coming contest, nor have our opponents made any overt movements for the campaign. I think I can discover from their conduct that they are waiting to see our arrangements developed, and that they then intend making theirs with an eye to our defeat, as they think by standing aloof and holding out the appearance of indifference they will get us so divided and split to pieces, by having several of our party out for each situation, that they can come down upon us with an undivided front and defeat us, but so far as I am concerned or can have any influence they will be disappointed. We have the majority and must keep the ascendancy, to insure which, nothing is necessary but concern and unity of action.

It is generally understood and believed that [Richard] Warner and [Thomas] Dean will be our candidates for the House of Representatives, although their names have not been announced, nor do I believe they are willing to come out, until it shall be known whether they will be troubled with any other candidate from our ranks or not. Col. C______² below me, is very anxious to run, and holds the others back, as they see and know what would be the consequences of a division in our ranks. If he should run our fate is sealed, as he would affect the object desired by our enemies, without the least prospect of being successful himself, unless one of the others were to decline and he should be taken up and run by the Democratic party upon the questions, and even then I am fearful it would not answer, as he has not the necessary strength to keep down opposition in the ranks of his own party. It is said that [Harvey M.] Waterson intends leaving the Country and will not be a candidate. Your friend Carlo D. [Steele] was pregnant with political information and big with the fate of empires until the November election, since which time I have not heard his name mentioned. He would have been before the people if that election had resulted differently, and I presume will now, provided the hoped for division with us should take place.

[Joseph] Kincaid is spoken of as their candidate for the Senate, but I think will give place to [Theodorick F.] Bradford and take his chance for the other House, as I understand when he is questioned upon the subject, he expresses a preference for the House of Representatives, and I cannot see any other motive that he can have in view but the accommodation of Bradford, and I think the matter is so understood between them. Bradford would have liked to have given you another trial for Congress but Van Burenism is rather too strong in the District and to cover his retreat would now be willing to take shelter in the Senate.

The suggestion in your letter respecting my running for the
January 25 1837

Senate, is a matter that is frequently mentioned here by the people, but I am of opinion it would be bad policy for me to run. My having so recently been before the people for another appointment would be used to my prejudice. It would be said immediately that I was endeavouring to engross every appointment that came within my reach, and a plea of this kind in the hands of such men as Bradford & Kincaid would break any ordinary man down, and I think I could do the cause more good in aiding my friends than I possibly could do by being a candidate myself. I can fight better and more to the purpose of others than I can for myself, and I feel confident would be able to bring stronger forces to the contest by operating privately than if I was more immediately interested in the contest. In addition to the bad policy of my running, I have another almost insurmountable obstacle in the way; that is the situation of my private matters. I have been almost constantly serving the public or my friends for the last ten years to the almost entire neglect of my own business and consequently my affairs are greatly deranged and will require my close personal attention for two or three years to straiten them up! If I should not run and it is my wish now not to be before the people, it is quite uncertain who we will start.

Were it not for a local question in Marshall County about removing the seat of justice Col. Record would answer every purpose, but that question would injure him near the [Duck] River and on the North side of the River, as the people there are very much dissatisfied with the present location. I will see our friends at Feby. Court and ascertain their views about these matters and write you again before you leave Washington.

Who has the appointment of the visitor to the Military Academy at West Point? Would not a trip to that institution be of great service to a Brigadier General of Militia? If the nature of the trip would be calculated to improve me in Military tactics I would be gratified to be considered worthy of the consideration of the appointing power.

I enclose you the letters of Administration taken out by my Brother upon my Mother’s estate. You will be pleased to present them to the proper department and request that the money should be paid at Nashville as my brother is in this country at this time.

Mr. Van Buren has nothing to fear as regards the support of Tennessee after the people have another hearing upon the subject, provided he administers the Government upon republican principles, and that he will do that his Democratic friends here, have no fears. The people are opening their eyes to the efforts now covertly going on, to transfer our Patriotic State to the enemies of Republican principles; the device is too shallow. It won’t, it cannot be affected.
Give my best respects to my old friend Yell\(^6\) and tell him that I have a strong idea of becoming one of his constituents. Gilchrist started with his hands about a week ago, he intends settling a farm about fifteen miles from Little Rock and will settle his family in that town.\(^7\)

**SAM MITCHELL**

Addressed to Washington.
1. War Trace was located in Bedford County, east of Shelbyville, on the War Trace Fork of the Duck River.
2. This letter has not been found. Polk obviously wrote a similar letter to Richard Warner, asking for an estimate of the political situation in Bedford County. See Warner to Polk, January 24, 1837.
3. Henry B. Coffey.
4. James C. Record, a former resident of Maury County, had served on the commission that chose the site of Lewisburg, the county seat of Marshall County. The people in the northern part of Marshall County disliked the location, which they thought too distant from their homes.
5. The enclosure has not been found. Mitchell’s parents are not known, but the brother may have been David R. Mitchell, a former resident of Maury County who lived at this time near Montgomery, Alabama.
6. A close personal and political friend of Polk, Archibald Yell had practiced law in Fayetteville, Tennessee, but moved to Arkansas in 1832 when President Jackson appointed him judge there. Yell served in Congress from Arkansas, 1836–39 and 1845–46.
7. William Gilchrist, a Bedford County lawyer, as Yell was, had also moved to Arkansas. See Gilchrist to Polk, November 16, 1836.

**FROM NICHOLAS FAIN\(^1\)**

Rogersville.\(^2\) February 1, 1837

In a long, rambling letter, Fain explains the plight of Tennessee volunteers called up in the summer of 1836 and then sent home without having been mustered in or paid. He says that a memorial has been sent to Samuel Bunch\(^3\) asking for compensation to these volunteers who traveled to and from the rendezvous at their own expense and hopes that Polk will support legislation for that purpose.

Addressed to Washington.
1. A political leader in Hawkins County, Fain entered the state legislature in 1839 and served two terms.
2. Rogersville was the county seat of Hawkins County.
3. Samuel Bunch of Rutledge, Tennessee, was about to finish his second term in the United States House of Representatives.
TO JAMES L. EDWARDS¹

Sir

Washington City Feby 2nd 1837

Enclosed I send the application of William Bailey² for a Pension, and also his claim for Bounty land, in consideration of Revolutionary Services. Will you examine and decide on the application for a Pension, and do me the favor to hand the papers relating to the claim for Bounty land to the proper office.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Revolutionary War Pension File S2053 (RG 15), National Archives.

¹. Edwards was Commissioner of Pensions in the War Department.
². Unidentified.

FROM ALFRED EMERSON¹

Sir,

Yale College Feb 2, 1837

The regulations of this institution require that when the unexcused absences of a student in any one term amount to the number of 8, notice of the fact be communicated to his parent or guardian. When 4 or more are added he is reprimanded by the president in presence of the faculty. When they amount to 16, a second notice is given to the parent or guardian. Lastly, 20 absences caused the student to be immediately dismissed from college.

Your ward S. W. Polk² has now come upon the first stage of the course of discipline above described. Of the importance of strict regularity, both as it respects the character & prospects of persons at his period of life you are most fully aware & will no doubt be ready, cheerfully to unite your influence with ours in checking evil in question. This is the desire of the faculty.

I am happy to say that in other respects his conduct meets their approbation. His performances in the recitation room are usually creditable to himself & satisfactory to his instructors.

A. EMERSON

Addressed to Washington.

¹. Alfred Emerson, a recent Yale graduate, was a tutor in mathematics and natural philosophy.
². Samuel W. Polk was Polk's youngest brother.
FROM JOHN A. THOMAS¹

West Point, New York. February 2, 1837

Thomas seeks to have his brother, James H. Thomas, appointed to the Board of Visitors of the United States Military Academy.

Addressed to Washington.

1. John A. Thomas was a son of Dr. Isaac J. Thomas of Columbia. John Thomas was graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1833, and he had remained there as an instructor. Later he became commandant of the Academy.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

New Haven, Connecticut. February 4, 1837

Olmsted, an instructor at Yale who was acting as guardian of Samuel W. Polk while Samuel was enrolled there, forwards a statement of his ward's expenses from October 1836 through January 1837. During that time, young Polk spent nearly $500 for board, clothing, and furniture.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOHN INNES POCOCK


A London barrister seeks information on a possible heir to Sir David Barry, recently deceased.¹ Dr. James Barry, a brother, had lived near Gallatin and was known to have had a daughter named Maria.² If this daughter were alive at the time of Sir David's death, she or her heirs would be entitled to a share in her uncle's estate.

Addressed to Columbia and forwarded to Washington.

1. Born in Ireland, Sir David Barry was a physician and physiologist. He was noted for his research on the influence of atmospheric pressure on various functions of the body. After serving on a cholera commission in Russia, Barry was knighted in 1831. His death came in 1835.

2. Maria Barry was married to Major Andrew Price of Lebanon.

FROM JOHN W. FORD¹

Dear Sir: McMinnville² Ten Feby. 5th 1837

Some two years ago, to enable me to "go ahead" with my printing establishment, I executed a mortgage deed to my papermaker to
February 5 1837

secure him the payment of $800 which I was owing for paper. It was divided into two equal payments of $400 each, at six and 12 months. When the first note fell due, I was able to pay it, but when the other fell due it found me without the available means of paying it off. Consequently, a bill was filed against me to foreclose the mortgage; a final decree was had against me at the last Jany term of the Chancery Court held at this place, and my establishment is advertised for sale, to be sold in 40 days from this time to satisfy said debt.

The object of this letter is this: I find that it will be impossible for me to raise the money here, without I will agree to repay it at six and 12 months and that at a high rate of interest. I know it will be impossible for me to refund half the sum in six months. I therefore have thought I would address myself to you and ask your aid in trying to procure it for me from some of our political friends who will be willing to wait with me, one and two years, and who will be also willing to take a reasonable rate of interest. The money shall be religiously repaid when it falls due provided you can procure it for me.

I believe I can say without vanity, that my press rendered essential service to the Democratic cause in this Congressional District during the late Presidential canvass as was evidenced by the large majority which the Van Buren Electoral Ticket received—larger, than was given by any other Congressional District in Tennessee. Myself and press were made the special objects of attack from Messrs [John B.] Forester & [Balie] Peyton in their various barbarous speeches delivered in this District immediately before the election. The people were told not to believe any thing that they have seen in my papers—that I published nothing but lies, but all their efforts proved unavailing. Already, as I am informed, some of the leading Opposition men in this County are chuckling at the idea that my establishment is to be swept from me. If I do not receive aid from my political friends, it will be out of my power to avert it, and if it is brought under the hammer, it will almost certainly be bought by some of the Opposition for the purpose of wielding it against the principles which I have endeavored to maintain, and advocating the reelection of Mr. Forester to Congress, or some other person of the same political stamp. If they can silence my press it will be one great point gained by them.

There is the same necessity for a paper in this District now that there was before the Presidential Election. It is evident from the power of the Opposition in Congress this session that Mr. Van Buren's Administration is not to be judged of by its measures but he is to have "War to the knife." Consequently, it is necessary that there should be faithful wardens on the Watch-Tower, for the purpose of
giving the people correct information. I shall keep the Democratic flag flying, and if my press must go down, it shall go down with the Democratic colors nailed to the mast-head.

I have also addressed a letter to Mr. Grundy. I wish you to consult together and if this necessary aid can be afforded me, write me immediately, and enclose it to me. If it cannot be had write me in like manner that I may prepare for the worst.

JOHN W. FORD

Addressed to Washington.

1. Ford was editor of the McMinnville Central Gazette, a Democratic newspaper. He was also postmaster at McMinnville from 1835 until 1844.

2. McMinnville was the county seat of Warren County. Located on the Collins River, it lies about seventy-five miles southeast of Nashville.

FROM JABEZ JACKSON

My Dear Sir,

Philadelphia, 6 Feb. 1837

The chronic character which my disease has put on will, I have little doubt, debar me from the resumption of my seat during the session and in all present probability will detain me here after the adjournment. Last year, in consequence of a similar attack, I did not adjudge it prudent in me to go home at all during the interregnum of Congress, a circumstance which, by the way, reduced my vote in October so low that I had nigh lost my election. I am here in the hands of Dr. Dunglison whose character is a sufficient guaranty that I shall be taken off the sick list as soon as possible.

I lament my situation particularly in reference to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for Gen. Howard has written to me urging me to go to Washington in relation to it. It seems that they are divided, 4 & 4, as regards a report to the House on the subject of indemnity to the sufferers by French spoliations prior to 1800. I am in favour of such indemnity, & were I with the Committee my casting vote would carry the report into the House. Now, as I cannot at present think of a land journey to Washington, and as I am not at all willing that the publick should sustain the least detriment by my misfortune, I beg that after conversation with Genl. Howard (I having today written to him to seek such with you) should you and he coincide, you will vacate my seat as a member of the Committee and appoint some one in my place, assigning, if you please, publickly for the sake of just effect in my own state, the cause of the change—that is, my incapacity from illness, to attend to my official duties.
While on the subject of the committee, I beg you sir, to accept my thanks for the honour which, two sessions consecutively, you have conferred upon me in putting me upon it. I lament that I have not been a more active member of the House during the period in which I have held a seat in it. Taken from my farm in Georgia, on which during nearly all my life, except when travelling in Europe and the northern states I was devoting myself exclusively to literary pursuits, without the wish, or the thought even, of ever engaging in publick life; and never having, therefore, addressed a publick body of any description, I have remained mute in the House. At my time of my life, it would be fatuity to begin to act the orator, and I must content myself in endeavouring to be useful only in the Committee Room.

I beg you also to believe that not one of your friends in the House has observed with more satisfaction than myself, the triumph which in the enlarged publick mind of the Country, you are daily, by your firm and impartial and therefore just and enlightened course in the chair, gaining over your vindictive enemies. Abroad, I am happy to say, that nothing but commendation is awarded to you. The late scene in the Special Committee room is a good thing, perhaps, on the whole; certain persons whom I need not particularize, must themselves see the deformity of their outrageous conduct reflected back upon them in the fullness of its shamelessness, by the publick press without distinction of party.

JABEZ JACKSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Jackson represented Georgia in the United States Congress for two terms, 1835-39, before retiring to private life. The nature of his illness remains obscure, although he referred to it frequently in subsequent letters to Polk. Apparently he had a lung disorder. See Jabez Jackson to Polk, March 1, July 5, 1837; July 6, 14, 1838; January 12, 30, 1839.

2. Robley Dunglison was a distinguished physician. In 1824, at the invitation of Thomas Jefferson, he came from England to accept a place at the University of Virginia. After a few years, he moved, first to the University of Maryland, then in 1836 to the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. He remained at that post until 1868, becoming one of the most prolific and successful writers on medical subjects in the United States.

3. Benjamin C. Howard of Maryland was in the House of Representatives for four terms, 1829-33 and 1835-39. He was reporter of Supreme Court decisions, 1843-62, and in 1861 served as a member of the Washington Peace Conference.

4. This probably refers to difficulties involving Henry A. Wise, Balie Peyton, and Reuben M. Whitney.
Columbia Ten. Feb. 8th 1837

I yesterday saw [William] Grissam, Wm. A. Johnson, [John] Braden, Michael Lancaster, and two or three others from same neighborhood, who requested me to write to you soliciting your efforts in having a Post Office established somewhere in their neighborhood to be supplied with the cross mail from Cedar Spring to Mooresville. They say that the mail will not have to go out of the present route more than 3 or 4 miles, and that a densely populated neighborhood will be accommodated which now suffer great inconvenience on account of their remote situation from any office.

Yours & Mr. Walkers letters were received yesterday and shall be promptly attended to. I owe you an apology for not having written you frequently. The best that I have to offer, I knew that Nicholson had written & felt satisfied that he could give more satisfactory information than I could. I have however still another, which should be sufficient viz. Cherry’s indisposition required my personal attention to the Post Office & being compelled to give at least one half my time to the Democrat Office and also being in bad health myself I hope will be a sufficient apology for apparent neglect.

Great efforts are making to get up a war excitement for the purpose of making Cahal formidable against you, but I think it will prove a failure. Cahal has not yet returned tho' the main body of the volunteers are at home. A Ball was given them last Friday night and a Dinner is to be given shortly. I have heard it hinted that Cahal will not settle here again. I also hear it frequently asserted that he will oppose you for Congress. I on yesterday had a conversation with Powhatan Gordon. He is of opinion that Cahal will not oppose you tho' he says great efforts are making and will be made to bring him out. He further said that Cahal had told him he had no idea of opposing you. The probability that he will, is talked off generally and your friends from every part of the County, firm & devoted to you, many of them are anxious that he shall, that they may (in their own language) “give him a Jeff Porter defeat.” In truth our friends firmly believe that we can beat him for the Senate, if he ventures to offer. No candidates yet out. Nicholson & [Jonas E.] Thomas will of course run & their election certain. Col. [Williamson] Smith has not yet been heard from. Dr. Thomas & Greenfield are both greatly in our way. We find it hard to work to keep them back. Powhatan Gordon is favorable spoken of as a candidate for the Senate. I this morning saw in the Democrat Office a call upon him. You will see it published. If
he can be got out we have the matter settled. I feel certain from what I have observed, that he can be elected.

The mails continue to be crow[d]ed with Documents from your friend7 at Washington. Why do you not send some? Do not fail to send some of Bentons, Rives, Hamer & Lane's speeches.8 Send one to Petillo.9 He says he wants to see a speech in answer to Wise & Peyton.

If it is possible to procure some man who has a talent for business, as a partner for [Chesley P.] Bynum it should be done. Chesley is a good fellow but he is not capable of attending to the business concerns of the office. Something must be done for I cannot think of devoting so much of my time to it. Nothing is wanting but the proper man to break down in a short time the Observer office. The subscription list of the Democrat is constantly increasing, while, as I believe, the other is decreasing.

Bynum was married last Friday to Miss Wingfield.10 I hope he will be more of a business man and things may go better than heretofore.

Excuse this scrawl. My best respects to Mrs. Polk, and for yourself renewed assurance of my high regard.

A. C. HAYS

Addressed to Washington.

1. These men obviously lived in a neighborhood in Marshall County, but they have not been identified further.

2. Cedar Spring had been changed to Berlin. Both Berlin and Mooresville were in eastern Maury County until their incorporation into Marshall upon its creation. Berlin lay about eight miles northeast of Mooresville.

3. This is perhaps a reference to Jeremiah Cherry, a former resident of Columbia who had served for a short time as postmaster at White House in Williamson County.

4. Powhatan Gordon, a brother of Boling Gordon of Hickman County, later served two terms in the General Assembly. Although these two brothers lived in different counties, their homes were quite near each other.

5. Thomas Jefferson Porter of Columbia was a member of a large Porter connection that generally opposed Polk. In 1833 he had entered the congressional race between Polk and Theodorick F. Bradford, trying to split the vote in Maury and permit the election of Bradford. Porter polled such a small vote, however, that the only effect of his action was to make him the butt of many jokes.

6. Isaac J. Thomas and Gerrard T. Greenfield, both physicians, were perennial hopefuls when public offices were at stake. Neither had a large public following, and party leaders were frequently embarrassed by the necessity of keeping them out of the actual contests.

7. This is a sarcastic reference to John Bell.
8. Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri and William C. Rives of Virginia were in the United States Senate; Thomas L. Hamer of Ohio and Amos Lane of Indiana were members of the House of Representatives. All defended Jackson's administration against attacks made by critics such as Peyton and Wise.

9. John Petillo lived north of the Duck River in Maury County, where he owned a small tract of land. He was a relative of the Caruthers family and at one time lived in the home of Robert Caruthers Sr.

10. Chesley Bynum married Mary D. Wingfield on February 3, 1837.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

New Haven, Connecticut. February 8, 1837

Olmsted acknowledges receipts of $75 for Samuel Caldwell, Polk's nephew, but reports that Caldwell has paid his board bill and left for Washington. He asks for instructions as to the disposition of the money.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. On the envelope, Polk noted that he wrote Olmsted on February 13, directing him to credit the money to the account of Samuel W. Polk, also a student at Yale.

FROM GEORGE R. POWEL¹

Dear Sir

Rogersville T. 13 Feb 1837

Your communicating the intelligence of the passage of the Expunging Resolution² was duly reed. and nothing that has occurred for years afforded me half the gratification.

I am heartily glad it was done in the life time of the venerated old man & witnessed by the same generation that saw the record of his attempted infamy. There is but one feeling here upon that subject among the people, one general burst of joy & gratulation on account of its consummation. Bentons name deserves to be written in letters of living fire; his course is onward. I would have been pleased to have been there to have seen its execution. I wonder how our old friend the Judge looked & felt, Tennessee receiving only half the honour of removing the foul blot that she ought to have if rightly represented.³ I see Mr. Bell has introduced his ad cap⁴ bill to secure the freedom of election. I wonder if [he] has incorporated in the bill such a provision as (under a severe penalty) will prevent him & others of like principles from passing over into open districts for the purpose of influencing the people to go against a successful but hated rival. It seems to me he ought to have such a provision.

I see Peyton has threatened to kill Whitney.⁵ I think his sun is set.
February 13 1837

At least I hope so. Such Bullys ought to be powered down by an honest community. Our cause here is on the ascendant in my opinion. Now the White leaders here come out openly & say they would have voted for Genl. Harrison in preference to Mr Van Buren. The people will not brook this.

Our candidates are beginning to be designated by the people. Rogers (Whig) our Rep last year will be beaten by Critz, Van, if he can be prevail’d on to run, which I think he will. If I run, which is doubtful, my friends tell me I will have no opposition. No Whig will show his face in my district unless two Vans take the field. I think [Samuel] Bunch is easing over.

I wrote you a letter some time since in reference to procuring an appointment for my brother at the Military Academy West Point. I have not reed an answer upon that subject. Please let me know whether his appointment is secured as he is very desirous to learn. You would very much oblige me to let us know at as early a date as possible. Many of the volunteers are importuning to whether Congress had made an appropration for their benefit or not. Please inform me whether any law has been passed to meet their case, if not, what they may expect &c.

I presume the President will return home immediately after the adjournment; if so which route will he take? I have not seen who is elected Vice President. We all suppose Col. Johnson.

I have written this letter in a great hurry so you will please excuse all inaccuracies.

Geo. R. Powel

Addressed to Washington.

1. Powel, a Rogersville lawyer, was at this time a member of the lower house of the state legislature, where he served one term. Later he was for twelve years clerk of the circuit court.

2. Henry Clay’s 1834 resolution censuring Jackson was expunged on January 16, 1837.

3. Felix Grundy voted for Benton’s resolution to expunge, while Hugh L. White opposed.

4. Ad captandum, “for the sake of pleasing”; said of arguments addressed primarily to sentiments, desires, or passions.

5. Reuben Whitney’s activities during the banking controversy had been investigated, and he had been exonerated of wrongdoing. Demanding that another committee investigate, Wise and Peyton actually threatened Whitney physically in committee meetings.

6. John A. Rogers and Philip Critz both served in the General Assembly, but Critz did not unseat Rogers as Powel predicted here.
7. See Powel to Polk, December 23, 1836.
8. In the first few days of March 1837, Congress approved several laws that benefited the Volunteers. The reference here is probably to a benefit approved on March 1, wherein those Volunteers who had been mustered in but discharged before they marched were to receive one month's pay and allowances.

FROM RICHARD WARNER

Shelbyville Febry. 14th 1837

Dear Sir

I understand from Capt Rushing⁴ that some difficulty will probably present itself relative to obtaining a post rout from Shelbyville to Chapel Hill in consequence of the office at Versailles² (in Williamson County). When I wrote you,³ I was unapprised of the office at Versailles which office I understand is of but very little importance. However should this be a difficulty if the rout was so changed as to give us a mail once a week from Shelbyville and let the rout from Nashville still pass by Versailles it would answer our purpose; that is let it pass each place once a week. Our object is to get the Shelbyville mail and their object to get the Nashville mail. I would just remark for your information that on last Sunday (12 inst), I read the Shelbyville mail of the 27th January, Washington City of the 30th and the Baltimore paper of the 1st February. This surely ought to be altered; do try and have the defect remedied by some means.

In conclusion I would remark touching political matters. It is not yet known who will be candidate (Senate). [Joseph] Kincaid is spoken of. I think Genl [Samuel] Mitchell will not run (Rip).⁴ [Robert G.] Morgan and myself are announced. [Thomas] Dean will be it is said in the next "Star" (Opposition), probably [Carlo D.] Steele and [Harvey M.] Watterson, not certain. I hope things will work right.  

RICHD. WARNER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Unidentified.
2. Versailles was about six miles due east of Eagleville and very near Versailles Knob. It was in Williamson County at this time, but a few years later that part of Williamson was annexed to Rutherford County.
3. See above, Warner to Polk, January 24, 1837.
4. Requiescat in pace, "may he rest in peace." While Warner and Mitchell were of the same party, they were not personal friends. It is quite probable that their political ambitions in Bedford County made them rivals within the party.
FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Feb. 15th 1837

I have just read the proof of the correspondence between Gen. Armstrong and the Secretary of War, in relation to clothing for the Volunteers. The letter of Mr. Butler shows the vigilance of the Government in providing for the troops, and the ridiculous falsehood of the several published and unpublished letters receivd here last fall, in relation to this matter, from persons in Gen. Armstrong's Camp.

Have Bell, Peyton and Wise all been sworn before the investigating Committees? They ought to be made to testify. Prosecutors, even where they are persecutors as in the present case, are compitant witnesses, however much they may lack in credibility. Defendants are not witnesses, and ought not to be. There is but one opinion here, among candid men of all parties, of the flagitiousness of the course of Peyton and Wise; and all intelligent men regard John Bell as being at the bottom of the whole affair. It is whispered among the Whigs here that Mr. Peyton will decline a re-election. Will he "back-out" without running? I think it probable.

Crockett, and I regret it, is running in Rutherford. I was in Murfreesboro on Friday last. Strong efforts are making among the Whigs there to unite on a candidate. Randolph, [George A.] Sublett, [William] Ledbetter &c were in caucus, but nothing transpired of what was done. It was hoped among them some time ago, that Ledbetter could run, and that [Abram P.] Maury could be put aside. There seems to be no hope of that now. [Charles] Ready is flat—completely done up—for Rutherford is herself again.

Nicholson left here this morning for Maury. He says there is a dead calm as sometimes precedes a storm. Cahal is in New Orleans, and is about to locate, and take up the law.

Gen. Armstrong leaves here to-night for Washington. Robert C. Foster Sr. will leave in a few days for Washington, his object being to complete a negociation of turnpike bonds with the Secretary of the Treasury. Maj. [Andrew Jackson] Donelson was here yesterday, wrote to the President, and will leave about next Sunday for Washington, by the river if the water rises.

Please say to Mrs. Folk, that her friends in Rutherford, are all well. I spent an evening at her sister's, who is in as good health as usual. When John Laughlin and [William H.] Sneed had their fight in the street a few weeks ago, Joanna, so says Elizabeth, had a disposition to take part on the Van Buren side.

What does Judge White mean by seeming, in several recent votes,
to be on the side of the Administration? Does the old critur wish to get back? He will find that he is too late.

The other day when I was away, Mr. Andrew Ewing wrote two or three short editorial paragraphs for me. Among them was one praising Foster, on his appointment to deliver the Address. I did not like it, but could not help it; and as he is a true man, I could not disavow it. The circumstance convinced me that there is as much in an Editor's knowing what he ought not to do, as in knowing what he ought to do on many occasions.

The Irish have made Nye knock under. It is stated that Gen. Barrow will forthwith take post, assisted by McMahon, formerly of the Truth Teller, as his adjunct. Great things, therefore, may be expected. Wash [Barrow] will be out for the Legislature it is understood.

I publish to-day extracts of a letter from Washington of the 17th Janry furnished to me by our faithful friend A. C. Hays, in which Bell, Peyton, Wise & Polk (the Speaker) are spoken of as they respectively deserve. I wish I had a Washington correspondent who would write me such a letter weekly. If I continue in my present vocation, from which nothing shall drive me but poverty or starvation, I must have a letter writer next winter.

There is talk of A. Wright being a candidate for Congress in Giles, I do not know upon what authority. [Andrew A.] Kincannon, I understand, is in Mobile on some trip of speculation.

It is funny to see A. V. Brown's name standing in the paper as one of the Editors of the Pulaski Trumpet he being in Mississippi and the paper weekly filled with White-Whig matter. I wonder why he did not take steps to have things better arranged.

Nicholson has a good article coming out in the Democrat on Bell's Freedom of Elections Bill. He will Commence his Numbers on Bell's political career, to which I will add notes and comments, in a week or ten days. The first No. he has ready.

Caruthers told Waterson of Bedford, the other day, that he could beat Bell easily, but did not know that he should offer &c. Has he been bought off? What have the infernal set to offer him, now or hereafter? Nothing.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Presumably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found.

1. While Laughlin clearly dated his letter February 15, the correspondence of which he had just read proof actually appeared in Laughlin's newspaper on February 14. Benjamin F. Butler was Secretary of War.
February 15 1837

2. Henry A. Wise had introduced a resolution calling for a select committee to investigate all the executive departments, directly challenging the veracity of Jackson's last annual message and charging that his whole administration was shot through with fraud. Administration supporters in the House voted for the resolution in order to force Wise to substantiate his accusations and, according to some opinions, to cut short the long speeches Wise was in the habit of making.

3. Beverly Randolph, a Murfreesboro merchant, had moved from Virginia to Rutherford County, Tennessee, in 1816. Sublett, an early settler, had with his brother, A. C. Sublett, published a newspaper in Murfreesboro for a long time.

4. Robert C. Foster Sr. was the father of Ephraim H. Foster and Robert C. Foster Jr.

5. For an account of the fight, see William R. Rucker to Polk, January 20, 1837. Elizabeth and Johanna were the oldest children of William R. Rucker. At the time that this letter was written, they were sixteen and fifteen years old.

6. Andrew Ewing, a young Nashville lawyer, was a Democrat, but his family was of the opposition party.

7. Shadrack Nye of Sumner County had bought the Nashville Republican in 1834 while Washington Barrow was editor. The reference to the Irish is obscure. Barrow's name appeared on the paper as editor until March 9, 1837, when that of Col. James H. McMahon was substituted. McMahon was a former editor of the Jackson Truth Teller. Barrow's valedictory statement indicated that he was not leaving the paper permanently.

8. Archibald Wright of Pulaski was a lawyer and a Democrat. He served one term in the legislature, 1847-49.

9. The Pulaski Trumpet of Liberty, edited by Alston B. Estes, was a Whig paper that Brown and others had been trying to obtain for the Democrats. Eventually they succeeded and William H. Feild became the editor. See Aaron V. Brown to Polk, July 18, 1837.

10. In January 1837, Bell introduced in the House a bill to insure freedom of elections, which was such an obvious slap at Jackson's administration that it was taken as an announcement that Bell no longer pretended to be a Jacksonian Democrat.

11. This is probably a reference to Robert L. Caruthers and William S. Watterson, father of Harvey M. Watterson.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother Columbia Tenn. Feb 15th 1837

I returned from Mississippi a short time since. I remained until I seen that every thing was in operation. There is nothing required but a moderate share of attention to make it very profitable. I am very much pleased with the place & country.¹
Col Cahal has not returned, but is looked for daily. Some of the *White-Gentry* say that he will run for Congress—it may be merely a *boast* on their part. There is no doubt, but what great exertions will be made to induce him to run. The general opinion of your friends is that you will have no opposition. This opinion, though, has not thrown them into a *fatal conscious security*—they are still active and ready for any event. It is the prevalent opinion, that P. Gorden will run for the Senate. He is more popular than he was when he left home.² He will succeed without difficulty. All are well. My love to Sister Sarah.

**Bill Polk**

Addressed to Washington.

1. William H. and James K. Polk jointly owned a plantation near Coffeeville, Mississippi.

2. Powhatan Gordon had just returned from Florida, where he had served as a major of volunteers in the Seminole War.

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**FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS**

Murfreesboro Feby 17th 1837¹

By reference to the columns of the 'Weekly Times,' a copy of which I send you, in its improved form, you will find the article from the 'Boston Post,'² in relation to the attempt to transfer this State to the Federalist of the north. I cannot form a correct idea of the effect that movement will have. I am sometimes inclined to think that the White party are so much exasperated against Mr V.Buren, that they are willing to enter the lists under the banner of any leader, even Theodore Dwight³ himself were he placed before them in opposition to the administration. I sometimes converse with a few of the White party, who say they will not vote for Clay or Webster but they seem to be equally averse to V.B. The large mass however of the county are uncommitted and I think undetermined. As such, now is the time to make impressions. If proper exertions are made to awaken the people to a sense of the news of the Federalist, before their feelings are enlisted by local circumstances and artful appeals in favor of the opposition, there is a chance, that Tenn. may again be a Republican State. But if the Democratic party continue to be apathetic and careless the reverse will certainly be the case, for the opposition are ceaseless and untiring in their exertions, artful, talented, vindictive, and by no means sparing in the use of the money the[y] have, to
accomplish their designs. They attempted to buy out the little press in this place and failed, and forthwith a new establishment was sent up from Nashville and a Whig paper issued without subscribers, with the view of breaking down the old paper. In this they have also failed, for as you will see by the copy sent, the little 8 by 10, has grown to be next to the largest sheet in the state. I learned to day that they have also had an agent at McMinnville lately with the view of buying up the Democratic paper there. I presume as they failed in that they will also establish a press there. The Editor & proprietors of ‘The Times’ are industrious, & indefatigable and say thy will do their best for the future to sustain the paper. All the merchants have pounced upon them, will take away nearly all the advertising and they must rely alone upon the patronage of country subscribers.

A great deal depends upon the dissemination of political news among the people by members of Congress. In that our friends have been very remiss. I do not think Mr Grundy has sent documents to 100 men in this county within the last four years. We receive none from any one else, and of course the people see but one side. Mr Maury, Bell & others keep the P.O. full. Can you arouse Mr Grundy, Turney & others upon this subject? Col. Benton has many old acquaintances here and could also help. The people have as yet seen but one side of the Sub Treasury question. Speeches & documents upon that subject would be very acceptable. The Mississippi election created considerable sensation and I anxiously looked for something in favor of the Democratic members. But nothing has been seen here in reference to it except the one sided reports of the letter writers for the Nashville Whig. I have been thus particular because I believe that the events of the present congress will determine the fate of the Administration in Tennessee; and because I believe that the Democratic party have lost much ground for the want of information among the people; and the blame is attributable in a great degree to the remissness of the few Democratic members of Congress. Now is the time for exertion, before the people are committed. If they continue to see the many & violent assaults against the administration without seeing the defence, of course they will begin to credit every thing, and when they make up their opinions it will be too late to offer any defence.

The press in this State is laboring to make the people believe that Mr Clay has abandoned the American System. If you can find them conveniently I would be glad you would send me his speeches upon the subjects of Internal improvement & the Tariff as early as you can. The Editor of the ‘Times’ will be at great loss for the want of such documents. There are none here that he can have access to. And
if there are other papers you may think would be of any service in conducting the controversy I would be glad you would send them to me. What are the prospects of a reunion of the Democrats in New York and Virginia? Is there a probability that the Admist. party will succeed in New York next fall? Will Mr Rives go off with the opposition or will he return to our ranks. I would be pleased to hear your opinion upon these subjects.

We will set out for Alabama some time between the 1st & 15th of March as the weather may suit and will be gone untill about the 1st May. I would be pleased to hear from you before we start. Tell Sarah I will write to her a short time before we set out. It is somewhat doubtful whether Mah goes or not. She is greatly troubled with Rheumatism in the shoulder and is almost afraid to venture upon the trip. I think however, if we can get her off, the trip will be of service to her health.

J. W. C.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Internal evidence indicates this letter was written in 1838.

2. The Murfreesboro Weekly Times, edited by Dr. Stephen B. Johns, was a successor to the Monitor, which had been anti-administration as long as William H. Sneed was editor. The Boston Morning Post was a Democratic newspaper edited by Charles G. Greene.

3. Theodore Dwight the elder was one of the “Connecticut Wits” and an outspoken opponent of slavery. It is probable that the reference is to him, although his son Theodore, though lesser known, was also an espouser of many causes, including abolition.

4. See John W. Ford to Polk, February 5, 1837.

5. “The subtreasury question” was one of several names applied to a Democratic scheme for taking the government out of banking. Other names used for proposed legislation were the divorce bill, the warehousing bill, and the independent treasury. The basic feature of all of these plans was merely to have the government deposit its funds into a treasury from which it would be paid out directly for government expenses, and thus never be handled by a bank.

6. William C. Rives was one of a significant number of Democrats who were opposed to the subtreasury plan. He drifted into the opposition ranks and by 1844 was an avowed Whig.

7. Mrs. Joel Whitsitt Childress was the mother of Sarah Polk, Susan Rucker, and John W. Childress.
FROM GEORGE W. CHURCHWELL

Knoxville February 17th 1837

Sir, at the request of a friend of mine, I take the liberty of recommending to your favorable notice, a Gentleman of this place Mr Robt. B. Reynolds, a Nephew of Gov. Reynolds, now in Congress. He wishes the appointment of Marshall of E. Tennessee.

I know him well; he is well qualified for the office. I have been opposed myself to Mr VanBuren, and therefore have no right to speak of White men for office, as some people say. But whatevr may be the rule of the new administration I know not. But one thing I do know, that Mr Reynolds has stood alone in Knoxville Battling for Mr. VanBurens cause and become unpopular with the White men on that account. He is a VanBuren man & I am a White man, but he is an honest man & qualified for the office he desires, and I would be glad he could get it. I could say more. Reynolds has been an original Van Buren man, and is as clever as any body.

He would be glad you would see Gov. Reynolds and secure his appointment. I have no right being your political enemy to ask favors even for friends, and do not ask for my friend alone but for your private & political friend & my private but political enemy. Justice demands what I have said.

G. W. CHURCHWELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. Churchwell practiced law in Knoxville for more than thirty-five years, and at this time he was serving his one term in the lower house of the General Assembly. A Whig while in the Assembly, he later became a Democrat.

2. John Reynolds had served as governor of Illinois but resigned in 1834 to take a seat in Congress. He was a member of the House, 1834–37 and 1839–43. Robert B. Reynolds was practicing law in Knoxville at this time.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Nashville Feb 17th 1837

I have not written to you until now because I had nothing to write but an account of the bad roads &c. When I reached Wheeling I found the Ohio still closed there and was compelled to come on to Cincinatti by stage. There was a general thaw in the roads and an average travel was about forty miles including day & night. I arrived here this morning too late for the days stage, and am compelled to spend the
day here. I have seen Mr. Bass, Laughlin & some others, and from every thing I can learn nothing is going wrong in the political world here. It is still a calm. It is likely the White party will endeavor to bring [Robert] Armstrong into their views & run him for Governor, and may succeed as they did with White. I think our true men have determined on running Carroll, and making no compromise as to Armstrong. The candidates for the Legislature are not yet out here, Cheatham & A. Ewing spoken of on one side, W. Barrow and [ . . . ] Yerger on the other. It is understood here, that Powatan Gordon, Nicholson and [Jonas E.] Thomas are to be our candidates. So says Laughlin. Cahal has not returned. He is, it is said, going to settle in New Orleans & practice his profession there. I hope we are rid of him.

I will write you more particularly in a few days. I have heard that all is well at home. James reached here in proper time.

JAMES WALKER

P.S. I write in a hurry, because I have been out all morning, and wish to get ready to take the accommodation for Franklin (where I have some business) this evening.

J W

Addressed to Washington.

1. John M. Bass, a Nashville lawyer and businessman, was Felix Grundy's son-in-law.

2. Leonard P. Cheatham, a nephew of Gen. Richard Cheatham of Robertson County, was a Nashville lawyer. Unlike his uncle, Leonard Cheatham was a Democrat. One of his sons was Gen. Benjamin F. Cheatham of the Confederate army.

3. What appears to be Yerger's first name has not been deciphered.

4. This is a reference to one of the two Walker sons who had been at Yale. It appears that the father had traveled to New Haven to bring his ailing son home. See Samuel W. Polk to Polk, December 17, 1836, and Denison Olmsted to Polk, December 19, 1836.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, Feb. 21, 1837

I do not write to you for the purpose of telling you the news and prospects here, but for the purpose of bespeaking your good offices prospectively for a friend, and thereby, when rightly understood, for myself. But before I speak of this, allow me to explain a little in relation to my letter written a few days ago to Mr. Grundy. In what
I said of my views of the propriety at this time, of you or Mr. G. taking office, I was guided by my own views and judgment. I had in view the great benefit our party here have to expect in the next election, from having both of you present on the spot, one a candidate directly before the people, and the other indirectly. As I feel a deep solicitude for our success, the success of the old Jackson, now the Van Buren party, I may be selfish in my desire to retain you both in the field at home, but it is a selfishness without personal interest, and that looks alone to the present and prospective benefit of others, and the maintainance of our political principles unchanged. I had also persuaded myself, that the course I deemed as best, all things considered, would be the course best calculated to promote and secure the true future interest of both yourself and Mr. Grundy, both as statesmen and as individuals. In all this, however, I may be and perhaps am wholly mistaken; for I have reasoned without a knowledge or view of the whole ground which lies open before you. That I have any other view but your true interest, or can have any other wish than the promotion of your honor and advancement, is impossible. I say this in reference to both yourself and Mr. Grundy. I am not vain enough to think that my opinions ought to have any operative influence upon your course. Excuse, therefore, both you and Mr. Grundy, what, if not understood as founded in good intentions, might be justly deemed as impertinent. Consult your own judgment in what you may do, and while I know your motives to be pure, as they ever must be, rest assured of my constant, though feeble support.

Now as to the first matter mentioned above, it is this. I am in a state in which starvation is in the full tide of successful experiment in near prospect, potentially, at least in the legal sense of that word. I therefore wish, in some honest and honorable way, to make something. My son-in-law, a man of great energy and enterprise, of steady habits, of industry in all things, and withal, a man of independent circumstance, and extensive credit wherever known, has withdrawn from mercantile pursuits, and for my mutual benefit with himself, wishes to embark in land speculation in Arkansas, or Arkansas and Texas as the case may be. Among the merchants of Boston and New York with whom he has had dealings for ten years past, his credit is unlimited, in matters of trade, but this is not money. Except resources insufficient to operate to any profitable extent, as speculators now estimate reasonable profits, he has vested his means in real estate in this city, in property yielding him an income in rents sufficient for his genteel subsistence. His object, therefore, is to form a connexion with persons in New York or Boston, or in both cities, who have
capital, and will advance it as it can be profitably employed, for joint interest. He will go to Washington, and will be closely on behind Maj. Donelson. I must intreat you, Mr. Grundy and Mr. Johnson, to obtain for him such letters of recommendation to persons in New York and Boston who may be of service to him. Maj. Donelson has been kind enough to promise his assistance. He [Kezer] is a close, discreet calculating man, and in every sense trustworthy. I wish you to know this from others than myself. He owes nobody any thing, and never will involve himself. A line of introduction from the old chief, or Mr. Van Buren, or Mr. Butler, or members of Congress, might be of infinite service. He and my brother in law Rev. Peyton Smith, whose stability, solvency and prudence are well known to Mr. Grundy, will, if arrangements can be made, will take to the woods in the spring, with a view of devoting two or three years exclusively to the business. And in the profits, they will give me a mutual and equal interest, if any are made. Nothing can be lost. The business will be exclusively conducted by them. If this goes on, I will have hopes of being able to live, and to devote an exclusive attention to my present vocation here, and in hopes of regaining what I have actually lost; for before God, this day, I am two thousand dollars poorer man, besides loss of time, than I was on this day 1835. I say this, in perfect truth and sincerity for if I give others their right of preference in being paid from my establishment before myself, where strict justice in dollars and cents so requires it, I am even in a worse situation than here stated. If Mr. Kezer cannot succeed in the business above refered to, I will and must be compelled if creditors (Not of mine or one cent of whose money has ever gone to my private benefit) require it, to give up as a ruined man, and seek a livelihood in the law, or in some new pursuit, here, in Arkansas or the Lord knows where. But of these things after you come home.

As I now feel more self-confidence, and more determination, to which I have perhaps arrived from necessity, but which I attribute to having turned over a new leaf in life on my fortieth anniversary, I am ready to do any thing my friends, with any just and reasonable respect to my interest, may require or desire; but I will not wade an inch further in debt unless it is made apparent that I can get out of it. I shall hope that Judge Catron will give any aid which he may find convenient, in furthering Kezer's purposes.

I must repeat my earnest intreaties that Judge Foster be excused from accepting one of the departments. Do assure the President elect, that if he expects me to remain stedfast as his humble supporter in this state, that he must excuse the Judge. We want him as a Turnpike Commissioner, and cannot spare. His retirement on the Murfrees-
February 22 1837

borough Turnpike, may be likened to accepting the Chiltern Hundreds in England—a kind of genteel retirement to Coventry in politics; and will, at present, suit our views and wishes in relation to his honor the Judge. The dignity of his foxy wig suits the turnpike, and would equally, in his opinion, become the head of the Treasury department, but we cannot spare him, indeed we cannot.

My respects to Messrs. Grundy, Catron, Johnson, Dunlap &c. and my humble respects to the Speaker's (not Bell's) lady.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Washington and delivered by Andrew Jackson Donelson.

1. Timothy Kezer, a Nashville merchant and hat manufacturer.
2. The Butler mentioned here was probably Benjamin F. Butler, Secretary of War. Peyton Smith was a prominent Baptist minister in Rutherford County. He had married Nancy S. Bass, a sister of Laughlin's wife.
3. It appears that Robert C. Foster Sr. had gone to Washington with the notion that he might receive a cabinet post. Laughlin was highly amused and wrote these sentences in jest.
4. Divisions of counties having their own courts, in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Since the manorial rights belong to the crown, persons becoming officers of Chiltern Hundreds must resign other offices. Thus a person who wants to resign another office applies for "Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds." Appointment entails his resignation, and having thus fulfilled its purpose, is itself vacated.

FROM JOHN CATRON

Dr Sir, [Washington] Feby. 22d [1837]

Mr. Justice Story asks me to invoke your aid to prevent the Judiciary bill, passed by the Senate just now, from being committed, but to be passed without.

The provisions in several respects interest the Eastern Circuits very much.

Give some instructions if convenient.

J. CATRON

Delivered by hand. Catron was in Washington arguing his first cases before the United States Supreme Court.

1. The Library of Congress tentatively suggested 1838 as the year; the content of the letter, however, makes it clear that 1837 is correct.
2. A learned jurist from Massachusetts, Joseph Story was appointed to the United States Supreme Court in 1811 and served until his death in 1845. He is considered a founder of the Harvard Law School.
3. The judiciary bill which passed the Senate on February 15 and the House on March 3, 1837, created two new circuits and added two new positions on the United States Supreme Court. Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri were in one new circuit, while Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas were in the other. Catron received one of the new justiceships.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

Ho. Reps. Feby. 25, 1837

Governor Johnson of Louisiana¹ is very anxious that your message, with the accompanying Report of the Secretary of War,² on the subject of the Survey of the Mississippi River, should be communicated to the House as early to day as practicable. that it may be referred to a Committee. If Andrew³ has not returned from Baltimore I suggest that any other person whom you may designate, for that purpose, could deliver it to the House. The House will take a recess until 4½ O.Clock, at which hour we will be in Session.⁴

JAMES K. POLK

This letter was probably delivered by hand. No covering sheet has been found. The letter is in the Kohns Collection, New York Public Library.

1. Henry Johnson, governor of Louisiana, 1824-28, was at this time a member of the House of Representatives.
2. Benjamin F. Butler was then Secretary of War.
3. Andrew Jackson Jr., adopted son of Andrew Jackson, was a nephew of Rachel Jackson.
4. A fragment in Andrew Jackson's handwriting and dated February 25, 1837, says that Andrew Jackson Jr. will deliver the message to the House.

TO ANDREW JACKSON JR.

My Dear Sir

[Washington. February 25, 1837]¹

I find laid on my table this morning a message from the President in relation to the survey of the Mississippi, accompanied by a report from the Secretary of War.² The message should be announced by you at the Bar of the House. Messages from the President are never transmitted to the Speaker, but are announced to the House.

Will you come down immediately and deliver in the message in the usual way.³

JAMES K. POLK

This letter was addressed “At the President’s,” Washington City, and was delivered by hand.

1. Polk placed the date below his signature.
2. These are obviously the papers Polk had requested in the letter immediately preceding.

3. A fragment in the handwriting of Andrew Jackson says that he has opened the letter to Andrew Jackson Jr., who is absent in Baltimore, and suggests that the message was probably placed on the Speaker's desk by someone of the committee that had used it. This fragment also bears the date February 25, 1837.

FROM JABEZ JACKSON

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. March 1, 1837

Jabez Jackson finds that during the last sessions he made an error in computing the mileage between his home and Washington. The error has caused him to lose more than a hundred dollars of travel money due him. He asks Polk to help him to obtain an adjustment.

Addressed to Washington.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

The Judiciary Bill has passed both Houses, and will be sent to you for your approval, as soon as it can be enrolled.

I earnestly recommend the appointment of Judge Catron and the Hon. John McKinley to the Bench. I know of no two men in the South or West so well qualified or who have more character before the country. With Judge Catron & McKinley on the Bench, the Court will be strong, and will have a decided democratic bias. Upon all the great constitutional questions, the opinions of Catron & McKinley are known to be sound.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to “President of the United States” and hand-delivered. This letter is in Letters of Application and Recommendation, 1837–1845, Department of State (RG 59), National Archives. On the envelope in Jackson's handwriting appears “Col. Polk recommends Judge Catron. A. J.”

1. This act created two additional circuit courts and two additional seats on the Supreme Court.

2. Both Catron and McKinley became members of the Supreme Court, but one of the positions was first offered to William Smith of Alabama. When Smith declined, the place was offered to McKinley, also from Alabama, who accepted. McKinley had served in the United States Senate, 1826–31, and in the House of Representatives, 1833–35.
FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Col. [Washington, March 4, 1837]¹

I refer you to the Genl for the arrangements which are made for his accommodation in the Boat.² It is understood by the agent that you are to be with him as a part of his family. Trusting that you will be with him, I have concluded to go directly on, and join my little children one of whom I left in bad health. Continue if possible with the President, at least until he leaves Louisville.

A. J. DONELSON

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.

1. The writer wrote only "4th, in the morning." The information in the body of the letter places it in 1837.

2. Donelson had returned to Tennessee in December to visit his wife, who was seriously ill. She died shortly before he arrived. He then returned to Washington to make arrangements for transportation for the presidential party.

FROM WALTER S. FRANKLIN¹

Dear Sir

Washington Mar 7th 1837

The situation of my family is such, as to require me to return home immediately. The Journal will be brought up to day and submitted to you.

I cannot permit this occasion to pass, without expressing to you the gratitude I feel for the courtesy and kindness you have at all times extended to me, and it is to me a source of very happy reflection, that in the closest official intercourse for two sessions of Congress, not one unpleasant occurrence has taken place between us. I shall be glad to hear from you at all times, and if I can in any way serve you would be glad to do so.

Please to present me respectfully to Mrs. Polk. May health and happiness attend you both.

W. S. FRANKLIN

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.

1. Franklin served as Clerk of the House of Representatives from 1833 until his death in September 1838.
TO MAHLON DICKERSON

Sir Washington City March 8th 1837

I have been requested to lay the enclosed papers before you. I have no knowledge of young Montgomery, the applicant for a Midshipman's warrant. He resides I understand in New York. Should you think proper to appoint him, I wish it understood that I do not desire him to be considered as coming from Tennessee.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Harvard University Library.

1. Born in New Jersey, Dickerson served as governor of his native state and as United States senator before being appointed Secretary of the Navy by Jackson in 1834. He continued as Secretary of the Navy under Van Buren until 1838.

2. These enclosures have not been found.

3. William H. Montgomery of New York did receive the midshipman's warrant that he sought.

FROM WALTER S. FRANKLIN


In compliance with your request I shall leave home this afternoon for Washington. I am aware of the importance of having the journal made up correctly, but upon looking over the minutes, it appeared to me that the proceedings of the two last days, altho containing a great deal of legislative matter, were less intricate than usual. I will revise the journal before it is sent to the printer's.

I leave my family under very unfavourable circumstances—my children are ill and my wife quite unwell. I wish you a prosperous journey and a happy return to four friends and constituents, and your safe return by the latter to the post you have so ably filled.

W. S. FRANKLIN

Addressed to Wheeling, Virginia.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother, New Haven March 11th 1837

Your letter of the 7th I received on yesterday but owing to other pressing duties I have deferred answering it untill now. That you were greatly surprised at my having a letter sent home for absences
from collegiate duties, I think is evident from [the purport of your] letter before me. I regretted exceedingly to have a letter sent home for such a trivial matter, knowing that it, although of no great consequence would create fears and apprehensions as to my position in College. I was not aware that I had absences sufficient to require a letter home until it was too late to render excuses for any of them. Had I known that my absences were accumulating so rapidly, I could easily have rendered excuses for some of them and prevented the necessity of having a letter written to you on the subject.

You need not fear as to my intention in being absent so often, for be assured, if I should become dissatisfied with College this would be the last method to which I would resort in order to procure a dismissal. I cannot say that I have not been dissatisfied since I have been here. I must acknowledge that the silence with which my request was treated relative to having the control of my own funds, rendered me somewhat dissatisfied yet it never once prompted the idea of neglecting my duties as a member of College. I am willing to remain here so long as I can have funds sufficient to enable me to appear respectable. My expenses now are necessarily more than they were at the commencement of the Collegiate course. But I need not enumerate to you the reasons why it is so, you being as I am convinced, unwilling to withhold from me anything which is necessary in a pecuniary point of view.

I have long since thought that I ought to have had the control of my funds. Prof Olmstead exercises no care over me except paying my debts when my creditors call on him. The money might just as well be in the Bank. And besides this consideration I look also upon the money he receives for his Guardianship as wasted. This to be sure is no very great sum but still it is better saved than wasted. I had some conversation with Prof O on yesterday and he informed me that I had no money in his hands; therefore I wish, since this is as convenient a time as any, that you would hereafter remit the funds to me. And I wish also with your consent to travel over the country the next vacation which will be in May. And therefore the remittance will have to be greater than usual, should you consent. The principle reason for my wishing to travel, is recreation, (having been cooped up so long).

I think your suggestion as to the probable reason why [Samuel P.] Caldwell left college is correct. I have no doubt but that he could have sustained quite a respectable standing in his class, had he applied himself diligently. He became dissatisfied and concluded I think that the surest way to get home was to neglect college duties. If ever I wish to leave college, I shall from a sense of duty communicate to you the reasons. But I am persuaded that I shall never make the
request from the fact that my college course is drawing rapidly to a
close. Still I have at times seriously considered the question whether
I should write to you on the subject of leaving college, or not.

I have thought since commencing this letter that perhaps you
would be better satisfied should I explain how I did not know that my
absences were accumulating so rapidly. By the college laws each
student is permitted to be absent from duties four times each term
and all over four the law directs to be brought over to his account
for the next term provided he has no excuse for them.

It seems from what Mr. Emmerson\(^4\) tells me, that I had 3\(\frac{1}{2}\) ab­
sences brought over from last term. He neglected to warn me of this
fact at the beginning of the term. And I took it for granted that they
were not standing against me from the fact that he had warned others
and did not warn me. I enquired of him too\(^5\) commencement of the
term, how many absences I had brought over and he said “none.”
When he told me this I thought myself quite fortunate and remained
away from college duties 5 times. Then Emmerson informed that I had
3\(\frac{1}{2}\) absences brought over from last term, which made in all 8\(\frac{1}{2}\) ab­
sences & consequently a letter must be written home.

Thus did they steal a march on me.

If you agree to let me travel this vacation, I wish you would send
the money immediately, as I am anxious to start as soon as the term
is ended.

Samuel W. Polk

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This letter has not been found.

2. The writer struck through the bracketed words.

3. Caldwell, the son of Silas M. Caldwell, was a nephew of Polk. Young
   Caldwell was poorly prepared for entrance at Yale and had been unhappy
   throughout his stay at New Haven.

4. Alfred Emerson. See Emerson to Polk, February 2, 1837.

5. At this point, some words seem to have been omitted.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My Dr. Sir: Baltimore, Sunday 13 March \([1837]\)^1

I did not leave Washington until yesterday morning. Mrs. Catron
met me here in the evening. We are to leave Tuesday morning in an
accommodation stage, and my fears are we cannot overtake you, or the
Prsdt. Congratulate you & Mrs. P. at the escape uninjured by the car
running off.\(^2\) Mrs. Catron is afflicted with cold, & I am unwilling to
try the mail, the only chance, for which she is anxious. Two upsets &
a broken axle have cured me of the mail.
King refused openly, the Austrian mission & said hed been up to the Presdt's to refuse. No other spoken of. Judge Smith's nomination had much trouble to get through, & this is about extent of my knowledge. Of your Servt, it was currently reported he was not qualified. Underwood, so said to Huntsman! He who could not pass muster before a Bar, where Mr. U. had been a Supreme Judge, wd be truly a weak Brother.

The court sits at St. Louis this Apl (3d.) and I'll not have time to get home. Have taken all the necessary steps by letters, to secure the exertions of the District Judge, Marshall, & Distr. Atty, in forwarding the preparations for a business term, & will make it so. "The last day of the Session, & the Judiciary Bill" appeared in the Globe of the 9th. Have heard it spoken of here, and Mr. Bell assailed. The facts are admitted by all sides, & the defeat of many measures attributed to the consumption of Thursday night. Peyton, & Wise are not mentioned, save as instruments & incidents, Judge White forgotten, but Bell grossly assailed. The two last days of the Session were more fatal to him than every act he has done in Congress—ever. It was death, say those who complain, to the great portion of the business done in the Session. All to be done over again, next year. Peyton's withdrawing, is a subject spoken of as evidence he is broken down & that his party has surrendered. Judge White could hardly be in more contempt. I've only spoken of him as a misled aged man, too venerable for me to speak of. He used his utmost exertions to defeat my nomination, a thing generally known. How it leaked, I know not. As to yourself, if you can recruit your health, & spirits, you'll live in comfort, unless your conscience should sink under causing some deaths by envy.

The article, "Mr Calhoun & his new Lieutenant", has not appeared. As the bill (fortification) died between the Houses & as Mr Bell killed it & so the Whigs excuse themselves for its loss, perhaps it is as well. Mr. [Francis P.] Blair was the Judge. He did not mention it to me, or I to him.

When you go through Nashville, make any Editorial arrangements you please, or can, & rely on me My devoted respects to Mrs P.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Wheeling, Virginia.

1. The Library of Congress assigned the year 1837 to this letter, and the contents confirm that judgment, although March 13 did not fall on Sunday in 1837.

2. The Polks had recently escaped injury when one of the cars on the railway between Baltimore and Frederick became uncoupled.
3. William R. King of Alabama served in the Senate, 1819–44.

4. William Smith represented South Carolina in both houses of Congress before moving to Alabama in 1833. He was seventy-five years old when offered the Supreme Court appointment. After he declined, the post went to John McKinley, also of Alabama.

5. Joseph R. Underwood, a Kentucky Whig, served in the House of Representatives from 1835 until 1843 and later was a member of the Senate.

6. This article describes the way in which John Bell, at the last minute, sought by delaying tactics to prevent passage of the judiciary bill, which provided for two new Supreme Court circuits in the West. Peyton and Wise co-operated with Bell, speaking at great length on a bill that preceded the judiciary bill on the calendar. Bell said that he opposed the bill because it created two circuits instead of one, but it was pointed out that when he was on the Judiciary Committee, and even before the admission of Arkansas and Michigan, he had favored the creation of two. At this time Polk took a rare action, leaving the chair and appealing to the House for fairness. His appeal was effective, and the bill passed.

7. This seems to refer to an article submitted to the Globe, but it has not been found on the pages of the Globe. Catron's foreknowledge of the existence of the article raises an interesting question as to its authorship.

8. The three or four words in the space indicated by brackets have not been deciphered.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Sir, [Louisville, Kentucky. March 18, 1837]

I thought I had succeeded in delaying the Gladiator for the accommodation for the President, but the Capt. having reason to fear that he would not be down until late on Sunday, and having engagements which oblige him to sail on that day, has determined to sail at once. I would wait but for the assurance that you are with the President and will continue with him until he reaches Nashville. I know that you will with pleasure assist in relieving him from the pressure of his correspondence and the solicitation of his friends to give audience to the people when his health will make it improper.

I will meet you at Nashville and endeavor to give things such a direction there as is best suited to the state of the President's health. Genl. [Robert] Armstrong is with me and seems to feel as we do about general politics.

If Mr. Grundy is with you remember me to him. He will be able to excuse me for the anxiety which the absence from my children occasions, and which prevented me from stopping at Wheeling until you came up.

My best wishes to Mrs. Polk.

A. J. DONELSON
Addressed to Louisville, in care of Thomas J. Read.

1. Donelson gave no date, merely heading the letter “Saturday Night.” The correct date was determined by the fact that the Jackson party was expected in Louisville about March 19, 1837, and in that year March 18 fell on Saturday. Jackson arrived in Nashville on March 24.

2. The Gladiator, built in Cincinnati in 1834, sank on the Mississippi in January 1838, with some of Polk’s cotton aboard. See George W. Bratton to Polk, November 24 and December 24, 1838. The presidential party arrived in Nashville on the Emigrant, a steamboat that plied regularly between Cairo, Illinois, and Nashville.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dr Sir [Nashville. March 24, 1837]

Enclosed you have in a weekly Union, the—not defense—but vindication I made for you last week in relation to Wise’s assault, if it could be so called, which assault was none.

In the Tri-Weekly, you will find an article I made of the Whitney matter, in which your name is barely introduced at the end of it. The facts of the first, except documents, I had of our friend Catron, but I have dressed them up in my own way, making the separation I mentioned to you to-day.

My son-in law is named Timothy Kezer. Any letters, and I hope you can give several, of introduction to your acquaintances in New York, or Boston, will be doing him a signal favor; and me a greater one, for my sole dependance for making any money to live on, or provide any thing for the future, depends on his success.

He wishes to form a connection with some moneyed men to enter or buy lands in Arkansas, to which business he will, devote his time for several years, for joint benifit of those who furnish funds and for him & myself.

I will see you in the morning, or to night—in the morning as you will be out to night, and my girls want to call on Mrs. P. in the morning.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to the City Hotel, Nashville, and delivered by hand. The letter was marked “Private.”

1. Laughlin headed the letter “Friday Evening.” From the content of the letter and the fact that Polk was spending the night at the City Hotel, the date has been supplied. This was the evening of Polk’s arrival from Washington with the Jackson party.
2. This article appeared in the March 16, 1837, issue of the Nashville Union.
3. An article reporting on Whitney's vindication by the House of Representa­tives appeared in the Nashville Union, March 14, 1837.
4. See Laughlin to Polk, February 21, 1837.

FROM JARED S. ALLEN

Perryville, Tennessee. March 25, 1837

Allen is about to move to Texas and asks that Polk give his views as to the future of that republic. He also asks that Polk write letters of introduc­tion to any leading Texans with whom he is acquainted. He states that he has written similar letters to Felix Grundy, John Catron, and William Carroll.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A lawyer, Allen had been prominent in Perry County politics for some years. He served as circuit clerk and was twice elected to the state legislature. He resigned from the legislature and moved to Mississippi, where he was residing when this letter was written.
2. Perryville lay on the west bank of the Tennessee River and was the county seat of Perry County. Later the portion of the county west of the river was incorporated into Decatur County.
3. On the envelope, Polk noted that he answered this letter on April 6, 1837, and that he enclosed a letter of introduction to Sam Houston, then president of Texas.

FROM KENNETH L. ANDERSON

Dr. Col Shelbyville. 25 March 1837

You will have seen the Advocate of yesterday before this reaches you. You will of course not fail to be here at our first Court. Your Old Enemies rejoice but your Old friends are firm. They will not beleave that you have approached treason as the Genl. of the Advocate would have it. Fail not in coming.

K. L. Anderson.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Anderson was one of Polk's strongest political supporters in Bedford County. Later in 1837 he moved to Texas, where he had a successful political career culminating in his election as vice-president of the Republic of Texas in 1844.
2. The Shelbyville Peoples Advocate, edited by William H. Wisener, was established by Polk's political enemies soon after the Shelbyville Western Star began publication under editorship of Greenville Cook. Although the
proper issue of the *Peoples Advocate* is not available, it is clear that the reference is to the letter Polk wrote to James McKisick on November 4, 1835, in which Polk indicated his involvement with the establishment of the Shelbyville *Western Star*. See William J. Whitthorne to Polk, March 27, 1837.

3. This reference is obscure. The paper was being published by John H. Laird, but it was no secret that he was acting for Theodorick F. Bradford, who probably put up money for purchase of the paper.

FROM WILLIAM J. WHITTHORNE

My Dear Sir

Farmington March 27th, 1837

I have just understood that your Enemys about Shelbyville, are making a great bussell about a private letter which you wrote to Coln. McKissick Some time ago from Nashville, on your way to Washington about the time Mr. John Bell was married to Mrs Yeatman.¹ I think you would Do Well to Come up and Crush the matter Immediately. The Whiggys are makeing a great To Do about it. I think our friend McKissick acted to speak in the Mildest terms, very like a fool or a mad man, to leave a private and Confidential letter where any Human being Could get to see it, or throw it among his office papers. I hope it will do no Harm.

W. J. WHITTHORNE

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Polk to James McKisick, November 4, 1835. In that letter, Polk said in a postscript, "Bell you see is married to Mrs. Yeatman. 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." When McKisick moved to Arkansas, he left the letter in his files at the courthouse, where it was found more than a year later and circulated by his political enemies. On March 28, 1837, the Nashville *Union* printed the letter in full.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dr Sir,

Nashville, Tuesday Morning, March 29, 1837

Mr. [Timothy] Kezer has a mercantile acquaintance in New York, and having long dealt extensively with a few Houses there, thinks the expressions in your letters that he is "unknown in that city"—which you took for granted when you wrote the letters, for I had told you no better, will prevent them from being so useful to him as they would be omitting that statement. I am sorry to be troublesome, but I enclose you the letters with the expressions *stricken out* and certain words added and will be exceedingly obliged to you if you will be so good as
March 29 1837

TO SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir

Columbia March 29th 1837

I send you the introductory letters desired by Mr. Kezer. Mr. Grundy is mistaken in supposing that "Dunlap would be our best

to write them over again, and enclose them back to me by return mail, before you go to Shelbyville. Mr. K. wishes to be off. The Gen. has given him a letter to the Collector Col. Swartwout,¹ and Maj. Donelson to Daniel Jackson.² Mr. Grundy will give others. He arrived yesterday, and is well.

You will see what I have said in republishing your letter to McKissick.³ I fear you will think I have been too prolix and too tame. If it is republished here, and it is whispered that it will be, I shall give the Republican in which it is to appear, a glister of fishhooks.

Mr. Grundy thinks Dick Dunlap⁴ would be our best candidate for Gov. I have written to Moore, McClellan and Dulaney⁵ in favor of [Samuel] Powell.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

P. S. Mr. Kezer desires me to present you his thanks for your letters, and to apologize for the trouble he wishes you to take in re-writing them.⁶

S. H. L.

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. Samuel Swartwout had gained notoriety as an associate of Aaron Burr and later as a government witness against Burr in the latter's famous trial. An active Jackson supporter, Swartwout received appointment as collector of the port of New York and then misappropriated more than a million dollars of public money.

2. A prominent New York Democrat, Daniel Jackson was a director of the Morris Canal Bank and a government contractor of Indian supplies. During the previous month, he had acted as spokesman for New York City in presenting President Jackson a carriage made by L. Knowles and Company from wood of the frigate Constitution.

3. See Polk to James McKisick, November 4, 1835; Kenneth L. Anderson to Polk, March 25, 1837; and William J. Whitthorne to Polk, March 27, 1837.

4. Richard G. Dunlap, a brother of William C. Dunlap, was a resident of Knox County and had never been considered a friend of Polk.

5. Cleon Moore of Hawkins County, Abraham McClellan of Sullivan County, and Elkanah R. Dulaney, also of Sullivan, were all prominent East Tennessee Democrats who had served in the state legislature.

6. This postscript was written along the left margin of the letter.
candidate.” Personally I should have no objection to him, but I know the fact, that the Van-Buren party, in this quarter and elsewhere in the State, could not be induced to take him up. His speeches and course when he was a candidate two years ago, would prevent hundreds from supporting him. I have written Grundy, and wish you to see him immediately on the subject. At all events it is now too late to think of it. I have written to Powell himself, B[air] & others in East Tennessee on the subject. I have no doubt Powell is the man. Col. Dew has before this time written letters to E. Tennessee, of the same purport. There must be no discordance among ourselves, or we are certainly defeated. Be sure to see Grundy & write me.

I have only had time to glance at your article in the Union, but will give it a careful reading to night.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I hope you will republish the article from the Globe in relation to the Judiciary Bill in your next paper.

J. K. P

Addressed to Nashville and marked “Private.” This letter is in the New York Public Library.

1. A tear in the manuscript has removed parts of two words, but it is believed that the completion provided here in brackets is correct.
2. John H. Dew had recently moved to Columbia.
3. See John Catron to Polk, March 13, 1837.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville April 1st 1837

I had a very pleasant & expeditious trip & no accident (very unusual). We ought certainly to have a candidate in East Ten. The Judge I presume is the best we could get but I know nothing of his popularity. We ought to have the strongest man in East Tennessee & one who would take the stump.

It seems probable that I shall have no opposition, notwithstanding Mr Bell has covered my District with his speeches. I think there is no reasonable doubt of the election of Van Buren members of the Legislature in almost every county. Seals in Robertson is considered certain—is opposed by West. In Montgomery, Overton is opposed by Poston. Overton’s election considered certain, so much so that our opponents are said to be casting about for another. Frey has yet no opposition. I am doubtful whether he can be beaten except by W. B
Johnson who will not offer.⁵ We are sounding to see how Judge Clay­ton⁶ will do. He is a sort of half-way man that no body likes, but will act with us. In Stewart, Williams is opposed by Dunlap⁷ the latter a thorough goin Van Buren man. Williams is objected to because he voted for the nomination of White. He is one of my best friends & will be probably elected & will sit with us, as he did before. Gray⁸ who is with us will run it is thought without opposition for the Senate in Stewart, Dickson & Humphreys. In Dickson we have two, Neely & McCaslin, running agt Williams, Allen & Hunt.⁹ I suspect the contest will finally be narrowed down to Neely & Hunt & we shall succeed easily. In Hickman, Walker¹⁰ is running alone & is thoroughly with us. I see [Boling] Gordon has declined & I do not know what is the prospect of White who I hear is a candidate.¹¹ In Humphrys, we shall probably have Dawsey P. Hutson¹² who is very decidedly with us. I have not been out since my return but this statement corresponds with the cap[it]ulation & wishes of our friends. I am certainly stronger than ever before, at least every body says so here. It is probable the next week will decide whether I am to have opposition. Our Chancery Court sits here & the Nashville lawyers will do their utmost I suppose.

Your letter will do you no harm but will disgrace men connected with the purloining & publication.¹³ I think Shields will be with us thoroughly.

Is there no danger that Trousdale may be brought out for Gov & Peyton induced to become a candidate? It had best be looked to.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia and marked “Private.”

1. Lying on the Cumberland River about forty-five miles northwest of Nashville, Clarksville was the county seat of Montgomery County.

2. Samuel Powel of Hawkins County.

3. William Seal was county court clerk in Robertson County, 1819–36 and 1839–43. A Democrat, he was elected and served a single term in the lower house of the legislature, 1837–39. David West, a Robertson County farmer, was the Whig incumbent defeated by Seal.

4. William Overton, a former editor of the Clarksville Chronicle, a Demo­crat and a lawyer, was the incumbent, serving only one term. John H. Poston, a Clarksville businessman and a Whig, defeated Overton but served only one term, 1837–39.

5. Henry Frey, a Whig, had served six consecutive terms in the state sen­ate when William B. Johnson defeated him in 1835. Johnson, Cave Johnson’s younger brother, served one term and, disliking politics, refused to run again. Frey was again elected to the senate and served three more terms, 1837–43.

6. Alexander M. Clayton had moved to Clarksville about 1825 and in
1832 was appointed as territorial judge in Arkansas. In 1834, he resigned and returned to Clarksville. After a short time, he moved to Mississippi, where he became a planter and was selected to the supreme court of that state.

7. William Williams of Dover, a Democrat, had served as clerk of the county court, 1824–35. He was the incumbent in the lower house of the General Assembly but was defeated by Robert Dunlap, also a Democrat. Dunlap seems to have been no kin to the large and prominent Dunlap family that lived in Paris, Tennessee. He died before his term expired.

8. James Gray was an early settler in Stewart County. He was a prosperous planter and was for many years a Baptist minister. He served in the lower house of the legislature, 1827–33, and in the state senate, 1835–37. He was not elected as predicted here, being replaced by Jonathan P. Hardwicke of Dickson County.

9. McCaslin, Williams, Allen, and Hunt are unidentified. Johnson erred on the other name. It was McNeilly, rather than Neely. In a subsequent letter, Johnson changed it to McNeely, but never spelled the name correctly. Robert McNeilly, a lawyer in Charlotte, was the successful candidate, and he served a single term, 1837–39.

10. Pleasant B. Walker, a lawyer and farmer who had been sheriff of Hickman County, was elected at this time and served five consecutive terms in the lower house of the legislature, 1837–47.

11. White is unidentified.

12. Dawsey P. Hudson was an early settler who was county clerk in Humphreys County, 1810–36. He never served in the legislature.

13. This refers to Polk's letter to James McKisick, November 4, 1835. See William J. Whitthorne to Polk, March 27, 1837; and Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, March 29, 1837.

FROM SAMUEL POWELL

Dear Sir

Rogersville April 10th 1837

I received your letter of the 28 ult and was highly gratify[ed] with the commencement of an acquaintance (so flattering to myself) with one who has fill'd some of the high stations in our government with such distinction and satisfaction to the Democratic party. Next to an approving conscience the good will & confidence of our fellow citizens is most to be desired and the wish that some of my friends have expressed to elevate me to the highest office in the State Government will be held in greatful remembrance, but existing circumstances compels me respectfully to withhold my consent to become a candidate, for reasons that I hope will be deemed satisfactory. Had I no other reason the situation of my health would be a sufficient admonition to me to pursue this course, which for the last six or seven years has been greatly impaired. Altho for the last year it has very much im-
proved, yet I am still afflicted with a very troublesome complaint (the gravel)² which will probably continue through life. This with Rheumatism renders me but barely able to ride from Court to Court. I cannot endure severe exercise of any kind, and I am very sure, I could not possibly undergo the fatigue of an electioneering campaign through the state which present usage would require to render success probable. In consequence of my impaired state of health I had more than ever come to a determination to retire from all kinds of business and nothing but the hopes of improvement & the duties I owe my family prevented me from doing so. But were these objections out of the way I am persuaded there are others of the same politicks as myself who would be more likely to succeed, altho I think the VanBuren party would support me in mass. I should probably meet with stronger opposition from the other side than almost any man in E. Tenn. The course I pursued in the Presidential Election could and would be used with considerable effect altho at all times when speaking on the subject I was desirous to speak in Language not to be misunderstood yet I find some disposed to misrepresent my course with impunity as through mistake, and from your letter I infer that you have not been altogether correctly informed. I will therefore frankly but briefly inform you the course I did pursue. Considering Judge White a sound Democrat and an ardent supporter of Genl Jacksons Administration, when he was the first spoken of as a candidate for President, I did not hesitate to express my individual preference in his favour and to some of my friends in Congress suggested the propriety of having his name presented to the Convention that was then expected to be held at some future day. This did not meet the approbation of his friends generally. I was informed by some of my friends in Congress that a large portion of the Jackson party were determined not to support VanBuren and that an opposition Candidate would not be started under any circumstances. Altho I did not doubt my friends sincerity I was compelled to doubt the correctness of their judgment. However as so large a majority of the Ten delegation united in nominating him I joined my fellow Citizens in a County meeting in recommending him as a candidate. It was then the understanding I believe of every man who attended the meeting & had thought much upon the subject that if there was a third Candidate & Judge White the weakest Democratic candidate that his name would be withdrawn by his leading friends as he had expressed in his answer to that portion of the Delegation who addressed him that he was willing it should be done if it was believed the public good required it. Altho I could not but highly disapprove of the course pursued by the papers that supported him, I did not feel myself
at liberty to withdraw from the support of an acquaintance & friend of as long standing & I should have voted the White ticket had I been at home at the election. But I repelled as well as I could the unfounded charges made against Genl. Jackson, his administration & Mr VanBuren, and at all times avowed my intention to support his (Vanburens) Administration if elected unless he abandoned his avowed principles. You are aware how such matters can be used in an election.

I regret exceedingly that Governor Carroll has refused to permit his name to be run. I think he would have beat any other man in E Ten. Cannon he would have beat overwhelmingly. I had hoped Genl. [William] Trousdale would have responded to the call in the Union by permitting his name to be run, but I see his is announced as a candidate for Congress. He would, judging from the little I have heard, have run well in E Ten. perhaps as well as Carroll. Is Judge [West H.] Humphreys of the right politicks. I have heard several say latterly they would support him if he offered. Could Genl [Richard G.] Dunlap run well in the West. Altho a decided White man I always understood his intention was not to join the opposition under any circumstances but to support VanBurens Administration if elected. He would almost have swept E Ten at the last election, but he became unpopular with the volunteers last summer. To what extent that would affect him I cant say but I suspect considerably. You will consider the contents of this letter for yourself except that part of which relates to my declining to become a candidate. At least you will show it to none except those you know will not misuse its contents. It would afford me much pleasure to hear from you whenever you find leisure to write.

S. Powel

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Powel was a distinguished jurist from Hawkins County. He served a single term in Congress, 1815–17, but he was best known for his legal attainments. He established in his home the first law school in Tennessee. Robert L. Caruthers studied law under him.

2. This letter has not been found, but it is obvious that Polk had approached Powel about becoming a candidate for governor.


FROM DAVID FENTRESS

Dear Sir Bolivar 4 April 12th 1837

There has been a bill filed against you & all the heirs of Samuel Polk deceased, also against myself V. D. Barry & Alfred Balch con-
cerning the actions of ejectment that you authorized Balch to bring in the heirs names for the 5000 acre tract in this county that had been located & granted to S. Polk. I presume you know all the circumstances about the suits. I have brought several action of ejectment against the several tenants. One of the tenants Mr. Conar has filed his bill charging champarty with other things. Major Betts who is agent for Conner told me to day that he had sent a copy of the bill to the Sheriff of your county to be served on you. I wish to know whether it has been served & if so what you will answer to the different allegations. As for myself, I can answer as to the charge of champarty with a clear conscience. As to the other charges I know nothing about them. I do not believe that the party or parties filing the bill believed there was champarty in any one belonging to the suit but it was to stave off, hoping to delay the ejectment or gain some advantage. They have procured poor little Belcher to swear to the bill, when I am certain he knows nothing about it.

If you have been served or have received a copy of the bill please get the answers of all the heirs & guardians of the minors by our next term which is the first Monday in June next. If you have not got a copy of the bill write immediately & I will send you one.

Politicks is here rather at a low ebb. Most of the Whiteites or Whiggs are trying to get under the Van Buren banner. E. C. Crisp, V. B. and Col. A. Hill (White) candidates for H. R. Gen. Robertson (Whig) & Levin Coe, V. B. for the Senate. Coe is too young & I fear Robertson will beat him.

D. FENTRESS
I fear C Williams will beat Col Dunlap for Congress. This is my present impression.

D. F.

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Bolivar was the county seat of Hardeman County.
2. Valentine D. Barry was a Bolivar lawyer. At this time, he seems to have been associated with Alfred Balch in the ejectment proceedings. Shortly after this letter was written, he became judge of the eleventh circuit.
3. This tract of land had been the subject of litigation for about a decade. See Ezekiel P. McNeal to Polk, October 3, 1829; D. W. Wood to Polk and James Walker, July 31, 1830; Alfred Balch to Polk, January 6, 1831; James Walker to Polk, November 20, 1832; Alfred Balch to Polk, April 4 and October 13, 1835; and Polk to James Walker, November 3, 1835.
4. Although this name was clearly written, it is believed that it should be Conner, the form used in the next sentence.
5. *Champerty* is a proceeding by which a person having no legitimate concern in a suit bargains to aid in or to carry on its prosecution or defense in consideration of his receiving, in the event of success, a share of the matter in suit. Such agreements were formerly always illegal.

6. This is probably J. R. Conner, at one time a claimant of part of the tract under consideration here. He was probably a resident of North Carolina. Major Betts is unidentified.

7. This is probably Edward R. Belcher, who was chairman of the Hardeman County court, 1837–39.

8. Little is known about Allen Hill except that he was chairman of the county court in Hardeman County, 1834–35.

9. Levin H. Coe was a young lawyer of Somerville, Fayette County, who had lived for some years in Maury County. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and began his law practice in Bolivar. His father, Joseph Coe, had served one term in the Tennessee legislature; and despite the prediction, Levin H. Coe was elected to the state senate.

10. Christopher H. Williams did, indeed, defeat William C. Dunlap. A Whig, Williams was in the House of Representatives, 1837–43 and 1849–53.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My dr friend: Nashville, Apl. 16, 1837

Got home almost a week since & been endeavouring to aid in arranging the Union. Find the old difficulty—a determination in Mr. L. not to leave it if possible. Had a meeting yesterday with him, Mr [Joel M.] Smith, Mr. Grundy &c. Smith will not much longer print it. By divers means, Mr. Laughlin has gotten through type & presses, and the *Subscription cost* is literally the capital left. This must be preserved, if may be, but the paper between us, is so inferior in matter as to be next to useless, and the sooner it is succeeded by another, the better. If the young Phenix cannot be raised up from the ashes of the old, it must be *created*, Mr. Smith's printing establishment being the basis. My way is clear enough, & the wherewith in reach, were we disenumbered of the old concern. Have to go to Frankfort (1 mo. May,) and promise you on my return some fair account of the matter.

Things look well enough here in Davidson politically, save as to Congress. Mr. Hall¹ has thrust himself forth, and is busy canvassing. He is a Quixotte, unfit for any useful purpose—still makes considerable show of strength, owing to Mr. Bell's odium with one party, and want of strength in his own; yet Mr. Hall cannot beat him, but a good 2d. rate man who could speak tolerably and had character for fairness could beat him, & with ease. Much has been said about Gnl. Armstrong. He has been involved in caucuses, & concert with Mr Bell and his
friends for so long as to be exceedingly crippled with our friends. Then 
he cannot speak, and is radically defective in intelligence. Caruthers 
or Yerger can beat Mr Bell, but I think neither will run. Such is the 
present aspect.

For the legislature our friends will I imagine succeed in this county. 
[David] Craighead promises to be elected over [William E.] Ander-
son. The lawyers of the opposition are averse to the Petway dynasty, 
for which they admit and avow, poor Anderson, is a Jobber.

The lawyer friends of the White cause, are obviously [ . . . ] at 
their prospects ahead—are nauseated at the idea of Judge White's 
leading of them any further; and are shrinking from Bell and Peyton 
in disgust from the latter, but grudgingly from Bell, whom they 
view as a man of notoriously fallen fortunes, making a feeble, & but a 
feeble, death struggle, & who they admit is unfit to lead, not so fit as 
Peyton, a person that ranks too low for a leader. This is notoriously, & 
pretty openly the tone of the old opposition here. There is more of 
political dispondency than I have witnessed. My old friends feel them-
selves helpless, and without hope, present or prospective. They hardly 
have the courage to complain. How long this may last, it is difficult 
to say. Division to a goodly is [sic] extent is one certain consequence, & 
is rife here now in the local contest for the legislature.

Saw Mjr Donelson on Friday. Presdt. getting well & speedily— 
walks a mile out, & is in high sperits. Will go up tomorrow.

Went to St. Louis. But the new Marshall had not got his com'n. 
nor the record from Jefferson not got down, & did nothing. Lawyers 
there generally poor, & dependent on the merchts. for bread, abuse the 
powers that be, & Benton—call the country "Jackson Boys" rabble & 
of course reap the reward—the pleasures of a home Society likeunto 
themselves, where "the affections of the Heart," are but slightly culti-
vated I fear. I am told they are well informed—had little opportunity 
to ascertain. Col Benton had not reached home.

My respects to Mrs. Polk. Learn she is to be in town. Will come 
out on my return fr. Ken.

J. CATRON

P.S. Hand the enclosed to Jas Walker.

J. C.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. John Hall, a Lebanon lawyer, served a single term in the legislature, 
1835–37. He supported White against Van Buren and became a Whig. He 
was a brother of former Governor William Hall.

2. Robert L. Caruthers and George S. Yerger, both of Lebanon, were
among the ablest lawyers in the state. Yerger was in the state senate, 1833–35; and, shortly after this letter was written, he moved to Mississippi, where he continued a distinguished career in law. He edited ten volumes of Tennes­see Reports.

3. This is probably a reference to the political influence wielded by Hinchey Petway, a wealthy planter and merchant.

4. This seems to be a reference to Jefferson City, capital of Missouri.

5. The enclosure has not been found.

FROM SAMUEL MITCHELL

Dr. Sir. Shelbyville April 17th 1837

I am before the people for the Senate, no other person out but Fon­ville.1 I am informed that [Joseph] Kincaid will not be a candidate under any circumstances. Their dependence now is upon [Theodor­ick F.] Bradford or Webster2 and I feel confident I can beat either of them. If you do not come into our County this week send me those papers that I forwarded to you at Washington.

SAML. MITCHELL

P.S. If Bradford makes a set against me for the Senate I shall want some evidence of Tylers Nullification principles as I intend boring him under the fifth rib for voting for him.

S. M.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Israel Fonville had run unsuccessfully for the state senate in 1833 and 1835.

2. Jonathan Webster, a former speaker of the state senate, had sup­ported Hugh L. White against Van Buren and was no longer considered a political friend to Polk.

TO WILLIAM TROUSDALE

Dear Sir Columbia April 19th 1837

I take the liberty to send you, the enclosed letter, received from John James Pocock Esq3 of London, that you may, if you find it con­venient, either shew it, or communicate its contents to the persons interested, if they are still living in Sumner. After making the in­quiries desired, will you do me the favour to return the letter, with the information which you may obtain, that I may be enabled to forward an answer.

I see you are running without opposition for Congress, and from all
I have learned, I think it probable you will have none. I received a letter a day or two since from Judge Powell of East Tennessee. He declines running for Governor, in consequence of the impaired state of his health. Have you seen Genl Hall on the subject? I should be happy to hear from you on this subject, and also to receive from you, the political news in your quarter. Here we have nothing new. I have as yet, no opposition, and will probably have none. Our majority is large and increasing, and as yet the elections have produced but little excitement. We are exceedingly anxious to have a candidate for Governor of the true faith, in the field, and I hope, in the course of a few weeks, some suitable person upon whom we can unite may be induced to run. I will write you shortly more fully on this subject.

JAMES K. POLK

FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT

Dear Sir

Jackson 21st April 1837

I have been upon the eve of writing you for several weeks but a press of other engagements has prevented. Without further preface I will give you my views of political matters in general. I believe it manifest the Whig party in this State are determined the people shall not be allowed repose; for the best of reasons, because that repose would bring ruin upon them. Therefore, to keep up an excitement, they will run Bailey Peyton for Governor, to traverse the State and thunder his intemperate invectives against Genl. Jackson, and prate about the corruption of the late and present administration, and the dangers that threaten "the freedom of elections." By his operations they expect to influence all the coming elections, get a majority in the Legislature, turn out Grundy, and place this State in a hostile attitude to the present administration.

With this view of the case what position should we assume? I am of opinion we should put up a man against him, who has popularity and will meet him broadly and capable of discussing with care and
vigour National politicks, and who will without fear discuss and place in a proper light before the people the conduct of Messrs Peyton & Co in the last Congress. Who this man is, amongst our ranks I confess I am at a loss to find unless that man be yourself. I am aware that the sacrifice would be great on your part, to give up your seat in Congress where you are so useful for the trifling station of Governor of Tenn. But I take it, it would be only temporary. If we can only defeat them in the coming elections, the White party, after that, would vanish. Bradford you will see has been solicited but he has wisely declined, and has announced himself a candidate to represent Madison, Haywood, Tipton and Lauderdale in the State Senate. Judge Powell of East Tennessee I see is solicited. I have no acquaintance with him personally, or his politicks. Rumour says he is with us. He may be a very talented man, but somehow or other, as we learn by experience, these old Judges make but a poor hand in canvassing before the people.

A few of us, have thought, the most certain man would be the old Chief himself. At this I suppose you will startle. Why? Will it be a degridation in a man who has been the Chief Magistrate of the Union to become the Chief officer of a State? I think not. And we have an illustrious precedent. Mr. Monroe thought it no degridation to accept the commission of a justice of the peace in his state, and it was lauded at the time from one end of the Union to the other. His was it is true, a very insignificant office, in the discharge of which, he could render very unimportant services to his friends. But Genl Jackson could render services of the most important character to his State such as no other man can render. Namely, to put in operation an extensive and durable system of Internal Improvement. If Genl. Jackson will lead the way, the State of Tennessee will shoulder a debt of ten millions if necessary for the purposes of Internal Improvement. If he says to the people this is the way to prosperity, the people will flock to him and the little politicians may snarl and spit as much as they please to no purpose. With him at our head the conquest will be easy. I see they have appointed him to represent the county of Davidson in the Convention to meet at Nashville on the second Monday in May. I hope he will be prevailed upon to attend. The editors I see will also hold a convention at the same time. For what real purpose it was projected I know not, but we may be able to turn it to good account. I shall attend the Int. Imp. Convention and should like to see you there. Think maturely of all my suggestions.

Huntsman has declined a canvass for Congress, which may let in two or three others. How we will make it God only knows. We must hold ourselves ready to profit by the "chapter of axidents."
man’s declaration has thrown the oposition into some confusion. They have two candidates in the field, John Crocket the son of Davy and A M Hughes the latter the most violent and foul mouthed oposition man you ever heard. Between these two our people will vote for Crocket, who is a very modest unassuming young man. And Huntsman says, but mark this as the strictly private, that he will support Mr. Van Burens administration if administered in accordance with the principles of his inaugural. I myself place but little confidence however in this, but think it likely a little attention at Washington would make him think charitably of the administration. Billy Miller another cocksparrow of a White man is now in a feviour to be out. If so, we will put up John W. Cooke or J R McMeans of Henry and beat them. We must try our best to take care of Grundy, by electing a majority to the Senate opposed to bringing on the election, by this means. If they have a majority against us on joint ballot, the Senate will non-concur in a resolution to go into the election. Our Friends should understand this matter. If we can only postpone the election two years all will be well. The White faction cannot last longer than that time. They will in the meantime be compelled to break ground for Harrison or Clay or Calhoun or Webster, either of whom will be fatal to their cause. Candidates are coming out very thick all over the country and by the time I meet you at Nashville will be able to tell more of our prospects.

You are aware the odds are greatly against us in this section. Our friends are much to blame. I have stood almost alone. The oposition have determined to make an effort to break down our little press here. They have issued proposals for a real nullification paper; have made up a large poney purse as I am informed and will issue it about the first of next month. How they will succeed I cannot tell. I am the only man here upon whom any reliance can be placed, and if not sustained by friends abroad, our paper may sink, as my circumstances will not justify me supporting the establishment unaided.

My paper is out. I hope you will allow no person to steal this letter. I have retained no copy.

Jos. H. Talbot

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Alexander B. Bradford was indeed elected to the state senate to represent the counties named. A lawyer at Jackson and a major general in the militia, Bradford served in the Seminole and Mexican wars.

2. Samuel Powel declined to run for governor for reasons of health. See Samuel Powel to Polk, April 10, 1837.
3. The Internal Improvements Convention met in Nashville on May 8, 1837. There is no evidence that Polk took Talbot's suggestions seriously or that Jackson attended the convention.

4. The convention of editors was not widely attended. It is not clear how Talbot thought the gathering could be turned to good account.

5. This reference is obscure.

6. Archelaus M. Hughes was later involved in questionable rumor-mongering that was intended to injure Jackson's reputation and reflect discredit on the Van Buren administration. See John W. Childress to Polk, January 14, 1838, particularly footnote 3. David Crockett, the famous frontiersman and hunter who died at the Alamo, had served in Congress and in the Tennessee legislature. John W. Crockett, son of David, was a lawyer in Paris, Henry County, Tennessee. Elected to Congress as a Whig, John Crockett served two terms, 1837-41, before moving in 1843 to New Orleans, where he was a commission merchant and newspaper editor.

7. William B. Miller, son of Pleasant M. Miller and a brother-in-law of Alexander B. Bradford, had served one term in the lower house of the state legislature, 1833-35.

8. John W. Cooke and James R. McMeans were prominent lawyers in Paris, Henry County. McMeans had served in the state senate before moving to Henry County and was elected to one term afterwards. At this time, Cooke was judge, and McMeans was attorney general of the ninth circuit court. Cooke never served in the legislature.


10. A "penny purse" was a fund raised by donations.

11. This refers to a letter from Polk to James McKisick in 1835. For details of events connected with this letter, see Polk to McKisick, November 4, 1835; Kenneth L. Anderson to Polk, March 25, 1837, footnote 2; and William J. Whitthorne to Polk, March 27, 1837.

FROM JOHN CATRON

Nashville, 22d. Apl '37

Dr Sir: The Union was not published at the time of issuing the last number, Mr. Laughlin being intoxicated. He is however up again to day, & Mr. Grundy informs me, said to him Mr Smith the publisher wd. again proceed to issue the paper. In other words that he, Mr. L., wd. not surrender the attempt to carry it on. Until this is done there is no possibility of making the paper respectable. Mr. L's habits are too indolent to edit a tri-weekly. He will not even furnish the extracts from other publications until the news is stale, and the Union will sink on his hands, shd he not be intemperate. Such is my decided opinion, with many opportunities of knowing. A crisis must come in a few days.

I do not hear any intimations whether Mr. Peyton will, or not run
for governor; if so, I am inclined to think Genl Armstrong had better be brought out. Then, he would combine our friends—not otherwise, I apprehend.

Mr. Grundy had written to Nathl. Smith, before your letter was read, asking him whether he wd. run if Judge Powel did not? Until Mr Smith is heard from, we have thought it better to keep silent. We are badly off for a candidate, and the other side not much better, as Gov. Cannon is standing aloof from the White party since the affair with Peyton, which he obviously thinks will end in Smoke. I conversed with him, and Secy Lea today some time, and such was the tendency of the conversation.

Gov. Carroll left home for Washington the day after I reached home, & suddenly, without my having seen him. His business there is not known. He is to be at home about the 12th of May I understand.

For Congress, it is hardly possible in the District to bring out an efficient man. [Robert L.] Caruthers is very timid—wd. run he says if [John] Hall was not out. Hall got a larger vote in Wilson for the Legislature at the last Canvass than Caruthers, & the latter fears his own strength at home. I have not seen him, nor wd. I converse with him if I did, but [Andrew Jackson] Donelson has, & will again. Armstrong keeps silent.

Saw a letter from Dnl. Graham, now at Jackson, to Genl. Armstrong, saying Huntsman had in a speech declined running for Congress. This is strange information, & I think it improbable. Graham only stated it as an on dit coming from a distance from Jackson. Such are the odds, & ends of our unsettled affairs.

J. CATRON

P.S.

Whilst writing Gnl Gibbs dropped in, who says he thinks it true that Huntsman has declined. That he G. thought [John W.] Crockett stronger than his father & that he wd have beaten Mr Huntsman. That Gnl. [Alexander B.] Bradford so thought—and that Bradford told him Gibbs, the other day he wd. run, if Huntsman declined. Armstrong says Bradford is as near right as it is possible for a Bradford to be. He will carry the Van Buren men just as certainly as Huntsman would have done, who involved himself last summer in his declarations favourable to Judge White, which it is difficult to explain.

J. C.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Luke Lea of Knox County had served two terms in Congress prior to his election as secretary of state for Tennessee.
2. On dit—"they say"; hence a rumor.
3. George W. Gibbs was a Davidson County lawyer and businessman. Later he moved to West Tennessee. He is sometimes called the founder of Union City in Obion County.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dr. Sir.

Clarksville 22nd Apl [1837]¹

We have had but little stir here as yet as to our Legislative elections. I do not think a struggle will be attempted except in Montgomery & Robertson. They will make a powerful effort in Robertson agt. [William] Seal, alone upon the ground of his supposed preference for Grundy, & perhaps for a U. S. Bank. I do not think he is in any danger. [Henry] Frey is yet without opposition & seems likely to be so unless W. B. J² should again become a Candidate, to which I am decidedly opposed but which he secretly wishes & has committed himself so far that he cannot well do so. They are attempting further opposition to [William] Overton. [John H.] Poston they think not strong enough & if so that he may not answer their purposes very well. He is a verry independent, honest man & has always been a decided friend of Jackson but went off with the White fever. I have not seen him since my return. He has been & is yet to the East. They now wish Col. Crusman.³ I do not think we are in any danger.

I hear nothing of opposition to me as yet. I shall be pleased to hear from you.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Columbia.
1. The year was supplied on the basis of the context of the letter.
2. Willie Blount Johnson, Cave Johnson's brother.
3. Cornelius Crusman moved from Virginia to Clarksville as a boy. He learned the saddler's trade and became a merchant who handled leather goods of all kinds. An interest in militia affairs led to his election as a colonel. He later joined the gold rush and died in California in 1850.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Coln.

Murfreesboro, April 22 1837

We have been looking for you and Sarah for some time with considerable impatience. We expect you will not delay your visit much
longer. You have had ample time to have cleared up your stolen letter¹ & for having made your arrangements for the approaching campaign. All things are ready for the race in this county. The Horses are brought out and the riders are up. Crocket & Maury, Keeble & Ledbetter & Laughlin, Fletcher, Reeves & Wade.² Keeble & Laughlin are in fine trim & we expect will take the purse. You will learn particulars when you come up. I wrote you a long letter about six weeks before the adjournment of Congress filling two sheets containing a copy of a letter from the Revd H M Cryer to me and my answer to him and disclosing my views of the Election Campaign in Rutherford & Williamson.³ I enclosed in that letter five Dollars to you to send Richard Blair of this place the Semi Weekly Globe. From the circumstance of the paper's not having arrived I have been induced to believe that you have never gotten my letter. I would be glad to know. If you did not Blair & Reeves [John C. Rives] must send the paper, for the money was sent at their risk & without any profit to me and it was sent to you to save them postage. If you do not come up write to me on the subject. It would be a matter of some consequence to us in this county if Grundy would come among us and exercise some influence in favor of his own reelection. The candidates are making that a question in the canvass. He could if he would do us great service and by the bye it may be requisite for his own success. Some of your friends talk of giving you a dinner when you come to this place. They want to have an opportunity of hearing you on the subject of Politics.

W. R. RUCKER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This refers to Polk's letter to James McKisick that had fallen into the hands of political enemies who published it in the Shelbyville Peoples Advocate.

2. Granville S. Crockett, Abram P. Maury, Edwin A. Keeble, William Ledbetter, John R. Laughlin, John D. Fletcher, Moses G. Reeves, and Levi L. Wade. Keeble, a lawyer at Murfreesboro, edited the Monitor as a young man and was elected mayor of Murfreesboro in 1838 and 1855. Fletcher, also a Democrat, represented Rutherford County in the legislature, 1839–41; later he moved to Winchester and served in the state senate, 1845–47. Wade, a Whig from Murfreesboro, owned several plantations and had banking and railroad interests; he completed Andrew J. Hoover's term in the legislature, 1837–39, after Hoover died.

3. Rucker's letter was dated January 20, 1837. Polk seems to have received it without delay. It is not known why he did not answer more promptly.
FROM ALFRED FLOURNOY¹

Dear Friend Pulaski², April 24th 1837

Your kind favour of the 20th Inst³ was reed last night and as it is inconvenient for me at this time to avail myself of your kind invitation to visit you, I can only confer with you in this way. I received your message by our friend Patterson⁴ and am sorry to say to you, that it is out of my power at this time to offer for either branch of the Legislature. I regret it not on my own account, but altogether on account of my friends, for I do believe from all I can learn from Lincoln and from various parts of this County I could be elected without the least difficulty. But to acknowledge the fact, my pecuniary affairs will not admit of my doing so. In addition to my own contracts an unworthy friend has made me responsible as endorser for a large amount and in my opinion it would be madness in me to offer my poor services at this time. I am well aware of the efforts making to set Mr. Grundy aside and am grieved that I cannot give him the benefit of what little aid I could render in the Legislature, for what I could do, would be done cheerfully. We are at fault here what to do. I have been urging Robertson⁵ of Lincoln to offer. I think he could be elected. Moore⁶ is afraid to offer; he would have difficulties to encounter. I received a letter from Robertson last week positively declining. For my own part I know not what to do. [Archibald] Wright is too young to offer for the Senate. I think my brother Wm⁷ could be elected if he would try, but I fear he will not. He has a great aversion to politics. Caruthers⁸ is out of the question. I have no idea who we can run. As for [Aaron V.] Brown he has got a little appointment that he would not surrender to save the administration. Brown goes for himself; he could have been elected with ease if he would. Why he keeps his name fastened to the Strumpet of Liberty⁹ is more than I can tell you. I inquired of him about it before he left home, and he said, he intended to quit, but you see he is still a stock holder.¹⁰ I shall visit town tomorrow. I will try and rally our friends. If any thing can be done you shall be informed. If we dont act shortly we had as well surrender the ship in this district. I do not know how matters are going in Lawrence. I have been at home all the winter.

Be so good as to let me know how Shields has deported himself and what faith can be placed in him. I have seen him but once [since] his return. He told me he did not like Bell, and that he and Mr. Van Buren were on the most intimate terms. Say to me in confidence how you like him. Let me hear how you stand at home, and what they have
made out of the stolen letter. Can they get up any opposition? I should be happy to see you, but as I cannot come, I beg you to remember me kindly to Mrs Polk and accept for yourself the prayers of a faithfull friend for your success and prosperity.

ALFRED FLOURNOY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Flournoy, a Pulaski doctor, was Polk's personal friend and very loyal supporter.
2. Pulaski is the county seat of Giles County.
3. This letter has not been found.
4. James Patterson, whose family settled in Giles County in 1808, was active in local civic and political matters.
5. Born in Virginia, Henry Robertson came to Lincoln County about 1825 and became a wealthy farmer and race-horse owner. He served as a Democrat in the state legislature, 1835–37.
6. A brother-in-law of Archibald Yell, William Moore was a large landholder and served in the General Assembly as a Jacksonian Democrat, 1825–29 and 1833–37. Moore County was named for him.
8. James Caruthers, a farmer, was elected to the legislature in 1837 and served a single term. He subsequently moved to Mississippi. He was a Democrat, and Flournoy's reason for thinking him out of the question as a candidate is obscure.
9. The Pulaski *Trumpet of Liberty* was the successor of the Pulaski *Tennessee Beacon*. Alston B. Estes edited both these papers and was an opposition man. Since Polk supporters offered financial support to the *Trumpet of Liberty*, it was supposed that Estes had changed his politics, but he continued as an opposition man, to the disgust and disappointment of the Democrats.
10. For Brown's own explanation of his puzzling actions, see his letter to Polk, July 18, 1837.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Nashville, April 25th 1837

In answer to yours received last evening I have to say, that in the event [Nathaniel] Smith should not offer,¹ and I do not expect he will, I approve entirely of the Idea of supporting Judge Turley;² and shall communicate Smiths determination to you as soon as received. Upon the subject of the Senatorial election, I would suggest, that our friends
take the ground at once that the election should not come on. To me the result must be the same, because if we beat them now, we can certainly do so two years hence, besides it will give our friends a decided advantage in the canvass. They can charge their opponents with an effort to bring on the election prematurely in order to deprive the people of what might suit them best when the time comes, when a senator will be needed. There can be no called session of the Senate in 1839, because no cause for it can exist. Write to me often. I cannot say that I should much fear the result of an election this fall. But the course, I suggest is in my opinion both right and expedient.

FELIX GRUNDY

Armstrong has gone to the Hermitage today. I shall soon know the object and result.

Gr

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. Grundy had written to Nathaniel Smith, asking him if he would be willing to run for governor and suggesting that he would get strong support if he would do so. See John Catron to Polk, April 22, 1837.

2. A native of Virginia, William B. Turley moved to Nashville as a boy. After attending the University of Nashville, he read law with William L. Brown and began practice in Clarksville. After several years as judge of the eleventh circuit, he served with distinction on the state supreme court from 1835 until his resignation more than fifteen years later.

3. Although Grundy still had two more years to serve in the United States Senate, it was thought that the Whigs would try to elect a senator during 1837 while they thought they could still control the state legislature. Should Grundy not win in such an election, he would be a lame duck for two years.

4. It was perhaps at this meeting that it was decided that Armstrong should run for governor.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Nashville. April 25, 1837

McNeal acknowledges Polk's letter of introduction to General Jackson and says that he has seen Jackson and found him in better health than he had expected. McNeal adds that he will visit Columbia on his way home and will come to Polk's home.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. McNeal was Polk's first cousin and a brother of Prudence McNeal Bills, wife of John H. Bills. He lived at Bolivar, where he was a merchant and farmer.
FROM WILLIAM TROUSDALE

Gallatin 27th April 1837

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 19th Inst. has been received including that of Mr. Pocock of London. Doctor James Barry at the time of his death lived one mile and a half west of this place. At his death he left a wife and one Daughter called Maria. The wife and Daughter each have since married and now live in Wilson County Tennessee. Mrs. Barry married with a Mr. Winns and Maria with a Col [M. A.] Price who is now a merchant in the town of Lebanon. Doctor James Barry was an educated Irishman and no doubt the brother of Sir David Barry mentioned in the letter of Mr. Pocock. The family of Doctor Barry some weeks since were informed by letter of the death of Sir David Barry and of the legacy coming to them and are preparing to forward the necessary proof.

I have not seen Genl. [William] Hall recently but have understood that he would have no particular objection to become the governor of Tennessee could the thing be made tolerably certain. I shall see him shortly. I have no opponent yet for congress. Maj [Balie] Peyton has returned and some of the people of Davidson County or rather of the City of Nashville are endeavouring to spirit him up to give me a race. I cannot tell how it will result. [Josephus C.] Guild yet runs alone for the senate altho opposition is anticipated. You are yet permitted to go alone in your district. I do not suppose any one will encounter you. Write me on the receipt of this, give me the out lines of your stump speeches. I have not yet left home but shall take a tower [tour] shortly.

W. TROUSDALE

P.S. I return you enclosed the London letter.

W. T.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Pocock's letter to Polk, February 4, 1837, and Polk's letter to William Trousdale, April 19, 1837.
2. James Barry had married Mary Ann Taylor in Wilson County in 1819. After he died, his widow married R. S. Winn, a resident of Wilson County.

FROM JAMES McKISICK

Fayetteville, Arkansas 28th April 1837

A few days ago Wiseners' paper printed in Shelbyville was forwarded to me at this place in which I found a confidential letter writ-
ten by you to me on the subject of Mr [Greenville] Cooks purchasing the Western Freeman from Laird. I was much surprised to see a private letter published which I believed until the moment I saw the publication was on file among my private letters. It is entirely misterious to me by what means they got it in possession tho I learn by a letter from Col [Kenneth L.] Anderson that it is said Doctor Fogleman & Lewis Shepherd found it in the Clerks Office among some official papers. I have also received a letter from Squire Orr to the same effect. Orr denies having any agency in the matter & says he remonstrated against the proceedings but without effect & I have no right to dispute his statement tho I am well aware that he goes generally with the opposition. It was certainly a most disgraceful & dishonorable act in these rascals to publish a private letter, however I think there is nothing in it that can prejudice you however desirous they may be to use it to your disadvantage. I have attempted to answer Wisener's comments but have made bungling hand of it. I wrote to Col Anderson that I would make some sort of a reply & forward it to you with a request if you think it will bare publishing to send it on to him that he Col Anderson may have it published. My object in this was that I wished you to see it before it was published, perhaps you may think it best to make some alterations or amendments which I authorise you to do, besides I did not know but it might be expedient for you to say something to the people on the subject in the course of the Spring or Summer. You will see the substance is generally aranged & that it needs pruning & revision. I have not been in the habit of writing Newspaper communications & in this case I have not by any means succeeded to my own satisfaction. I had a disposition to handle the fellow pretty rough, but somehow I have not got my ideas to fit well. I am very desirous for you to write to me on this subject so soon as you can give me some information as will be satisfactory. I want to know what the people say & think about Wisener & Co publishing a private letter, whether it can be possible that such an infamous act can prejudice you. I want to know if Kahal opposes you & if he does what his prospects are. Also write whether Bell & Payton are candidates & if they are who opposes them. My Tennessee papers come very irregularly, I think more than half don't get here at all. I want also to know how the Governor matter is working.

Jas. McKisick

P A Judge [Archibald] Yell & lady has arrived at home in good health. Mrs Yell expresses great attachment to & respect for Mrs Polk.

J M
Addressed to Columbia and delivered by hand.
1. William H. Wisener was editor of the Shelbyville Peoples Advocate.
2. John H. Laird had been publisher of the Western Freeman. When Greenville Cook acquired that paper, Laird was alleged to have promised not to start another paper in Shelbyville. The Peoples Advocate, however, was immediately established with Laird as publisher and Wisener as editor.
3. George W. Fogleman was a Shelbyville doctor. Shepherd is unidentified.
4. William Orr served as sheriff of the county and later as clerk of the county court.
5. This refers to Terry H. Cahal of Maury County.

FROM WILLIAM B. TURLEY

Dear Sir Bolivar April 28th 1837

You are the owner of a four hundred acre tract of land in the vicinity of Bolivar, a portion is convenient to my residence for the purpose of procuring fire wood and I am desirous of obtaining the privilege of using a part of it for that purpose in some shape or other. I am willing to pay a reasonable sum per year for that purpose, or to buy the timber on a given number of acres, to be designated by mets & bounds, say ten, fifteen or twenty acres with time to take it of, or the same amount in fee simple, at such a price as may be right, under the circumstances. Please inform wether either of the propositions will suit you. If they will inform J H Bills² of it so that we can make the arrangement.

We have nothing new, some pressure in the money market, & when it is to stop no one can tell. I never was before so thoroughly satisfied of the great wisdom of the much abused treasury order.³ But for it the south & west must have been utterly ruined, & all that I regret is that it was not adopted one year sooner. But for it, there is not as I think a bank in the south could have met the present pressure. Is it not a little astonishing that the strenuous advocates of the distribution bill⁴ find nothing in its operations to have aided in producing the great distress in the commercial cities. If the money had been permitted to remain under the controul of the government, it could have been so used by the Secretary of the Treasury as to have given relief at the points where the pressure has been most severe. But as it is, it appears to me that a great amount of it has been of as little avail as if it had been in the mines of Mexico or Peru. The banks which have it in possession cannot use it, because they have to distribute it to the States, & a great portion of it being in transitn it must of necessity be idle. But even if it had all been distributed, it could under no circumstances be made available to the extent it would had
it remained in the treasury, for in times of distress, produced by over trading the evle is first felt in the commercial citiess, and extends from them to the interior, and at such times an accumulation of capital in the citiess is to be desired. But instead of that at the present crisis there must of necessity under the operations of the distribution bill be a distribution at least it so seems to me, though perhaps one so little skilled in financial operation as I am ought to doubt an opinion which is in conflict with that of the comercial men of the Country.

Wm. B. Turley

Addressed to Columbia.
1. "Metes and bounds" are boundaries or limits of a piece of land.
2. John H. Bills, merchant and postmaster at Bolivar, was married to Polk's first cousin, Prudence Tate McNeal.
3. This order, popularly known as the Specie Circular, was issued on July 11, 1836. See Daniel Graham to Polk, January 12, 1837.
4. The Deposit Act or Distribution Bill was sponsored by Henry Clay and was passed in June 1836. This legislation provided for "depositing" with the states, prorated according to Congressional apportionment, all Treasury surpluses in excess of five million dollars. When the Panic of 1837 struck, federal revenues declined and the fourth-quarter installment was postponed until January 1839.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Bolivar Te May 1, 1837

Dear Sir,

I have your valued favour of the 25 ult.¹ and have given its contents due consideration. I am satisfied your selection of a candidate for the Gubernatorial chair is a good one, and one verry likely to succeed. His Honour² was much flattered as well with your letter as with one reed. simultaneously from Mr. Nicholson on the same subject and is witheld alone from countenancing the idea of becoming a candidate by his Poverty. He has confidence in success, but is too proud to become politician in poverty. His resolution is fixed, he will remain at the supreme bench. We must however have a candidate & must now look to Middle Tennessee for one. We have no other in this section of the State at all likely to succeed.

I cannot think there is the least danger of [to] Dunlap's success. [Christopher H.] Williams cannot get a Van Buren vote. Whilst all the Moderate White Whigs will go for Dunlap. No one here doubts his success.

Huntsman has quit in disgust, his reasons appear in the Truth Teller, a copy whereof I enclose you. "Young Crockett" I presume
will be elected unless [James R.] McMeans should run, of which there is some talk.

We have to day disposed of our whig Senator Genl [J.C.N.] Robertson, by making him Sheriff, an office which he is well qualified for & which became vacant by the failure of the peoples Sheriff. To my surprise I find myself petitioned by some one hundred of my county men this evening to become a candidate for the Senate. Although the solicitation comes in such a shape as to be allmost irresistable I have no idea of yielding, being wholly disinclined to enter a political strife, yet I think it gives assurance that some one of correct & orthodox politics will be elected to the Senate, Robertson being now out of the question. Coe (son of Joseph) is the only candidate in the field & he is right though not sufficiently known.

My regards to Mrs. Polk.

JNO. H. BILLS

P.S. We had Dick Johnson3 with us last night.

Addressed to Columbia.
1. This letter has not been found.
2. William B. Turley of Bolivar had been approached on the possibility of his being a candidate for governor. See Ezekiel P. McNeal to Polk, May 4, 1837.
3. Vice-President Richard M. Johnson visited several Tennessee towns at this time. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, May 4, 1837.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

New Haven May 2d 1837

Yours of the 17th1 I received to day containing two Bank notes of one hundred dollars each. Two hundred will be sufficient to pay my debts and leave a surplus of about eighty dollars, which sum I will not spend in travelling as I anticipated when I wrote you last. I expected that you would remit perhaps $300² which sum would have paid my debts and enable me to travel. The great risk incurred in sending bank bills by letter I suppose was the reason why you did not send more. It does not however make the slightest difference. Travelling was designed merely to pass away time which since the vacation has commenced I find I can do as well here as any where.

Prof Olmstedd has no money in his hands now of the past remittances. I will speak to him in a day or two and let him know that you have consented to let me have the controll of my money matters. I will write when this gives out, the greater part of which I will now pay out in settling up my debts. You must not be surprised if I should
write somewhat sooner than usual, since it has been a good while since the last remittance.

SAM W POLK

Addressed to Columbia.
1. This letter has not been found.
2. It has not been possible to determine conclusively whether the sum expected was $300 or $500.

FROM GEORGE MOORE

Dear Sir
Stage Stand [Bolivar] May 3, 1837

Your favour'd [20th] came to hand to day. I hardly know what to doo about the mule as I fear [George W.] Bratton will buy one before I could send one down to him. However I will write to Bratton & if he has not got one I will send him one immediately. I Bought one some time ago sent down to Bratton in March, I think about 25 of March. You write me that you hav never [ . . . ] a word from Bratton since W. H. Polk was down in the winter & I hav wrote to W. P. as many as 3 times. I Know I sent a young man down in Jany with your negroes & then I sent another one down in March with a mule & negro for William Polk. Bratton had all his Land ready for Planting & was planting cotton. I hav no doubt but he will make you a good crop. I knew him well before I Employed for you & knew him to be a good planter & good manager. I will hear from Bratton in a few days & will write you again. Tell Bill I want him to pay due attention to his wife but not forget his intrust in Mississippi. I understand there is grate complaint abot bad stands of cotton in Mississippi as well as in the district. Ther is no cotton up in this section of county yet & grate many is plough up & planting over in this section. Our corn also stands badly. My Respects to Mrs. Polk.

GEORGE MOORE

Addressed to Columbia.
1. The letter bore no post office name, but it was postmarked at Bolivar.
2. Polk's letter of the date mentioned has not been found.
3. William H. Polk had married Belinda G. Dickinson in April 1837.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dear Sir
Haywood [County, Tennessee] May 4, 1837

I have received from Mr. Harris [30] an account of the sale of 30 Bales at one time and 56 Bales at another tho, I think he gave me and
account of the sale of 9 bales twice. I expect we have 77 bales sold which was all the Cotton we had ready before the first of January. He can inform you the amt. of sales. There was 7 Bales sent from Miss in February and 18 Bales from here the 12th of April which makes 25 the number of Bales unsold. We made 102 Bales, 44 in Miss, and 58 here. I instructed [Madison] Caruthers not to sell at the present price but gave him no further instructions about it. I am not in favor of sending it to Liverpool the uncertainty of the price there and the vast expence of shipping it & for the Risque Insurance &c. I have collected of C. C. Jones for you $235 25/100 also of Thomas Dotson $211 25/100 none of McNeal. I have heard nothing from Brown respecting your Durham Money since I saw you. I think he brot. suit soon after I gave him the notes. I have paid about $1350 for expences and there are some accounts unsettled. I dont know what amt. as have not yet got the amount of them. Perhaps not more than $100. I dont know where Browns Post Office is therefore cant write to him on the subject. You can find where it is when you come down and write to him yourself. I have not been able to collect the note I got of William [H. Polk] on Rutledge and am very much pushed to settle our accounts, in fact cant until I can get it and see very little prospect of getting it soon. They have bot. Cotton on which they will loose considerably and am afraid they will not be prepared to pay their debts easily. Tell William he must comple them to pay that note when he comes down if possible. We have a very bad prospect for a cotton crop owing to the cold spring. I am now planting over part of my Cotton. The corn crop is very unpromising also.

Eliza & Saml. will start for Columbia in a few days. I will not be up until the first of July.

My respects to Sarah. . . .

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Adlai O. Harris was the husband of Polk's sister, Naomi. He had been in partnership with James Walker in a mercantile business but was at this time a partner in a New Orleans firm, Caruthers and Harris, a commission business.

2. The Jones debt was for land that Polk had sold to Jones. See Ephraim Beanland to Polk, October 26 and November 1, 1834. Thomas Dodson of Fayette County had acted as Polk's agent in land sales and had himself bought some land for which he still owed a balance. The McNeal mentioned is probably Polk's cousin, Ezekiel P. McNeal; the debt was probably for land he bought from Polk in Hardeman County.

3. Thomas Durham owed a balance on land bought several years earlier.
Polk had placed collection of that debt in the hands of John T. Brown. See Silas M. Caldwell to Polk, April 11, 1834, and January 31, 1836.

4. During 1833, William Rutledge, formerly of Rutherford County, bought from Polk a tract of land in Fayette County; the note mentioned was probably related to that purchase.

5. Dr. Caldwell's wife and son.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, May 4, 1837

Mr. Grundy informs me you will be here on Sunday. I am glad of it, and hope you will not fail to come if you can.

I am in treaty, with the assistance of our friends, for the sale of the entire Union establishment to Smith & Nesbet (the St[e]am printers) under proper covenants for its continuance and politics, upon terms which will insure both objects. I am so waded in in debts for its continuance heretofore, that for my extrication, I am in treaty also for the sale of my house for relieving other more indispensable property from mortgage, all incurred for the (I fear) thankless part I have taken in the matter. I mean thankless with a portion of the public who have no knowledge of the privations to which I have submitted.

I hope to see you, and whatever you and Mr. Grundy sanction I will do, with the concurrence of Maj. Donelson & other friends, whether ruin or future success is to be the result.

Mr. Johnson, you see has opposition. I sent him his Volunteer's Bill Speech to-day. He wants Harrison's answer to Sherrod Williams' interrogatories. If you have it, or it can be found by Mr. [Andrew C.] Hays bring it with you, as I cannot lay my hands on it, not having published any part of it except short detached extracts.

The Campaign here goes on pretty well. Craighead, I think, will beat Anderson. Cheatham is safe for the House, and I think Grundy will beat Hays and Barrow.4

S. H. LAUGHLIN

P.S. Tecumseh⁴ has been here you will see. We offered him a dinner &c. He is gone.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. No sale was consummated at this time. In July it was reported that Robert Nesbit had bought the paper, but in a short time Joel M. Smith seems to have become the sole owner.

2. Richard Cheatham was opposing Cave Johnson. The speech mentioned was made by Johnson in the House on February 14, 1837. He urged quick
passage of an appropriation to pay volunteers for their service in the Seminole War, even though some of them actually had not been enlisted for duty in Florida. Laughlin had devoted half a column to this speech in the February 28, 1837, issue of the Nashville Union.

3. No such interrogatory has been found. The reference could be to the interrogatory by Albert G. Harrison of Missouri, who asked Hamer of Ohio if he knew of any plan to bring Reuben Whitney before the House to expose the improper conduct of Henry A. Wise and Balie Peyton in a committee of investigation.

4. Laughlin completely misjudged the strength of the Whig upsurge. David Craighead, the Democratic incumbent, was unseated by William E. Anderson in the state senate contest, while two Whigs, Blackman Hays and Washington Barrow, won the seats in the house over Leonard P. Cheatham and James P. Grundy.

5. Richard M. Johnson, Vice-President.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Dear Sir Bolivar May 4 1837

The candidates in Wayne are Brown the former member, Whig; and Robt. Mack Esq. a lawyer of Waynesboro and formerly of Maury County said to be Van Buren. Those with whom I conversed thought the latter would be elected. In Hardin there is but one candidate as yet, a Mr. C C Gibbs. G. Hardin of Hardin's Creek is spoken of as a candidate likely to run. It appears to be the current opinion that Gibbs will be the member. He is looked upon as favorable to the administration. In McNairy there is three candidates. Johnson, the former Rept. & another Whig, and Mr Neely formerly of Perry County, an administration man. The contest it is thought will be close between Johnson & Neely. [Elihu C.] Crisp & Hill are the candidates in this County. The former, perfectly orthodox, will certainly be elected. In this Senatorial District we have now a fair prospect of sending a member of the right faith. The most formidable man the Whigs could run, to wit J.C.N.Robertson, is filed away. He on last Monday accepted of the Sheriffalty for this County and declines a canvass for the Senate. I have very little hesitation in saying that we will be able to send a Senator & Representative good and true to democratic principles.

You will ere this reaches be advised by the letter of Mr. Bills as also the letter of Turly himself to Mr A.O.P.Nicholson as to his determination. I had an interview with Judge Turly yesterday. He is deeply sensible of the present favorable opportunity for serving the State, his political friends, and of placing himself in a favorable at-
titude for promotion, and regrets exceedingly that he is so circum-
scribed in his pecuniary affairs that in justice to his family which is
increasing and becoming daily more expensive that he is compelled to
decline the solicitations of his friends. I will write you again in the
course of a week or two as to our prospects and advise you as to the
Counties North East of this.

E. P. McNeal

Addressed to Nashville.

1. Andrew Brown, a farmer who lived near Waynesboro, served in the
state legislature, 1835–43. Robert Mack, formerly of Maury County, was a
lawyer, judge, and poet. He married a sister of Aaron V. Brown.

2. Conrad C. Gibbs was an early settler in Hardin County. He served as
county clerk and as an officer in the militia. Although successful in this con-
test, Gibbs served but the one term in the General Assembly. Gibson Hardin,
son of Colonel Joseph Hardin, for whom the county was named, moved from
Roane County in 1817 and settled near the mouth of Hardin Creek, which
was also named for his father.

3. John M. Johnson, a farmer who lived at Laurel Hill in McNairy
County, served two nonconsecutive terms in the lower house of the legisla-
ture, 1835–37 and 1839–41. Neely is unidentified. The third candidate, Wil-
liam H. Beavers, was the winner. While a member of the legislature, Beavers
became involved in a scheme to promote a turnpike in his county. When the
nature of his involvement was revealed, he moved to Texas unde r a cloud.

4. This is probably a reference to Allen Hill, an early resident of Bolivar
who served as chairman of the Hardeman County court, 1834–35.

5. See John H. Bills to Polk, May 1, 1837.

FROM JOHN F. GILLESPY

Dear Sir

Madisonville May 5th 1837

The Hon Baily Peyton of Whitney memory a few days since
honored us with a visit & speech. He eulogized Judge White, Bell, Wyse & himself, & claimed much political honesty & consistency. He
was pretty free in his denunciations of the alleged abuses of the
administration, and the administration party in Congress; and made a
bold push at you, Grundy and some others he coupled with you by
name. He concluded by telling us he greatly desired to retire to
private life, if the people would let him, but the importunities of his
party for whom he presumed to claim the exclusive guardianship of
the Constitution & of the integrity of the union, were so numerous that
he could not with a easy conscience deny them the privilige of electing
him Governor, unless some other suitable candidate of the party can
be selected. Cannot Genl. Armstrong be prevailed on to run for Governor? He can beat Peyton in this quarter, and I think throughout E. Ten. six to one. Carroll, I think, can if he would run beat Peyton in East Ten. but Cannon cannot run at all.

I was impressed with a belief from Mr. Peyton's speech, that his chief object was to prejudice Grundy & yourself, and advance Bell & himself in public estimation, and thereby promote the election of such members to the next Genl Assembly as would support him or Bell for the Senate of the U.S. in preference to Grundy or you. The Van Buren cause will from present appearances do well in the election of his friends to the next Legislature from the Hiwassee District. I have no doubt we have at this time a majority of the people with us. The name of Judge White has lost its magic since his shameful defeat. Many of his friends here believe he was shuffled forward by Bell, presuming on his overwhelming popularity in the State, to raise a party by means of which Mr. Bell might be enabled to supercede Mr. Grundy in the Senate of U.S. The candidates for the Legislature so far as I have heard with their political complexion are as follows—For the Senate [James A.] Whiteside (anti Van) Jonathan Tipton (doubtful), [George] Graves (uncertain) [Richard D.] Wheeler of Campbell, (Van B.). For Representatives [Scott] Terry of Bledsoe (doubtful), [Josiah M.] Anderson of Marion said to be (V.B.), James Connor of Meigs (V.B.), [William] Grant of Bradly joint R. (V.B.), [James] Walker of McMinn (V.B.), [John O.] Cannon of Monroe (Anti Bell, Foster, Peyton, White), upon the whole he will do, although not much for (V.B.), [Jesse] Thompson of Blount (Anti V.), but is supported by the friends of V.B. in that County, [Lewis] Reneau of Sevier (Anti V.) [John H.] Crozier of Knox (on the fence) Milligin [Alexander Millikin] of Cocke (Anti V.) [Andrew] Johnston of Greene (V.B.), [James] Overton of Claiburne. It is Said [Thomas D] Arnold has mounted the V.B. hobby & will beat [William] Carter for Congress. Williams I think will beat Anderson for Congress. I support Williams from a belief he will support V.B's administration. [Samuel] Bunch it is thought will be hard pressed by somebody. [James] Standfer runs alone. I would be glad to hear from you. Present my respects to my friends Messrs Nicholson, Thomas & Smith.

JOHN F. GILLESPY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Gillespy was born in Blount County. He became a lawyer and lived at Maryville until 1833, when he moved to Madisonville. He served three terms in the General Assembly, 1829–33 and 1839–41, and in 1840 was a Van Buren
elector. Both his father, James, and his brother, James Houston, served in the legislature.

2. Madisonville, Tennessee, was the county seat of Monroe County.

3. When Reuben M. Whitney was called before a House committee, both Peyton and Henry A. Wise of Virginia abused him and threatened him with physical violence, climaxing a session in which both Peyton and Wise had been bitterly and aggressively critical of Andrew Jackson's administration. Perhaps misled by the Whig victory over Van Buren in Tennessee, Peyton seems to have thought that the voters back home would approve of his conduct. Making no secret of the fact that he expected to run for governor, he was soon so disappointed with his reception in Tennessee that he dropped out of the race.

4. No attempt has been made to identify fully all of these candidates for the General Assembly. All served in the legislature at one time or another. Five were incumbents, three of whom failed of re-election. Ten of the fifteen men named won seats in the next election.

5. Although this name is clearly spelled Johnston, it refers to Andrew Johnson.


FROM JOHN McKINLEY

My Dear Sir

Florence [Alabama] May 5 1837

I had the great pleasure to receive, by yesterdays mail, your very kind letter of the 3. And the same mail brought me the commission of associate Justice of the Supreme court. So you see that your kind offices, exerted in my behalf before you left Washington, were not unavailing.

So little confidence had I in the passage of the law extending the judiciary system; & so completely had I lost sight of the appointment that I had not thought of it, for months, until I met Mr Chapman at the mouth of the Tennessee river (on my way to New Orleans) who informed me that the law had passed, that you, Judge Martin, & himself had exerted yourselves, as far as you could under the circumstance, to have me appointed; but that the appointment had been given to Judge Smith. All this passed in about five minutes, for I was obliged to go on board of the boat which brought Mr Chapman. This information struck me as something singular. But feeling conscious that my claims to the office were very humble, & that I had no right to complain no matter who got it, I determined to think no more about it.

I did not return home till the 24 of last month, & then very sick, & am now barely able to walk. I heard a few days after my return that
Judge Smith had declined the office, but I determined never to apply for it directly or indirectly. As it came to me without solicitation, on my part, I have accepted the appointment, although it is certainly the most onerous & laborious of any in the United States. Should I perform all the duties of the office I shall have to hold eight circuit courts, & assist in holding the Supreme court, & travel upwards of five thousand miles every year. These are four or five times greater than many of the judges have; & besides my expenses in attending courts alone will not be less than $1500 a year while other judges will not have to expend five hundred. These inequalities could not, I know, have been canceled in the passage of the bill. But I hope for the sake of justice, no matter who may be the Judges, that some mode will hereafter be adopted, by reorganising the circuits, adding another Judge, allowing of mileage or some other means proper in themselves to equalize the duties & compensation.

Mrs M & myself should be very much gratified to see you here this summer; but I fear you will have another troublesome campaign this summer, for your enemies appear to be untiring in their efforts against you. That they can succeed in pulling you down I have no apprehension; but I greatly fear some of them will be reelected; & especially Bell. Where will you be after the election? Let me hear from you. Mrs M & Mary join me in kind remembrances to Mrs. P.

J. McKinley

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Polk's letter has not been found.

2. Reuben Chapman and Joshua L. Martin were members of the Alabama delegation in Congress, having succeeded Clement C. Clay and John McKinley, respectively. Chapman and Martin each served as governor of Alabama. William Smith, although a resident of Alabama since 1833, had long been a political leader in South Carolina, where he had been elected to both houses of Congress. Polk had recommended McKinley's appointment to the Supreme Court.

3. McKinley had been elected to the United States Senate, but when he accepted the appointment to the court, Clement C. Clay, who was finishing out a term as governor, was elected senator in his place.

4. "Mary" appears to be a reference to McKinley's daughter.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My dr Sir: Frankfort, [Kentucky] May 8, 1837

Have been here a week holding the Court. Found everything wearing a political tinge. Met with a cool reception, under a belief brought home from Washington that [I] wanted legal skill—wanted
lawyership in Kentucky! where the most important causes are heard & decided without reference to a single book, and any knowledge where the law is to be found. The best lawyers here we have never heard of; these are sore at the repute [of] their brethren, whose fame is based on Stump oratory, and they are content with any Judge who is capable and does his duty. Nor do the seniors presume to complain, for whether the Judge is right or wrong they have no knowledge. Wickliff\textsuperscript{2} has been an exception to this, but he has read none for seven years as he informs me himself, and his recollections are dim and confused. Crittenden\textsuperscript{3} had reported unfavourably of me, & to friends amongst others, which he Says was grounded upon the information of other persons—of course, the Knot\textsuperscript{4} at Washington. Poor man! He has forgotten Blackstone, & is getting too old to declaim.

Somehow the opposition had learned here that [William] Smith wd. not accept, & enquired of me who wd. be appointed. Said they had heard you was to be the man. Judge Robertson told me Judge Evans had so informed him.\textsuperscript{5} I did not believe Judge Smith had or would decline, & of course laughed at the ignorance that supposed a member of Congress could get the nomination. But by the next Globe I found that Judge S. had declined, & that [John] McKinley had been appointed, with which I was most truly gratified. The matter has worked itself out rightfully. The opposition here groaned in silence, save as to the evil times, which are breaking their money-power. They are exceedingly afflicted with the failure of Yeatman Woods\textsuperscript{6} &c. The poor Woodses they care not a cent for. Never have I seen a people so devoted to masses of wealth in individual hands. The whole party seems absorbed with affection for those who have wealth, & in this respect, the Clay party are more corrupted than any set of people I ever was amongst. They understand you & I both inherited fortunes, and that we live without stint on them, & that our wives are Kinsfolk\textsuperscript{7}—were heiresses & that things in Tennessee are ruled with a golden rod. You cannot imagine how ignorant the mass of men here are of Tennessee affairs—were astonished when informed I had never been in politics, or even a candidate. Who you was, has been enquired of me from the first men here, that is, whence you came. N. Carolina, & its University, & first in its first class,\textsuperscript{8} was my reply. I a Virginian—& the heiresses Tennessee bred. These same heiresses are deemed pure [ . . . ] stock, nevertheless, and it behooves them to live up to their high name. No wonder this people has Sunk down to silly gossip & idle folly. They have spent their lives in nursing bad passions.

J. Catron
Addressed to Columbia.

1. This was Catron's first official visit to Kentucky after being appointed to the United States Supreme Court. It will be remembered that Kentucky was included in his circuit.

2. Charles A. Wickliffe, a Bardstown lawyer, had been Polk's colleague in the House, serving there from 1823 to 1833. Later he became governor of Kentucky.

3. John J. Crittenden had a long and distinguished career as a jurist and politician. A Whig, he was elected to the Senate on four occasions: 1817, 1835, 1842, and 1855. As a Whig leader in Kentucky, he was second only to his friend and political ally, Henry Clay.

4. This probably refers to some particular clique, but its identity has not been learned.

5. George Robertson had a long and notable career in politics, law, and education. After serving in the state legislature, in Congress, and as chief justice of the Kentucky court of appeals, he taught at Transylvania for many years. He was at Transylvania at the time this letter was written. Judge Evans is unidentified.

6. Yeatman, Woods and Company was a Nashville firm operated by Thomas Yeatman and his partners, Joseph and Robert Woods. They made a fortune as commission merchants, dealing in cotton and tobacco. They also operated iron mines, blast furnaces, a rolling mill, and a forge. Later they extended their business to banking and became one of the strongest banking firms in Tennessee. When Thomas Yeatman died, his widow married John Bell, and it was through that marriage that Bell's business fortunes improved.

7. Catron was married to Matilda Childress, a cousin of Sarah Childress Polk.

8. This reference is vague, for the class in which Polk was graduated at the University of North Carolina was not the first graduating class there.

FROM RUFUS P. NEELY

Dear Sir

Your kind favor of 29th March was read during my absence to New Orleans where I have been since middle of March. Before leaving home (during the winter) I was strongly solicited by the people of this Senatorial District to become a candidate for the legislature but on my leaving Memphis I declined all idea and requested them to find another who could serve them better, giving as my reason the situation of my private affairs. And the truth is I am not Eligible not having arrived to the age 30 years as is required. But for this last reason I believe I should have yielded & believing at same time that success would have been pretty certain. On my return I find L H Coe (son of our old countyman Joseph Coe) a candidate who is of the right stripe.
He has to contend with Col A R Alexander who was announced in the Sommerville paper five days since and with whose Politics you are acquainted. You will find on examination of the Newspaper which I sent you that Bills has been called on by the citizens of one county but declines. It would be wrong to divide the ranks and in truth he (Bills) would consider himself wanting in gratitude, to oppose the Col. in as much as he owes him a great deal for his start in the world.

The people are aware of the importance of sending men who will and have supported our favorite. Our county will send a genuine Jackson VanBurin man in the person of Col Crisp who is opposed by Allen Hill, Anti, who is endeavoring to succeed [Edward D.] Tarver. We have filed Robertson away by Electing him Sheriff which office he could not refuse to accept. The people (White men) have not succeeded in getting up opposition to [West H.] Humphreys of Fayette. Dunlap & Williams are haranguing the good people at all points. It will require industry on our part to hold Dunlap up.

I learn that Judge Powell [Samuel Powel] has declined a canvass. Who will be the man. The Honl W B Turley shewd me letters yesterday from several his friends soliciting his consent to be run, but will decline. I would be pleased to hear from you frequently in as much you must know I feel an inst in your Elections &c. . . .

R. P. Neely

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. Adam R. Alexander, once a resident of Maury County, has been considered the founder of Jackson, Tennessee. Later he moved to Shelby County, where he was living at the time of this letter. He served in the state legislature and in Congress. A few years earlier, he had been a political friend of Polk, but had drifted into Whiggery.
3. The Somerville Reporter, established by William Lewis in March 1837, was the first newspaper in Somerville.
4. The details of Alexander's assistance to Bills have not been ascertained.

FROM GEORGE W. BRATTON

Dear Sir

State of Mississippi May 13, 1837

I received youre letter in good time, which gave me a great pleasure to heare tha yo ar comming out here as yo wish to know the sise of the crop. I have one hundred an fifty acre in cotton and aty or ninty in corn and both corn and cotton are as likely as I ever saw and if I hav luck I will make corn annough for the platation and the rise of
May 15 1837

1 hundred bales of cotton if helth will admit. I has my cop in first rate order at this time. As for your plantation beleave it a firs rate one if well improved. My team ar vary weak an one ar giv out. I have been forst to by a horse for which yo will hav to pay for when yo com. Your negros ar all well and has bin well all but Disa [Dicey]. She is better than when William was hear. I cant writ but work. Com down and I will tell yo all about it.

G. W. BRATTON

I will let you know that in the division of the property Colwell [Caldwell] cheated William and in order that you may be satisfied com by Heywod and see the mules and when yo come her yo can tell all about it as he got all the best mules on the place.²

Addressed to Columbia. This letter, excluding the postscript, has been published in Bassett, Plantation Overseer, 106. The letter is badly smeared; and this, together with the poor spelling and handwriting, has made it difficult to read.

1. The letter was postmarked at Coffeeville, Mississippi.
2. Dr. Silas M. Caldwell's plantation was located in Haywood County. For a somewhat different view of William H. Polk's ability to deal with Dr. Caldwell, see George Moore to Polk, January 10, 1837.

FROM DAVID FENTRESS

Bolivar May 14th 1837

I was away from home when your letter arrived. I now enclose you a copy of the Bill.¹ Be so good as to have it answered by all the heirs by our next chancery court which sits first Monday in June. Forward your answers immediately as I wish to get along with the ejectments as soon as possible. No news.

D. FENTRESS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See David Fentress to Polk, April 12, 1837. No letters from Polk to Fentress have been found.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Bolivar May 15 1837

Eliza¹ & myself are subpoenaed in a suit in which A. Balch is concerned. I presume you know all about it. Eliza will not be here and it will be necessary for her to answer the Bill.² Fentress says
that you had better make out a general answer including Eliza to which she can make affidavit and send it to him before court which is the first Monday in next month. I will be here at court myself and answer separately or it may be necessary to answer jointly with her. If so you can arrange it in the answer so that I can answer jointly. You perhaps had better send the answer to Fentress as soon as possible.

S. M. CALDWELL

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Silas M. Caldwell's wife, Eliza, was Polk’s sister and one of the heirs of Samuel Polk.
2. See David Fentress to Polk, April 12, 1837.

FROM WILLIAM C. DUNLAP

Friend Polk
Sommerville May 16th 1837

Send Mr Bells letter or speech he made at Columbia in which he said that all that was left of Jacksons administration was mud & slime &c.¹ I have to answer a private letter I wrote to [John H.] Bills about Whites votes. I will have a warm and doubtful race to run but with Bells letter I can mask him and [Christopher H.] Williams both.

Send to Col W[est] H. Humphreys a newspaper containing the appointment of Delagates to the Baltimore convention in 1832² appointed at Nashville.

I will write you hereafter about the elections to the Legislature; they will most of them be good.

W. C. DUNLAP

Write me at Bolivar.

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Although the particular letter or speech remains elusive, Bell had invaded Polk’s district in September 1836 and heaped abuse upon Polk and Van Buren supporters. See William G. Childress to Polk, September 15, 1836, and Erwin J. Frierson to Polk, September 23, 1836.
2. The first national nominating convention of the Jacksonian party was held in Baltimore in May of 1832.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

My Dear Sir
Columbia May 19th 1837

I owe you an apology for not having called at the Hermitage on my return from Rutherford. I had fully intended to do so, as I prom-
ised I would, when at your house last week, but found on reaching Nashville, that it would be necessary for me to return home sooner than I had anticipated. I suppose however that my presence in reference, to the matter of which you spoke, cannot be material. I have no doubt that your communication to the public should you make one, will be what it should be, a dignified and temperate exposure of the injustice which has been done you, by those who are professed to be your friends.¹

On my return home on yesterday, I was informed that a rumour had been busily circulated in town during the day, founded on information brought from Nashville by some of the New-Born-Whigs who had on the day before paid our town a visit, as they passed on to the South; that you had recently announced opinions favourable to a Bank of the U. States, and were now in favour of such an institution. I promptly pronounced the whole story to be a fabrication of its author, and utterly destitute of truth. The impression attempted to be made by its circulation cannot be mistaken. It was intended to create the belief that the existing pressure in the money market, and derangement in trade had been produced for the want of such an institution and that the erection of a bank was the only remedy. It is one of the poor shifts resorted to, to operate temporarily on the pending elections, and will be understood by the public. I merely mention it to show the recklessness of those who are seeking to place the State in a false position, by transferring our Republican people to the ranks of the opposition. I do not think it requires or merits the slightest notice from you, unless you choose to address a letter to me (not for publication), that I may if necessary, pronounce it, on your authority to be a base calumny.

I see from the last Union that Genl. Armstrong is a candidate for Governor, and in his letter takes ground sufficiently explicit to satisfy our friends. He will be warmly supported here, as I doubt not he will be by our political friends throughout the State. I consider it fortunate that he is a candidate, and regard his election certain.

Should you think it necessary, at any time during the spring or summer to see me, it will only be necessary for you to write me and it will give me pleasure to visit you.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to the Hermitage, although no envelope has been found. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

¹ Whigs held Jackson responsible for the panic that was sweeping the country, citing his antibank and hard money policies. In particular was the
Specie Circular blamed for the tight monetary situation. Many of Jackson's former friends were now joining the outcry against him.

TO MAHLON DICKERSON

Sir Columbia Tennessee May 20th 1837

I understand that Mr. John O. Bradford, late of Kentucky, and now a citizen of this town, was recommended to your Department, some months ago, by Col. Richard M. Johnson and others, as a suitable person, to be appointed Chaplain in the Navy. I take the liberty to call your attention, to the application made in his behalf by his friends, and take pleasure in saying that I consider Mr. Bradford, in every way worthy of the situation he seeks. He is a young gentleman of moral habits, and exemplary piety, and has been for many months a student of divinity; and I have no doubt if appointed he would give entire satisfaction to the Department and to the public. I take pleasure in adding this testimonial in his behalf, and hope it may be in your power, should any vacancy occur, to confer upon him the situation which he seeks.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Connecticut Historical Society.

1. Bradford was a grandson of John Bradford, the founder of the Kentucky Gazette in 1787. After leaving Kentucky, John O. Bradford was a divinity student and lived for a while in Maury County. In July 1837 he became editor of the Nashville Union. He did not receive the appointment to the Navy chaplaincy.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

My dear Sir, Hermitage May 22nd, 1837

Yours of the 19th instant was recd late last night, & conveys to me another Whig falsehood circulated about me for political effect. These lying panders had my bill protested for $6000 the other day. That refuted, next comes the report that by endorsing for a near relation engaged in land speculation (Mr Calhoun slander in the Senate reiterated) in Yateman & Woods Bank, that I was entirely ruined. Now, that I was in favor of a national Bank as the only remedy for the purpose. (This must be from the inventive genius of Mr Bell, who wants our Banks to suspend Specie payments, because
his is broke, that he may benefit by the depreciation of all and have a national Bank). The whole is a fabrication of the most wicked kind, & coming from the bases[t] source. I think it would be well that in your paper a short comment on the continued falshoods propagated against me should appear. It would have a good effect. I never have nor never will be in favour of a national Bank. I have shewn this in my farewell address. I have just prepared a piece for the press on this subject, which I would like you to see before it is published. I think at the present time it would have a good effect to be published. I am sorry that you did not call as you passed from Murfreesbury. If convenient I would be happy to see you in the course of this, or early in next week. Mr Lucius Polk, Mary² writes me, is setting out for the East & will pass this way. Suppose you accompany him & spend two or three days with us with your good Lady. I will be happy in your company and shall expect you if it is entirely convenient for you to spare the time from your other concerns. Please write me if you will be in, & when.

The Whig presses from the east say that all the Banks have stopped specie payments. I do not believe a word of this. I have a letter from Mr Woodbury of the 10th May & one from [Francis P.] Blair of the 10th & 11th which says nothing of this. It is another falshood I believe for effect to get others to stop. With our kind regards to Mrs Polk in haste, the mail waiting. . . .

ANDREW JACKSON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Just as Jackson was retiring from the presidency, numerous false rumors about his financial affairs were afloat. Besides those mentioned here, one claimed that he had used the presidency as a means of amassing a fortune. Despite efforts to refute these allegations, they continued to circulate.

2. Lucius J. Polk, a son of Colonel William Polk of North Carolina, was Polk's cousin. A resident of Maury County, he had served one term in the state legislature. Mary Eastin, a niece of Rachel Jackson, was his wife.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, May 22, 1837

I intended to have written to you yesterday, but waited until this afternoon that I might be able to advise you of the result of a public meeting held at the Court House at 3 o'clock to-day on the subject of the Times, a meeting intended to give color by seeming expression of public sentiment in relation to a suspension by our
Banks. A thin meeting was held and the vote passed. This vote is to be held up as being the advice under which the banks act in doing what they had previously resolved to do. I will try to publish the proceedings tomorrow or the substance of them.

I said in a letter to Mr. Hays, by my young man, that the tools of Bell and the Erwins were to be set on me. I have had two intimations of such designs, and a personal call from John P. Erwin to know whether I alluded to him personally in my late articles. I told him frankly, that personally, as he is neither banker, trader, speculator or politician, but a private man, I never once thought of him as connected with public affairs. This is true, for the creature has no more weight here, and is no more thought of or noticed than Tom Peirce, and besides, whatever he may have made by his defaults, is vested in real estate, and in no matter of banking or speculation. It is not so, however, with brother Jim and sister Bell. You will see what I have felt bound to say of our friends the Woods. They are, I now know, personally and politically hostile to John Bell. I have the assurance both through Harry Hill and Col. Willo: Williams.

Judge Catron has not returned. I am working along, hard ground, and closely pressed. The moment he arrives I will let you know.

My proposition will be that all the creditors make a joint stock of their debt, and take the concern in my discharge of all responsibility, and that by some means, partly by the collections I can thereafter make of the debts, and in some small degree by more prompt relief, I shall be allowed as nearly what I ought to have as all our friends may be willing to give, so as to save me from being sold out of everything but what the law allows. I am sued for one debt, every cent of the money part of which I paid for paper and printing. This is a note given to Judge Catron and assigned to [Vernon K.] Stevenson and which, I am sure, he would have arranged for me if he had known of its situation before the night he left for Frankfort. Another debt is due for which the only negro boy I have large enough to be of service to my family is liable to be sold in ten days from the 24th instant. This is a debt to Boyd, a usurer, and contracted to pay for paper on [Medicus A.] Long's failure last spring. It is $500. Another debt, for which yourself and four or five others are bound, Love, Gwin, A Jackson Jr. &c. will be due about 3rd of June. This is about $700 among five I think. Love says it shall be paid. With $300 of this money I paid the only private debt I have ever paid from any money borrowed or furnished by my friends.

Thus, you see the deplorable condition to which I am reduced, and besides, I have to pay within a fraction of $100 a week for the Union, or it inevitably stops.
From $6500 to $7000 in debts, $6000 of which are good are due the establishment. I have had a correct estimate made.

My friends must take the establishment and these debts, place all in the hands of whom they please, and dispose of me as they like, or do for me what they think just. I have, in the whole affair acted in trust for myself and others and [for]10 our party. They may discharge me if they [pl]ease as a useless dog, and if they only leave me my skin, I have nothing to do but submit. I have wasted my little substance, my time, and expended the little brains I have in their behalf, honestly and independantly however; and now am ready to be offered up as a scape goat or as any kind of sacrifice to which I may be doomed.

Judge Catron will surely be here this week. If so I will let you know. On or before the 12th of June something must be done. I cannot hold out any longer, and it is useless to talk of it. Relieved, I will work gratis until our party say I have fully earned my redemption. More I cannot do.

I hope my young man will be enabled to get me a few dollars in Maury, Giles, Hickman &c. He has no experience, is an orphan I am training up, and worthy of trust. I hope with the advice and assistance I asked for him from Mr. Hays that he will do something to help on a little.

S. H. Laughlin

Addressed to Columbia and marked “Private.”

1. Two Nashville banks suspended specie payments on May 25, 1837; and after that other banks throughout Tennessee adopted the same policy. Laughlin’s charge that the decision to suspend had been reached prior to the public meeting has not been confirmed.

2. This man’s name is revealed in Laughlin to Polk, May 24, 1837, as Robertson; but the first name has not been learned.

3. John P. Erwin was a lawyer, the son of Andrew Erwin Sr. and, therefore, of a family generally aligned against Jackson and Polk.

4. Tom Peirse, or Pearse, was a character in the old English ballad, Widdecombe Fair.

5. “Brother Jim” was James Erwin, husband of one of Henry Clay’s daughters. “Sister Bell” was John Bell’s second wife, a sister of John P. Erwin and the widow of Thomas Yeatman.

6. Joseph and Robert Woods were partners of Thomas Yeatman until the latter’s death.

7. Harry R. W. Hill was a Nashville commission merchant who operated chiefly through New Orleans. Willoughby Williams was a prominent lawyer and political figure in Nashville. He was sheriff of Davidson County, 1830–35.

8. Boyd is unidentified.
9. Charles I. Love and William M. Gwin, partners in the iron industry, were wealthy supporters of Jackson. Love often attended to affairs for Jackson when the latter was in Washington. Gwin was a son of James Gwin, a Methodist minister who had served as Jackson's chief of chaplains in the New Orleans campaign. Currently a resident of Mississippi where he had practiced medicine at Clinton, William M. Gwin was United States marshal for Mississippi and a prominent political leader of the Jackson party in that state.

10. A blot at this point on the manuscript has obscured parts of two words.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir,

Nashville, May 24, 1837

Judge Catron has just arrived at home as I this moment learn from Colo. Willo: Williams. This being the case, please let me know the earliest day at which it will suit your convenience to come up. Smith (the printer-Parson)¹ is absent at Princeton Ky. but will be at home by Sunday as his foreman understands, at farthest. If you will let me know by return mail, I will give notice to our confidential friends, Donelson, Williams, Grundy, &c. so that they may be here. The matter must be adjusted, as I cannot go on. With at least $6000 in good debts due the concern, I have had this day to loose $15 in shaving a private debt of my own to raise $50 for the establishment. If my private credit and resourses were not exhausted, no man could stand getting on by such means.

We will want experienced advice in making a bargain for publication. There is no printer here whose advice is worth having that is of us, except Nesbit² and he is concerned and interested with Smith. I would therefore respectfully request for the interest of all, that Mr Walker³ should come up if he can spare a day or two. He can prevent us from being imposed on, for I am too little of a printer to like to depend on my own judgment. I know the facts and precise situation of the office, but am a poor judge of value, or the practicability of effecting given objects with printers means and reliances.

Do write me the day you can come, as I am all anxiety until some definite object is effected. Young Robertson will obtain me a little money, but it will only serve as a palliave for a day or two and leave things as bad as ever. I am broken down in heart and in spirit and must give up, loose all and quit if no arrangement is made. I have often said to you that while I could hold a pen, command a sheet of paper, or the use of a press that I would never give up. I wrote you last winter that I could only be starved out. All these evils have
May 25 1837

arrived. I have sent part and am sending my family to an humble cabbin, of the cost of forty dollars, in the Hills, to get relieved of expenses I cant meet here. What I ought to have subsisted on, and applied to schooling my children—what was really theirs in good part and not mine—I have spent in supporting the paper; and now, have neither the gratitude or thanks of many who had more interest in its uses, as a press, than I had or ever can have. Thank God, there are a chosen few who are not of this number; and who will yet aid in doing me justice.

I have no news, except that Armstrong's nomination takes gloriously every where, as you write me it does in Maury. He is sick but convalescent, and will take the field in a few days. He will make the “tour of the continent” of East Tennessee first.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia and marked “Private.”

1. Joel M. Smith operated a steam press in Nashville. The reference to him as “Parson” is obscure.

2. Robert Nesbit bought the Nashville Union in July 1837. He had been a partner of Joel M. Smith, and it is not clear whether or not this partnership continued after Nesbit purchased the Union.

3. James Walker of Columbia was not only a businessman of some reputation—he had also been a newspaperman.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir, Nashville, Tennessee 25 May 1837

A slip from a Cincinnati paper to the Republican office here says that Congress is convened to meet on the 1 Monday in Sept. We think it most probably true. This will give but a short time after our elections for the members to receive their Commissions & get on to the City. In your case the certificate of the [ . . . ] sheriff can be had in a day or two & you can be off. The real position of the money affairs & existing laws present serious difficulties. Government can tender nothing but coin in payment of dues; coin cannot be collected for all the Revenue & the intervention of Congress may be necessary to reshape the relation between the government & its debtors & Creditors. How long will you be detained there? Will you return home after a short Session, or will you continue on through the Winter? Aye or Nay may determine domestic arrangements, such as taking on your family in Augt. or relying on returning for them &c.

Armstrong has had chills & fever ever since you left here but is
well enough today to go out to his office. He is intent upon an immediate visit to East Tennessee & will take Col Lauderdale with him. The accounts are encouraging from abroad & the Junto here are sewed up. Eph\textsuperscript{8} says he is for Armstrong. A. A Hall you see takes water gently. McMahon will fight heartily for Cannon.\textsuperscript{4} W. H. H.\textsuperscript{5} will squib that way. Also. The town folks are beginning to talk & are for Armstrong. Who brought Rob Webster out?

\textbf{D. GRAHAM}

We have an account in town this evening that Genl Jackson was thrown from a horse yesterday evening & badly hurt.\textsuperscript{7} He was passing a gate.

D G

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A special session of Congress was called and met on Monday, September 4.

2. Samuel D. Lauderdale, member of a prominent Sumner County family, had served as a colonel under Jackson in the Creek War and in 1833 was appointed to assist in the transportation of the Choctaws to the west.

3. This refers to Ephraim H. Foster.

4. Allen A. Hall was editor of the \textit{National Banner and Nashville Whig}; and James H. McMahon, former editor of the Jackson \textit{Truth Teller}, was editor of the \textit{Nashville Republican}.

5. W. Hasell Hunt was proprietor of the \textit{National Banner and Nashville Whig}, of which Allen A. Hall was editor. Hunt was also listed as assistant editor of the paper.

6. This seems to refer to Robert P. Webster of Maury County, but reference to his candidacy is obscure.

7. Jackson was thrown from his horse but apparently was not seriously hurt.

\textbf{FROM MEDICUS A. LONG}

Dear Col: Shelbyville, May 28, 1837

Yesterday Mr. [Greenville] Cook suggested to me that he contemplated publishing a \textit{Life of Gen Jackson!} He sayd he could realize enough from the work to clear him of all present embarrassment, \&c. He then asked me to suggest the matter to you for your opinion on two points, upon which he could not agree with me: 1. Whether \textit{Charles Cassidy}\textsuperscript{1} could so compile the work, and 2. Whether his name, as \textit{author}, wold damn such a work or not?

You will, therefore, communicate your views to him on this subject, at your earliest convenience.

M. A. LONG
P.S. My own opinion is, that such a project ought to be stopped by *injunction*, rather than the illustrious name of Jackson should be sullied by *such* a biographer. But, still, I have no doubt, that if Cook had the means (which he has not, nor can get,) he could make money by the affair, one, two or three thousand dollars.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Charles Cassedy had served as private secretary to Andrew Jackson and to General James Winchester. Cassedy's literary talent was not challenged, but his weakness for strong drink and his fraternizing with Jackson's political enemies made him an unlikely candidate for the job that Cook proposed. It will be remembered that it was to Cassedy that John Bell wrote his highly publicized letter in 1835.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

Your letter of the 22nd. has been received, and I have not failed since, and will as before it came to hand, to contradict in the most positive terms, the rumour which had been circulated in regard to your Bank opinions. I would visit you this week, but I think it necessary to take a tour through my District, in order to preserve a sound state of public opinion, especially during the present state of excitement, produced by the pressure and derangement in the currency. Our opponents here as well as elsewhere continue falsely to attribute the present state of things to the Government, and to insist that a National Bank is the great panacea for the disease. Whenever there is public discussion and the people understand the truth as it is, they are sound to the core. The early convocation of Congress, I have no doubt had become indispensibly necessary, for the preservation of the public interest, for in the general suspension of specie payments by the Banks, including the Banks of deposite, it had as I suppose become impracticable for the Executive to execute or enforce the existing laws, which permit nothing to be received from the public debtors, and nothing to be tendered to the public creditors but specie or its equivalent. I infer from all I see, that Congress has been called together for the purpose of re-adjusting, modifying or changing temporarily perhaps, the existing relations between the public and the public creditors and debtors, and for the purpose of invoking such legislation for the protection of the Treasury, as the existing crisis demands. This step as one of precaution at least, will be properly appreciated and generally approved by the friends of the President, whilst his political opponents, having called for it, cannot disapprove it.
The Whigs will no doubt, seize upon the panic, and the early convocation of Congress in September, to press the charter of a Bank. I trust the Representatives of the people may not be operated upon by the alarms of the times, which must be temporary, and forced to yield a jot of the great principles, which the Democratic party, have heretofore vindicated, in resisting the continuance or erection of such a monopoly. From all the intimations I see, I think it almost certain that the Bank and her political allies will make another struggle at the approaching session, and we must be prepared to meet them with firmness and energy. I have written to Mr Van Buren on the subject,1 and have given him my views at some length, of the present state of things, and my opinion as to the designs and views of our opponents. I have great confidence in him, and have no doubt he will remain firm, still your opinions in the present crisis would I know, be acceptable to him, and if you have not done so, I suggest that you write him also.

When I can visit you, I cannot now say, further than this, that I will make it convenient to do so, at any time I may be able to serve you, or when you may think it important that I should do so. I expect to spend several weeks before the people, and to discuss freely and fully all the questions which now so agitate and excite the community.

Genl. Armstrong's majority will I think be overwhelming in this part of the state. Our friends here go warmly into his support.

I regretted to hear that you had been thrown from your horse, but am pleased to learn from the Union that you were not seriously injured by it.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to the Hermitage, although no envelope has been found. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

1. See Polk to Martin Van Buren, May 29, 1837. Note the similarity of these two letters.

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN

Dear Sir Columbia Tennesseee May 29, 1837

I have watched with much anxiety the progress of the panic, and the efforts made by the opposition, here as well as elsewhere, to turn the existing pressure in the money-market, and the deranged state of trade, to political account. The agitators have at length reached a
May 29 1837

point beyond which they cannot go. They have raised the storm, but cannot lay it, and now find that they themselves are likely to be overwhelmed in the general ruin, which they have contributed so largely to produce. I am well satisfied that much the greater proportion of real suffering, which has visited the mercantile and trading classes, has been produced by the panic-makers, whose chief object it has been, to make war upon the administration, and falsely to attribute to the Government, the existing state of things, as if the Government could either have controlled or prevented the rage of wild speculation and over-trading, which are in fact the causes of their present sufferings and complaints. It is utterly absurd and ridiculous to attribute to the measures of Government the pressure in the money-market, and derangement in common which prevails, not only in the U. States, but to a much greater extent in England and other parts of Europe. They have succeeded in destroying all confidence and credit, and have thereby incalculably increased their own sufferings. What would the Whigs have had the Government to do? Had the Government attempted to restrain the overtrading which has prevailed and to prevent the indebtedness of the merchants, and speculators in lands, stocks and other commodities, it would have exceeded its authority, and the act would have been denounced by them as arbitrary and tyrannical. They have brought themselves to their present condition, by their own extravagant and wild speculations, and when whole classes, have contracted debts beyond their ability to meet, surely the Government is not answerable, because it possessed no power to restrain or permit it; nor can it pay their debts for them. They are to be sure entitled to our sympathy, and would be entitled to a much greater share of the public sympathy, were it not for the recklessness with which they have aggravated their own sufferings, by attempting for sinister and political ends, to attribute to the administration, the misfortunes which have come upon them. The [Washington] Globe and [Richmond] Enquirer have been of incalculable service in this crisis, in counteracting their political designs, by exposing their real objects, and diffusing correct information among the people.

The early convocation of Congress, I have no doubt had become indissolubly necessary; for, in the general suspension of specie payments by the Banks, including the Banks of deposites, as provided and designated by act of Congress, it had as I suppose, become impracticable for the Executive Government, in such an unexpected state of things, to execute or enforce the existing laws; and I infer from all I see, that an early meeting of Congress was deemed proper, for
the purpose of readjusting, modifying and changing the relations existing between the public and the public creditors and debtors, and for the purpose of invoking such legislation for the protection of the Treasury as the existing crisis demands. The necessity which made this step expedient, as a precautionary measure at least, will be properly appreciated and generally approved by your friends; whilst your political opponents having called for it, cannot complain of it. The Whigs will however, no doubt, seize the occasion of the panic, and the early convocation of Congress, to press the charter of a Bank as the great panacea for the disease. They have already commenced their labours with this object. Here public opinion has been long settled on that subject, and I trust that the Representatives of the people assembled in September, may not be operated upon by the alarms of the times, which must be temporary, and found to yield a jot of the great principles, which the Democratic party have heretofore vindicated, in resisting the continuance or the creation of such a monopoly; a monopoly at war with the constitution, and wielded as it has been, and probably ever would be, as a political engine, to subserve ambitions and partizan political purposes. From all the indications we see, I think it almost certain that the Bank and her political allies, will make another struggle at the approaching session, and we must be prepared to meet them with firmness and energy. The temporary alarm to the contrary notwithstanding, the advocates of the Bank will find that the public opinion upon that subject, throughout the country, is as sound as it has ever been.

In relation to the present state of our political matters here, it may not be unacceptable to you, that I should give you my opinion. We have an animated canvass pending, and have a fair prospect of having an accession of strength in the next Congress. There are opposing candidates, and the elections are contested in every district except my own. The chances are, that a majority of the delegation in the next Congress, will be your political friends and the supporters of your administration. We shall I think carry our candidate for Governor (Genl. Armstrong) with ease. There is more doubt in relation to the political complexion of the Legislature, owing to the fact, that we have heretofore been unused to political contests in which Federal politics have been made the test in the State elections, and in many parts of the State, other considerations, personal or local in their character, will operate, and probably in some instances control the elections. The panic too, will operate to some extent on our next elections. I have however no doubt but the State will support your administration. Should I be again returned (and I have as yet no
opposition, and there is no probability that I will have) I will be at
Washington a week before the meeting of Congress in September,
when I hope to have the pleasure of conferring more fully with you.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Papers of Martin Van
Buren, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.
1. Perhaps the most influential Democratic newspaper of its time, the
Richmond *Enquirer* was edited by Thomas Ritchie, 1804–45.
2. After the destruction of the Second Bank of the United States, certain
state banks were chosen to receive deposits of federal funds. Some of these
“Deposit Banks” were not very well run and the laxity of their methods
helped to bring on the Panic of 1837. The Subtreasury plan, if adopted, would
end the depositing of federal funds in state banks.

FROM WILLIAM MOORE

My Dr Sir Fayetteville 30th May 1837

Yours has come to hand & the contents properly apriciated.¹
I have long since known that arangments were making to change the
politticks of this State, even at the hazard of “War, Famine & Pesti-
ulence.”

In reply to yours I can only say that before I made known my
determination to decline running for the Senate, I had the pledge of
Genl. Clemmons² who wished to run, & after he declined, we had the
assurance that Doct. Flurnoy³ would pole (& we could have made him
successful.) So you will see that our friends have not done their duty.

However our Candidate for the Senate⁴ has expressed himself in
favor of Mr Benton's Expunging Resolution, & I am told he says he
will support the present Administration. Of this I will know in a few
days.

Mr. Buchanan⁵ is decidedly for Grundy & the Administration.
Jones⁶ is as firm as a rock. Wilson⁷ is anti Bank, but has not all the
White rubbed off yet. A hard Election.

Armstrong is doing well here I think. Col Kincannon & Shields will
have a hard race.⁸

I will write you again shortly. Let me hear from you. How is
Col [Powhatan] Gordon getting along & how is matters going in your
county &c.

WILLIAM MOORE

P.S. Genl Clemmons is absent & his running doubtful. [Henry] Rob-
ertson at N. Orleans.
Addressed to Columbia.
1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. This refers to Jesse B. Clements, a well-to-do farmer of Lincoln County. He had recently been elected a brigadier general in the militia.
3. Alfred Flournoy of Pulaski, Giles County.
4. It is not clear which candidate Moore had in mind. James Caruthers of Giles County was the winner.
5. John Buchanan represented Giles County in the legislature, 1835–37, 1839–43, and 1845–47.
6. George W. Jones of Fayetteville, a saddler, was a member of the lower house of the legislature, 1835–39, and of the upper house, 1839–41. Later he was in the United States House of Representatives, 1843–59, and also served a term in the congress of the Confederate States. He was elected to the lower house along with George Wilson.
7. George A. Wilson was elected to the legislature as a Democrat in 1837 and served one term. By the end of that term he had become a Whig. In 1839, he moved to Mississippi.
8. Andrew A. Kincannon had also opposed Ebenezer Shields in a congressional race in 1835, with Shields winning.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Florence [Alabama] June 2d 1837

I received the enclosed letter from Judge Catron just as I was leaving home. From what passed between Laughlin and me, I think it best for me to write him, and advise his offering the Union establishment to his creditors, classed as political friends, and also to transfer all dues to the office to the future editors that may be agreed on, with the agreement that all collections made of present dues are to be paid to him and his other creditors. I think Catron's views are correct, and that $4000 for the Subscription List and the name of the paper, is very liberal, and would leave him not the slightest ground to complain on. I think it would be well for you to write Catron or Donelson confidentially to answer this matter immediately, and if L. proves troublesome (and I think he will not) to make an immediate arrangement for another paper to be conducted with all the power & talent of our friends. Catron has always power to use my name in any way he chooses. You can give him any further views you think proper.

Jim Jackson is to be shamefully beat tomorrow for the Legislature by A. J. Hutchings. A glorious triumph for the Democracy, and personal feeling. If the Big gun of Alabama is put down by the General's boy, they will indeed begin to think the old man is invincible on the earth or under it. Every thing is sound here and I
June 2 1837

hope they will be found so with us, but begging the question must not be permitted.

I left rather a hasty editorial for the Democrat,3 which I think will be attacked. The sentiment was this in substance "The people of this country are now as prosperous and as little in debt as they ever were." The ground is perfectly tenable, and it is a fine field to oppose the Whigs upon. The mass of the community, for whom the government was formed, are as well off as they ever were; they only see the ruin, and bad administration in the Whig newspapers, and of this every man must be satisfied, when they look into their own condition and that of their neighbors. If the reputed rich and profligate traders and speculators are in difficulty, whose fault is it and why should the great body of the people be affected by it or the government be called on to pay debts, the contraction of which has been so much warned against? When the common people are in difficulty and trouble we hear no outcry. It is said to be all right, and industry and frugality, and the giving up of what they have is the only remedy. But when 3 or 400 reckless Sharlatans and overtraders are involved in trouble brought on by their own folly and blind devotion to panic making, the whole country must come to their relief or our government is the most tyrannical on earth. If the article alluded to should be attacked, I wish you would see that Andrew Hays attends to it, and give him such suggestions as occur to you.

I wish you would remind Samuel to attend to Judge Catrons business I left in his hands.4 If he collects the money send it immediately to the Judge or deposite in Bank to Catrons credit and send him a certificate of the deposite. If Porter does not pay it the legal steps must be taken by the Carrier. But I think Porter will pay without this trouble, and I would much prefer it so.

Tell Maria that although the night was bad, Jane5 was perfectly dry and comfortable, and while it rained she slept and arrived here pretty fresh. I think she will enjoy her visit here and to the district very much. We shall leave here on Sunday morning.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This letter reports on the affairs of the Nashville Union and on Samuel H. Laughlin's recent behavior.

2. James Jackson, Irish-born, lived for some years in Nashville, where he was a surveyor. One of the founders of Florence, he was a wealthy Whig who served in both houses of the Alabama legislature. Andrew Jackson Hutchings, former ward of Andrew Jackson, was married to a daughter of John Coffee.
As predicted, Hutchings won the seat in the legislature vacated by Hugh McVay, who had resigned to become governor in the place of Alabama’s new senator, Clement C. Clay.

3. A loyal supporter of the administration, the Columbia Tennessee Democrat had frequently carried editorials that were written by Walker.

4. Samuel P. Walker was the oldest son of James Walker. The transaction concerned Nimrod Porter, long-time sheriff of Maury County, but the nature of the business has not been learned.

5. Maria was Walker’s wife, Jane Maria Walker. Jane was Jane Clarissa Walker, their seventeen-year-old daughter.

FROM WEST H. HUMPHREYS

Sir

Bolivar 7th [June, 1837]¹

I recd your letter² enclosing me a paper. It is not the one desired. It was the paper which contained the appointment of members all over the State. Col. [Adam R.] Alexander was appointed by that meeting.

Col. Dunlap thinks he will succeed. I would rather have his chance. The administration will gain a vote in Hardeman one in Tipton and probably one in the senate.

Col [Christopher H.] Williams is the avowed advocate of a National Bank.

Would it not be well to Republish Judge Whites Speech against the Bank of the United states in 1834? It would be of benefit to us here to [present?] the use of Whites name for the destruction of his own principles.

WEST HUMPHREYS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Humphreys first wrote May and then wrote June over it. The letter was postmarked June 7. The year was omitted from the letter and has been supplied on the basis of the contents of the letter.

2. Polk’s letter has not been found.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother

New Haven Con. June 7, 1837

In my last letter to you I told you I did not intend travelling during vacation.² After remaining here a part of the vacation and finding it so dull and tiresome a place I concluded to travell. My travelling expenses were about half my remittance. Upon my return
June 8 1837

SAM W. POLK

PS It may be well to mention that my college term bills have not been paid amounting to about $55. I should prefer now squaring off with all my creditors and commence upon a new method viz paying cash for every thing.

S. W. POLK

Addressed to Columbia.
1. See Samuel W. Polk to Polk, May 2, 1837.
2. This refers to Samuel P. Caldwell, son of Dr. Silas M. Caldwell. Young Caldwell had recently left Yale.
indisposition. His crop looks small and backward, but he has an excellent stand, and a fair prospect for both Cotton & Corn.

I look upon the political aspect of things here as decidedly favorable. Our friends are standing up to the question very firmly. The circuit and chancery court is in session at Bolivar, and of course a good opportunity to ascertain our prospect throughout the District. All the indications make it certain that 7 of the 13 representatives from the District will be decided Van Buren. It is said Coe will beat Alexander badly, and John D. Love\(^2\) is relied on from Henry. [Alexander B.] Bradford is more than half administration so that the District that gave a heavy majority against us in the Presidential election will now pretty certainly give an administration majority in the Legislature. So far as I can learn Armstrong will get a sweeping vote in this quarter. Dunlap's election is not certain, but his chances are much the best. Humphreys could have been elected by a great majority. The difficulty with Dunlap is with the Van Burens. He staid on the fence so long, that it is hard to rally them warmly on him. I am urging our friends to make all exertions to secure Dunlap's election, and making them sensible of what important principles are at stake, and assuring them that Dunlap now is and always has been perfectly true to the administration and to Republican principles, and hope I shall be able to do him some good.

Have you noticed the editorials in the [Nashville] Republican of May 25 & June 3d.\(^3\) Much use might be made of them. Is Laughlin and our friends at Nashville all asleep. Andrew Hays or Nicholson ought to write some articles for the Democrat if it has not already been done. If Andrew is in too bad health to write much, he can copy. The editorial of June 3d struck me with much force, and I believe the Whigs can be made to make a more outrageous clamor against a National Bank, than they ever did against the veto, the removal of the Deposites or the Specie circular. Look at the alarm at the bare mention of a national Bank, that cannot be got hold of by the Whigs and their foreign allies. See how lustily Mr. Bell's organ begins to talk of the danger and overwhelming influence of a monied power. That immense power which they have been almost ready to go into rebellion to have placed in the hands of a mere agent of the British nobility and capitalists, wholly unfavorable to, and beyond the reach of the American people, they are wholly unwilling to see in the hands of a republican administration, altho the States might hold a controlling balance of power in selecting the directors, because they say a National Bank founded on the Treasury, would forever perpetuate the power and ascendancy of the party now in power; and they say truly.
If proper arrangements can be made for the collection, safekeeping and disbursement of the public revenue, we can and ought to do without a National Bank, but if necessary for Government purposes, and to settle this eternal Whig clamor, and contention, the only bank the people ought ever to agree to would be something on this plan: Let the General Government, and the states be the only Stockholders, individuals totally excluded. Say the U.S. would take 10 millions of Stock, and the states 40 millions, to be apportioned agreeably to their representation in Congress, the states to execute their bonds for the stock allotted them at long terms at 4 or 5 p. cent interest. The amount of paper circulation to be strictly limited, heavy penalties and punishment upon the Bank officers for any issue beyond a prescribed amount, exchanges fixed at a low rate by law, and possibly interest reduced. The U.S. to appoint as formerly her share of Directors, the states to be entitled to Directors in proportion to their stock to be appointed by Joint ballot of their Legislatures. The directors to be in fact government officers and suitably paid. Such a Bank would be National Bank in fact, would belong to the people, and be controlled by them and no foreign or domestic aristocracy could exercise power over it. Checks & ballances of power would exist as effectually as they now exist in our General State governments. And if the Whigs will force a Bank of the U.S. upon us or keep up an eternal clamor, and Bank & currency war, this is the kind of a one we ought to give them; one that they and the British capitalists can by no possibility get the control of. The [ . . . ] of such a bank would instantly annihilate the Whig party, the degrading servility of the mercantile community would cease, and they become supporters of a republican administration.

An accidental mistake of the people might at some time give the Whigs the power to create a Bank of U.S. on their own plan, and if so they will certainly do it, and place the country as firmly under British and aristocratic control as it was before the revolution. While we have the power, had we not better prevent this, and give them a bank that they cannot deny will give commerce & exchanges all the advantages of a sound currency, and forever perpetuate republican principles. It could be no monopoly of power or profit; the people would get all the profit; the U.S. would be bound for the notes, and they would be as good as gold and silver in any part of the world, and ought to be so strongly based on a metallic basis, as to be certainly convertible into bullion at the pleasure of the holder. All this is practicable. Let the Republican party seriously propose it and you will have the Bank & Whig presses in a phrenzy. Their whole sheets would be filled with the awful danger of a monied power, consolidation &c. If we must have a
bank it must be such a one under the control of the people through their representatives, and by men placed in power by them and responsible to them. If it is determined by our party that we will have no National Bank, no more effective plan could be adopted to raise a Whig clamor against the dangers and evils of a monied power, than to propose to give them a bank to regulate the currency upon the plan I have suggested.

Hand the enclosed note to Mr. Harris.5

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Columbia.
1. The letter was postmarked at Bolivar.
2. A lawyer and merchant who lived near Paris, John D. Love ran for the senate and was defeated by William H. Johnson. The incumbent, Love had sat in the legislature, 1829–31 and 1835–37.
3. These editorials attacked the Van Buren party and defended those who supported White in 1836. The second one, after repeating a rumor that Polk had switched to support of a national bank, enumerated the great dangers of having such an institution allied to the party in power. It charged that the power of money was so great that if such a bank were created it would enable the incumbent president and his partisans to determine the presidential succession. Polk’s name was not mentioned, but it is clear that the editor, James H. McMahon, had Polk in mind. It was this apparent antibank stand that Walker thought would make the opposition vulnerable to the charge of inconsistency.
4. A blot renders illegible what seems to be a single word.
5. The note mentioned has not been found; it is not clear which Harris was intended here.

FROM WILLIAM M. WARNER1

Col Polk Fayette Cty Tenn June 9th 1837

From the personal acquaintance with you and on entire confidence I have in your political rectitude, I am induced to seek information from you on the following points. Did the resolution or act to recind the Treasury order, commonly call’d the Specie circular, pass congress last Session, and if so by what majority? What is your opinion as to the cause of the present pressure. Does it depend on the putting down the U S Bank, removal of the deposits and the Specie circular, or does it depend on the Speculating mania in a fictitious or credit capital, which has prevailed the country? Has the President call’d or will he call congress together before the usual time of meeting, and if so what is the object? Will he attempt to relieve the Present distress by
Governmental interference. Any information you may be kind enough
to give me on the above points will be very thankfully received. It is
for my own information I ask. I may if permitted shew your opinion to
some of my friends. I will however be governed by your will in that
respect. I have seen abuse of your letter to Col McKisick. Our pros-
pects in this District are rather gloomy. Col. [William C.] Dunlap I
fear will not combine the earlier strength of the Democratic party
owing to his indistinct course. If [he] had declined so that we could
have run Humphres [Humphreys] we should have been safe. We will
however do the best we can. I thank you for the favour of some
Documents sent to me last winter.

Wishing you continued success in your political course and domestic
prosperity and happiness. . . .

WILLIAM M. WARNER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. William M. Warner, a Fayette County doctor, was a brother of Richard
Warner of Bedford County. William Warner had lived for several years at
Egypt, where he later served for a time as postmaster.

2. Egypt was a village about nine miles southwest of Somerville. A post
office was established there in 1835.

3. See Daniel Graham to Polk, January 12, 1837.

4. See William J. Whitthorne to Polk, March 27, 1837, particularly foot-
note 1.

FROM LEVIN H. COE

Dr Sir

Somerville June 11th 1837

There is getting to be considerable anxiety amongst the people upon
the subject of a National Bank and the Whigs are making a desperate
effort to defeat the Administration ticket upon it. As yet I have steered
clear of it & so has my opponent A. R. Alexander. In fact his policy
evidently is to make no points himself and run upon objections that his
friends may handle to me. They are not attempting to bring me to a
stand upon the Bank question. It is the only one that I fear. I find
very many of our best Administration men have got it into their heads
that we must have some sort of National Bank. It is even asserted by
some that the views of the Administration party have undergone some
change. Will you write me immediately on the recpt of this and give
me your views & if it will be the policy of the Admn. party to establish
a Natl Bank, what sort of one.

The contest between Williams & Dunlap is warm but D. is sinking.
The knowing Whigs wont have him & the bulk of the Administration men care nothing about him. His defeat is almost beyond a doubt. I regret to see Williams ahead but Dunlap is meeting that reward which every trimmer should.¹

Please direct your answer to Bolivar. I will be in that county for 14 days to come or more.²

L. H. Coe

Addressed to Columbia.

1. It is clear that Dunlap’s slowness in making a choice between Van Buren and White had displeased both sides.

2. The last two sentences of this letter were written on the left margin.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir Columbia June 14th 1837

Last night’s mail brought us intelligence of the resignation of Messrs Forsythe and Poinsett.¹ The President has acted with a firmness that became him, and there can be but one opinion among honest men of all parties as to the correctness of the course pursued by him. This must be the opinion of all the lovers of good order and the supremacy of the Constitution and laws. What is the case, and what the cause of their resignations? The laws of Congress are imperative. The President is bound by his duty and official oath to see that they be faithfully executed. He possesses no discretion; he cannot alter or change a law of Congress, but is bound to see it faithfully executed as he finds it. And he ought not to have yielded to a demand which required him to violate his oath of office by failing to execute an existing law of Congress, or to sanction its open violation. The Whigs will no doubt be in ectsasies at the event; and so they were at the dissolution of your first cabinet, and so they were when Duane was dismissed from the Treasury Department.² The Whigs like all desertions, but have no confidence in the deserters. When Ingham, Berrien, Branch³ and Duane were dismissed, their conduct was much lauded by the opposition; and though the dismissed Secretaries denounced you in the bitterest terms, and courted the favor of the opposition, they soon found they had lost the confidence of all parties and sunk into obscurity, whilst your acts were approved by the people. And so it will be in the present case. The Whigs will no doubt laud Messrs Forsythe & Poinsett, as long as they hope to effect any political party purpose by it; they will then drop them as they did Ingham &c., and suffer them to sink into ob-
security, whilst the President's conduct will be approved & sustained by the people. The only account which I have seen of the "Resignations" is contained in the Banner of the 12th which purports to have been taken from an extra Globe.¹ I would be pleased to have your opinions on the subject. In a few days we will no doubt have more authentic particulars of the event, than have yet reached us.

I thought I would have visited you before now, but so constant have been the efforts of our political opponents to mislead public opinion, especially upon the subject of a Bank, and the currency, that I have deemed it prudent to remain in my District. Here our opponents are in the minority. Public opinion is sound, and with the proper information, will remain so. Armstrong will win a large majority of votes in this quarter. I see that the opposition paper at Jackson² is charging your intended visit to that place, to be for political effect, designed to operate on the pending elections. Though any sensible man must know the charge was false, yet as it would be attempted to be used by the Whigs, I suggest to you whether it would not be prudent to postpone your visit until after August. I would also suggest for your consideration, whether your intended publication,³ for the same reason, might not be postponed until after that time. Some of the Whig papers are already saying that your promised publication will probably be postponed until the eve of the election &c. I merely make these suggestions for your consideration.

I hope you have suffered no material injury from your fall from your horse.⁴ Mr. & Mrs. Lucius J. Polk were at my House a few days ago. They intend visiting you shortly. Make the kind respects of Mrs. P & myself to Mrs. Jackson⁵ and be assured that... JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private." The letter did not go through the mails.

1. News of these resignations was a false rumor. Both Forsyth and Poinsett remained in the cabinet throughout Van Buren's administration. Each was rumored to have threatened resignation if Van Buren would not agree to irregularities regarding customs and post offices. According to the rumor, Van Buren refused to be coerced, and they resigned.

2. Jackson had dismissed William J. Duane when Duane refused to order removal of federal deposits from the Bank of the United States.

3. Samuel D. Ingham, John Branch, and John M. Berrien were members of Jackson's original cabinet. Jackson asked for their resignations when they remained hostile to Peggy Eaton.

4. The rumor was supposed to have come from somebody in Wheeling, Virginia, who had seen the news in a Washington Globe extra edition and
notified a newspaper in Maysville, Kentucky. The *Globe* extra has not been found, and no trace of such a story has been found in the regular issues of that newspaper.

5. This apparently refers to the *Western District Telegraph*, generally referred to as the *Jackson Telegraph*, a Whig paper edited by B. H. Sheppard. This paper survived only about a year.

6. The publication of which Polk spoke was actually printed in the Nashville *Union* on the day before Polk wrote this letter. The issue of the *Union* bearing Jackson's statement has not been found, but it was reprinted from the *Union* by *Niles Weekly Register*, July 8, 1837. The publication was Jackson's defense against the charges of corruption so freely made by the opposition. He took Henry A. Wise and Balie Peyton to task for the vagueness of their accusations and demanded that they present evidence to back their charges. He struck at the testimony of Hugh L. White before the Wise Committee, charging that White had once approved of some of the measures that he now charged were fraudulent. White's reply was later printed by the *Union*.

7. See Daniel Graham to Polk, May 25, 1837.

8. Sarah York Jackson, referred to here, was the wife of Andrew Jackson Jr.

FROM SAMUEL MITCHELL

Dr. Sir, War Trace June 14th 1837

The Candidates will be at Chappel Hill on Monday next at Dunnagin's1 on Tuesday, Raney's Store2 on Wednesday, Lewisburg on Thursday, and at Farmington on Friday.

We have nothing new since you left us. We are all getting along about as usual. Some of Van Buren's friends are alarmed for fear he has not the nerve and moral courage of old Hickory. They are fearful that his object in convoking Congress is to recharter the United States Bank, but so far as [possible] I have been able to refute this idea. I have met it promptly and satisfied most of those with whom I have had an opportunity of talking. If you are up at Court, it would be well for you to explain his views in relation to that matter, as I presume you will, by that time, be made acquainted with his object.

SAML. MITCHELL

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This probably refers to the home of Sherwood Dunnagin, who was a member of the county court at the time Marshall County was organized.

2. "Raney" here refers to Isaac Rainey, who lived at Caney Springs, where he was postmaster from 1832 to 1838. Caney Springs is in the north central part of Marshall County.
FROM ANDREW JACKSON

My Dear Col,  

Nashville June 15 1837

Yours of the 14th is just recd. and I hasten to undeceive you of the error into which you have been lead by the Whigs falshoods. I am astonished that you should have believed such an absurd tale. The indecorum of speeches reported to be made & resignations offered in the Executive council, were too absurd to be believed. But I have just recd. a letter from Mr [Levi] Woodbury of the 4 instant that puts the falshood down—all is well, going well & harmoniously. The conduct of the Banks under the influence of Biddle & the aristocratic foreign & American Merchants becoming more odious every day, & the people in all quarters becoming more & more in favour of a metallic currency. Mr W. says, all united in executing the laws, collecting the revenue in specie &c.

I was anxious to have seen you before my review went to press. You have seen it before this in the Union. Give me your thoughts upon it. I must see you before you go to Washington. With respects to Mrs. Polk. . . .

ANDREW JACKSON

P.S. I have but a moment to write as the mail is closing & I wish to undeceive you.²

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Nicholas Biddle was president of the Bank of the United States from 1822 to 1836. When that bank expired in 1836, he secured a charter from Pennsylvania and continued as president of the Bank of the United States of Pennsylvania.

2. This postscript was written along the left-hand margin of the letter.

TO WILLIAM R. RUCKER

My Dear Sir  

Columbia June 15th 1837

From all I hear from Williamson, Col. [Granville S.] Crockett is receiving a much better vote in that County than was anticipated. It is certainly so in that part of the County adjoining Bedford and Maury, and I am now satisfied that it is perfectly in the power of Rutherford to elect him. If you can give him any thing like Brady's³ strength in Rutherford he must succeed. A confidence in his prospects, and some activity among his friends, is all that in my judgment is now necessary to secure his success. Write me what is the present state of the canvass
in your County. What are the prospects in the State elections, for Governor, Legislature &c. Our opponents are becoming more and more violent in their exertions to carry the elections in August, and thus transfer the State to the ranks of the opposition.

Here we have a sound state of public opinion. Armstrong will receive a large majority in this quarter. How will he run in Old Rutherford?

The Union of yesterday brought us the Grundy publication.² He literally demolishes White and his associates, and though the critics will abuse him for making it, it cannot fail to do good, by disabusing the public mind from the calumnies which have been heaped upon him. I hope Dr. [Stephen B.] Johns will republish his communication in his paper; I hope too that at this crisis, when great principles are at stake, that he may be induced to enter vigorously in his paper into the defense of the Republican doctrines which the people of the State have so long professed and acted on. Tell him to consider me a subscriber and send me his paper.

The girls are very well, though Johanna is almost distracted to receive a letter from home. Tell Elizabeth³ she must write to her.

I have written to the editor of the Globe, to send his paper to Mr [Richard] Blair of your place.

Of course you will see the propriety of not mentioning my name to any one, unless it be to Majr [John W.] Childress, in regard to the information I give you from Williamson. It would be used by our opponents to the prejudice of our cause. Let me hear from you soon.

P.S. Col Dew⁵ who is now here, will be at your Court on Monday. He passed through Williamson lately, and can give you additional information from that County, confirmatory of what I have heard.

J. K. P.

Addressed to Murfreesboro and marked “Private.”

1. William Brady had been a political leader in Murfreesboro. In 1835 he ran for Congress and was heavily favored to win; however, he died suddenly, in the midst of the canvass.

2. No issue of this newspaper between June 13 and June 27, 1837, has been found.

3. Johanna and Elizabeth were daughters of William R. Rucker; Elizabeth was about a year older than Johanna.

4. The signature to this letter has been cut away, and in the cutting process a portion of what seems to be the last word in the sentence was also taken out.

5. John H. Dew, a lawyer, had moved from Lebanon to Columbia.
FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Dear Sir

Nashville 16 June 1837

I read your kind note some time since and regret that I have not been able sooner to answer it. I have been confined for two weeks with the chills and fevers every day. I have got clear of them in the last few days. This is the third attack since my return from Florida. I am much recovered, but from all the accounts I get of the prospect before me I feel confident I shall succeed in my election owing entirely to the exertions of my friends. On them all depends.

Genl. Jackson is now on a visit here, and will go to the District in a few days. He wrote you last evening and laughed that you were Hoax'd,2 with many of us. His letters from the City gave cheering accts, all Harmony and Concert. Let me hear from you. Will you attend to Bedford County. From the news I have from there I fear the District. Also with Turney.3

R. ARMSTRONG

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. This seems to be a reference to Polk's reaction to the false rumor that Forsyth and Poinsett had resigned from the cabinet. See Polk to Andrew Jackson, June 14, 1837.
3. Although Armstrong's thoughts seem scattered and disorganized here, he must have had some reason for fearing the results in the Western District and in Turney's Mountain District.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia June 16th 1837

I have just learned from Mr Gordon of Wilson, that Mr [John] Hall has withdrawn from the canvass for Congress. Had he declined earlier, so that a stronger man could have taken the field, it would have been better. The public mind is however already excited, and a formidable man could now make as good a run as if he had been out earlier. Should the election be suffered to go by default, it would be exceedingly mortifying to your friends at home as well as at a distance. The effect too on the balance of the State, would be calculated to do harm. Great principles are at Stake, and every exertion should be made to prevent the State from going into the opposition. From what I learned when last at Nashville, a strong man in the District could...
succeed. Where is [Robert M.] Burton? Would he not yield to a call from Davidson, if one were immediately made, in an imposing form? If he will not, is there none other that will? Surely the contest will not be yielded without a struggle.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to the Hermitage and marked "Private." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Obediah Gordon was an associate of Major Andrew Price in the stagecoach business.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My dr Sir: Nashville June 17, 1837

The day after I reed. Mr Walker's last letter Mr Laughlin appointed for a conference, and assented to the transfer of his establishment to Mr. Smith, or rather Mr [Robert] Nesbitt. Mr. Grundy reed. Mr L's letter, which was to us Jointly. I attended on Mr L. then sick, slightly, but sober. He promised, & seemed anxious to act so soon as Mr Kieser [Kezer] returned from Gallatin, at least by Monday last all was to be arranged. On Monday he was prostrate with drink, & is yet so. Yesterday his books were taken possn. of by Ch. I. Love, & others, & today we had a meeting, & the conclusion is to set up a paper under a new name, & send it to the Subscribers of the Union. We are to lend, some 20 of us, to Mr Nesbitt, 2000 $, and amongst hands conduct the paper until we can be suited in an Editor. I hinted Jo. Talbot, a day or two since, & it has taken very much with Genl. Jackson, Grundy &c. Wheather Mr T. will undertake is not known. He is expected here to day; if not we must look out elsewhere.

Saw your letter of yesterday to Graham.¹ Will act for James Walker. My policy for a year has been to drop the Union if no better could be done, & I did not believe better could be done, with Mr. L. He has never believed we dare drop him, & really asks us to pay more debts than will set up a new paper, & then to sustain the successor, & merely for the subscription list, on which the subscribers have advanced we are told considerably.

Shall be at Columbia next Thursday evening.

Joel M. Smith has just returned from East Tene. and reports favourably for Armstrong, & that [Thomas D.] Arnold is likely to beat [William B.] Carter: & Jo. Wms.² is pretty certain to beat [Robert M.] Anderson. This is a matter of much concern, for Wms. is with us, and highly respectable.
Genl. Jackson spent a couple of days & nights with us, left Love's this morning, is in fair health, & more, considering his late illness, talks rofe [rough] and vigorous as ever. Allen Hall says his publication is all smoke, but others of that side do not think so. White is badly hurt, as the truth always hurts a Simon Pure, more than another. The exposure of White's true character will ruin him, & such pieces as appeared in your last paper will soon cool the Bank folk with him. He was the father of the act of 1817, excluding the US. Bank from Tene., & if charged with it, cannot, & dare not deny it. 1817 ch. 132, S. 2. He for a long time staked himself upon it. This I well know.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. A Knoxville lawyer and a Whig, Joseph L. Williams served in Congress, 1837-43. He was the son of former United States Senator John Williams.

FROM JOHN F. H. CLAIBORNE1

My dear Sir,

Madisonville [Mississippi]2 June 17th 1837

I enclose you the Proclamation of the Gov. of this state ordering a special election for members of Congress.3 Gholson & myself are candidates opposed by S. S. Prentiss & Gen. Acee,4 two lawyers of very fine talents, who will unite the whole Whig vote. If the people turn out we shall, I think, beat them at the July election, particularly as the impression prevails here, that the persons elected in July will only serve until the regular election fixed by our constitution & laws in November next. I think that this impression is erroneous. If I am elected at the special election in July, I will claim to be the member throughout the whole of the 25th Congress.5 Please give me your opinion promptly on this subject. For if I am only to hold my seat in the extra session in September, & run the risk of being turned out at our regular election in November next, I would not run for the vacancy, but would remain & canvass for the full term. What you write will be for my own eye only & be shown to no one.

JNO. CLAIBORNE

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."
1. Claiborne, a lawyer of Madison County, Mississippi, was a member of the Twenty-fourth Congress.
2. Madisonville, a town in Madison County, no longer appears on maps.
3. When a special session of Congress was called for September 1837, Mississippi had not held congressional elections. Since the terms of the two members of the House of Representatives had expired and the regular election was not scheduled until November, Governor Charles Lynch called a special election. Lynch stated, however, that those chosen would serve only in the special session and that regular congressional elections would be held in November as usual.

4. Claiborne and Samuel J. Gholson of Monroe County, both Democrats, had represented Mississippi in the Twenty-fourth Congress. Sergeant S. Prentiss and General Erasmus L. Acee were the Whig candidates in the special election.

5. Claiborne and Gholson won decisive victories in the July election and served during the special session. They were also seated in the Twenty-fifth Congress, although they had been beaten by Prentiss and Thomas J. Word of Pontotoc in the regular November election. When Prentiss and Word presented their credentials, the House finally, in February, rescinded its earlier action and declared the seats vacant. An effort by Word and Prentiss to be seated immediately, however, was defeated when Polk, as Speaker, cast the deciding vote. In an election held in April 1838, Word and Prentiss won and were seated in May. None of the four men involved in this controversy ever served in Congress again.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir, Nashville, Tennessee. 17 June 1837

The affair of the Cabinet was a miserable hoax¹ as you will have seen in the Newspapers, and we never gave credit to it here. The ground alleged to have been taken by Forsyth & Poinsett, & the language attributed to all the parties carried condemnation on the face. Hall who published on Monday might plead some excuse for his Commentaries but Nye who published on Tuesday after the utter non-confirmation of Monday night committed a great outrage.²

The Genl. came down to see us on Thursday, took lodgings that night with Col Marshall,³ went out to Loves' last night, & off to the Hermitage this morning. He looks firm & speaks energetically as ever. A Bank, the Bank, & all the Banks receive no mercy at his hands. He thinks that the Government can employ its own Collectors to be its own depositories & disbursers.

Laughlin has been beastly drunk every hour since [James] Walker was here. The No of Tuesday was published in great tribulation for the purpose of getting out Jacksons address. Grundy & Catron took possession of the Books yesterday. They are in Conference today & I showed your letter to Catron. You will hear the result next mail. Jno Hall has backed out. Craighead, Cheatham & [James P.] Grundy are
still ahead. The news from Rutherford is not so good but [Granville S.] Crockett is evidently gaining ground there.

D. GRAHAM

1. For details of the hoax, see Polk to Andrew Jackson, June 14, 1837.
2. Allen A. Hall was editor of the Nashville Banner, and Shadrack Nye was publisher of the Nashville Republican. In August 1837, these two papers were combined and turned into a daily, with Hall as editor and Nye as publisher.
4. This seems to be a reference to the home of Charles I. Love, who lived near Haysbоро. Love died about a month after this letter was written.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir, Nashville, June 18th 1837

Our friends cannot be rallied on Burton. I presume he would not offer. If he would, he would be badly beaten, which would do us more harm, than to let the election go by default. Besides, his offering would injure Armstrong's election. It would be decisive against our County election, as he would pull our candidates down to his feeble condition. It would injure us abroad as it would be presumed he got all our friends.

I shall leave home on Wednesday, (by Centreville) for Savanna in Hardin County. I must be there on the 4th Monday, which is the first day of the Circuit Court in that place. I cannot tell how long I shall be detained there. I shall return by Waynesboro and Columbia home. You should be prepared to leave home, so that you can reach Washington seven or eight days before Congress meets. I think our County election is in a good way—there is still some uncertainty about it. Tomorrow, we shall place the Union in other hands.¹

F GRUNDY.

Addressed to Columbia and marked “Private.”

1. The last issue of the Nashville Union that bore Samuel H. Laughlin's name as editor appeared on June 13, 1837. Publication temporarily ceased, but on June 27, 1837, the paper again appeared. Various attempts to place it under the proprietorship of Joel M. Smith failed. On July 8, 1837, the Union bore Robert Nesbit's name as proprietor and listed John O. Bradford as editor. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, May 24, 1837; John Catron to Polk, July 7, 1837, and John O. Bradford to Polk, July 8, 1837.
TO WILLIAM M. WARNER

Columbia June 19th 1837

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 9th has been received. In answer I have to state that a Bill passed the two Houses of Congress at the last Session, the title of which was "An act designating and limiting the funds receivable for the revenues of the U. States." This Bill the President did not approve for the reasons assigned by him; and published in the Globe of the 7th of March, a copy of which I send you. You will find accompanying the President's communication, the opinion of the Attorney General of the U. States. Though this Bill does not contain in terms, any clause repealing the Treasury Circular, it is I presume the one to which you allude. Had it received the sanction of the President, it would have depended upon the construction placed upon it, obscurely worded as it was, whether it would have operated as a repeal of the Treasury order or not. My memory does not enable me to answer you, by what precise vote in either House, the Bill was passed, but it was by considerable majorities. You will remark that the Bill was not sent to the President, until the day before the adjournment of Congress, when his time was necessarily much occupied in other indispensible duties, and at that late period precluded the possibility of his assigning his reasons at length for withholding his signature. Not being satisfied that he ought to sign it, he retained it, as he had a right under the constitution to do. Had it gone to him earlier, and he had with held his sanction he would no doubt have returned it accompanying his veto with his reasons.

You ask my opinion as to the "causes of the present pressure," and particularly whether it has been produced by "the putting down of the U. S. Bank, the removal of the Deposites and the Specie Circular." I do not attribute it to these causes, or to either of them. Those who insist that a National Bank is the Panacea for the disease, and that but for the refusal to recharter the late Bank, the present derangement in Commerce, and pressure in the money market, would not have occurred, forget to remember, that during a similar pressure and derangement in 1819 & 1820 and also in 1825, that Bank was in existence, and as its advocates said in full and successful operation. Yet it was not at that time enabled to perform the great functions of regulating of currency and of trade, which is now attributed to it, but had then as now, by the excessive credits it had afforded contributed mainly to produce the calamity, and then as now been well nigh overwhelmed in the general ruin which it had contributed to bring on. They forgot too to remember that the existing pressure and commercial derangement,
is not confined to the U. States, but prevades the whole commercial world, and in no country with more severity than in England, where there exists a National Bank, with more capital and more power than any Bank in this country ever possessed. The Bank of England has not been able to avert the calamity in that country, but has contributed largely to produce it, and is itself now tottering to its foundations, and in danger of being overwhelmed in the storm. The Removal of the Deposites in 1833 from one Bank to other Banks could not have had the slightest agency in producing the existing state of things. It is true the opposition at the time predicted desolation and universal distress, as the immediate consequences of the act, and though the Bank by its sudden curtailments, and its presses and political allies, did all in their power by the continued ringing of the alarm bell to produce panic, and destroy all confidence whereby their predictions might be verified, yet we all know that years of unexampled prosperity followed. The Specie Circular or Treasury Order it will not be pretended, has been the cause of the pressure in England and other parts of Europe; and yet it is as gravely as it is absurdly insisted on by the opposition that it has been one of the chief causes of producing the pressure in this country. If they are right, we may well ask them what has produced the same effects elsewhere when no such cause existed. What is the Specie Circular? The Government had lands to sell. She had a right to sell them upon her own terms. She offered them in the market & one of the conditions of purchase, was that payment should be made in the constitutional currency (gold & silver.) Who was injured by this? No man was compelled to purchase, but if he did buy he must conform to the terms of sale. The great hue and cry that was raised against it was by speculators and large companies of land operators, who wished to borrow more money (paper rag) from Banks to invest in lands, or speculation upon the wild scheme of making fortunes suddenly without real capital or labour, and upon fictitious capital & the labour of others. The Treasury Circular, far from having contributed to produce the existing state of things, has had a direct tendency, so far as it has operated at all to lighten the shock. For had it not issued, it cannot be doubted that many millions more would have been loaned by Banks, and the indebtedness of the country for wild lands, that would have lain for years a dead property, would have been much greater than it is. Its issuance was necessary for the security of the public Treasury, and its effects was to admonish the Banks, that they must be prepared to meet their liabilities and they ceased to loan with the wild extravagance they had before done.

I am clearly of the opinion therefore that the Government so far
from having caused the existing state of things, possessed no power to prevent its occurrence. The causes lie deeper, and their effects are found not only here but in every other commercial country of which we have any knowledge. They are to be found in that mania of speculation, in lands, stocks, merchandise, Negroes and every description of property; in that wild and extravagant overtrading which has prevailed for the last two years. During the year 1836 we imported sixty millions of merchandise more than we exported produce to pay for. The necessary consequences were the creation of a heavy foreign debt, and an immense surplus of goods on hand beyond the current demands of the country for its consumption which could not be sold; add to this the immense amount withdrawn from the active employments of trade and vested in dead lands which cannot be sold. All this as well as other wild schemes of speculation has been stimulated by excessive credits, afforded as much and indeed to a greater amount by the late and present Bank called the Bank of the U. States as by any other causes. I might add many other causes in the course of our trade, which have in my judgement been ancilery in producing the existing state of things, but I have already fatigued you too long; and have extended this hastily written letter to too great length. To a mind not benumbed by the nightmare of party prejudice, it is utterly ridiculous and absurd, to attribute to the acts of the Government, the present state of things. Many of those who do so, do it more for political effect, than from any settled conviction of the correctness of what they say and would wish others to believe.

It is amusing to hear some of the White Whig leaders and presses among us, constantly declaiming against Gen. Jackson and heaping on his head the bitterest & most violent epithets of abuse charging the veto of the Bank, the Removal of the Deposites &c. &c. as the causes of the pressure, whilst at the same time they are lauding Judge White and their other leaders, in the state as the most consistent, pure and orthodox statesmen of the day. Have they so soon forgotten that in all his acts against the Bank, Gen. Jackson was sustained by Judge White himself, by Bell, Peyton, and every member of Congress from the State, some of them by speeches in Congress and all of them by their votes. Judge White in his speeches in the Senate in 1832 & 1834, zealously sustained the course of the President, insisted that the Bank was unconstitutional, and demonstrated to his own satisfaction, that the Bank of the U. States more than any other one cause had produced the derangement and pressure of 1819. He was in favour of the removal of the Deposites, and in a word up to the time he became a candidate for the Presidency neither he nor his present friends in the state,
whispered a word of dissatisfaction or dissent at the course the President pursued. If then Genl. Jackson was to blame they were equally so. To revive these facts in the recollection of those who are now most clamorous, the Editor of the paper in this place (The Democrat) has republished parts of speeches made by White and Peyton. I send you a copy and ask your attention to them.

I have no idea that it is any part of the object of the early convocation of Congress, to charter a Bank. As Judge White once said the remedy would be worse than the disease; and I have no idea that such a proposition will meet with any favour from the Democracy of the Country. The purpose is no doubt to enable Congress by suitable legislative provisions to provide for the safety of the public Treasury, and now that the Banks have all ceased to pay in Specie, to provide a place of safe keeping of the public revenue for the future. Though this letter contains my opinions, which are concealed from no one, but on the contrary are openly avowed in my public addresses, yet it has been hastily written and without care, and is intended therefore for yourself and not for public use. A pressure of other business has prevented an earlier answer to your letter, and although I have written much more lengthily than I had anticipated, I have I assure you done so in great haste. I am sensible that I have not even now done justice to the subject matter of your enquiries. But as you assure me it will not be used publicly, I send it as it is, without correction or revision.

I am happy to inform you that the election of your brother in Bedford is regarded as beyond doubt. I expect to see him in a few days.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I hope that our opponents may not be able to transfer the State to the ranks of the opposition at the August Elections. Armstrong will receive a large majority of our votes here. How will he run in your quarter.

J. K. P.

Presumably addressed to Fayette County, although no envelope has been found. Marked “Copy,” this letter is not in Polk’s handwriting, nor did he sign it.

1. On March 3, 1837, Jackson wrote a critique saying that the bill was so “complex and uncertain” that he would have to consult with the Attorney General. The latter agreed with Jackson that the bill was so poorly drawn up that it should not be approved. The bill had as one of its purposes to drive out of circulation bank notes of small denominations.

2. Richard Warner was a candidate for the lower house of the state legislature and was elected to that post.
FROM SIDNEY C. POSEY

Tuscaloosa, Alabama. June 20, 1837

Posey reports that Gov. Clement C. Clay has been elected to the United States Senate without opposition. The Whigs grow more confident, while the Democrats are unable to unite on a gubernatorial candidate.

Addressed to Columbia.
1. A resident of Florence and a personal acquaintance of Polk, Posey was at this time a member of the Alabama legislature.
2. John McKinley had been elected to the Senate; but before he qualified, he was appointed to the Supreme Court.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia June 21st 1837

Col. [Samuel B.] Marshall who is now here, informs me that nothing has been yet done to bring out opposition to Mr B[ell] in the Davidson District. He is of opinion that Burton if he will run will receive a majority in Davidson, and that he ought to be brought out immediately. Col. [John H.] Dew told me a few days ago that Burton could carry a majority of Wilson against any man. Why then should our friends hesitate for a moment. Should there be no opposition the effect would be bad upon the pending elections all over the state. It would at once be viewed as a triumph over yourself, and would be used to your prejudice and the prejudice of our cause. The impression would be immediately sent abroad that both yourself and the administration were in so great a minority in the Hermitage District, that the contest was yielded without a struggle. The effect of this upon the pending elections in every part of the state cannot be calculated. Mr Grundy is deeply interested in the matter, for upon our success in the August elections depends his continuance in the Senate. Why not then act at once, and let Burton take the field actively? If this is concluded on, I suggest, as the most imposing mode of bringing him out, that can be adopted, that a suitable call, as numerously signed as time will permit, be made upon him from Davidson. Let this address with the signatures be published in the Union, and the effect will be not only to rally our party in his support, but to gain their confidence in his success. Col. Marshall fully concurs with me in these views. I hope our friends will see the absolute necessity of acting promptly and efficiently in the matter.

JAMES K. POLK
Addressed to the Hermitage and marked "Private," this letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Grundy and Polk apparently did not agree on the chance that Burton had of being elected. In his letter to Polk dated June 18, 1837, Grundy expressed his opposition to Burton's candidacy. It is possible that Polk had not received Grundy's letter when he wrote this one to Jackson.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

Columbia June 22nd 1837

I take pleasure in introducing to you my friend Mr. John O. Bradford lately of Kentucky, now a citizen of this town. Mr. Bradford is a very worthy gentleman, is one of our firmest political friends, and has expressed a desire to call and pay his respects to you.¹

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to the Hermitage and delivered by the hand of John O. Bradford. This letter is in the Princeton University Library.

1. Since Bradford became editor of the Nashville Union in less than three weeks, it is possible that he wished to discuss that position with Jackson.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Sir

At home,² June 23rd 1837

The General has shewn me your letter of the 21st to him suggesting the importance of some one's running against Bell. Entertaining similar views, the moment I heard that Hall had declined, I expressed the hope that our friends would take up Burton. There was, however, yesterday nothing to authorise the expectation that our friends at Nashville would agree to unite on Mr. Burton, and I fear nothing further will be done in time for a successful rally on any one. This reluctance to start a candidate is doubtless the effect of a distrust of our strength at this time. I do not believe that we are in a minority in the District and would be very willing myself to risk the contest with Mr. Burton, if our Nashville friends would espouse his cause cordially.

I would write to you more in detail on this subject but for the assurance which Judge Catron made me that he would see you yesterday or to day, and explain to you fully the considerations which induce him & others to doubt the propriety of our running any one against Bell.²
Are you active for Armstrong? Much in my judgement depends upon his success. He is with us in feeling and will occupy a position, if elected, that cannot fail to be useful in enabling the friends of the Administration to expose the selfishness and cunning of those who have rode into office upon the shoulders of poor old White. We are doing all we can for him in this quarter, and I do not doubt his success.

Remember me cordially to Mrs. Polk. . . .

A. J. DONELSON

Addressed to Columbia and delivered by the hand of James Walker. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Tulip Grove, Donelson's plantation, adjoined the Hermitage.
2. Bell had promised to support Robert Armstrong for governor. Catron and Grundy thought that putting up a candidate against Bell might cause him to withdraw his support from Armstrong. It was especially futile, they thought, to put up a candidate who had no chance of winning.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Sir,

Bolivar Tenn June 24, 1837

I have your valued favour of the 19th.1 Mr [Levin H.] Coe is in this county and we will send yours to him as early as practicable.

Coe will make a fine run in this county, even beyond the expectation of his friends & if his prospects continue to brighten as they have done since the canvas commenced his election is certain. His politics are perfectly orthodox & he enforces them in every speech. Our people are sound to the core & I now think alive to their true interest.

No interest whatever is manifested in the Governors election. Much might be done by the presence of Genl. Armstrong. Advise him to come here. Dunlap will be pressed if not beaten. A lively interest taken in the election of Armstrong would promote him. Crisp will beat Tarver.2

JNO. H. BILLS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This letter has not been found.
2. Elihu C. Crisp defeated Edward D. Tarver for a seat in the lower house of the legislature.
FROM JOHN C. McLEMORE

My Dear Sir               Nashville 25 June 1837

I arrived here a few days past and as usual am so much crowded
with business that I cannot now do myself the pleasure to go out to
see you as I intended, to consult with you as to the best means to
defeat the vile and ungreatful plans now in operation under the direc-
tion of Bell Peyton &c to turn over republican Tennessee to the
Whigs, which we can prevent by electing Genl. Armstrong Governor.
I have settled permanently at Memphis and having lately travelled
through the District have no hesitation in assuring you, that we shall
get a decided majority there, but here, indeed no where is there that
proper consent & action necessary to ensure success. Hence I am the
more desirous to see you here so that a few of us may consult and act
for the best. Our friend Armstrong will do his part and if so advised
by his friends will visit East Tennessee where they are making the
question and I as one of his friends for reasons which I will explain
when I see you, think it best he should visit East Tennessee, tho his
friends generally think it best he remain at home. I have had no con-
sultation with any of them on the subject, and will not without first
hearing your opinion. You know better than any man in the state
what is best to be done in the case. Genl. Armstrong also wishes to
see & consult with you about what is best to be done in his election.
His circular will be out this week and cannot fail if widely circulated
to do much good. It is in the election of Governor we ought to make
the push. Our friends do not take interest enough in it and I flatter
myself if you cou'd make business here and help us stir them up, it
wou'd do great good. I therefore hope you can make it convenient to
come here in the first stage. I wish to leave for the District about
Wednesday next. Write me if you cant come.

JNO. C. McLEMORE

Addressed to Columbia.

1. An intimate friend of Andrew Jackson and one-time surveyor general
of Tennessee, McLemore had extensive land holdings in the state, especially
in West Tennessee.

TO JOHN F. H. CLAIBORNE

My Dear Sir               Columbia Tennessee June 26th 1837

Your letter of the 17th containing Governor Lynch's Proclamation
was not received until yesterday. I have not the constitution or laws
of Mississippi, regulating your elections before me, and therefore cannot respond as satisfactorily to your inquiries as I could wish.

Without having had much time to examine the subject, the conclusion at which my mind has arrived is, that if it be consistent with your constitution and laws, to hold the election for members of Congress in July, as proposed by the Governor’s Proclamation, that election when it shall take place, must be for the whole term of service of the members of the 25th Congress, and cannot be for a shorter period, or for a part of that term. If there be nothing in your constitution and laws authorizing the election to be held at the time proposed, then the election itself would be void unless there be something in the constitution of the U. S. to make it lawful. I do not regard yours to be the case of an ordinary vacancy to be filled, as contemplated by the Constitution of the U. States. The term of service of the members of the 24th Congress, expired on the 3d of March last; and the term of the members of the 25th Congress commenced on the 4th of March. No vacancy could occur after that time in the 24th Congress, because that Congress had expired; and in states situated as yours is, no vacancy could take place in the 25th Congress, because no regular election for the 25th Congress had taken place, and because when such election does take place, it must by the Constitution be for the term of two years, dating back to and commencing on the 4th of March, and terminating two years thereafter. If there then be no vacancy in the meaning of the Constitution, there can be no election for a less time than two years. By the Constitution of the U. States Ar. 1, Sec. 2, it is provided that “The House of Representatives shall be composed of members, chosen every second year, by the people of the several States.” The members must be “chosen every second year,” and there is no authority given to choose them at shorter intervals of time, or for a shorter term than two years. By the same section it is provided, that “When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive authority thereof, shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies.” There unquestionably exists a “vacancy in the Representation from your State,” and if it be lawful for the Governor to “issue writs of election to fill such vacancies,” I am clear that the members must be chosen for the whole of the unexpired term of the 25th Congress. And this brings us to the question, Has the Governor authority to “issue writs of election,” to take place in July as is proposed? You state that your “regular election is fixed by your constitution and laws in November next.” Is there no contingent authority given to the Governor by your constitution and laws, to order the election to be holden at an earlier day? If there be such authority con-
ferred on him, that could settle the question, the election held would be lawful, and would be for the whole of the unexpired term of the 25th Congress. But if there be no such authority conferred on him, by the State constitution & laws, how would the question then stand? To decide this question, we must again refer to the Constitution of the U. States. It is provided in that Instrument Ar. 1, Sec. 4, that “The times, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law, make or alter such regulations, except as to the place of choosing Senators.” Congress has never exercised the authority here given, but has left it to the States. Must the State therefore in the case which has occurred remain unrepresented, because the State Constitution and laws, have failed to provide for the contingency, and because no regular election can take place under them until November? I incline to think not, though this opinion I give doubtingly. My reasons for it, are that “vacancies” have “happened in the Representation” from your state, and in that case the Constitution of the U. States, in the clause already quoted, Ar. 1. Sec. 2, is imperative that the “Executive authority” of the State “shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies.” Should this provision of the Constitution of the U. States be repugnant to the provisions of the State constitution and laws regulating your elections, I incline strongly to the opinion, that it must be regulated as “the Supreme law of the land,” and must prevail over the State constitution and laws. It is expressly declared in the Constitution Ar. 6, that “This Constitution & the laws of the United States” &c “shall be the Supreme law of the land,” & the Judges in the States are “bound thereby, any thing in the constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.”

I incline to think, therefore that the Governor, so soon as it was ascertained that the State would be unrepresented, at the extra meeting of Congress in September, was bound by Ar. 1, Sec. 2, of the Constitution of the U. States, to “issue writs of election to fill such vacancies” though the time of holding the elections was not that fixed by the State Constitution and laws, but repugnant to them, because in such case the Constitution of the U.S. must be regarded as “the Supreme law of the land.” Upon the other point, that the election whenever held, must be for the whole of the unexpired term of the 25th Congress, and not for any shorter time, I think there cannot be a doubt.

I have thus given you my opinion very hastily formed, and without having had much time to examine the question, but as you say it
is intended for "your own eyes alone," and not for public use, I send it as it is, hoping that it may contain some suggestions, which may aid you in the further examination of the subject.

I expect Judge Catron, of the Supreme Court of the U. States, at my house, in two or three days, and will take his opinion and write you again.

Wishing our friend Gholson, and yourself great success in your election. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Madisonville, Mississippi. On the envelope, Polk noted that this was a draft, and that only a part of it was copied and sent.

1. See Claiborne to Polk, June 17, 1837.

FROM JOHN C. McLEMORE

Dear Sir, Nashville 27 June 1837

Yours of yesterday is recd.¹ and I too rejoice to see you take a proper interest in the contest. Never can an occasion occur when exertions will be more necessary. We have the strength if the case was understood, but the people have become confused by the sudden revulsion of the times. Add to this, the management of Bell White &c, by the aid of their purses & management in securing the presses in every direction, whilst we have none at this point when it is expected a lead would be given, puts it out of our power to meet the many slanders & falsehoods propagated against the administration & the old chief. Is it not shameful? Your letter has stimulated me to make another effort to start the Union. Our friends here behave badly. I am mortified to see such cold indifference. Not a man here worth a cent when money is necessary. Still I will not despair. We can & must start the Union instantly.²

I cannot be mistaken when I assure you that we have a most decided majority in the district. Whites visit there evidently done us good & they perfectly understand the game he, Bell &c, has been playing. Coe will beat Alexander badly. He has more talents, is decidedly popular, whilst Alexander is considered a cross sowed and broken down polit[i]cian. But I must confess I have my fears that Williams will run our friend Dunlap hard. I did not think so at first. Still when I left the District our friends were sanguine of success. Yet I have my fears. [John W.] Crockett will be elected in his District by a large majority. The Van Buren men go for him to a man for in
truth he is entirely with us whilst his opponent is a full Whig. The question as to who will be senator is not nor will not be made in the District, and I have no doubt if the election shou'd be brot on at the next session, but Grundy will get almost the entire vote of the District against Foster. Bell is spoken of as the opponent of Grundy, not Foster, but you may rely on it, the opposition cannot get in their man now, nor at no time hereafter, if we do our duty. I shall not leave till Sunday morning for the District. I agree with you about Armstrong. He has every thing to gain by shewing himself. It was wrong to agree to remain at home and I shall urge on him to go out among the people immediately. Do write him & urge it & if you have time write me again.

(In great Haste).

JNO. C. McLEMORE

P.S. East Tennessee is the pivot, for Armstrong. He was raised there, is the son of an old revolutionary officer, old Trooper Armstrong. His head is now gray in the service of his country and to shew it in E. T. he will be revered as an E[as]t Tenn [essean], and I have no fear but he will act with becoming prudence. Do write to your friends & urge them on. I am writing to all mine. Write me occasionally at Memphis.

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. See Felix Grundy to Polk, June 18, 1837.
3. Robert Armstrong's father, James Armstrong, was born in Ireland and had served in wars in Europe before coming to America. In 1777, he was living in Virginia, and by 1791 he was a resident of East Tennessee.
4. The postscript was written on the margin of two pages of the letter.

FROM DENISON OLMSTED

New Haven, Connecticut. June 27, 1837

Reporting a balance of $39.62 due on Samuel W. Polk's account, Olmsted says that the young man does not look so robust as formerly. The other young gentlemen from Tennessee are well.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM JOHN H. DEW

Dear Sir, Murfreesborough Tenn June 28, 1837

I received a communication from the venerable Ex President on yesterday in reply to the note I had previously forwarded to him upon
the subject of calling Mr. Burton into the field in opposition to Col. Bell for Congress.\(^1\) The General is all alive to the experiment and has used his best indeavour to induce Burton to make the effort; but he positively refused for the same reason that Col. Cahal gave for refusing to oppose you, "Certainty of defeat."

Mr. Burton arrived here from Gallatin on Monday morning and informs me that he had maturely considered of the probabilities of success and had determined not to run.

The prospects in Tennessee, formerly republican Tennessee, promises very unfavourably for the administration. I am creditably informed that H. L. Turney Esq will be hard run if not defeated upon the Question of a National Bank. Judge M. A. Martin\(^2\) of Clarksville the Bro in law of Gen. Cheatham\(^3\) is preaching him by interchange with Judge [William E.] Anderson. He speaks Confidently of Cheatham's success over Johnson; & I have very little doubt now, but that [Abram P.] Maury will be re-elected by a large majority; & I think the members of the Legislature from this county will be entirely Bank men. Col. [John R.] Laughlin would have been elected but for a charge that is being circulated against him that he is a defaulter to the Treasurer & for fraud when Clerk of the County Court.

Col. [Granville S.] Crockett, Maj Keeble & all the other candidates here declare themselves in favour of a Bank if the people desire it. I am now well satisfied that the next Legislature will be composed of a large majority of opposition members to the present administration & that Judge Grundy will be removed from office by the election of an opposition man in his place 2 years in advance.

I have heard also that Col Campbell\(^4\) will certainly beat Gen. Trousdale in Col. Peytons old district. Col Guild has opposition at last. Doctor Hogg\(^5\) of Smith County. I presume Guild will beat him badly.

I spent the last evening with Doctor Rucker & family, all well except their youngest daughter, she has the hooping Caugh. Say to Miss Johannah,\(^6\) her sister Elizabeth will write to her in a few days at least she promises to do so.

Present me very respectfully to Mrs Col. Polk and the friend generally. . . .

Jno. H. Dew

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Dew had told Polk that Burton could carry Wilson County against any opponent. See Polk to Andrew Jackson, June 21, 1837.

2. Mortimer A. Martin was not a political friend of Cave Johnson.
3. Richard Cheatham, a wealthy resident of Robertson County, had served four terms in the General Assembly and was a perennial candidate for the House of Representatives. A Whig, he finally was elected to a single term in that body, defeating Cave Johnson in 1837.

4. William B. Campbell had been elected to the General Assembly but had resigned to serve in the Seminole War. He practiced law in Carthage for many years. In 1837, he was elected as a Whig to Congress, where he served three consecutive terms. Later he was governor of the state.

5. Richard S. W. Hogg, a doctor who lived at Bagdad in Smith County, was opposing Josephus C. Guild of Sumner County for a place in the state senate.

6. Johanna Rucker was visiting the Polks in Columbia.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Coln. Murfreesborough June 30, 1837

I should have answered your letter sooner, but I was desirous of ascertaining publick opinion more thoroughly before I wrote again. Politics is as unsettled in this County as the waves of the sea. The failure of the Banks to pay specie, although a Whig measure and although it was mainly produced by them for the purpose of coercing the government to recharter a United States Bank and with a view of injuring the republican party, yet they have been very adroit in attributing all our present difficulties & embarassments to the measures of the last & the present administration of the general government and have induced a good many of our party to believe it because, as they think, their pecuniary interests are affected by it. But I am of opinion that there will be a reaction similar to what took place with regard to the removal of the public deposits. Shortly after that event there was scarcely an approving voice in this County; but in 12 months the tables were compleatly turned and there were but few to disapprove.

Our candidates are all now alarmed and have partially at least conceded the necessity of establishing some form of a Bank to "regulate the currency" of the Country. Crockett & Maury¹ made speeches at our Court last week and both advocated a Bank, Crocket a Government Bank founded upon the surplus revenue with Branches in each state with a capital proportioned to federal population to be entirely under the control of Congress, and Maury one after the model of the Ala Bank.² Maury was very soure and bitter against Genl Jackson & his "experiments." Our merchants & those under their influence are all bitterly opposed to Crocket & in favor of Maury. But
Crocket says from the towns he does not expect much support but that his prospects are very flattering in the County & especially through the hills. I am of opinion myself that he will be beaten but I am cautious not to have my opinion known and if the reaction that I have spoken of should take place soon enough he may be elected. We will not give up the ship.

The times have operated very much against our County elections for the Legislature. We feel more alarmed for [John R.] Laughlin & Keeble. Beverly Randolph has taken the field against John Laughlin accusing him of imbezzling the public money for a number of years whilst he was clerk of the County Court. Laughlin at the last Court had commissioners appointed to investigate the charges. They have operated most injuriously against him up to this time, but I am told that the commissioners will entirely acquit him of all guilt. They have had the investigation but have not yet reported. One of them told me that there was nothing wrong. The report I am in hopes will produce such a change as will elect him. If he is elected I think that Keeble will be likewise. We have some hopes likewise of Mjr. [John D.] Fletcher. He has come out several times to the satisfaction of our friends but he occasionally put in reservations that cancels all that has been previously said.

Cannon will get a large majority in this County. He was formerly instrumental in removing the seat of justice from old Jefferson. He was often in the Legislature from this & Williamson County. Has a great many relatives here in this County and withall being a Whig he will get all our Whigs. I think he will get 2 thirds or 3 fourths of our votes. Susan sends her best love to Sarah & the Children.

Colo Dew who was with us at Court can give you more particular information of things but his views of things are mostly gotten from the merchants & politicians about the town.

W. R. RUCKER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Granville S. Crockett and Abram P. Maury were candidates for the United States House of Representatives from the district composed of Rutherford and Williamson counties. Maury, a Whig, was the incumbent.

2. This apparently refers to a bank established in Alabama in 1823 by action of the legislature. The bank was a state enterprise, with capital and direction furnished by the state. Eventually branch banks were established at Decatur, Montgomery, and Mobile.

3. Jefferson, the first county seat of Rutherford County, is located on Stones River, a few miles northwest of Murfreesboro. The decision to move the county seat to a more central point was made in 1811.
4. Two of the Rucker daughters were visiting in Columbia at this time. Susan Childress Rucker was the wife of William R. Rucker and the sister of Sarah Childress Polk.

FROM HOPKINS L. TURNLEY

Winchester July 2 1837

Dear Sir

I have just returned from the Northern end of the district, where I found that the Whigs had been making considerable inroads on me by taking advantage of the pressure of the times. I think however that things are now right and that I will beat my opponent 2000 votes at least. Armstrong will receive a very large majority in this district, I think 5 to one. In this county [Micah] Taul the Whig champion has just come out to represent the county. We have 5 candidates on the V.B. side. I think we will horn some of them off and that the republican ticket will prevail here. We are certain of one. Warren sends 2 certain. Our Senator is also certain, so we are certain of 4 out of 5 & I think we will have the five. The balance of the district will be equally divided at 2 & 2.

I a few weeks since recvd a letter informing me that Armstrong would get a large majority in the counties of Monroe, McMinn & Blunt, and that there would be a material change in the political complexion of the members of the legislature from that section. I shall spend some short time in my own county and would at all times be glad to hear from you.

I am much pressed and perplexed in endeavouring to arrange Political men and matters here, which I hope you will receive as a sufficient excuse for the briefness of this letter. . . .

Hop. L. Turney

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM JABEZ JACKSON

Harrodsburg, Kentucky. July 5, 1837

On the advice of his physician, Jabez Jackson has been traveling for several weeks, and his health has improved sufficiently for him to be in Washington for the next session of Congress. After observing the political situation in Indiana and Kentucky, he fears that in the approaching election the Democrats will elect only two members each to the House of Representatives. He says he will soon move on to White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, for a few weeks.

Addressed to Columbia.
FROM GORHAM PARKS

Bangor, Maine. July 6, 1837

The dispute over the northeastern boundary of the United States has produced great anxiety in Maine, and because of its involvement Parks thinks that Maine should be represented on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. He recommends for that post Jonathan Cilley, a Democrat recently elected to a seat in the House.

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Parks had just completed two consecutive terms in the House of Representatives.
2. This boundary dispute led to the "Aroostook War" and was not settled until the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842.
3. In February 1838, Cilley was killed in a duel with Representative William J. Graves of Kentucky.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My Dr Sir Nashville July 7 37

After various attempts to place the Union in the hands of Joel M. Smith we eventually failed, the parties making the attempt not being hearty in the change. I thought it indispensable to the success of the paper. But compromise in such cases, and a ready acquiescence when no better can be done is an imperious duty, & I will of course give every aid to the yesterday's arrangement by which Mr [John O.] Bradford is to edit and controll the paper. The later Nos. have been worse than none.

Various subjects will be treated by different persons in aid of Mr. Bradford for some weeks to come.

Our affairs here stand curiously. The policy ardently sought to be observed by the candidates for the Legislature and for Gov on our side, is of the neutral character—no excitement, or contestation that will cement the neutral White men to their old associates—but the object is, to let them naturally return to the powers in places which is believed to be inevitable if the county Elections in Davidson where the Junto have their head quarters is carried and Armstrong be elected. I have great faith in Grundy's Judgment of results & he is in an attitude to have his full attention bestowed on the subject. He avers, if the whole ticket is carried in Davidson & the Gov's election carried, that the Legislature and the State will naturally return to their old friends, and his of Fdrl policy: that to beat Foster and Bell at home will sink their prospects. Sink Foster for the Senate, and turn him to the Whig side, & his Father's side, and dissolve the Petway Junto and
that this can be best effected between now and the election by neutral pieces in the Union on the Govs. election, and no agitation in the state elections as our candidates are ahead. So [Leonard P.] Cheatham and [David] Craighead thought yesterday and very clearly.

The other papers are not doing the least harm. Indeed the Banner is edging to our side, obviously enough for the reason, that a majority is feared in the legislature, and the public printing in part at least, is life, or death to the establishment. The Republican is not edited so as to make any impression on the Gov's election & the present prospect of the County elections going on the administration side, render it indispensable that silence should be kept as respects the state elections in this county, fearing the state patronage shd. go to the Banner in exclusion of the Repub.

It is said Mr. Peyton will be near this [place] at a barbecue a few days hence; and it is supposed he is to speak, & an effort is to be made to turn the tide in the county elections. Bell has fairly failed. Judging from the popular opinion Craighead outspeaks him. Bell said to Cheatham, who mentioned it to me, that he could not see how it was that last fall a decided majority in Davidson was for White, and that now a majority was obviously going the other way. That it must depend upon the men, & if he was in one of their places he would change it, or words to this effect. Grundy thinks as the state elections are now safe Mr. Peyton had as well be deterred from speaking. Craighead & Cheatham, who were present reluctantly assented. They desire Mr. P's interference, having overthrown Mr Bell's attempt who had authority to speak, they think short and thorough work could be made of Mr Peyton. Grundy is perhaps right, "to let well enough alone." Their object is to draw the party line and run the risk. They cannot be worsted & they could lay at Mr. Peyton's door the failure. Peyton is a man that is not intended for further use, as I believe. All hopes were lost of him after his ruinous management of the Whitney business. The old Whigs East and the Clay men abhorred that job and severed from Peyton. Bell is now in almost daily correspondence with Clay, and they cannot be incumbered with Peyton, who will be Ceaser where ever he is, & Bell has no courage moral, or physical to lead such a man, & he is now consolidating his interests with the Tariff and Bank party—is going with his wife's relations, with whom he could not carry Peyton another session. Should Peyton therefore throw himself into our election, & fail, he will only be made, what it is intended he shall be, a scape-goat. Mr. Grundy will be constantly here, and everything appearing in the Union will be seen by him before published.
At present the paper, as to the currency, will I believe adopt the system of finance indicated as I understand it in the Globe—of issuing treasury notes payable at the mints or at Treasury offices, & that all the creditors be paid in such notes convertible into specie at the option of the holder. As a uniform currency it is unobjectionable nor will it disturb the operation of the state banks from which the public money dare not be withdrawn in the form of specie. If so, none would be left to cover the remaining circulation & the notes would sink in value to a ruinous discount in the hands [of the] community. What of it.

I got a letter from my parents the other day, whom I have not seen for near four years and I am compelled to go there in a few days. Mrs. Catron² is going to Harrodsburg—her health requires it—and as it is on the way I'll go with her that far and keep on. I regret it but cannot control the circumstances.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Columbia.
1. This refers to the abusive treatment of Reuben Whitney by Peyton and Wise while Whitney was being questioned by a House committee.
2. Matilda Childress Catron, wife of the writer, was a sister of George C. Childress.

FROM JOHN F. GILLESPY

Dear Sir Madisonville [Tennessee] 7th July 1837

I reed. yours of the 27th ult. this evening.¹ I am glad to learn Genl. Armstrong is doing well in your quarter of the state. Since the leaders and organs of the opposition party have taken ground so decidedly for Cannon, I think Armstrong's prospects are not so good as was indicated when I wrote you.² I feel no hesitation, however, in assuring you, that in this county he [will] beat Cannon by a large majority. The opposition to him is stronger and better organized in McMinn but the people cannot be rallied to the support of Cannon; and I have no doubt McMinn will do nearly as well as Monroe. Bradley votes about 1000, is a Van Buren County, and of course will do her duty. I have not been in Blount since Armstrong was announced. I will start there tomorrow. Although Judge White and some of his followers in Knox command some influence in Blount (which I have reason to believe will be put in requisition) yet I think I may safely give Armstrong 2 to 1 there. Of Knox, Sevier, Grainger, Jefferson, Cocke &
Claiborne I am fearful. The ballance of E. Tennessee will, I think, in each county give Armstrong majorities, and in some of them large ones.

[Joseph L.] Williams' Election is pretty certain. I have no fear but he will give the administration a fair support which I know [Robert M.] Anderson would not do. He, Williams, knows the friends of the administration have his election in their hands and will not venture to provoke their opposition.

The candidates who will most probably be elected from this county to the Legislature, Cannon and Tipton, are both under pledge to oppose bringing on the election of Senator. Cannon is opposed to Bell, Peyton & Foster, but not pledged to Grundy. Tipton is unpledged, but his fear of encountering the opposition of Grundy's friends will make him do his best to postpone the election. Grant who will probably be elected the floating Rep. is for Grundy. Maj Walker a Grundy Candidate in McMinn County, I am fearful will be beat by Maj Barb, opposed to Grundy. I will attend to having the candidates in Blount committed against bringing on the election.

Thompson will probably be elected in Blount—is a White man, but is supported by the friends of V. B. in that County, and they can procure his promise to oppose bringing on the election. Wear of Sevier will be Senator from that District. He is a particular friend of mine, & I think I can procure his committal.

Genl Stone is supposed not to be pledged for or against the administration, is a warm Jackson man, will get a good many votes, but [James] Standifer will beat him. I have not heard from Bunch's District. [Abraham] McClellen is yet in the service but will be discharged tomorrow, when he will I presume go immediately into the District, but I imagine Bunch will beat him. It is supposed [Thomas D.] Arnold will beat [William B.] Carter. A. is supported by the friends of the administration. He had a public sparring match as I am informed with Peyton, as P. passed through his District.

JOHN F. GILLESPIE

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. This letter has not been found.
2. See Gillespy to Polk, May 5, 1837.
3. John O. Cannon, a Madisonville lawyer, was elected and served a single term in the lower house of the legislature. Jonathan Tipton had served in the General Assembly, first from Blount County and then from Monroe. He lost the election referred to here.
4. William Grant, a former sheriff of Monroe County, was elected and served a single term. Later he moved to Bradley County.
5. James Walker, a farmer who resided at Calhoun, was elected over Abraham Barb. Walker served three consecutive terms in the lower house and later was elected to a single term in the state senate. Little has been learned about Barb.

6. Jesse Thompson, a Blount County farmer, was elected and served one term in the lower house of the legislature. He had served in the War of 1812 and was frequently involved in minor political matters.

7. Pleasant M. Wear, a farmer, was for a decade clerk of the county court in Sevier County. He had recently served in the Seminole War. He served a single term in the legislature and subsequently moved to Missouri.

8. Unidentified.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

Hon and Dr Sir Nashville July 8th [1837]

Your letter of the 6th I have just received. I regret very much to inform you, that the arrangement which was in train, when Mr [James] Walker left, has been totally nullified by the refusal of Messrs Smith and Nesbit to sign the transfer. The consequence is that the whole office is in even a worse state, than before. On Thursday after much consultation between Judge Grundy and Major Donelson, they concluded to accede to the original terms of Messrs Smith and Nesbit and allow them to retain possession of the paper of which I am to be the editor. This arrangement I conceive to be a bad one, tho perhaps the best that could be made at present. The first No. of the paper under my control comes out to day. You will receive it in company with this letter. I thank you for the suggestions you made in your letter and hope that you and other friends in Columbia will write me often, as I am in doubt as to what amount of assistance I shall receive from our friends here.

Please present my respects to Mrs. Polk.

JOHN O. BRADFORD

P.S. The news received here from different parts of the state is highly gratifying. The friends of Genl Armstrong here entertain little or no doubt of his success.

Excuse my great haste.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The year 1837 was assigned on the basis of the content of the letter.
2. For the background of this transaction, see Felix Grundy to Polk, June 18, 1837.
3. This letter has not been found.
FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Murfreesboror July 11th 1837

I received yours a few days since, upon the subject of the approaching elections. I should have written two weeks since, but Dr. Rucker informed me he had given you all the news, in regard to our county elections. I do not know that anything material has transpired since he wrote to change the aspect of affairs. The candidates are getting along quietly & but little said about the election. My impression at present is, that the charges preferred against Laughlin have done him no injury, and will not unless the proof to sustain them is very positive & direct. On the contrary they have had the effect to arouse his friends to greater exertions & the cry of persecution will help him greatly unless as I before said the proof is very strong. His friends offer bets that he is ahead of all. I am not able to say how [Edwin A.] Keeble is doing. The last time I saw him he seemed to be very sanguine, and the friends of [William] Ledbetter are equally so. Bets have been made that he will beat Keeble 500 votes. My own opinion is that he will be elected by a small majority, say from 1 to 200. Keeble lacks stability and firmness in a close contest. He knows nothing of the "sovereigns" and of course has no tact or management. It is now generally conceded that Hoover will be one of the Representatives. Wade has lost ground, & [John D.] Fletcher cannot command strength enough to succeed.

I have not heard a dozen persons speak of the election for Gov. It is supposed that Cannon will get four fifths of the County. It is impossible to stir up our friends upon that election. Armstrong ought by all means to have gone about the country. The people dont know him. I cannot with any propriety say anything in his behalf amongst those who have heard me speak of him before he became a candidate. His sincerity has always been doubted by the friends of the administration in this county. I saw [Granville S.] Crockett on last Sunday. He is now with the sheriff collecting taxes and seems to be in good spirits. He says his news from Williamson is very favorable. Since he came to this county he has certainly produced favorable results. His strength is increasing as he sees & converses with the people. But I am afraid he cannot effect enough before the election to counterbalance [Abram] Maury's majority in Williamson. In fact some of Crockett's friends are afraid of a majority against him in this county. I think he will have a majority of three or four hundred here. He says there is but little opposition, to him in any portion of the county except Murfreesboro & vicinity. In a week or two we can arrive at some definite opinion as
to the result. I will see you at Whites Store\(^6\) on the 21st if I can possibly leave home—if not I will write again before the election.

My compliments to Sarah, Mary\(^7\) & Joanna. I expect to go to the District about the 1st August & perhaps Sarah\(^8\) will go as far as Columbia with me.

**JOHN W. CHILDRESS**

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. See William R. Rucker to Polk, June 30, 1837.
3. For the nature of the charges against John R. Laughlin, see John H. Dew to Polk, June 28, 1837, and William R. Rucker to Polk, June 30, 1837.
4. Andrew J. Hoover, a White elector in 1836, was chosen, but he died about a month after the General Assembly convened.
5. Levi L. Wade, a planter and businessman, was not elected in this competition but was chosen for the seat left vacant by Hoover's death.
6. Whites Store is unidentified.
7. "Mary" was probably Mary Childress, daughter of Anderson Childress, deceased, and Mary Sansom Childress.
8. This refers to the letter writer's wife, Sarah Williams Childress.

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**FROM JOSEPHUS C. GUILD**

James K. Polk, Esq.

Gallatin July 11, 1837

Yr favour has been reed.\(^1\) since which I have a Whig opponent in the person of Dr. Ried. Hogg. He with Maj. Cambell\(^2\) and all the candidates in Smith with the exception of one are advocating the establishment of a United States Bank, and as a matter of some astonishment I must inform you that a very great portion or majority of Smith seems to be in favour of this federal measure. The fact is, sir, the whole party have turned over upon this measure, are [inching] upon it, being ashamed still openly to argu the last Presidential question. It has some advocates in Sumner among the merchants, and Whites, showing that they as a party were never influenced by measures or principles, Judge W. having always taken strong ground on the power of C[ongress] to charter a Bank as well as against its expedency. The White candidates are now for instructing him to vote for a National Bank.

I must acknowledge that our friend Trousdale is hard pressed. Maj C[ampbell] & friends think he will beat, largely. My own opinion is that Trousdale will beat him one hundred votes. I think you may entertain no doubt of Bledsoe\(^8\) (V.B.) & Guilds election. It is
proberable that Stratton\(^4\) (W) will be the other Rept. Watkins\(^5\) will be beat. Our friends are divided between two (VBs) Wiley and Gilmore.\(^6\) Two (Ws) will be elected in Smith and 3 in Wilson. Will not our old friend Grundy be run hard. I am defending him on the stump.

I tell you in every corner of the state within my knowledge the White party where they have the strength, are exercising their old proscription principles. Is it possible that Grundy can not see this?

I should like to hear from you and that great man you have within your borders, Nicholson. He must be made speaker.

Jo. C. Guild

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Polk’s letter has not been found.
2. William B. Campbell of Carthage.
3. Oscar F. Bledsoe, a lawyer, had recently served in Guild’s company, which was under Trousdale’s command during the Seminole War. He represented Sumner County in the General Assembly for one term, 1837–39, and soon moved to Columbus, Mississippi, where he continued law practice and became wealthy.
4. This was probably John Stratton.
5. Charles Watkins was an early settler in Sumner County. He had served in the legislature for five nonconsecutive terms but was not elected in 1837.
6. Wiley has not been identified. Thomas Gilmore, a justice of the peace, was elected as a Democrat and served one term in the legislature. Nothing more has been learned about him.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia July 12th 1837

I hope The Union, is now placed upon solid footing. It is distressing to reflect, that during the most important period of the pending contest, we have had no central organ, through which to disseminate correct information among the people, and have been left at the mercy of the opposition press. The paper here, and those in a few other of the smaller towns, have been conducted with spirit and energy, and this effect is to be seen in the state of public opinion within the range of their circulation, but the misfortune is, that they are not extensively read beyond the Counties in which they are published. But it is useless to reflect upon things that are past, and are now beyond remedy. I hope The Union may be vigorously conducted, at all events during the short time which is to lapse before the election. It may yet be of much service to us. Our friends should see to this and
by their contributions, assist the Editor. I have confidence in the
talents and general ability of Mr [John O.] Bradford, but fear that
for want of a familiar acquaintance with our local politics, and the
course of our public men, he may be somewhat deficient in tact and
judgment.

Our opponents are now evidently directing their chief efforts to
control the Governor's election. Genl. Armstrong's prospects, I think
decidedly good. Indeed with ordinary exertions on the part of his
friends his success would have been certain. Here, as also in Bedford,
we will give him a large majority. H. L. Turney writes me that he
will receive an overwhelming majority in the mountain District; he
thinks not less than 5 to 1. I learn from J. F. Gillespy Esqr. of Mon-
roe that he will receive a large majority in that County, in Blount, in
McMinn., and throughout the Hiwassee country. My information
from other portions of East Tennessee, as also from the District, is
quite as good as I had anticipated. Still the White presses and leaders
are actively engaged in rallying their party to the polls against him,
and unless there be corresponding exertions on the part of himself and
his friends, I do not consider his election as beyond doubt. I think it
was a mistaken policy in Genl. Armstrong, to agree with Governor
Cannon to remain at home and not go out into the canvass. He had
every thing to lose, and nothing to gain by such a course. His com­
petitor had upon two former occasions, made the tour of the State as a
candidate for the same office, and was much more extensively known
personally, than he was. I have so written to the General, and urged
him, if the State of his health would possibly allow it, to spend the
few remaining weeks before the election in travelling through Giles,
Lawrence, the Tennessee River Counties, and a part at least of the
District. The most gloomy accounts I have from any part of the State
is from Giles, and the Tennessee River Country. Genl. A. is but little
known in some of these Counties, and in others his political op­
ponents have succeeded in making an unfavorable impression in re­
gard to him, especially in Giles. His personal appearance there, though
he were merely to pass through the country, without making public
speeches, would in my judgment unquestionably secure to him many
hundred votes, which he will otherwise probably not receive. I cannot
too strongly urge the necessity of his taking this course, and that im­
mEDIATELY. The propriety of it, cannot be for a moment doubtful. He
can loose nothing, & may gain much. There is no necessity for him to
go to E. Tennessee, and indeed it is now too late. He will receive his
strength there, at all events, and could not probably increase it much
by his presence. Will you see him and our other friends at Nashville
and urge upon them the necessity and importance of the course I suggest. Tell Genl. A. I saw a gentleman on yesterday who had lately passed through Perry & Wayne, who tells that not one man in ten, seemed to know that he was a candidate. Let him go there, mix with the people and distribute his circulars among them, and his interest cannot fail to be advanced.

I am satisfied from what I learn that Cave Johnson, though violently opposed, will be re-elected. Dunlap will be hardly pressed, the result doubtful. The contest between Shields and Kincannon, in the Lincoln District, will be close. Either will support the administration. H. L. Turney's election is beyond doubt. From what I learn from the Rutherford & Williamson District (and I have been lately on the border of that District, in canvassing in my own) I am satisfied that all that is necessary to enable Crockett to beat Maury, is a little more confidence on the part of our friends in Rutherford, in Crockett's strength. The active exertions of a few leading men in Rutherford could affect it. Can you not cause Col. Moses Ridley, and some other of our leading friends in Rutherford to move actively in the matter. The present indications are that Crockett will run Maury close in Williamson. What information have you from the Sumner District? I have my fears that our friend Trousdale will be closely run if not defeated. It is said the contest will be close in three of the Districts in East Tennessee, Bunch's, Lea's & Carter's. Have you any information from that quarter?

I received on yesterday a letter from the Hon. Mr. [Jabez] Jackson of Geo., and of the Ho. Repts written at the Harrodsburgs Springs Ky. who gives rather a gloomy account of our prospects in the pending congressional elections in Kentucky and Indiana. He thinks we are not certain of carrying more than 4 or 5 Representatives in the two States. Our majority in the next House will not be so large as in the last, still I think it will be divided. The Whigs will of course be prompt in their attendance at the opening of Congress in September, and the division of parties in the House will be so nearly equal, that it will be a matter of great importance to the administration, that there should be a prompt and general attendance of its friends. If in consequence of the absence of a few of the friends of the administration, the power, in the organization of the House in September, should be placed in the hands of the opposition, they will be enabled to thwart and embarrass, if not to defeat, all the leading measures of the administration during the 25th Congress. From present indications in the States where the elections are yet to take place, our majority in the House will not exceed 20, and may not be more than 10. I think it
important that our friends at Washington who are most interested, should be early reminded of the importance of taking all proper means to secure the prompt attendance of the members of the House friendly to the administration, at opening of the Session. It may be supposed that I may feel a personal interest in the matter, and therefore I do not feel that I can with propriety write to our friends at Washington on the subject. You could however do so, or might suggest it to Genl. J. who would I know cheerfully write on the subject. I should be much pleased to hear from you soon.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville and marked “Private.” This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Polk put on an optimistic front for political purposes, but his coolness toward Armstrong’s candidacy and his lack of confidence in Armstrong’s ability to win are but thinly veiled in his correspondence.

2. See Hopkins L. Turney to Polk, July 2, 1837.

3. See John F. Gillespy to Polk, July 7, 1837.

4. Both William R. Rucker and John W. Childress thought less of Crockett’s chance of success than Polk shows here. See Rucker to Polk, June 30, 1837, and Childress to Polk, July 11, 1837.

5. See Jabez Jackson to Polk, July 5, 1837.

FROM NATHANIEL SMITH

My Dear Sir New Echota Ga. 13th July 1837

I received your letter in behalf of Mr. Kincannon of McMinnville and of course gave him the appointment he asked. I have untill very lately believed we would have a numerious Emigration this fall. Since Mr. Jno. Ross returned I discover a great change in the deportment of the Cherokees. They are more distant and less disposed to mix with the whites, particularly in the Counties of Floyd, Paulding, Cherokee, & Gilmer Ga. & in the mountains of North Carolina. Many have already removed from those Counties to the mountains & more preparing to go. Their movements are so misterious that the white inhabitants have become alarmed & petitioned the governor of Georgia for military aid. Col. Lindsey who is now in command of the army of the Cherokee Country is organizing a force of 10 or 12 companies, and will in a few days exhibit some 3 or 4 companies in these county which I hope will keep them from commencing hostilities. But if we get them off with out Bloodshed I shall be disappointed. It is said here that they have it in contemplation at Washington to appoint a third comr. to aid in
adjudicating the claims under the Cherokee Treaty. I deem the measure a very judicious one & hope it may be done, and if Tennessee is entitled I would like to see our mutual friend Jno. F. Gillespie⁶ get the appointment. He is eminently qualified for such business.

NAT SMITH

Addressed to Columbia.
1. New Echota was located on the Oostanaula River, a tributary of the Coosa River, in the northeast corner of Georgia, at about the present site of Resaca. It was an important crossroads in the Cherokee country.
2. John Ross was the principal chief of the Cherokees. He had long opposed Cherokee emigration to the trans-Mississippi country and had recently returned from Washington, where he had been pleading the rights of the Cherokees.
3. Reference is probably to William Lindsay, a colonel in the Second Regiment of the United States Artillery at this time.
4. The word disappointed is used here in the sense of surprised.
5. John F. Gillespy of Monroe County.

FROM ALFRED FLOURNOY

Dear Friend Pulaski 15th July 1837

Your kind favour of the 11th Inst. is at hand as also another of older date which would have been answered before but I have waited until I could see some of our friends, more especially Thos. C. Porter since he has become a candidate.¹ He however is in Lincoln, and I have not been able to see [him]. At the time I concluded to withdraw all my pretensions as a candidate I had an interview with Porter, and urged him to become a candidate on conditions. I told him so far as I knew any thing of the wishes of the friends of the administration if he would say he could vote for the reelection of Mr Grundy to the U. S. Senate I thought the road he would have to pass over would be smoother. He appeared to have some conscientious scruples and declined coming out on terms—said however he would think, and see me again. We had no other conversation on the subject. When however he thought proper to come out I saw my name attached with others to the letter of invitation. I presume from that circumstance, for I had no hand in bringing him out, that on that subject his scruples can be easily removed. I cannot say what his prospects are.

I sorry to say to you that the prospects of Gen Armstrong are bad in this County. It appears that the Volunteers are against him.² Gen Armstrong was not known in this County before the Florida Campaign,
and all the prejudices of the people have been imbibed from the Volunteers. Such feelings are hard to remove. Cannon has no popularity. What can be done for Armstrong here will be done. I cannot say whether a visit from him would effect any thing or not. Unless the Volunteers would receive him kindly I fear it would be a bad business. Some of the most influential amongst them are decidedly opposed to him. I will see some of the Big Creek Volunteers, and if a majority of them can be induced to sign a letter of invitation or express a wish to see him here as a candidate I will address you or him on the subject. It is that company that has produced the most clamour against him.

From all I can learn the two Browns will be elected to the legislature from this county. Mr. N. S. Brown has received a few days past a letter from Mr E[phraim] H. Foster on the subject of the Bank. A private letter from Nashville from another individual requested that the friends of Mr. Foster would make application in writing to Mr. Brown for leave to publish it in the Trumpet of Liberty. Application was made to me to know if I would not join in the request to have the precious document brought to light. I declined, and have not heard of it since. I will however try and get a look at it.

The Friends of a U. S. Bank are on the increase here. I do believe that in less than one year if there is not an immense reaction in money matters it would carry by overwhelming majority here. I believe none of our candidates are avowedly in favour of a Bank, tho N. S. Brown and Estis would vote for no man who was opposed to one. Porter is right on that subject.

Our candidates are all pledged against bringing on the Senatorial election at the next Legislature. There can be no doubt however that if it does come they will vote against Grundy viz. N. S. Brown and Estis if elected would do so. Nor do I think if the White party has the majority they would oppose the election coming on.

It was impossible for us to bring out another candidate of our party for the Legislature. It was hard to get out the one we have, and I fear we may lose him. Our friends who were qualified to debate before the people could not be induced to present their claims. The one of all others, viz. A. V. Brown, who ought to have tried, got a little appointment and cut out. He will always do so whenever any risk is to be run.

I am always happy to hear from you. I do assure you that it would grieve me more for you to be put down in your district than to hear of the failure of any other man on earth. There is but one question I fear will react against you and that is the Bank question. I tell you Sir that if times continue as they are much longer, those who are
opposed in principle to the Bank will cease their opposition and let its
friends carry it through. I think you have more cause to fear that
question than all others.

When you have leisure let me hear from you. Please remember me
kindly to Mrs. Polk.

ALFRED FLOURNOY

P.S. Colo. [A.M.M.] Upshaw has just returned home via the Western
District. He is a decided Armstrong man. He said to me yesterday that
Armstrong would be badly beaten in the District.

A. F.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Porter was a Giles County farmer who had formerly lived in David­
son County. He served as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of
1834, but was never elected to the General Assembly. No letters written by
Polk to Flournoy in 1837 have been found.

2. As commander of Tennessee troops during the Seminole War, Arm­
strong was criticized because his troops were not well supplied. The volun­
teeers who had not been accepted for active service tended to hold him re­
sponsible for their inability to get paid for the time they were away from
home. During the gubernatorial campaign, money was appropriated for their
pay, and Newton Cannon claimed credit for getting them paid.

3. As predicted, Neill S. Brown and William R. Brown were elected. The
former, a young lawyer and a Whig, was just beginning a long and successful
political career. William R. Brown apparently became a candidate of the
Democrats when his brother, Aaron V. Brown, declined. William Brown was
a well-to-do farmer and served only a single term in the legislature.

4. Alston B. Estes, a cousin of A. O. P. Nicholson, had been connected
with newspapers in Middle Tennessee for a long time, the most recent being
the Pulaski Trumpet of Liberty. See Alfred Flournoy to Polk, August 26,
1835, and A. O. P. Nicholson to Polk, February 7, 1836.

5. Flournoy's disappro,al of Brown's political actions was expressed in
his letter to Polk, April 24, 1837.

FROM J. A. W. ANDREWS

Purdy, July 16, 1837

Andrews thinks that the economic condition of the country will enable a
violent Whig, Christopher H. Williams, to defeat William C. Dunlap. He says
that neither gubernatorial candidate is known to the people of his region and
that it is impossible to predict the outcome of the election there.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A former resident of Maury County, Andrews was known to Polk and
had been asked to report on politics in his county.
2. Lying about fifteen miles west of the Tennessee River, Purdy was near the center of McNairy County. It was for some years the county seat.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Dear Sir

Nashville 16 July 1837

Since the receipt of your last I have through my friends made one or two attempts to get away from Gov. Cannon. He was willing but would himself have went with the Paymaster on his present Trip into [Hopkins L.] Turneys District and perhaps have done Turney more injury than I could have done myself service. I was advised by my friends here Carroll, Grundy, Graham, etc. to remain. I will satisfy you when I see you that it is perhaps best. I have been governed by them in all things, for I am myself ready to do anything in my power in any way now and here after.

My friends write me good news. How it realy is I know not. The currency and Bank question seems to have taken full posession of the people. I fear for [Cave] Johnston and report says Turney will be hard run. [John C.] McLemore writes that Dunlap is pressd and [William] Trousdale is himself alarmed. We may carry the ticket in this County but I assure it is doubtfull. I write for yourself of course. The old Genl is well. Excuse my haste.

R. ARMSTRONG

We will have to fight for the next four years any way. We are now only half armed and equipt for the frolic.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Capt. David Perkins of the U.S. Army was moving through parts of Tennessee paying off Volunteers who had traveled at their own expense to the point where they were to be mustered for service against the Seminoles, only to be told that they would not be needed. Because of his position as commander of the Tennessee Volunteers, Armstrong was blamed for failure to pay these travel expenses. Cannon was using that as an issue in his campaign against Armstrong.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir

Pulaski July 18th 1837

This is the 3rd time I have attempted a reply to yours of the 11th Inst. each time more like making a book than writing a letter. Though you had marked it like the McKissack letter, I shewed it to our true & trusty friends in this quarter, who with shame & confusion
acknowledge the truth of many of your observations. It is too late to correct our blunders now except by inducing our Candidates to promise not to bring on the Senatorial election this fall. I cannot but think that but for my long absence, things would have been better managed hereabouts. Our old friend Felix [Grundy], I hope will be able to parry the blow, the vindictive blow so ungenerously & untimely aimed at him. I fear for Armstrong, noble hearted & generous as I have always known him to be, he is nevertheless not without his enemies. Those too who were expected to have been his very best friends. All however shall be done for him that can be, between this & the election. Kincannon is gaining on Shields but I think hardly fast enough to overtake him in the short remaining stretch of the race. Most of the Vans will go for him except the new converts of the Bank. But not with that warmth & eagerness, as if he had been called for by them. They regard it as a sort of Duress which he has imposed on them himself in precipitating himself as a candidate for congress at the very first moment the result of the Presidential election had been ascertained in this district. Want of concert will probably loose us the Legislative elections. If [it] should turn out so, it will prove one of the bitter but not unexpected fruits of the defection of Judge White.

I learn from one of my friends that you complain of the use made of my name as one of the publishers. I acquired my interest with a double view 1st of protecting myself & friends from proscription, for the course we were taking in the Presidential election, if any newspaper organ should be necessary for that purpose. 2nd. As an act of charity & benevolence toward the Widow & children of my deceased relative Lewis H. Brown. One of his Sons was learning the business & I thought when he became old enough I might be the means of setting [him] up in his proper vocation. I forbad the use of my name as Editor but when it was suggested that it might be useful to those whose benefit I intended it, I consented to its use as publisher, not anticipating that it would take so violent a course as it has done, nor indeed, (on account of my absence) knowing much of what course it was actually pursuing, until since my return. I shall take care soon to place it in a new attitude, as I am unwilling for my name if it can do so, to inflict a wound on the feelings of my political friends, although it should be contributing to the support of the destitute & needy.

But I am running into Book the 3rd & therefore I shall forbear until I see you which I expect will be shortly as I set out early next week on one of my yearly tours to Rutherford.

A. V. Brown
Addressed to Columbia.

1. This letter has not been found.

2. See William J. Whitthorne to Polk, March 27, 1837, and Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, March 29, 1837.

3. This probably refers to the Volunteers in the recent Seminole War, who were opposing Armstrong.

4. Lewis H. Brown was sheriff of Giles County from about 1824 until the latter part of 1831.

5. The only issue of the Pulaski *Trumpet of Liberty* now available, dated October 11, 1838, carried the name of H. R. Brown as the publisher. It is probable that he was the son of Lewis H. Brown mentioned here.

6. It is possible that Aaron V. Brown was more politically astute than some of his Pulaski associates knew. The single extant issue of the Pulaski *Trumpet of Liberty*, carried, in a prominent place, announcement of “Polk for Governor” and “Aaron V. Brown for Congress.”

FROM GEORGE R. POWEL

My Dear Sir Rogersville T. 18 July 1837

Yours of ____ date¹ was duly reed & should have been attended to long since, but owing to my incompetency to give you the information desired I have deferred it until the present time. Genl. Armstrong will, in my estimation wherever his claims are canvassed & known, get a heavy vote, but owing to his not being acquainted here & his opponent pretty well known will I have no doubt operate against him. He should doubtless have visited our end of the state. Sullivan & Hawkins I think will give him majorities, the former large the latter not so large. Nor do I speak confidently of this County [Hawkins] owing to the fact that there is less excitement upon the subject of Elections than I ever knew. We will endeavour however to give him a good vote. I feel that aside from party considerations, that Cannons inefficiency is a disgrace to the state. South of the river Greene, Washington etc our folks I am informed will carry most of their candidates, & the Genl will get a heavy vote.

I have been so busily engaged attending to my private concerns that I have hardly had time to think much less do much in the present contest, tho I have taken care that my neighbors are not led astray. I feel that the struggle to get our state upon her true ground ought to animate us all, & so far as I am concerned I shall hereafter always be at my post. This year altho I could have run without opposition & if I had have had any, could have been elected with ease, still my private concerns were in such a condition that I could not possibly take the field. In regard to [Abraham] McClellan I think he will get a large
vote altho I fear he cannot be elected. He has just returned from the Cherokee country, & four fifths of the people did not know that he was a candidate until within a few days. Sullivan will give him an over whelming vote & my present impression is that this county will give him a majority, so say his friends, but the other side count largely.

I am aware that an effort will be made to bring on the senatorial election prematurely so as to beat Grundy but hope they cannot succeed. We will exert ourselves here to prevent it. The administration will be decidedly stronger in the Legislature from this end of the state than last year. We hope to send a Van Buren man from this County & altho my place may possibly be supplied with an individual of different politicks, still the district is decidedly Van Buren & we can I think control his vote. He has been suffered to run alone until lately, & I fear it is too late [to] beat him altho we have the strength. I hope [however] it may turn out differently. Greene & Washington I think will both send our friends. Bradley for this senatorial district we expect will be hard run if not beaten by Balch altho the Judge has in his late production tried to jerk him up. I feel much interest in the present contest & hope the state may be redeemed. I am glad to see you have not opposition & hope to see you on your way to Washington. Will [Jonas E.] Thomas & Nicholson be elected? Will [Powhatan] Gordon or [Terry H.] Cahal? How is Turney, Cave Johnson etc doing ? Please write me on receipt of this. A severe contest is waging between Carter & Arnold south of the river, the result doubtful. Arnold Administration. Remember me to Thomas & Nicholson & accept my best wishes for your health & happiness.

Geo. R. Powel

Mrs. Powel wishes to be remembered to Mrs Polk.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The writer left a blank at this point, probably expecting to insert the proper date before mailing the letter. No letters written in 1837 by Polk to Powel have been found.

2. Powel was succeeded by Abraham V. Hulse of Sullivan County. Hulse died in December 1837, however, and was succeeded by David Shaver.

3. Orville T. Bradley was a Hawkins County lawyer who amassed a considerable fortune. Although a Democrat, he opposed Van Buren and supported White, under whom he had read law.

4. John T. Balch did, indeed, defeat Bradley. Balch was an elderly veteran of the Revolutionary War and had served several terms in the General Assembly, the first as early as 1819. He was a son of the Rev. Hezekiah Balch.

5. Judge Hugh L. White.
FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir,

Nashville, Tennessee 19 July 1837

The articles which allude directly to Bell, Foster &c. as supporting Armstrong are on Grundy's policy. When he was out at Hardin Court he there met Andy Martin, who expressed great anxiety how those gentlemen were expected to shape their course, alleging or intimating that there was a distinct understanding amongst them that all must go in for Cannon as the party candidate & that his course was taken with reference to the understanding & not from individual approval of Cannon. Grundy did not then know how Bell was expected to vote and after coming home took pains to ascertain (which he did) that Bell had said he would vote for Armstrong. This, however was before Armstrong responded to the final letter. So anxious was Grundy to produce a family quarrel that all were willing here that some allusion should be made to the prominent White men about Nashville as supporting Armstrong which Martin would understand as including Bell & Foster. When they were afterwards introduced into the paper by name, I had not expected it, but Grundy approves it, as forestalling those gentlemen from operating at a distance, and exposing them to White & East Tenn. Martin will not break with them and was doing them but eyeservice before.

Whilst Armstrong was confined with chills & fevers, an arrangement was made through Ch. I. Love with Cannon that neither of them would leave home to electioneer, and that compact still binds them. Had Armstrong been well and able to travel, the policy of the arrangement would have been more doubtful especially as he was a stranger to the people & Cannon had already canvassed them on former occasions but were Cannon now footloose to traverse the Country & make demagogue speeches (which Armstrong cannot) there might be as much lost as gained. Armstrong could have done a good deal could he have gone early to East Tennessee but it is now too late even if the compact were dissolved. Could he leave home at all that is the point at which the most could be done in the least time.¹

The prospects generally are not very flattering. Cave Johnson is hard run, so is Turney, so is Trousdale, the chances are against the latter. The accounts are that Dunlap will be beat, so will G. S. Crockett, and the possibility is that you may return to Washington alone instead of having a majority. You must make the best you can of Shields as he will probably beat Kincannon. If Huntsmans late letter appended to Whites thing be volunteered you have had more confidence in him than I ever had, or than he ever deserved. [David]
Craighead & co are still ahead here but hard pressed. Heaven & earth is stirred to defeat them.

GRAHAM

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Polk’s views about Armstrong’s campaign strategy were quite different. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, July 12, 1837.

FROM WILLIAM MOORE

My D. Sir. Fayetteville 19th July 1837

A few days since yours came to hand which is not before me, though the contents fresh in mind.¹

I now inform you that Lincoln is doing well. A call has been made on all the Candidates for state Legislature to give their sentiments on all leading Questions & they have answered them satisfactory, all against Bell, Payton, Foster & Co, Anti Bank & pledge to support the Administration. I have but little doubt of [George W.] Jones’ success. I also think [Thomas C.] Porter will be Elected, who is openly vs all Bank men for the U S Senate. Genl Armstrong is doing well, though not as well as I could wish. I think he will get a majority in Lincoln.

I have a few Nos. of the Union 12th Inst. This paper is of great worth at present. Col. Kincannon is in a fair way to be elected.

WILLIAM MOORE

Let me hear from you often

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The Polk letter referred to here has not been found.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Sir Nashville 20th July 1837

I am here to day and will return in a few hours to look at some papers with the view of taking some notice of the judges reply to the Genl. which I have just seen.¹

Our friends at Washington will be advised of the importance of an early attendance of the members at the call session. There never was so critical a period as now exists in the republican character of the country. The enemies of our principles have the advantage ground in the discussion of the embarrassments that have befallen the country.
In this state we have not had the men generally capable of explaining the cause of these embarrassments. Wherever we have had such men the people remain true to this republicanism, and the Federalists are left as usual to the consequences of their folly and ambition.

Genl. Armstrong will not have it in his power, as we are aware, to visit the people. The arrangement to this effect with Cannon will no doubt be a disadvantage to him in some districts, but in others it may not. From all the information we receive his election is certain if our friends half do their duty.

I am not able to speak confidently of Trousdale's success.\(^2\) He has not been to see us. I fear that his position in respect to the Banks and particularly as to what ought to be done at present are rather too radical. He is bold, fearless, and talented, and is right in politics. His opponent I understand knows how to play off Bell's arguments about currency &c. The people not understanding the subject may therefore allow their disgust at the shin plaster system to carry them too far on the side of a national Bank as the best remedy.

I will write you again as soon as I prepare something for Saturdays Union. With sincere regards to your lady. . . .

A. J. Donelson

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Polk to Andrew Jackson, June 14, 1837, especially footnote 6.
2. Trousdale was defeated by William B. Campbell.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

Hon and Dr Sir  
Nashville Ju[ly] 22nd [1837]\(^1\)

Your letter came in hand in due time, and I have been waiting the receipt of news from east Tennessee in order to answer it. This has just arrived and is of the most flattering kind. The individuals from whom the information is derived Genl Armstrong says are men of standing and capability for judging, and their report is that Cannon will be beat in every county but one. The news received here from the Congressional Districts is also much more encouraging and our knowing friends here think that you will certainly have a majority of the Tennessee Delegation with you in the next Congress.

In relation to the course which the "Union" has taken upon the gubernatorial election I can only say that my opinion agrees with yours. I was opposed to a temporary policy but our friends here went for it unanimously and of course I submitted.
I am sorry to find so much excitement against me in Columbia, especially from those of whom I expected better things. You have no doubt seen the base and unprincipled sneer at me in the "[Observer]." It is as false as malicious, and will no doubt injure me with many persons, the idea of which is very painful, but I hope my friends will not desert my cause, as I can never give up there. It was to avoid inconvenience that I left, and also for the purpose of extending and defending so far as I am able, the political faith in which I was raised and for which I cherish a filial regard. These people take the wrong method to convince me that the lessons of my father are erroneous. I should be glad to hear how you are getting on in Maury especially with the senatorial election as there is some interest felt here upon the subject.

JOHN O. BRADFORD

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The Library of Congress has supplied the correct year for the letter. The month in which it was written—July, rather than June—has been derived from internal evidence. It was on July 8, 1837, that Bradford became editor of the Nashville Union.

2. Polk's letter has not been found.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Sir

Bolivar July 23 1837

In reply to yours of the 18th. I regret to say our political prospects are not so bright as when I last addressed you. My private opinion is Dunlap is beaten; his course is such as to leave him but few warm friends. He could easily [have] sustained himself if he had been decisive on the side of his choice. He himself is in good heart. Says he will have majorities in 6 of his 7 Counties. I doubt it and if he even had, he might be beaten by the overwhelming vote of Hardeman.

The Late Post office advertisement will be the portent for the loss of many votes here. The people say he [Dunlap] has "done nothing" and should have had influence enough to keep things as they were.

It is indeed a sore cut to the friends of the Administration here to have the great road taken from them to accomodate no one—no town or community—at additional expense, without even a proposal in the advertisement to save a moments time. We must now look to you & you alone, for justice in this matter. It can be easily arranged at the time of taking the contracts.
Saltmarsh has written the P M Genl. from here that he decidedly prefers this road & that there would be no saving of stock or time to adopt the other, & he even doubts its practicability to be used in the Winter & Springs months.³

Crisp will be pressed by Tarver for the Lower house, but I think he is safe. Coe will succeed for Senate. I think without doubt Humphreys will beat Douglass⁴ perhaps 100 votes is the best information from Fayette. Topp⁵ (Very moderate Whig) will be elected from Shelby—Glenn⁶ (V.B.) from Tipton. Bradford & Martin are without opposition in Madison. McNairy is doubtful but [John M.] Johnson (Whig) most likely to succeed. In Haywood they may do as they please—all whigs as I understand it.

I apprehend we are badly beaten for Governor—the people are asleep as to that Election. We fail to get up excitement for Armstrong & the people care not for Cannon, but will vote for him because he is in. Armstrong should have come round. The general suspension has worked death to the cause of free principles.⁷ People are slaves to money, and every act has been exercised to induce a belief it is all the fault of the “Government Experiment.” But for the Crisis all was safe. My regards to Mrs Polk.

JNO. H. BILLS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Polk's letter has not been found.

2. Through local newspapers, the Post Office Department invited bids on contracts for carrying the mails. The routes were described in the advertisement. A change affecting Hardeman County involved one of the connections between Memphis and Nashville northward. Instead of passing through Bolivar as it had in the past, it would pass through Estanaula, a small village on the Hatchie River in the southeastern corner of Haywood County.

3. Both D. A. Saltmarsh and Orlando Saltmarsh regularly obtained mail routes in several southeastern states. Amos Kendall was the Postmaster General.

4. Burchett Douglass served numerous terms in the General Assembly from 1821 to 1842; he was Speaker of the House and represented Fayette County, 1837–39 and 1841–42.

5. Robertson Topp, a Memphis lawyer, served in the General Assembly for two terms, 1835–39. He was a Whig. He was prominent in the development of Memphis and was involved in a number of railroad-building enterprises.

6. Phillip R. Glenn was a lawyer in Covington, Tipton County. A Democrat, he was elected to the General Assembly in 1837 and served four non-consecutive terms in that body.
7. In May 1837, New York banks followed the lead of smaller banks throughout the country and suspended specie payments. From that time, the effect of the depression on political trends became more and more obvious.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Coln

Murfreesborough July 23rd 1837

I think we have now gotten things in a proper train to secure the Election of most and perhaps all of our political friends in this County. John R Laughlin has gotten relieved from the embarrassment under which he labored in consequence of the slanders of his Enemies.¹ He now stands "rectus in curia"² & the persecution has produced a reaction that will be of great service to him; and in fact it has produced a change in the tide of politicks that will be of service to all of our Candidates. It is generally conceded that Laughlin is the foremost man and it is understood that there will be a warm contest between, Hoover, Wade &, Fletcher, who is to be the next foremost. This naturally begets a jealousy between the two whigs which will of necessity lessen the strength of both of them. This is not the case between Laughlin & Fletcher & our friends will run them both and I am strongly in hopes that they will both be elected. Fletcher is gaining every day. Keeble we think is doing well. It will be a hard contest but we believe that he will be elected. Crockets friends are increasing by hundreds. I saw him yesterday. He is very sanguine & in high spirits. What a jubilee it will be for us if we should elect all our Candidates.

We are all well. Tell Johanna³ to be a good gal.

W. R. Rucker

Addressed to Columbia.

¹. See John H. Dew to Polk, June 28, 1837; William R. Rucker to Polk, June 30, 1837; and John W. Childress to Polk, July 11, 1837.
². Rectus in curia, "upright in court"—that is, with clean hands.
³. Rucker's daughter, Johanna, was visiting in Columbia.

FROM LAWSON GIFFORD

Dear Sir

Jonesborough [Tennessee] July 26th [1837]¹

Your letter² was received in due time, & I thank you for the suggestions, & in answer as to Gen Armstrong's success in East Tennessee I can say candidly that he will get a large majority of votes in this end of the state. Gen Arnold is running Gen Carter a hard race & it is
very likely he will succeed. You may recollect Arnold; he made some fuss in Congress 4 or 5 years ago & had a fracas with Maj. Heard. His politicks is some what better than Carter's, altho opposition. Col. Bunch in the 2nd District has opposition in the person of Col. McClellan, a relation of Col. Looney of your town, & a good man & true. I think its likely that Bunch will succeed though. We will send some Van members to the next Legislature, but I am rather fearful that it will be a Whig Legislature, and that they will bring on the Election of Senator. The leaders of the opposition, here think that Peyton will succeed Grundy. God forbid it. Joseph Williams, son of Col John's will be elected from the Knox District (3d). He is no friend to his uncle H. L. White.

LAWSON GIFFORD

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The year for this letter was supplied correctly by the Library of Congress.

2. Polk's letter has not been found.

3. In April 1832, during the excitement in Congress over the Houston-Stanbery affair, Thomas D. Arnold made a speech in the House in which he was critical of Houston and, by implication, of Jackson. Arnold said that he was ashamed that his state had ever elected as its governor a man like Houston. Morgan A. Heard, a former army officer and a friend of Houston, met Arnold on the street and warned him that he intended to chastise him. They exchanged charges in the local press, and in May, Heard met Arnold as he was leaving the Capitol and attempted to cane him. Arnold defended himself with a sword-cane. Heard pulled out a pistol and fired one shot, which barely grazed Arnold's arm, while the latter continued his attack with the sword-cane until he was restrained.

4. Abraham Looney was a Columbia merchant whose family once resided in East Tennessee.

FROM JOHN F. GILLESPY

Dear Sir Madisonville [Tennessee] 26 July 1837

Since I last wrote to you the Opposition have by desperate efforts, and the most [in]def[atig]able industry succeeded in a great measure in getting up the question in this quarter. The Knoxville Register the organ of Judge White, edited by his soninlaw, some weeks since made a strong appeal to the people not to support Armstrong who would not declare hostility to the present administration, unless they were willing to destroy the Judge's prospects abroad, as the election of Armstrong would be regarded as a triumph of Van B. over White in Tennessee.
July 26 1837

This was the signal for action by the White partisans, who immediately proclaimed the introduction of Armstrong in the field as an attack upon White at home, and we are now compelled to meet them in open combat not to defeat Cannon, (that would be an achievement easily to be accomplished) but to beat White, who is virtually A’s competitor “hic opus est.” But still believe that although the election now rests in this quarter upon the question that we shall beat them in Bradly McMinn Monroe and Blount, and probably in East Tennessee.

I think that the Judge is still influenced, whether by his own self-sufficiency, or by encouragement from some persons who wish to use him to answer their own purposes, in the vain belief that the opposition will yet take him up and run him against V. B four years hence. His friends here are very clamorous in publishing his political integrity, & consistency, and in claiming for him and his party all the patriotism and republicanism of the country. We have arrived at a most lamentable crisis in the destiny of this Government if, according to the doctrine of the White Whigs here, who disclaim Communion with the Harrison party and denounce the V. B. party as worse, the little squad who supported White for president are the only Orthodox republicans in the United States. But small as is the number, they most confidently assert claims and insist that public sentiment shall potens volens be revolutionized into an adoption of their political Creed. If such a party with such a leader among such a people is to be viewed as the forlorn hope of the republicans of this country, well might the genius of freedom turn with disgust from the sight, drop a tear of remorse and take her flight forever from amongst us. The candidates in this County and district for the legislature are pledged to oppose bringing on the Senatorial election.

JOHN F. GILLESPY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The editor was W. B. A. Ramsey. He was married to a family connection of Hugh L. White, but was not White’s son-in-law.
2. Hic opus est, “here is the work.”

FROM JAMES N. SMITH

Sir, Covington July 26th 1837

I receivd your lettir a few days past, and have been absent from Covington for some days or I should have answered you sooner. Your
remarks as respecting the candidates for Governor was correct. In this part of the district all the White party was speaking in Terms almost degrading respecting governor Cannons insufficiency for the Chief Officer of the state, but they now rally around him, and endeavor to have him elected. My opinion is that in Tipton, Armstrong will get a small majority, also in Lauderdale. It will be a close election in Fayette. In Madison Cannon will get a large Majority. In Haywood the contest will be nearly divided, but Cannon will get the majority. Gnl. Armstrong will get a much stronger vote in the District than was given to Mr Vanburen. Glenn will be elected in this County (administration) and it will be very uncertain whether Hess of Haywood (administration) or Grove will be elected. Genl. Bradford will be the senator from this District. He is a warm friend of Armstrong tho an antiadministration man.

Dunlap's Majority in this, [and in] Lauderdale County will be diminished—his election very uncertain. It is thought that it will be a close election in Fayette for the House of Representatives between Humphreys & Douglass. My opinion is that Humphreys will be elected. It is thought that Coe will beat Alexander for the senate.

There is not a great exciteinent in this county for the election of congress, a great many not friendly to Dunlap or Williams either. The friends of the administration will be active here, altho the opposition are powerfull.

JAMES N. SMITH

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Smith was a former resident of Maury County and had once taught Polk in a common school. He moved to Covington and was postmaster there from 1836 to 1839.
2. Covington was the county seat of Tipton County.
3. Polk's letter has not been found.
4. William R. Hess, Democrat, and William B. Grove, Whig, were both lawyers and early settlers in Haywood County. Grove won the election and served a single term.
5. Burchett Douglass, a Whig, beat West H. Humphreys.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir Springfield [Tennessee] July 30 [1837]

I have finished Robertson and am inclined to think I shall get a better vote than I did before agt him. I do not think it can be worse with me than to balance Hickman & Robertson. Montgomery is nearly
balanced, in Dickson I expect at least 300 majority, in Humphreys 75, in Benton 175, in Stewart 150. This is the worst side of the case in my estimation. We will soon know the truth. We have a good deal of excitement here. The other election is thought of, at least the Gov. election is scarcely spoken of. Many volunteers here do not support Armstrong. I will write you a statement Thursday week.

My respects to Madam.

C. JOHNSON

Seal will be elected here with all the weight Cheatham can pack on him.3

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The Library of Congress has supplied the correct year.
2. Johnson's opponent in the congressional race was Richard Cheatham.
3. Johnson's reference to William Seal's race for the legislature is obscure; Seal was a Democrat and Cheatham, a Whig.

FROM CLEMENT C. CLAY1

My dear Sir, Huntsville, [Alabama] July 31st 1837

Your much esteemed favor of the 26th. ult.2 was duly received, before my departure from Tuskaloosa, and I have delayed my answer in hope of rendering it more satisfactory. I am much gratified with your concurrence with my views on the subject of the U. S. Bank, tho I could have anticipated no less from my knowledge of your sentiments heretofore. I thought it decidedly proper, that I should make myself distinctly understood, to put the people of Alabama on their guard against the wiley management of the friends of the Bank; and as I was there before them as a candidate for reelection to the Office of Governor, and did not know but I might be called on to go to the Senate, I thought it fair to apprise them of my views on the subject, that they might the better determine whether I longer merited their confidence. I have no doubt the effects will be fortunate in every point of view.

Mrs. C. has not yet fully decided whether she will go on with me to Washington at this time, her health being delicate, and the season so oppressive and unfavorable. I think it probable, however, that she will accompany me.

Will Mrs. P. accompany you, or wait till winter? Where will you board, and who will probably compose your mess?3

Is it your opinion that the called session will terminate before the time appointed for the annual meeting of Congress? Or, if it should, in
time for us to return home? I have supposed Congress would continue
to sit till spring, without any recess, but would be glad of your opinion.

Mrs. C. unites with me in the kindest regards for Mrs. P. & your-
self.

C. C. CLAY

P.S. Let me hear from you, in reply, as early as may suit your con-
venience.

C. C. C.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Clement Comer Clay grew up in East Tennessee but moved to Ala-
bama in 1811 and practiced law. He was elected circuit court judge in 1819
and became chief justice of Alabama in 1820. He was elected to the state
legislature in 1827 and served as speaker. He was a Democrat congressman
from Alabama, 1829–35; governor, 1836–37; United States senator, 1837–41;
and returned to the state supreme court in 1843. He was a close political ally
and personal friend of Polk.

2. Polk’s letter has not been found.

3. Polk and Clay had been boardinghouse mates during four of the nine
congressional sessions in which they served together.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir—

Nashville Augt 4th 1837

We have been defeated in this county altogether, but not badly. I
do not know the exact state of the polls. I shall start for Washing-
on Monday in the stage to Louisville. Mrs Grundy, Maria & Ann
McGavock¹ will accompany me. Cannot you and Mrs Polk go on that
early. If not, you will probably overtake us. You should not delay.
We have succeeded in Baltimore.² I have heard from no other County
certainly, but from the accounts here, Childress is beaten by Marshal³
in Williamson.

FELIX GRUNDY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Maria was Grundy’s daughter, and Ann McGavock was a grand-
daughter. The daughter and granddaughter, however, were nearly the same
age.

2. It is probable that Grundy had news from Baltimore that had not yet
reached Columbia.

3. John Marshall, a lawyer from Williamson County, represented that
county in the state senate, 1837–41.
FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Coln. Murfreesboro Friday 4th Augt 1837

We are beaten. Hoover's & Ledbetter's election is sure. Wade & Fletcher are contending for the second representative; Wade ahead 70 votes. Six or seven precincts to be heard from, which it is supposed will give majorities for Fletcher but whether they will be sufficiently large to put him a head of Wade is doubtful. It was impossible for our friends to preserve any concert in their movements. Laughlin & Fletchers friends became jealous of each other, in consequence of the impression being gotten up that Hoover was ahead, & Laughlins defalcations operated powerfully against him with a good many of our friends and not only against him but against all of our candidates. A good many of our friends turned against Keeble because they could make friends for Crocket among the Ledbetter people. There never was the like known for bartering in any election. Crocket will not beat Maury more than between four & 5 hundred votes in this County. We have all been very much deceived in our calculations. Cannon will beat Armstrong 5 to one.

W. R. RUCKER

Fletcher majority over Wade 47
Crocketts " over Maury 418
Ledbetter " " Keeble 496

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Col Bolivar Aug 5, 1837

We have succeeded in electing Crisp by a majority of 149 votes over our late member Esq. Tarver. Dunlaps case is hopeless; we do not desire to hear from the Eastern Counties. Enough has allready transpired to settle his case.

Humphreys, poor fellow, who was to have had a clear course, is beaten by Douglass.

Coe we think has succeeded by a small majority. Armstrong has run better so far as we have heard that I expected. At this place the votes were equal, but the out precincts knew him not.

JNO. H. BILLS

Addressed to Columbia.
FROM GEORGE R. POWEL

My Dear Sir, Rogersville. 5 July [August] 1837

I have the pleasure to inform you that our County is disenthralled & redeemed. Altho Rogers is elected to the Legislature by a close vote still we have given Armstrong a tremendous majority and McClellan a small majority. Hulse Anti-Administration is Elected in my place, [John] Balch has beat [Orville T.] Bradley and McClellan we have this moment ascertained has beaten Bunch by a respectable majority. Huzza!! Carter has beaten Arnold. Dulaney elected in Sullivan. I have learned that Jno E. Wheeler has beaten Bratcher & David Rogers for senate below this—Wheeler Adm. Armstrong got a tremendous vote in Sullivan, Washington & Green. In Claiborne & Grainger Cannons majorities were considerable. This is all the news I can gather. The Whigs here are thunder struck. They little calculated on Bunches de-feat.

GEO. R. POWEL

P.S. I inclose the vote of this County.4

GRP

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Powel clearly wrote July, but he writes about results of an election that took place early in August. Furthermore, the letter was postmarked August 5, 1837.

2. Abraham V. Hulse was elected, but he died on December 4, 1837, and was succeeded by David Shaver.

3. Powel was misinformed. Ferrell H. Bratcher, a Whig of Campbell County, won the election, succeeding David Rogers of Claiborne, the incumbent. John R. Wheeler was elected to the state senate two years later.

4. No such enclosure has been found.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir Columbia Augt. 6th 1837

You will no doubt receive the result of the elections here, before this reaches you. In my District we have elected 5 Van-Buren men and one White-man (who is pledged to act with us) to the Legislature. Armstrong did not run as well here as I anticipated. He committed a fatal mistake, when he entered into the compact with Cannon not to travel through the state. The annunciation too, that Bell and Foster supported him, injured him with some of the Van-Buren men here and in Bedford, and did not secure him a single White vote.
August 6 1837

I will leave for Washington in four or five days, and will be at the Hermitage on Friday or Saturday next. If you have not written to any of the Georgia Delegation apprising them of the great importance of their prompt attendance at Washington at the opening of Congress in September, I suggest to you, that you immediately write to Genl. Glascock Dr Haynes, and Mr Owens, and request them to see or write to the other members of their delegation. You may rely upon it, that the opponents of the administration will be in attendance, and will not fail to avail themselves of any accidental advantage they may possess, should the friends of the administration, not be in attendance. Have you written to our friends at Washington on the subject?

JAMES K. POLK

P. S. I have just heard from Hickman. Johnson's majority over Cheatham in that County is 720 votes. Armstrong's majority over Cannon, is 418 votes. The Van-Buren candidates for the Senate & Ho. Repts. elected.

J. K. P.

Addressed to Nashville. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Thomas Glascock of Augusta, Charles E. Haynes of Sparta, and George W. Owens of Savannah were representing Georgia in the United States House of Representatives.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

Hermitage August 6th, 1837

I have just reed a letter from Mr. Claibourn of Mississippi who informs me that he and Mr Golston is elected by handsome majorities and the "Biddleites & Bankites are in that state routed horse, foot & Dragoons." From Baltimore I learn that Howard, McKim, Thomas & Worthington are certainly elected, and the rest doubtfull. It is probable, that Maryland will give five out of the eight republican members. Davidson has resulted as I expected, from the imbecile councils of the Nashville politicians. The Union has been manipulated by some unseen hands, and has been a great help to the enemy, instead of benefit to the republican party. Mr. Grundy will feel the efforts, of the combination, which has been produced by supineness & want of moral courage. I sent for him weeks ago when I discovered the plot against him. If he had come to see me, the thing being unmasked, could have been counteracted, but he did not come. He is the object. There has
not been even extracts from the Louisville Advertiser, or from the Globe in the Union during the canvass. The influence of the Banks has produced this, & Mr Grundy will find when too late that a temporising policy will not do. It always destroys those who adopt it.

I have recd. lately some very pleasant information from the city. All is harmony and the object of the Executive Government is, & will be, to separate the government from all Banks, collect & disburse the revenues by its own agents; receipts of all public dues in gold & silver coin, leaving the Banks & the commercial community to manage their transactions in their own way; reduce the tariff to the real wants of the government; no credit on duties, or public dues; and all disbursements in gold & silver coins. This, and this only, is the basis of real prosperity, & the perpetuity of republican government, for the influence of the banks with the corrupting powers of money has, I find, destroyed the morals of this country as well as others.

When I sat down I only intended to say to you, I wished to see you before you set out. Come & spend one night & day with me before you go.

I have not heard from any place but Williamson County. I hope Trousdale, Johnston, & Dunlap are elected, but from secret combinations in this county, in which some of my connections were engaged, & which I never expected until it leaked out after the election, to mortify me, by having a majority of Whig votes in the neighboring precinct, we cannot tell when we are safe. But this in due time will be made to recoil on the men whose want of sensitivity & respect for themselves & brothers are capable of such business. I wish to see you before you go on to the city, and I wish you to be there some days before the meeting of Congress.

With our united respect to you & Mrs. Polk . . .

ANDREW JACKSON

If this takes place it will kill Bell here after his opposition to it.

Addressed to Columbia. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. Most of the letter has been published in Bassett, editor, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, V, 503-504.

1. John F. H. Claiborne and Samuel H. Gholson were Democrats from Mississippi in the United States House of Representatives. For unusual circumstances connected with their election, see John F. H. Claiborne to Polk, June 17, 1837, and Polk to Claiborne, June 26, 1837.

2. Benjamin C. Howard, Isaac McKim, and Francis Thomas were incumbents who were re-elected. John T. H. Worthington had served in the House, 1831-33, and then lost two elections. He then served, 1837-41.

3. Bassett read this word muzzled.
4. At this point, Jackson marked for insertion the postscript to this letter. The postscript was written on the left margin of the second page of the letter.

5. This marks the end of the portion of the letter published in Bassett.

6. William Trousdale, Cave Johnson, and William C. Dunlap, candidates for the House from Tennessee, were all defeated.

FROM WILLIAM C. DUNLAP

Dear Sir, Bolivar August 7th 1837

I am beaten and that badly. I was unable to carry the Bank and pressure; every candidate for the Legislature were for some kind of a United States Bank and in this manner kept the people from examining the question. I went against all Banks. The district although I was beat is not opposed to Van Buren but will vote for him against any man but White. Coe beat Alexander for the Senate and Crisp beat Tarver in this county. Beavers has beat Johnson in McNairy. Glenn is elected from Tipton. I regret that Topp is elected from Shelby. He is a real true Whig.

If you are reelected Speaker put [Joseph L.] Williams on the same committee Bell put me on or the committee of Post offices etc and change Shields to the committee on public lands.

I will write you and give you all the information how matters and things are doing here.

W. C. Dunlap

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM ABRAM L. GAMMON

Blountville, August 7, 1837

Abram L. Gammon, a political friend, reports favorable results in the elections in East Tennessee. Abraham McClellan has won Bunch's seat in Congress, Elkanah R. Dulaney has been elected to the legislature, and Robert Armstrong is ahead in the gubernatorial race.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Gammon was a son of George Gammon and a brother of William B. Gammon, all Polk-Jackson supporters in Sullivan County.

2. Blountville was the county seat of Sullivan County, Tennessee.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Clarksville August 7th 1837

You will have seen that I am beaten contrary to all expectations. Such means were never before resorted to in any election as those used
by the Whigs agt. me, but I suppose all beaten candidates think the same thing. I believe that every thing happens for the best, & so take comfort, & shall not resort to the halter, pistol or bottle for relief. Our Legislature elections terminated more favorably. We have two Whigs, Frey & Poston¹ & the balance Republicans, Seals, Dunlap, McNeely, Wiley & Walker & Hardwicke² & the Hickman Senator.³ But Seals from his position in Robertson will be compelled to vote agt. Grundy. Wiley of Humphreys may possibly be taken off, some say, by his brother, T. R. Wyly⁴ of Reynoldsburgh. I do not think so. We could do nothing in the Gov. election. The volunteers here were much agt him.

What I shall yet do is uncertain. Boyd & myself are talking of practicing law in Mississippi which I think the most probable course that I may take.⁵ I cannot here get on so well. I cannot charge my friends & my enemies will not employ me, and sometimes I think of my widow here but will probably end as all other schemes of that kind have done.⁶ In my successor you will find a most bitter, malignant opponent, as much so as Bell, cuning, artful and always scheming to do injury to his opponents. Without any information, but with an active vigorous intellect & a good deal of energy of character he is rich & estimates mankind by the quantity of money they have. I shall be pleased often to hear from you & wish you a better fate than has awaited me.

Remember me with my best wishes to Mrs. Polk.

C. Johnson

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Henry Frey of Robertson ran without opposition for a state senate seat. John H. Poston, a prosperous businessman of Clarksville, served only one term in the lower house of the legislature.

2. Robert Dunlap was elected from Stewart County but died on the very day the legislature convened. James Wyly was elected from Humphreys County; but after the county was divided, he lived in Benton. He owned much land and became a merchant at Camden. Jonathan P. Hardwicke was an innkeeper and businessman in Charlotte, Dickson County. He served three consecutive terms in the state senate.

3. The outcome of the election involved here was not definitely known for some time. As late as August 14, 1837, Johnson thought McDonald had been elected. Finally it was determined that Dennis G. Jones, who lived near Beaver Dam Creek, was the winner. Jones was re-elected two years later.

4. Thomas R. Wyly was reputed to be the wealthiest man in Reynoldsburg.

5. George C. Boyd was a successful lawyer in Clarksville.
6. Reference may be to the woman whom Johnson later married, the widow Elizabeth Dortch Brunson.

FROM LEVIN H. COE

Dear Sir

Somerville Augt 8th 1837

Your esteemed favor was duly received and I would have written to you earlier but the old Col. kept me so busy that every moment was necessarily devoted to the canvas. On comparing the polls yesterday it was found that I had filed him away by but 224 votes. But for the efforts of the Whigs to tie him to their ticket I would have beaten him at least 700 votes. Your old practiced demagogues know a great many little electioneering tricks & require close watching.

Col Humphreys is beaten by 192 votes and on this account I feel a double responsibility resting upon my shoulders. Topp from Shelby is opposition throughout. Douglass here is a full blown traitor to the republican cause. Shelby is an opposition County & Fayette also by 200 votes majority. Hardeman is about a balance. Topp & Douglass will both do all they can to weaken me. I defy them upon every thing but Banking. They will have resolutions introduced into the Senate if for no other purpose than to get a [vile] hold upon me. Between ⅔rds & ⅘ths of the people of this Dist. want some sort of a Natl Bank. Crisp is pledged to instruct our Senators to vote for one "so framed as to avoid the objections which the Republican party had to the old one." Douglass is for one of 75 million capital owned equally by the Govt. States & Individuals. I took a decided stand against individual monopolies, denounced all Banks state and Natl which contained that feature; contrasted the management of the Alaba[ma] Bank with that of the Tennessee Bank; exposed the course of the old U. S Bank and its present condition; denied that it ever was, or that any large Banks ever would control the action of the state Banks; contended that the best checks upon them were to require them to make on oath monthly statements of their condition which should be published in the newspapers; and for our government gradually to introduce the practice of requiring all dues of every kind to be paid in and paid out in gold and silver; insisted that we now had too much Banking capital in the United States. I told them if we had a Natl Bank of any kind it should be one "possessed of powers barely sufficient to collect and disburse the public revenue and deal moderately in exchange, to belong to the people & under the control of the public functionaries" & repealable at will, that I had no objections to one of this kind but could under no circumstances agree to go beyond it. This
is a plan the opposition won't have and when they introduce their Bank resolutions I will move to amend as per above plan. This will bring on a warm discussion & will decide this part of the state perhaps all of it either for or against the administration. I regret very much that the called session of Congress requires you and Mr Grundy both to leave before I can see you. I have heretofore paid little attention to politics—less to Banking than any thing else and would derive great advantage in the struggle I will have to encounter in the Senate from information I should derive from you. It will be necessary for me to take a firm stand upon this question; to prepare my self well before hand and have my arguments printed & circulated freely, otherwise I shall fear for this part of the State. Douglass is a cunning man and is supported by a desperate faction resolved to spare no pains to keep the state in the Opposition. C. H. Williams advocates the same sort of Bank that he does; two years hence they will move in concert. I will use every effort to foil them but you will at once see the odds I have to contend with. My only chance of success is to place this question at once in as strong a light as possible before the people and let them have full time for reflection. I must also draw a picture of the true condition of the contending parties in the Union and the effect of driving the present administration to the wall.

I see in the middle of the state a proposition is agitated to create a new State Bank to be founded on the surplus revenue deposited within and on the scholl [school] fund etc to belong to the state & similar to the Alabama Bank. What do you think of it, and would a Bank of that kind satisfy those of the administration party who are joining in the cry for a Bank of the United States?

Give me such information in the shape of documents, your own opinions etc as you think will aid me.

L. H. Coe

Addressed to Columbia.


FROM SIDNEY C. POSEY

Florence, Alabama. August 8, 1837

Posey reports jubilantly that in his county the Democrats have beaten the pro-bank Whigs, who seemed completely confident of victory. Both Reuben Chapman and Joshua L. Martin have been re-elected to Congress, and Arthur P. Bagby appears to have been chosen as governor. Posey himself has been elected, without opposition, to the state senate.
Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. A lawyer and a Jacksonian, Bagby had been elected several times to the Alabama legislature and had served as speaker of that body. At this time, he was elected governor of Alabama. Later he served as United States senator from Alabama, 1841–49, and was appointed by Polk in 1848 to be Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia.

FROM WILLIAM C. FLOURNOY

My Dear Sir

Pulaski 9th August 37

Your two last favors to me were not read, in consequence of my absence, until a very short time before the election. Conceiving it then too late to answer them, I declined doing so. Our friend Armstrong will be beaten by a very large vote I presume, and the state generally will return a perfectly White legislature. What madness & folly pervades the state. The Devil is in it, running his frantic round in every district in the state, except yours. You are the only man in the state my Dr Sir that can match him, and I do firmly believe if you could have a fair fight with him in an open plain you could conquer him & drive him from our hitherto peaceful borders. God grant you may have a pitch battle with him yet in Tennessee. If so I fear not the result. Some of our friends here who ought to stand up in the battle field, become affrighted even at his distant roar & turn their backs upon him. Our district has been shamefully managed. It is decidedly Van Buren if the proper men had been brought out to concentrate the strength. But alas it was not done. I wish I could see you and talk an hour or so. I will be in Columbia before you leave for Washington. Our mutual friend Col. A. M. Upshaw, (who is now confined to his bead by sickness and cannot write), requests me to say to you that he is an applicant for the office now filled by Col Ben Reynolds1 who he understands has already or is about to resign it. His office is that of Agent for some Indians, You know all about it. Upshaws request is that you espouse his cause and present his name at a proper time etc. Let me hear from you. My wife unites with me in presenting our best respects to Mrs. P. and for yourself accept assurance of my very highest regard.

W. C. FLOURNOY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Formerly of Maury County, Benjamin F. Reynolds had served as agent to the Chickasaws since 1830. He moved from Maury to Franklin County, Alabama, and later was a member of the Alabama legislature for three terms.
FROM ROBERT B. REYNOLDS

Knoxville August 9th 1837

Dear Sir,

I rec'd. your favour of the 27 ult. some days ago, in answer to mine of July last,¹ and I take the liberty of sending you the annexed statement of the vote for Gov'r in E.T., so far as I have heard from, not doubting but you would like to hear from this part of the State, altho' it has not fully answered the expectations my letter to you would cause you to expect.

Since I wrote you, the volunteers has received their pay, and many of them immediately changed their oppinion of Cannon.

The friends of Judge White, seised the opportunità to aid Gov Cannon, by spreding it far and near, that Govr. Cannon was the prime mover of the payment, and some even went so far as to say, that the Governor was paying the volunteers out of his own private funds.

Altho' we are defeated in the election for Governor, in E.T. we have the consolation left us that we have gained upon the vote of [18]35, and have elected Col. McClellan to Congress over Col Bunch after a contest of only 3 weeks by upwards of 800 votes. And in addition to that Orville Bradley has met with a defeat by John Balch of Greene, beating him for the Senate.

He has time now to manufacture a few Certificates, to be read as evidence in the next "Wise committee" &c.² I hope he will take the precaution to swear to them, before he allows his master to present them to the committee.

I imagine his defeat is not to be attributed to any dictation from the late President to his constituents but to his late reckless inconsis-tency &c.

J[oseph] L. Williams, a real Hamiltonian federalist, is elected to Congress. It is said by his friends, that Judge White voted for him. Genl. Carter is re-elected in the 1st district. Col. Standifer is also re-elected. The Senators & Representatives elect in E.T. as a body, will be found to contain less talent than any representation East Tennessee ever had in the Legislature. She (E.T.) has several members elect who will go for a democratic candidate for senator.

The democratic party in E.T. would prefer you to Grundy, yet so far as I have heard they wish no division in the ranks of the party.

With sincere wishes for your prosperity I remain your democratic friend.

ROBT. B. REYNOLDS
R. B. R.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. On July 21, 1837, Reynolds had written a short, generally favorable report to Polk about political progress in East Tennessee. Polk's letter has not been found.

2. A letter from Bradley to White, concerning his conversation with Jackson, was used by White in his testimony before the investigative House Committee of which Henry A. Wise was chairman.
FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville August 14th 1837

My nephew¹ is at Alexandria at school and I should be glad, if an appointment could be procured for him in the Military Academy at West-point. He deserves it perhaps as much as any other, so far as regards the services of his ancestors. His grand father² you know was in the service in our early Indian fighting a great deal, commanded a Brigade you know in the last Indian War, and his father³ belonged to Coffee Brigade at New Orleans & was wounded in that battle. In addition to this his father is not well able to educate his sons as they ought to be; therefore I took charge of his education & now I shall have enough to do to get on myself. The Cadet for this district (Nor­flet)⁴ has come home sick & will never be able to return & a young man named Hilliard⁵ appointed on my recomendation who has re­moved to Mississippi & will not probably accept. I shall write to the Sec. of War & will be much obliged if you & Mr Grundy will write in a recomendation. My nephew is directed to call & see you upon the meeting of Congress. My brother Willie will be there by the middle of September.

It is enough to make any man forswear politics to know the man­ner in which I have been beaten. I was beaten in the last ten days by the united action of the merchants & Iron makers, who as if by con­cert upon my leaving a county for the last time went to work, under the pretence of collecting their debts, telling the people, that they would be compelled to collect in gold & silver if I was elected, the price of property be reduced to almost nothing & the people ruined. Some of the Iron makers told their workmen that they could not be employed if I was elected. Such frauds & impositions were never be­fore practised by men having any pretensions to character. They succeeded by 85 votes. My friends may rest assured that my district is as purely democratic as any in the Union and will as certainly send a friend to Van Buren in the next election as it shall come on, as the Legislative elections shew Walker & McDonald⁶ from Hickman, Mc­Neely from Dickson, Wyly from Humphreys, Hardwicke from Dick­son, Humphrey, & Stewart, Dunlap from Stewart, Seal from Robert­son, all for the adrn. & Frey & Poston agt it, 7 out of 9. I thought we would have had 8, but the same means that defeated me broke down

1. This is a variation in spelling Abraham McClellan's name.
2. John Williams, the father of Joseph L. Williams, died the day after this letter was written.
Overton, which I regret almost as much as my own defeat. You must keep me advised of the movements in Washington and Votes also of our Rep.⁷ which is sometimes neglected by the Globe. Our Editor⁸ wishes to sell out and we have som hope of getting the paper in the hands of some friend. If it can be effected it will be done. My defeat will add to our strenth or rather its manner will add to our strength here. It is allready apparent. If the election was again today the result would be different. Many other things operated unfavorably in Stewart. I had 3 friends running, 2 for Van & 1 for White. Dunlap was very zealous & came out for me on the stump. The others refused to take sides & they were induced to believe that I was taking sides for Dunlap & threw them & their friends against me & beat me in Stewart where Van Buren got 2 to 1. A similar state [of] things existed in Benton & Humphreys. In Montgomery Poston's popularity contributed largely to my defeat, but perhaps these things will operate finally for my benefit. I have long thought any man a fool who neglected his own affairs to serve the public. Boyd & myself will take a look at Mississippi in October or November.⁹ Whether we shall go there or not to practice law is uncertain.

Remember me with my best wishes to Mrs Polk & tell her I shall turn beaux as I have nothing else to do. I thought I should have to become a Methodist circuit rider but I shall not do that until I fairly surrender all hopes among the ladies. We have an Alabama widdow here, owning a cotton plantation & negroes almost equal to a Bank that I intend to look at but fear that a broke down politician will have a poor chance.

C. Johnson

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."
1. Cave Johnson Coutts, son of the congressman’s sister, Nancy, received the appointment to the United States Military Academy, where he was graduated in 1843.
2. Reference is to Cave Johnson’s father, Thomas Johnson.
4. Thomas J. Norfleet never returned to West Point.
5. Hilliard has not been further identified.
6. See Cave Johnson to Polk, August 7, 1837, footnote 3.
7. Richard Cheatham.
9. See Cave Johnson to Polk, August 7, 1837, footnote 5.
TO FRANCIS P. BLAIR

Dear Sir

Maysville Ky. Augt 16th 1837

I suggested to you some weeks ago, the importance of taking early measures to secure the punctual attendance of the members of the House friendly to the administration, on the first day of the session. Since learning the result of the elections in Ky. and Indiana, I am satisfied that there will be an absolute necessity for the presence of all our friends at the opening of Congress. The Division of parties will be more equally balanced than I supposed when I wrote you. Our majority will be small, but if our friends are all in attendance it will be decisive. Before this reaches you, you will have learned the result in N. Carolina, and our friends at Washington will at once see the importance of taking immediate steps to apprise the friends of the administration in that as well as other states, of the indispensable necessity of their prompt attendance at the opening of Congress. Our opponents will no doubt be in attendance.¹

What a rout we have suffered in Ky. and Indiana! No-body saved in the general wreck unless by possibility Boyd and Boone, from whose Districts I have not heard, may be.² From Alabama my information is more cheering. I saw a gentleman at Nashville just before I left on Saturday, who had arrived the evening before from Alabama, who informed me that Chapman and Martin had been re-elected; and that from partial returns received, it was probable that Lawler (W) had been beaten by Ellis (V.B.)³ and that the contest between [Francis S.] Lyon (who is running as the administration candidate) and his Whig competitor in the Mobile District was close; but the probabilities in favour of Lyon's success.⁴ Should this be so, we will have a gain of two from that state.

The general result of the Tennessee elections, you will probably have heard before this reaches you. Dunlap & Johnson have been beaten, the latter by less than 100 votes. Forester is succeeded by Turney (V.B.). Bunch has been beaten by McClellan (V.B.) The result in [William B.] Carter's District was not certainly ascertained when I left. All the Counties had been heard from except one, which left [Thomas D.] Arnold (V.B.) ahead between 700 and 800 votes. The County to be heard from was the one in which Carter resides, votes about 1100 strong, and the Whigs say will give Carter very nearly an unanimous vote.⁵ [Joseph L.] Williams who is elected from the Knoxville District occupies a position in reference to the parties in the state, which makes it uncertain what his course will be. He was
voted for by the V.B. people, and if opposed to the administration he will not be violently so.

The returns for the Legislature as far as heard from when I left, were better than from the Congressional elections. Counting the members pledged to act with us, there will not be much difference in the strength of parties. We shall I think be able to postpone the Senatorial election. I [sic] soon as I can get a Boat I will proceed [by] the River to Wheeling and thence to Washington.

I spent the day on Friday last, with Genl. Jackson. His [health] is much improved, and may now be said to be good.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington and marked “Private.” This letter is in the Blair-Lee Papers, Princeton University Library.

1. Polk had received a circular dated August 8, 1837, from Blair and Rives in which Democrats were urged to be present on the first day of the new session.

2. Linn Boyd of Kentucky and Ratliff Boon of Indiana were incumbents in the House of Representatives. Boon won his race, but Boyd was defeated.

3. Reuben Chapman and Joshua L. Martin were re-elected; but in a close race, another incumbent, Joab Lawler, defeated Harvey W. Ellis.

4. Francis S. Lyon of Demopolis was the winner.

5. Carter carried his home county by a large majority and was elected.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir, Columbia Aug. 19, 1837

Price¹ has left for Washington. The claim he goes on to settle is just, and I presume Mr. Kendall will settle it without producing difficulty. You know Price. I flattered him a good deal by telling him he could undoubtedly beat John Bell for Congress, and Caruthers² (who is not a slow hand) dosed him well to the same effect. I wish to have Price do us no harm in the Legislature, and I think some attention from you & other leading men on our side may make him vote with our people on all important matters. He hails as White, but speaks and thinks of Jackson and his measures in the highest terms—a strange inconsistency, but as we are under in Tennessee we must make the best of honest men, whatever their weaknesses may be. Try and send Price home, in heart a Van Buren Republican. It is not difficult.

I still think that the Bank power will be too much for the country, unless a more powerful institution can be made in behalf of the people, and belonging entirely to them, a National Bank in which the States
should be the sole stockholders, the stock made up by state Bonds, and the Directors appointed by the state Legislatures, would be my remedy for the interest and prosperity of the country, and for the preservation of republican principles. Such an institution might be created and be free from executive influence or controul be [sic] a political machine in the hands of no party, the people to have the sole benefit of the profits, and be the source of power. Such an institution alone can crush the Biddle monopoly and save the country from the rule of a federal monied Aristocracy. But to accomplish what I think for the general good, and for the maintenance of the Republican ascendency, a difficulty arises in the constitutional scruples of some, and the declared opposition of others to a National Bank in any form. If the expediency of creating a banking institution, that will regulate and confine all other Banks to safe limits, furnish a uniform circulating medium, and secure a metallic circulation for the small transactions be admitted, I think the thing might be accomplished without interfering with the constitutional scruples of any and with the full approbation of the people thus. Congress has the undoubted right to establish a bank in the District of Columbia. Let one be established with a capital of Fifty millions. Let each state that chooses take stock in it in proportion to representation in Congress, or in proportion to population and business and pay for the stock by the issuance of state bonds at such time and interest as it may be proper to fix upon. Each state that takes their proportion of stock to be entiltled to one or more branches, the branch directors to be elected by the Legislatures of the states where they are; the Directors of the principal Bank to be elected in joint ballot by Congress. No individual stock to be taken. Let the government deposite be made in this Bank, and proper provision made that the public monies shall always be within the controul of the government; let enough of the state bonds be sold to secure the permanent redemption of all notes in coin on presentation; let the notes be receivable for customs, lands, &c. no note issued for less than $20, the amount of circulation never to exceed 50 millions. If War or other reasons should render it necessary for a greater amount of issue to be made let the government by special act issue the requisite amount in Treasury notes, which might be paid out by the Bank to government auditors. Such a bank as this would require but little coin for the redemption of its paper, because its notes every where would be better than coin. Still it would be regarded as so safe a place of Deposit that a great portion of the coin would soon find its way to its vaults. The State Banks would be compelled to resume specie payment or quit business. The country would tolerate the suspension no longer than this bank could get fairly into operation. It would be equal to
the introduction of 50 million of coin, and would drive out of circulation all paper not redeemed in coin, as insolvent & worthless.

The people of the U. S. have been so long accustomed to banking and paper circulation that it is impossible to stem the torrent of feeling in favor of it. Banks and banking are almost exclusively in the hands of the Whigs, and the press being so much under their control, how easy it is to make the people believe that evils produced by themselves have originated in the mal-administration of the government. It is impossible to make the mass comprehend the machinery of banking, and how much their best interests are under the control of a few, and those few aristocrats in principle.

Why not then make a powerful institution that will be for the people, under their own control, all its profits go indirectly into their pockets. Settle the Bank war, and put down the senile Aristocracy. Put it out of the power of a privileged few foreign and domestic Aristocrats to tax this country at their pleasure, by means of an exclusive Bank monopoly. Such a bank as I have hinted at, could never go into operation except with the full approbation of the people through the action of their state Legislatures, would be extremely popular, and I am satisfied, would greatly promote the prosperity of the country by putting an end to excessive banking, and giving us a uniform currency both in value and amount. It could and would put an end to those sudden & wicket contractions and expansions so ruinous to all classes, but especially to the enterprising, and public spirited. It would produce a uniform and stationary metallic circulation for all desirable purposes. No paper could be kept afloat unless redeemed in coin at the pleasure of the holder. The country would start anew in sober regular prosperity, without any sudden fluctuations in the value of property or labor. The monied concerns of the country would no longer be mixed up with political strife. The political contest would again be confined to the question whether, the few or the many shall govern and the contest no longer doubtful.

My judgment is that unless the Republican party give the people an institution that will answer all the purposes of a National Bank the Federal party will by their deceptions and a bribed press prevail on the people to allow them to make a bank monopoly for themselves and their British allies. My view then is that it is true patriotism to discard prejudices, and at once make a controlling Bank, in which the states shall be the exclusive stockholders, and that cannot by possibility come under individual irresponsible control, that cannot be made a political machine, nor be liable to sudden contractions & expansions, nor the producer of panics.

If as enlightened and Republican a state as Tennessee, can be de-
ceived and brought under Bank power and influence, how long can we expect Democracy to withstand the monied power. Even our soundest Democrats every where are beginning to yield, and seem anxious for a uniform currency and regular state of things. The Republican party will split, and the seceders will give the Federal Bank party the ascendancy and the charter of another National monopoly seals the fate of this country. Power must be opposed by power. There is now a power over the interests of the people, greater than the government itself. It must be controuled and can be only controuled by the creation of a power greater than it is.

I do not believe that the notion of collecting and paying out the public revenue in coin will do, nor do I see any necessity for dispensing with the convenience of Bank transmissions of the public money from one section of the country to another. I may be mistaken in the remedies proposed by our leading men but if I am not, I tremble for the consequences. You have always seemed restless on this subject, told me my opinions were singular, and that we must wait the administration plan of relief & regulation of the currency. This I am willing to do, and would be happy to see a sensible plan proposed. The country must be taken as it now is, with the habits & prejudices of the people, and the power of a corrupt press must be duly taken into the account. I am willing to be beat on principle, if the people will it so, provided our forces & real strength are fairly rallied and the true interests of the great mass maintained. The magic of Jackson’s name is gone. Suppressed interest and corruption of the press & leading men will prevail, and nothing can prevent the great Republican party from being prostrated but the discarding of small prejudices & the adoption of a remedy for the sole benefit of the people, powerful enough to overwhelm our adversaries.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Major A. Price of Lebanon was a wealthy operator of stagecoach lines who held government mail contracts. He had just been elected to a single term in the legislature as a Whig.

2. This is probably a reference to W. T. Caruthers, former partner with Walker in stagecoach and mail-contract business.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville August 20th [1837]¹ I reed your very kind & friendly letter from Nashville.² I cannot yet tell what I shall do. I fear I cannot if I try practice law with any
success in my district & you know it is necessary. I shall go to Mis­
issippi in November or Dec. & by the time that I return I shall de­
terminé. You may rely upon it that my district will sustain the ad­
ministration whether I am here or not. The whole turn agt me was
given in the last ten days when I had no chance of answering. The
same thing could not occur tomorrow with all the pressure.

My brother* will be probably at Washington the middle of Sep­
tember & in that event, he will save you the trouble of attending to my
nephew further than writing a letter to the department, if he will con­
sent to go to West-Point. If my brother does not come to Washington,
I should be much obliged if he consents to go that you would call &
see if an appointment can be procured for him. If he does not consent,
I wish him to return home, as soon as you find any suitable person to
travel with him. I left $100 with his tutor; he will need more. Whatever
may be necessary I presume the Bank would take a Bill at 20 or 30
days payable in Nashville. Money is not very flush with me just now
or I would send it. If my brother comes, as he will if no accident hap­
pens, he will make the necessary advances. I think it very probable he
will insist on coming home. I should be obliged if you would urge the
propriety of his going.

I have sat down in my office & shall attend the final term of our
courts, just as if nothing had taken place, to the no little annoyance
of some of our Whig lawyers who no doubt calculated if I was de­
feated, that I would instantly run off, or take to the bottle or some­
thing worse & that an opening would be left for them.

My position here is exceedingly unpleasant; most of the merchants
as well as lawyers agt. me & I have not yet learned Christian charity
enough to do good for evil or to love my enemies. For my own comfort
I ought to remove but for their annoyance I ought to stay. We have
some hope of getting a better man at the head of our little paper.4

Remember me with my best wishes to Madam.

C. Johnson

Addressed to Washington.
1. The writer omitted the year. This date has been supplied on the basis
of the contents.
2. This letter has not been found.
3. This refers to Willie B. Johnson. See Cave Johnson to Polk, August
14, 1837.
4. See Cave Johnson to Polk, August 14, 1837, footnote 8.
FROM FREDERICK P. STANTON

Memphis. August 23, 1837

Stanton expects the recently elected Whig representative to Congress from his district to try to take public printing from the Memphis Gazette and give it to one of the Whig papers. He asks Polk to interpose, but if that is considered unwarranted interference, he asks that Polk have Grundy look into the matter.

Addressed to Washington.
1. A Memphis lawyer, Frederick P. Stanton was a son of Richard Stanton of Alexandria, Virginia, and a brother of Richard H. Stanton, editor of the Maysville (Kentucky) Monitor. See Richard Stanton to Polk, September 1, 1837. Frederick Stanton later served in Congress, 1845-55, as a Democrat from Memphis, and he was governor of the Kansas Territory, 1858-61.
2. Christopher H. Williams.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dr Sir

 Nashville Aug. 27, 1837

The Union is now about to be put on a footing that it will be of some value. Majr Donnelson has been in town several days, and has at length procured a transfer of the subscription list to Joel M Smith, who purchases the materials belonging to the American Presbyterian.1 The materials are very good, and have been got on favorable terms. The thing now looks like it would do, so far as that matter is concerned.

The indications are not to be mistaken that the administration intend to adopt the sub Treasury plan and attempt to dispense with all banks in the fiscal concerns of the government. I think the indications are equally plain, that in this measure the administration will be in a minority. If so, what next? Are we to battle on against the corrupting power of Biddle’s bank until the country, worried down, and dispirited, sinks in to the power of the monopolists. I cannot resist the conviction that our party will be overpowered, unless something is done to regulate and control the bank note currency. I do not believe this can be done but by the creation of a monied power greater than the one under control of the Whigs. I believe this can only be done for the safety and interest of the people by the states being the exclusive stockholders, and alone possessing the power of appointing the Directors. You see Judge White has broken ground, and fully admits the Constitutionality of a bank by Congress in the District of Colum-
bia, with the branches in the states. If he extends the idea and presents a plan in detail making the states the sole stockholders, and altogether excluding individual stockholders, his scheme will in my opinion be exceedingly popular and he will obtain credit for the scheme which ought to belong to our side of the House. Our political position is a critical one; a false move will overwhelm us. If our leaders have made up their minds to take the chances of going to the wall I suppose the rank & file must go with them. But why should it be so when it can be so easily prevented, & that too, by promoting the true interest and independence of the country, and preserving republican principles. There are many sound objections to the Treasury scheme. It is too unwieldy, cumbersome and expensive and must be followed by immense defalca­tions. It will not do to trust such large sums to individuals; the tempta­tion to speculate will be too great. I stand ready to sink or swim with my political friends. I have nothing personally to lose. Still I can not resist giving my opinions freely tho I may stand alone in the opinions I entertain.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. The American Presbyterian began publication in Nashville on January 8, 1835, with Joseph Norvell listed as printer and publisher. The prospectus stated that all communications should be addressed to the Rev. John T. Edgar, who was probably the editor.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Sir,

I hand herewith the Memphis Enquirer1 of the 26th. from which you will perceive the creature of that print has thought proper to attribute the Republican majority of this county wholly to the influence of the Polk connection here.

Would it not be cruel in the Post Master General under all the circumstances to take from us the great mail road & place it upon worse ground when there is no bridge, a very imperfect Levee, and no town, merely for the sake of saving some 7 or 8 miles distance, when Saltmarsh has written down himself that he would prefer this road with same pay & same time & even doubts the practicability of carrying it on that road at all during the winter months?2 It would seem to me that a county standing "solitary & alone" as Mr. Latham pleased to say of us, should not be the first to be deprived of facilities
enjoyed for the last eight years and all for want of a proper explanation of the topography of the country. This is indeed a subject in which our people feel the liveliest interest, and the friends of the administration will well be subjected to the taunts of our enemies if we fail to keep things as they are, in addition to the deep mortification they would otherwise experience.

Amidst your various labours, we must draw upon you for a moment at best to testify what you personally know of the Estanaula Road. The bridge has fallen down killing two persons & will not be rebuilt as we are informed. They use a ferry boat.

JNO. H. BILLS

Addressed to Washington.
1. The Memphis Enquirer was a Whig weekly that was owned and edited by Francis S. Latham.
2. See Bills to Polk, July 23, 1837.

FROM JOHN F. H. CLAIBORNE

My Dr Sir, Wheeling [Virginia] Aug 30th 1837

I have at length arrived here, after having been cut up & dreadfully mutilated by the upsetting of the stage.¹ At Bowling Green, I left Mr. [Ebenezer J.] Shields confined to bed.² Between that place & Elizabethtown, Genl. Cheatham is detained by his wife, who had her arm broken by the upsetting of the stage. Neither of these gentlemen can reach Washington on the first day of the session. I will persevere to the last, and get there on Sunday, although a mere wreck. I wish by all means to occupy the place of Mr. Cramer³ on the Com. of Foreign Affairs.

J. F. H. CLAIBORNE

Addressed to Washington.
1. The stage was wrecked near Munfordville, Kentucky. Nashville newspapers reported the accident, but mentioned only the injury to Mrs. Cheatham.
2. Shields was probably a passenger on the same stage, but his illness was not connected with the mishap.
FROM JOHN FIELD¹

Berlin.² August 30, 1837

In compliance with Polk's request, Field sends a list of fifty-five names of voters from his vicinity in Marshall County.

Addressed to Washington.
1. Field was a justice of the peace who helped to organize the first county court in Marshall County in 1836.
2. The small town of Berlin lay south of the Duck River in the eastern part of Maury County, Tennessee, until the formation of Marshall County.

FROM ISAAC H. HALEY¹

Newburg.² August 31, 1837

Isaac Haley reports that he and James H. Walker have succeeded in getting a post office established at Newburg and wish to receive an administration paper from Washington. Haley also requests that Mrs. Polk send them a copy of Van Buren's message.

Addressed to Washington.
1. Haley was a business partner of James H. Walker, second son of James Walker of Columbia. It is obvious from the content and tone of the letter that Haley was personally acquainted with both Polk and Mrs. Polk.
2. This letter was posted at Estanaula. The post office at Newburg was in existence for less than two years. Haley was the first postmaster, but in January 1838, George Moore succeeded to that position.

FROM RICHARD STANTON

Alexandria, Virginia. September 1, 1837

Richard Stanton, a brickmason who had trained his sons in that trade, writes in behalf of one of them, Richard H. Stanton, editor of the Maysville (Kentucky) Monitor, who wishes to obtain some public printing for his newspaper. The writer mentions another son, Frederick P. Stanton, who is known to Polk.¹

Addressed to Washington.
1. Both of Richard Stanton's sons became lawyers and, later, members of Congress. See Frederick P. Stanton to Polk, August 23, 1837.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

Hon. and Dr Sir Nashville Sept 2nd [1837]¹

Your letter of the 23rd² came to hand on Sunday, and I can assure you proved a source of much satisfaction. And in return I avail myself
of the few moments my multifarious duties will allow to give you some information respecting the state of our affairs here which I [am] well satisfied cannot fail to interest you.

Before this letter reaches you, you will have learned from the "Express Slip" which I sent you of the organization of our Legislature. In the election of General Cocke⁸ as speaker, our party have done well, as Douglas was the candidate of the [opposition] party and his defeat will prostrate him in Fayette. Cahal you will perceive has been elected speaker of the Senate which if I am not mistaken is the zenith of his political glory, his conduct here having been such as to disgust many of his warmest friends.

The Van Buren party here are high in favor; instead of being a "despised sect," their influence and favor is courted even to servility. They hold the balance of power and can control any movement that is made. The heterogeneous composition of "Modern Whiggery" is fast crumbling to atoms, and I feel well assured that a judicious and manly course on the part of our friends here will do much to change the political complexion of the state.

There are four opposition candidates in the field already for the United States Senate, Bell, Foster, Andrew L. Martin, and General [Robert L.] Caruthers. Their respective claims are urged with a good deal of spirit. Bell and Foster are two. Bell I am informed by good authority has made a direct proposition to him to decline a canvass, which has greatly incensed him. I most sincerely hope that Bell will be a candidate as he will be beaten as sure as fate and that will prostrate him forever. What course we should pursue under these circumstances I cannot determine. My own opinion is that we as a party should stand aloof and let them "devour each other," as I am convinced from the acrimony now existing & especially between Bell, Martin, and Foster that we shall be able to postpone the election with all ease if not secure your election. Of this from present appearances I am sanguine.

In case the election should be forced on and we be compelled to make a choice of evils, I am in "dubio" as to who we should take, Foster or Martin. Mr. [James] Walker I find is clearly in favor of Mr Foster in such a contingency and thinks he will be the least objectionable to our party generally. This I must confess is not my opinion at present as the recent movements of Mr Calhoun, the Magnus Apollo of Mr Martin together with his known and avowed hostility to Messrs Webster, Clay, and Harrison for the Presidency, and the information furnished me in your communication seems to indicate that he would suit our purpose best.
Upon this important subject I hope you will let me hear from you soon, as unless forced I shall not act until advised by you. My time will not permit me to write more. . . .

JOHN O. BRADFORD

P.S. Your Brother William came to town last evening and left all well in Columbia.

Addressed to Washington.
1. The year was not given on this letter. It was supplied on the basis of the contents.
2. This letter has not been found.
3. John Cocke of Grainger County was elected to the first two legislatures of Tennessee and was re-elected several times thereafter. In 1812 he was speaker of the lower house. After four terms in the United States House of Representatives, 1819–27, he was again elected to the legislature. Thus, in 1837, he was elected speaker more than forty years after he had first served in that body, and twenty-five years after he had first occupied the post as speaker.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My Dr Sir

Nashville Septr 2d 1837

Have been at home eight days. Came by Gnl. J.'s; met Donelson there on his return from Nashville. The Union had that day been placed in Joel M. Smith's hands by transfer, & in the precise situation I had endeavoured to place it in June. Mr. Edgar's Prysbeterean press1 has been purchased for it, & on good terms. J. M. Smith was from home, & only returned on day before yesterday. The first No. issued fr. the new press yesterday, and in good style. Mr. Bradford is fast improving, & promises better than I had hoped. He was very much crippled whilst the paper was printed at the office of Smith, & dispirited. Open war, & to the knife, has ever been the course for the Republican side. No other position is left for it, nor has there been, since the days of Jefferson. It is the contest of wealth agst. numbers, sapped by the statutes of descent when wealth consisted of estates; but the European policy is now basing itself upon incorporated & mercantile wealth. Such an impulse was given it by Mr. Hamilton, & so adroitly have Mr. Dallas2 and other Secy's of Treasury managed in favour of the Fedreal side, and so much has the attractions of wealth drawn to it from our side (Mr. Clay is a great instance) that danger of success was imminent during the life of the U.S. Bank, & owing to the perplexities the unsuspecting majority have had imposed upon them.
there is constant danger of wealth getting the ascendant. To repel this
danger, there is one inevitable course of policy our party must never
loose sight of—to retain scrupulously the public moneys in their own
keeping. I care not what private Banks you put it into, it will convert
the keepers into Federalists in principle & practice in a few years. Him
of the [hoard]3 loves money next to self, & his affections for it, force
out all for the lindsey-clad, rough-handed, ploughman.

If Mr. Rives, Mr. Talmage, & others, shd. divide, some middle
compromise course, furnishing a Treasury circulation must be adopted;
nor do I hope that our real friends can get on without giving ground to
some limited extent, & providing for a paper circulation based upon
govt. credit, & if no better can be done, a large circulation. The treas­
ury dare not pass from the majority, without power passing with it.
The Treasury is arm of power, as much in this govt as in any on this
Earth; the placing it in private hands, is to raise up a rival power in
the face of the popular will—of numbers, which will govern in fact, in
Congress, & out of it, by [. . .] . The experience of the U.S. Bank is
conclusive. That it commanded through indirect bribes a majority in
one branch of Congress & much of the most prominent talent in the
other, for a time, I have no more doubt than that I exist. Indeed, as to
prominent leaders in the Senate, it was hardly concealed that their
support was an advocacy, & that their daily bread depended on Bank
pensions in the form of annual retainers.

A govt. based upon money is irresponsible to any constituent; is
in all countries, even unlimited monarchies, corrupt, because its in-
fluences are overweaning to poverty, & especially to proud, political
poverty. A Bank in the hands of the govt has none, or at least few, of
these dangers dependent upon it, if it is not a Bank of discount and
loans. Were I in politics I'd escape this feature, and compromise upon
a paper circulation. You must expect the wealthy members of Con-
gress, & especially of the Senate, to take sides with the moneyed class.
They have children to marry, & are seeking connections in this class;
nor will the positively poor, with rare exception, reject the golden se-
duction with which they assuredly will be tempted by the promises of
the millionairies. Shd by the aid of a Republican wing, a Bank be
incorporated, or on a refusal, the majority now in power [will] be
turned out. This is notoriously the Clay policy at present. Never in
Ky. since Gnl. Jackson came into office, have hopes been so high of a
division as at present. I speak knowingly when I say this, for Ken-
tucky is the locality to learn the facts, & the H. Springs the best point.4
The idea was, not to run Mr. Bell for Speaker & to let the Admtn. side
quarrel, & divided & then to present a candidate for presdt, professing
the principles of the Rives & Talmage party, and especially, to prevent our party from doing any thing on the subject of the currency.

The opposition have gone to Congress under the idea of offering no plan, and to court the party opposed to Wright, Benton, yourself etc. That Mr. Webster wd assent to this course (the Clay policy) was doubted, but that Bell and White will, nay have, gone into it, need not be questioned.

Bell dare not establish, or aid to establish, a National Bank. This is certain, it would ruin his wife's concern, which has been more deeply opposed to a U. S. B. than any money dealing House within my knowledge. The great mass of information (& its doings) of the U. S. Bank, in Yeatman's day, I obtained through from [sic] him, who kept spies upon it, & in it, & upon its frds, the leaders. His ruffed wife well knows the effects of a withering superior money power, and her pennyless husband dare have no will other than her's in money matters. In her affairs he is only allowed the privilège of being dry-nurse to her younger Boy. Bell's course will be that of confusion, & to keep the monetary derangements in the govt. as they are, for a specie-paying policy with the state banks wd. destroy him, & as a U. S. B. wd. produce this result, he will at bottom move every secret spring to prevent any step of the kind. He will use Wise, & such as Wise, to clamour & confuse, keep retired and silent himself, and be deemed friendly to every scheme of opposition. Keep his associates out of his house, & they will not have the wit to catch him.

Clay is managing to elbow Webster out of his position as a candidate for the presidency, most notoriously. Of this you need not doubt. C's. friends fear Calhoun cannot be kept back from taking a run against the field, willing as they might be that he shd. take off S. Carolina. They desire Clay may run alone. This is the present Kentucky policy. Such are my apprehensions. Look about you & see how far they correspond with appearances at Washington.

If you can settle the money matters of the govt at the coming Sessions of Congress, we can carry Tennessee with it two years hence. The people here have little of fixed politics to go by, & will go with any settled state of money matters that they understand, for the reason, that such a state of things will make an issue with a U. S. Bank, which never can carry a majority against a treasury Bank, or other tangible institution.

We have been helped by the late elections, in this: The middleground men have all felt the weight of the White bitterness, & will go into a contest with spirit, paid in the expence.

Have heard nothing from Mr [West H.] Humphreys that has come
Correspondence of James K. Polk

to my knowledge. Can there not be a letter writer be had at Washington for the Union? It is greatly needed, and would have more effect than any other intelligence that could be had. Try to procure one who writes well, has integrity, and will tell the truth, & who can be trusted if aid be afforded. I'll aid in the expense, through you. See that it is arranged. Say so to Grundy. Put up for me a full share, and & a little over if need be, but let it be known to no one, & stand as from you, or some one else. The letters formerly written to the Banner & Repln did us more harm than any course ever taken, & we drove them out because of their falsehoods. I attacked [Shadrack] Nye, & threatened to indict him. He said he was not responsible, admitting the slanders, & they got scared. Indeed, the story of Bell's speech, set members of Congress on him, & he got afraid. Avoid even high exaggeration, but tell & expose every thing.

Shall be at Washington sometime in Decr., by 15 or 20th. Will not again go through the ice.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."

1. The American Presbyterian was published by Joseph Norvell, but through most of its two-year life it was edited by John T. Edgar. Edgar became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Nashville in 1833 and remained in that capacity for almost thirty years. A civic leader, he also was instrumental in the founding of several other churches in the Nashville area. He was pastor when the present Downtown Presbyterian Church, designed by William Strickland, was erected.

2. Alexander Hamilton and Alexander J. Dallas were in the cabinets of Washington and Madison, respectively.

3. At several points the writer's handwriting is extremely difficult to decipher. In some cases the words in brackets are supplied with confidence, but in others there is some doubt as to the accuracy in deciphering. In one instance, ellipsis points are used, rather than an uncertain transcription.

4. Probably this refers to the Harrodsburg Springs, Kentucky's most fashionable summer resort.

5. Bell's wife was Jane Erwin, heiress and widow of Thomas Yeatman.

FROM DUTE® J. PEARCE

My Dear Sir, Newport [Rhode Island]

September 2d 1837

You will have learnt before this can reach you, that in this state we have been badly beaten, the particulars of which you will learn from others. I can only say now that I never fought harder, and in
falling, have fallen, with the democracy of my state, overpowered by Bank power, the power of the manufacturers, credit men, and trading men generally. Though beaten I am not disheartened, and hope to rise with those who have fallen with me. One thing, however, let me say to you, that situated as our state is, that, if Mr Benton's notions are adopted generally, we cannot gain what we have lost in this state, and am I afraid that in the 26th congress, all New England will be found in opposition to the Administration. If the election in Connecticut had taken place when ours did what has been our fate would have been the fate of our friends there. I think the doctrine of Mr Senator Talmadge and that of the Albany Regency as last put forth, is the only doctrine that can save us. I am however for one, quite as well pleased with the doctrine of Mr B. but the American world is not prepared for it, and we cannot sustain ourselves in its adoption. We have suffered after all, more by the accursed conduct of the deposite Banks, than by any thing else. They ought, at all events to have continued specie payment, whatever might have been the sacrifice necessary to have enabled them to have done this. There was no way in which we could meet the arguments which our opponents derived by the course adopted by these Banks. But my main object at this time is to say to you, that I hope and trust that you will again be called to the chair, and supposing that there can be but little doubt of this, to say a word or two concerning new members. Mr Tillinghast, is a man of education and fashionable talents, has a great itching at all times for speech making, and will be found to be captious & troublesome. He is, moreover a violent party man. In the management of the committees, if you give him a place on the committee on manufacturers, you will properly dispose of him, giving to him, all he can claim as a new member, from a manufacturing state. Mr Cranston is a man of limited education, no powers for debate, has been a deputy post master, sheriff, and cashier of a Bank, and can claim of you nothing higher than a place upon one of the nominal committees of the house. I have thought these suggestions would be useful to you, and have consequently for your benefit made them.

DUTEE J. PEARCE

This is from a hasty rough draft made by me, and copied by my son, a boy in my office. I have no time fore the correction of errors.

D. J. P.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Confidential."

1. Dutee J. Pearce was a Democratic Congressman from Rhode Island, 1825–37.
2. A noted advocate of hard money, Benton proposed the creation of an exchequer bank that would maintain a currency redeemable in specie.

3. The Albany Regency, the Democratic machine in New York, was badly divided on the money question and was seeking a compromise somewhere between the type of institution proposed by Benton and outright re-establishment of a United States Bank. Conservatives like Nathaniel P. Tallmadge were drifting dangerously close to orthodox Whig views.

4. The recent Whig triumph in Rhode Island had swept into the House Joseph L. Tillinghast and Robert B. Cranston. Both men served, 1837-43, and Cranston was later elected to another term, 1847-49.

JACOB FRY JR.¹

Friend Polk

Washington Sep. 7, 1837

Since the House have 'determined upon the appnt of the Standing Committees, I have one word in relation to the Com. of which I was a member at the last Congress which may be communicated as well this way as if I should see you.

Should it not interfere with any arrangement which you may have in contemplation with regard to the Standing Committees, I wish to suggest the propriety of giving that Committee to my charge. I will give you these reasons.

Five of the old members are not in this congress. Mr Klingensmith² who was a member I know would not wish to be encumbered with it as his health has always been such as to prevent his attendance very frequently upon the Committee. Mr Morgan³ was similarly situated with regard to his health. Mr Bond⁴ is an opponent (inveterate) and for the last two sessions was mostly attending some scientific lectures, so that we had sometimes to change our times of meeting to accommodate him. Further, the district which I represent I believe never yet had a chairman of a Standing Committee, owing I suppose to the circumstance of our very short terms. That district gave me at the last election infinitely the largest majority any man ever had there, & gave Mr Van Buren a larger maj. than Genl Jackson had. The duties of the Com. on Rev. Pensions being a very plain business, the acts of Congress of 1818, 20, 23, 28 & 32 containing the whole law, makes the duty a matter of investigation rather than research, and such as can be attended to by most any man who is industrious. To this I will add that our state has lost Mr Miller⁵ of the Invalid Pens. and Mr Sutherland⁶ of the Commerce Committee.

Should you find it agreeable to acquiesce to this suggestion, I shall try to remember the favor.

JACOB FRY JR.

I wish you would consider this confidential.
Addressed to Washington.

1. Fry was serving the second of his two terms in the House. A Democrat from Pennsylvania, he did not get the appointment as committee chairman that he was seeking. He was in the House, 1835–39.

2. John Klingensmith Jr. was also a Democrat from Pennsylvania who served in the House, 1835–39.

3. William S. Morgan of Virginia was a Democrat whose two terms in the House coincided exactly with those of Fry and Klingensmith.

4. William K. Bond was a Whig from Ohio who served three terms in the House, 1835–41.

5. Jesse Miller, a Pennsylvania Democrat, resigned from the House late in 1836 to take appointment as First Auditor in the Treasury Department. He had entered the House in 1833.

6. Joel B. Sutherland served five successive terms in the House from Pennsylvania. He was first elected as a Jackson Democrat, but in 1836 he ran as a Whig and was defeated. His tenure in the House was 1827–37.

FROM JOHN Y. MASON

My dear Sir

Southampton [Virginia] Sepr. 7th 1837

Permit me to introduce to yr friendship and esteem my friend & successor, the Honl. Francis E. Rives.¹ He is a Gentleman of much experience in public affairs, of great intelligence, & of the highest integrity and firmness. I trust that you will pardon me in advising that he be placed on one of the most important committees. As a politician, he is of the most orthodox school with the exception of his “whole hog” support of the measures of our venerable friend Prest. Jackson. With our best regards to Mrs. Polk, & best wishes for your happiness & prosperity. . . .

J. Y. MASON

Addressed to the House of Representatives and delivered by Francis E. Rives.

1. Rives had served in the Virginia legislature from 1821 until 1836. He served two terms in the United States House of Representatives and declined to be a candidate for re-election.

FROM ANN M. POLK

College Hill, D.C. September 7, 1837

A needy daughter of Charles Peale Polk, formerly a clerk in the Comptroller’s Office, Ann M. Polk seeks a pension supposedly due her grandfather who was killed in the Revolutionary War. She is a relative of the artist, Charles W. Peale, and suspects that she is also kin to Polk.² For particulars
of her grandfather's service she refers Polk to friends of her father and Vice-President Richard M. Johnson.

Addressed to Washington and delivered by J. N. Moulder.

1. Information contained in this letter indicates that if such kinship actually existed it was quite distant.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir  

Nashville Sept 7 1837

I have been here a few days as a witness in the case of Marsh charged with robbing the mail. I write to you at the special request of our friend Joel M. Smith, who wishes you to look out for him a correspondent of abilities, and of the true faith, who must furnish him communications by the express mail. Great pains ought to be taken in this, and none but a true and talented man ought to be selected. I think the Union is now on the right footing, and every exertion ought to be made to sustain it. Whatever patronage the heads of Departments can give ought to be afforded. Joel is honest, devoted and prudent, and we must not give up the ship in Tennessee. If we can get the currency question settled on a plan acceptable to the nation we are safe. I still think that the true doctrine is to "fight the devil with fire" and therefore I would create a more powerful monied power than Biddies. It should however be free from Constitutional objections, be for the real people, and done in accordance with their wishes. Bold, wise and decided politicians at this crisis, are to be the future great men of the land.

I confess I feel uneasiness for the result of the Speakers election. If you are beat, nothing can save the administration, but bold decisive movements. I cannot believe it will make so very much difference in your personal prospects, but still it would be a great draw back if Bell should beat you. Bell and all the Tennessee Whigs, will go in for Biddles Bank; if they do not Bell sinks at once with the opposition. How easily the tables might be turned on these traitors, the true interests of the country saved and the perman[en]cy of Democratic principles put beyond a doubt. The man who shall bring forward the plan to produce a uniform currency, and perfectly destroy Biddle's power, will be the next President. Mr. [William C.] Rives sees this, and aims at it. The prize is worth the risque of a fall, and that fall cannot take place, if in the effort public good is the main principle aimed at.
I shall be here several days, and will write you again after we receive the message.

James Walker

Addressed to Washington.
1. Charles Marsh, a stage driver, was charged with extracting a letter from a mailbag at a point near Jackson, Tennessee. He was arrested by Joel M. Smith in his capacity as agent for the Post Office Department.
2. See John Catron to Polk, September 10, 1837, for strikingly similar language on the same point.

From John Catron

My Dr Sr: Nashville, Sept 10, 1837

I have just finished the P. Message. It is such as the receivers, obviously from private hands, had indicated in the Globe. But I repeat what was said in a former letter: I do not believe the Bank (U.S.) can be over come, by a pursuance of the specie policy recommended. The old adage, “That you must fight Divel with fire,” is true very nearly in all party contests, and to the letter in this. Mr. V.B. is prosecuting a theory sound to the core in principle, but hardly possible in practice. A practice of more than 50 yrs. standing based on paper, and credit, in our fiscal operations, has sapped the public mind and morals, as was intended by its distinguished founder Mr. Hamilton to this fearful extent: it has made Federalists of almost the entire trading community, and of most of the wealthy of other avocations & especially, of very many of our profession, who are the politicians. I mean by Federalists, such as seek to govern by wealth, opposed to numbers, or to govern the country, by cities & villages. They command the surplus money, and the press, & at this time possess a great accidental advantage; that of financial embarrassment. And they possess another. They set up their claims to power with a Bank already in existence, tangible & understood, whose paper was distinguished for its high comparative value, during a time far back as the recollection of the present generation of young men (& the young, not old, produce revolutions). The opposition declare, the old state of things, commercial credit, & sound currency, would in a month be restored by a re-charter of the bank, which is constantly kept before the public by all the talent, and appliances that money can buy and is gaining ground, as it must, when opposed by mere theories, which the great mass can only comprehend by seeing them in operation. As well might we undertake to over-throw
a mountain with a shadow. Nor did Gnl. J. attempt it. He set up the State Banks in opposition as known and tangible institutions. They have failed, and are by the message declared unworthy depositories of the Public money, & most truly.

Man is an artificial creature. He is ruled by his habits—ours ever have been since a govt., paper money habits, & credit habits. The public mind in the cities & Towns knows nothing else, and in the planting states, little else. On Earth has there never been a people so weded to paper, crdit, and Banking, in our sense of Banking. Which means, coinage of currency. To this state of things, and feeling, has the public taste and prejudice been reared, and corrupted if you will. Still so is the fact, and the Republican Party must flex themselves to it, or fall in a fruitless, yet patriotic resistance. Our dress & our domestic habits, are in many respects bad but you cannot reason against them—they can only be changed by degrees. The paper system is only less inveterate, but inveterate in a high degree. To overthrow it at once is impracticable. And it is stronger, at this particular instance (two to one) in favour of a Federal paper circulation, than ever it has been, & against a state currency, (now at its ebb) and abandoned by our party to its own guidance & fate. It is to a paper currency based upon the treasury of the U.S. & a large and genl circulation of U.S. paper, that the majority are looking—merchants not only, but a great mass of the people. The affection for gold & silver is too much weakened for our party to rely upon this feeling for a perpetuation of its power. It will assuredly sink under the attempt of a rigid adherance to the impracticable theory; for such, time, & circumstances have made.

The message says:

"It is, however a mistaken impression, that any large amount of specie is required for public payments. Of the seventy or eighty millions now estimated to be in the country, ten millions would be abundantly sufficient for that purpose, provided an accumulation of a large amount of revenue, beyond the necessary wants of Government, be hereafter prevented. If to these considerations be added the facilities which will arise from enabling the Treasury to satisfy the public creditors, by its drafts or notes received in payment of the public dues, it may be safely assumed that no motive of convenience to the citizen requires the reception of bank paper."8

Base your proceedings on this hint, and issue Treasury notes receivable for public dues, and subject to be redeemed at points, & the mints in specie & let them have the form of Bank notes, as well as the substance. Gratify the eye & profit by experience. “Bank of the United States,” Mr Biddle’s Pennsylvania notes at this good day,
gives them credit. Were they headed “Bank of Pennsylvania”, rest assured they would have not half the ideal value now attached to them. It is the trick of the play-bill, and nostrum lable, flared forth to credulity, but found in all powerful nature. The affection for the U.S. Treasury, is overweaning to an extent in precise proportion to its wealth & resources compared with the state treasuries. Veneration & contempt are the twin passions entering the mind intuitively when the institutions are thought of; & so is their comparative credit. & individual, corporate-credit, is less than the state treasuries. Hence, a U. S. circulation needs no resources for a basis other than the treasury & custom houses. Is this not true? No merchant will desire better money. All goes to the importer from the inland trader. Custom house money is the currency needful & the one indicated is the very best. The plan is free from any constitutional objection, simple in process, and I think must be certain in effect. Certain to an extent not known to any circulation the U.S. has ever had. There is no political danger to be apprehended from it, and then, from its simplicity, such an Institution (for it will soon be such) can and will be understood by all classes & members of the community.

This will be “a severence,” of the U.S. Treasury, with an infusion of the paper system, congenial to our habits of fifty years, & more.

But mark you! In the first instance—at once, the amount of treasury notes put into circulation must be large enough to relieve the necessity for extra money to pay the imposts, and especially, to drive out of circulation as Fedrl. currency, the old U.S. Bank paper. This will strangle the Lion, and her whelps, at N. Orleans, or York etc. and in three years she’ll be buried, & the brood starved. Her circulation will be cut down, & her stock ruined. Then of the merchant. He is a peculiar man. He thinks of money, & little else. He worships wealth, and the dispenser of wealth. He hugs the dispenser to his heart. He thinks of him day & night, until like the mother for her sick child, he clings to and loves him beyond all others. He worships a Presdt of a U.S. bank as the head & God of his class, and obeys him as the Pope of his creed—a creed having no dissenters, holding that money is the chiefest good, and the dispenser of it the first object of supplication. It is this feeling, that has made Nicholas Biddle the dreadest object of affection in these U.S., & ere long promises to make him the most powerful man in the Nation, unless the current of feeling is changed. Turn it on the Treasury (U.S.) & Mr. Biddle will be forgotten in three years, & with his crippled bank be laughed at in all probability as no financier for with its bonuses & large liabilities, it is likely to fail, as may many other institutions, & with my leave.

The Republican party should give itself no trouble about the hue
& cry that will be raised at an over-issue of treasury notes. The community will only look to the fact of soundness, & the circumstance of plenty, & call it reasonable relief. And so it will be to the embarrassed treasury. Congress is looked to, to furnish sound paper money enough for all general purposes, & will be hailed for the act without enquiry for the motive. This the opposition promise by a U.S.B. and with this weapon, they must be met and beaten by the party in power. War Mr. Biddle, & his Bank by more treasury notes, than he has in circulation. Let this be the basis of the issue, without the least squeamishness how the notes are gotten suddenly into circulation. The paper will be better than specie and no fears of it presentation need be apprehended to any dangerous extent—not up to a tenth of the ability of the govt. to meet. That too much will be called for in a few years is probable, but at a future time this may be guarded against. Open the war with force enough in the field to make a Waterloo battle with it. Time Sir, would produce the adequate quantity, but you have no time for the roll like process that the ordinary payt of Govt dues wd. put into circulation. It must be a relief measure to the country, as well the treasury—and the means of influx be at once furnished, antecedent to regular and ordinary issue. Devise this means, & the rest is plain as the Avenue.

These views, ramblingly scrolled, & obtruded on the Sabbath, & the Seting Fdrl. court, are not of yesterday. They were of 1829, one plan of several, & the only admissable under the message, & now the favourite. It may be worth something, or nothing. Can you keep together upon it? If you divide your gone.

J. CATRON

P S. If the foregoing plan is unacceptable meet upon some middle ground & furnish a U.S. paper circulation. On this hangs the law & the prophets, and if it be not done, our party will divide & be beaten by a dissenter for the presdy, or Mr. Clay will come in. That Mr. V. B. is mistaken in supposing a majority are friendly to the specie policy as proposed by Gnl. J. and himself, I cannot bring myself to doubt. We but just know what specie is. We are gamblers, & love the gambling paper system; he who thinks the reverse of this is deceived most assuredly.

J. C.

P.S. James Walker, on consultation with whom I wrote the foregoing letter, thinks it not at all comparable with the plan somewhat thought of the first year of Gnl. J.'s admtrn by some of his frds here, as the opponent to fight the U.S. Bank with. To wit, a mother treasury Bank at Washington, and a branch in each state, sanctioned by the state, &
owned partly by it, & its depository of the state treasury, if the state saw proper: and to be Banks of discount to an extent and wide circulation. Mr. Walker thinks that treasury notes could not be circulated widely enough to answer inland purposes, nor the circulation be kept up in all parts of the country. It is difficult to adopt this plan consistently with the creed of the Rep Party, nor could an entire separation from State embarrassment and control be maintained.

Let there be a separation of the Treasury from the state corporations. Let it be a treasury in fact, & with a wide circulation based on it, & we need not care for the form. It will not fail of success.

J. C.

Go for the expedient & for success—give & take—but act, & that quickly and boldly. "When you doubt Strike," the late Presdt's rule on great occasions requiring high energies. The people follow recklessness rather than the sage's philosophic timidity.

This letter was addressed to Mrs. Polk and delivered by hand. She left for Washington after Polk was well on his way and delivered the letter to him after she reached Washington.

1. This was Van Buren's message, presented on September 4, 1837, to the Special Session.

2. The extent to which Catron and James Walker had threshed out this question is indicated by the similarity of expression when they wrote to Polk. See James Walker to Polk, September 7, 1837.

3. Catron did not copy this paragraph but attached a newspaper report of this portion of the President's Message.

FROM JABEZ JACKSON

My Dear Sir,

Sunday noon, 10 Sept. [1837]¹

My friend & colleague Mr [George W.] Owens having informed me that in a conversation had with you yesterday (he having incidentally mentioned that I had a paper containing an extract from one of your speeches against Genl Gordon's proposition for the establishment of a sub treasury system in 1835) you expressed a desire to see it, I do myself the pleasure of enclosing it to you.² Your enemies will, doubtless, throw up to you your above referred to speech as an argumentum ad hominem³ but, surely, the conduct of the Banks since the above period in making such large over issues, and the present condition of the country putting it out of their power speedily to resume specie payments, have authorised a change of opinion in you & those who in 1835 thought with you.
Correspondence of James K. Polk

I did myself the pleasure of calling on you yesterday; but, you being absent, I left my card, which I trust you saw.

JABEZ JACKSON

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.
1. This letter was not dated by year. The Library of Congress suggested 1838, but the context and a comparison with other letters between the two men clearly identify the year as 1837.
2. William F. Gordon served as a congressman from Virginia, 1830–1835. A veteran of the War of 1812, he later became a major general in the Virginia militia. Polk and Gordon had argued in Congress for rival deposit bills in both 1834 and 1835. The debate referred to in this letter occurred in early January of 1835. The writer’s prediction that Polk’s enemies would use his arguments of 1835 against him later was fulfilled in the governor’s campaign of 1841.
3. Argumentum ad hominem, “an argument addressed to the man”; that is, to his prejudices and passions, rather than to his intellect.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother

I received your letter1 on yesterday and find, since the amount you remitted was not sufficient to settle my debts, it necessary to write you for more. Owing to the delay in receiving the last remittance, my bills have been running up ever since, and some time previous to the remittance in May last. I believe I informed you by letter that I spent in traveling the greater part, in fact nearly all the May remittance.2 My bills here are consequently large, (having a standing of six months) including every thing. As I am anxious to be as near as possible free from creditors and to, in general do cash business, I wish you, if convenient, to remit about $250.00. This will leave about $50.00 against me, which I will settle up when I receive the next remittance.

You, I am confident, will think me extravagant. But I assure you nothing resembling extravagance has been attempted on my part, although economy has not, I confess, in every instance been strictly consulted. It is useless, however, to enumerate to you, the many ways and means, in which they compell one to spend money here. I therefore will not attempt it. Our Senior year will commence in two weeks.

SAMUEL W. POLK

PS. Knox3 received your letter also.

S.W.P.
Addressed to Washington.
1. James K. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. See Samuel W. Polk to Polk, May 2 and June 7, 1837.
3. Joseph Knox Walker, the third son of James Walker, was also a student at Yale. Knox's older brother, James H. Walker, had left Yale a few months earlier.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dr. Sir

Nashville Sept 10, 1837

The President's message reached here yesterday morning, and has been read with great attention by both political parties, and with that variety of feeling and opinion which was to be expected. No one seems to be disappointed. The Whigs seem delighted, and now feel perfectly sanguine that the course of the administration ultimately secures to them the establishment of a U.S. Bank upon the old plan. I think the message an exceedingly able and sound document—Republican and patriotic. Mr. Van Buren seems willing to stand in the breach and nobly fall in the attempt to preserve sound principles and *fall he will* if he maintain without change or compromise the position he has assumed. If nothing more is done than is indicated in the message, the Biddle bank party will inevitably [succeed].¹ It is impossible to resist the current, the popular desire to have a regular and uniform paper circulation of the same value everywhere.

If the present administration do not furnish such a currency the people will elect men, who will give them one to *their sorrow*. The prospects of the Federal party were never so bright as at present. The indications from every part of the Union are not to be mistaken, and it seems to me folly to shut our eyes to the signs of the times. If the people were contented it might work well and for public good to put his [Van Buren's] theory into practice. But can it be done, and made the permanent system of the country? I think not. I know not. The obstacles are too great to be overcome. Let us look at things as they are, not as we would have them. A powerful monied power has grown up among us, wielded by corrupt and profligate men, that can and will crush and overthrow the Republican party, if it is not itself crushed and rendered harmless. This power must be destroyed. Fail to strike the blow now, and it will soon be too late. What does Mr. Biddle stock holders care if he expends the whole of his thirty five millions of capital in corrupting the American press and American politicians. The absolute control of our monied concerns—the possession of the government itself, would be cheap at the price. Who can fail to see
that such is the use made of the funds of the U. S. Bank, with the approbation of its stockholders.

How is this tremendous power to be opposed? The government itself is not strong enough to overthrow it except by the creation of an opposing monied power stronger and more powerful than it is. All hope of a renewal of the old charter, or the creation of any similar Bank upon the individual stock plan must be utterly extinguished. The Bank must be killed dead and its power to do mischief must be destroyed. Any thing short of this insures it the mastery in less than 4 years. But how is this to be done, consistently with the Constitution and the position our party have here to fore maintained? That question is easier asked than answered.

If there was no constitutional difficulty I would prefer as the very best plan the creation of a National Bank, with the States the exclusive Stockholders in proportion to population business &c.—individual stockholders wholly excluded; the stock to be made up of state bonds, bearing interest, a small portion of which it would only be necessary to sell to be able to redeem all notes presented in coin; the Directors to be elected by the different legislatures in proportion to the stock held by the several states; or let Congress elect the board, and the state Legislators the bank boards in their own states; the profits to go to the people, which would render state taxes unnecessary. This is my favorite scheme, and the man who will bring it forward and carry it through may be Mr. Van Buren's successor. It would beyond all doubt be exceedingly popular. The great mass of the merchants now Whigs, would go in for it and become again Republicans. If this be rejected, the next best is the creation of a mammoth Bank in the District of Columbia, with branches in such of the states as would have them, the states in this also to be the exclusive stockholders, and the principles the same as the first. This also would be popular, would have the effect of crushing Biddles power and secure the permanency of Republican principles. On either plan there would be no monopoly; it would be for the benefit and convenience of the whole people. All the benefits of a National Bank would be attained without any of the risk or danger. If this also be rejected there is no alternative but the heavy issue of Treasury Notes, or brave ourselves up to look upon the certain triumph of the Federal Bank party with all the complacency we can. An issue of Treasury Notes may avert the evil, but I doubt it. This measure would not extinguish the hopes of Biddles stockholders and that is necessary to put an end to the present lavish expenditures in corrupting the press and politicians.

The Whigs here calculate much on the expected split between the
Rives & Talmadge division of our friends & the hard money men, with how much reason you best know. They know that one false move on our part leaves them the victory. Compromise of opinion among the friends of the administration is all that can save it and I hope there is patriotism enough yet in power, to preserve the country from Federal grasp.

Why should we stand still and be crushed, when we can so easily prevent it when the best interests of the country will be promoted by the remedy that can also prevent our downfall. Every move of Genl Jackson from the Veto down to the Specie Circular inclusive, have been wise and necessary. Mr. Van Burens message contains the true doctrine, and perhaps he can assume no other position at the commencement, but surely when he finds he cannot maintain the hard money doctrines to the extent he wishes, he will yield to what is manifestly the popular sentiment of the nation, and adopt the means necessary to prevent the creation of another Bank monopoly.

It is a wide mistake to calculate on the soundness and correctness of public opinion. With three fourths of the press against us, $\frac{3}{4}$ths of the merchants, how can we calculate upon correct information and sound views reaching the great mass. I repeat we must act upon the matter as it is, and not as it ought to be. It may be noble to stand still with our eyes open to the results, and fall on sound principles, but I do not believe it, when that fall can be prevented on sound principles & strict fidelity to the people. The Republican party have entrusted the present administration with the preservation of Republican principles. It is their duty to do it if possible. If it can be done in no other way, as things are, but the creation of a National Bank, for, and belonging to the people, it would not take me long to decide this question of expediency.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.
1. At this point, the manuscript is badly smeared.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Clarksville Sept. 11th [1837]

I heard last evening of your election & need not assure you that I was much gratified at your success over the intrigues & malevolence of Bell who I presume was your opponent. We also read the Presidents Message which I have looked over hastily. It meets the expectation of
his friends & when read I was almost ready to declare myself a candidate again & take the field here. The triumph of the friends of the Adm. in this district I consider certain by a large majority. I am again taking fees. I have so far reed a respectable portion, but the object of now troubling you is, to say that I reed a letter last evening from Genl. Gratiot\(^3\) saying that C. J. Coutts could not be appointed Cadet because he was under sixteen. I think he will be 16 the 22nd of Nov. next & I cannot conceive that it can make any serious objection or if so, he can continue at the Academy in Alexandria until he is of the proper age. I am verry anxious for his appointment because I think him verry smart & it may not be convenient to expend so much on his education as may be necessary, especially if I get married to a widow & three children.\(^4\) Do tell Mrs Polk I shall be verry anxious to hear all the chit chat among the belles of the city. It will be peculiarly interesting now as I have become a beau, but as she may not like to correspond with an old bachelor, tell her to make occasional memorandums of such things as she thinks would interest me & you I am sure will have the good ness to enclose them to me.

I shall expect to hear from you as often as may be convenient, tho I know you will have but little leisure for your friends here.

I shall write you again soon giving you an account of the impression on the public mind by the message. Van Buren will get stronger here. My health is better than you ever knew it. I am now heavier than at any period of my life & likely to be corpulent.

C. Johnson

The first number of the Madisonian\(^6\) seems honest & promises well. Is he honest? A sworn friend of the Adm.? Or is he playing double?

Addressed to Washington.

1. The letter bore no year, and the Library of Congress tentatively assigned it to 1835. The contents of the letter, however, clearly establish that it was written in 1837.

2. Polk was re-elected Speaker of the House on September 4, 1837.

3. Charles Gratiot, head of the Corps of Engineers and a graduate of West Point, was ex-officio Inspector of the United States Military Academy.

4. This is a reference to Mrs. Elizabeth Dortch Brunson, whom Johnson married on February 20, 1838.

5. Only recently established in Washington by conservative Democrats Nathaniel P. Tallmadge and William C. Rives, the Madisonian was edited by Thomas Allen. The paper posed briefly as a friend of the administration, but its true position became obvious when its editor was chosen public printer by the House of Representatives over Francis P. Blair of the Globe.
TO JOHN FORSYTH

Sir Washington Sept 13, 1837

The enclosed letter is from an old acquaintance and a gentleman of the Bar of high standing in Florida.¹ I have but little personal acquaint­ance with Mr. Duval² whom he recommends for the appointment of Marshall, but have entire confidence in any representation which Mr. Allen would make. I enclose you Mr. Allen’s letter that you may be possessed of his opinion of Mr. Duval when the appointment is made.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. The enclosure mentioned here was a letter from Richard C. Allen to Polk, August 23, 1837. A surveyor and land speculator in the Florida Territory, Allen became a wealthy and influential man. In 1838 he became a federal judge in the Apalachicola district.

2. Samuel H. Duval, a nephew of William P. Duval, territorial governor of Florida, 1822–34, received the appointment.

FROM JAMES C. MITCHELL¹

Clinton, Mississippi. September 13, 1837

Mitchell reports that Henry S. Foote² has just told him that his resigna­tion as surveyor general of the Mount Salus³ district would go forward in the next mail. He appeals to Polk to help him get appointed to that post.

Addressed to Washington.

1. James C. Mitchell had recently moved to Mississippi from Athens, Tennessee. He was a successful lawyer and judge and had served two terms in the United States House of Representatives. Although he still claimed to be a Democrat, his loyalty was openly questioned by many members of that party. Later he ran as a Whig for Congress and for governor of his adopted state.

2. Foote, a lawyer, had been associated with the Jackson Mississippian. Since he did not resign, as he had promised, one wonders if he was deliber­ately misleading Mitchell. Foote later served in the United States Senate and as governor of Mississippi.

3. Mount Salus was the name that an early governor of Mississippi gave to his home, located quite near Clinton. It was here that a Choctaw land office was created.
FROM JOEL YANCEY

Glasgow, Kentucky. September 13, 1837

Yancey congratulates Polk on his re-election as Speaker of the House of Representatives and mentions plans to visit Washington shortly.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A former colleague of Polk in the House, 1827–31, Joel Yancey left Kentucky after failing to be re-elected. He moved first to Florida and then to Calhoun, Tennessee, where in 1836 he served as a clerk in the Cherokee agency.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

My Dear Sir

Nashville Sept 14th [1837]

In haste I write you a few lines to request that you will see Mr Blair and get him to send us express slips. As according to the present arrangement the Banner gets the news from Washington three days before us which will never do.

I congratulate you most heartily upon your triumph over Bell, both for your own sake and the sake of the country, as it would have been a terrible thing to have had the organization of the House against us. Your success was celebrated here by the discharge of fifty guns much to the discomposure of Mr Bells friends who stood aghast while the cannon was echoing our victory.

Please present my respects to Mrs P. . . .

JOHN O. BRADFORD

P S. We are waiting anxiously for a communication from our letter writer. Please hurry that matter. I have just heard from Col. 2 All well.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Bradford omitted the year in the date of this letter, but Polk noted on the envelope that he answered Bradford on September 23, 1837.

2. This reference is obscure.

FROM WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

Dr Sir.

Franklin Septr. 17, 1837

The organization of the present congress and the result of the Speakers election reached here in four days from Washington. The contrariety of feeling upon the arrival of the courier was great; the Message was met with an apparent firm & indignant tone, worse say they than anticipated, and your elevation to the Speakers chair produced a ghastly countenance with an exclamation is it possible (poor
unfortunate John, quam sibe sortem), whilst on the other side all was hilarity and good humor, the Message recd. as an able state paper filled with sound and able argument such as characterises the ablest and soundest Republicans of the day & if carried out would redound to the honour and safety of the country.

Since you left another press has been established in this place, the first no. issued on Friday giving the Presidents Message with a short editorial approving and supporting the Message as well as the admr. of Jackson. From the tone of the paper I presume it will support the administration which will be assailed on all occasions by the Review.

I enclose to your attentions the affidavit of Richard Ryan a pensioner who has lost his certificate and is unable to draw his pension for the want of a duplicate, which you will be kind enough to attend to for the old man, and enclose it to me. He had spoken to Mr. [Abram P.] Maury to attend to his business some time ago. He has become somewhat dissatisfied with him and desires a change through me. He is inclined to doubt the Majs. capacity. I enclose also the letter of Mr. [James L.] Edwards informing him of his transfer. By way of strengthening his proof if his proof should be insufficient please obtain from Mr. Edwards the steps necessary to enable him to get a duplicate certificate. The old man is in great need of his money. He is poor but honest & a good democrat. I know him well and will vouch for his honesty and integrity.

I have been requested by some of the proprietors of the Weekly Recorder published in this place to say to you that it would be recd. as a favour for you to frank them such public documents as in your opinion will be of service to them and the cause they espouse.

W. G. Childress

Addressed to Washington.
1. Quam sibe sortem, "what a destiny is his."
2. The Franklin Recorder, edited by Henry Van Pelt, had just been established.
3. The Franklin Western Weekly Review was a Whig paper that began in 1831 with James H. McMahon as publisher and James Hogan Jr. as editor. After a short time Hogan became both publisher and editor and was still in control in 1837. Later the paper was edited by Don Cameron.
4. Richard Ryan has not been further identified.

FROM ALFRED FLOURNOY

My Dear Friend Pulaski 17th Sept 1837

Permit me to congratulate you on again being elevated to the Speakers Chair. I could not help fearing that the changes of the times
had been such, that your political enemies would have been gratified
by your defeat. I suppose the vote for Speaker may be considered as a
test of the strength of parties in the House. If so, you are still in a
majority, tho with numbers somewhat diminished.\footnote{1}

Since you left, I have sold my land in Giles, and shall start in a
few days to explore some region more congenial to the growth of cot-
ton. I saw some short time past my relation Mr. Joseph Trotter,\footnote{2} (an
old friend of yours) who had just returned from the Red River coun-
try. He gives a most favourable account of the region he visited.
Major Buford\footnote{3} of Giles and myself have determined in company with
Mr. Trotter to visit it and see for ourselves. If the country comes up
at all to the anticipation we will make a settlement in it this winter.
Mr. Trotter informs us that the lands are all yet unsold and from
every indication of the course that the government will pursue we are
under the impression that the settlers will be intitled to the right of
prefference at the government price for lands. Now if that is the case,
such an opportunity will never present itself again for securing a good
cotton farm at so cheap a price. I must beg of you the favour to give
me your opinion on this matter, whether you think that government
will or not grant the privaledge we hope for. It has done so heretofor
and I see no reason why the same privaledges may not be granted
again. If the country is such as I believe it is, and you might have any
desire to avail yourself of the advantage that may be presented, I will,
if you choose to send a few hands, see that they are advantageously
located. I shall be there myself and your interest shall be attended to.
I owe you a debt of gratitude and would like to cancel it in part, if I
can, by promoting your pecuniary prospects. You politicians are so
absorbed in public affairs that you have no time to attend to your
private business. I sincerely believe that so fine a prospect has not
been presented for many years. The country is yet entirely new, not
filled up by settlers, and a man can make his choice of the best. When
I have explored I will however be better able to give you a history of
the country and the advantages it may permit. It lies on the west side
of the Red River and near the head of the great Raft.\footnote{4} The country
was purchased from the Caddo Indians.\footnote{5} The Texas line approaches
within some thirty miles of the river at the point near where I would
expect to locate. There is also a country said to be very desirable lay-
ing within the line, as now claimed by Texas but which when correctly
run will no doubt be thrown on our side of line. I have seen a gentle-
man who is well acquainted with the locality of the country and who
believes he has a pretty correct idea where the true line ought to run.
He says that the settlers are trying to secure Texas grants for the land
and in the event of its falling finally within our limits they will con-
tend that our government ought to recognise their titles. This Disputed
Territory as it is called embraces some of the finest lands on the Red
River. It appears to me it would be good policy in our government to
have the true line defined without delay.

If it is not taxing your goodness too far will you have the goodness
to ascertain at the Land office Department when it is probable the
Red River lands will be brought into market, if the surveys are nearly
completed, but more especially give me your opinion with regard to the
passage of any law giving the settlers the preference of entering their
improvements at the government price.

I shall return home by 10th November and should be happy to
receive a letter from you by that time. If you have leisure from your
more important engagements, do not fail to let me hear from you. Say
in your letter if the country is as desirable as it has been represented
if I must look out a good place for you.

Please remember me kindly to Mrs Polk.

ALFRED FLOURNOY

Addressed to Washington.

1. In the election for Speaker, Polk beat Bell by only 13 votes, 116
to 103, with 5 votes scattered.

2. Joseph H. Trotter came as a boy to Giles County about 1810. The
exact kinship between Trotter and Flournoy has not been learned.

3. James Buford, an early settler, became one of the most successful
farmers in Giles County. He was the county's second sheriff, and he also
served two terms in the state legislature, 1839-43.

4. The Great Raft consisted of logs and driftwood that accumulated in
the lower reaches of the Red River where that stream was a maze of swampy
islands and shallow, sluggish channels. This natural log jam extended from
90 to 160 miles, chiefly below Shreveport. Not until the 1870s was the jam
broken and the river rendered navigable above that city.

5. The Caddo Indians lived along the Red River, largely in Louisiana;
buIn 1835 they ceded their lands to the United States by treaty.

FROM CHARLES D. MCLEAN

Dear Sir: Memphs, Ten. Sept 17, 1837

I hope you will see Mr. Forsythe, the Sec. State and assure him
that it is due to the firm, steadfast, and consistent course, and extensive
circulation of the Memphis Gazette, that the Public Printing should
be continued in that office.
The proprietors are determined to use increased efforts to promote its usefulness, and its utmost efforts will be used to sustain the present Administration.

C. D. McLean

Addressed to Washington.

1. A planter in Shelby County, Charles D. McLean had published newspapers in Clarksville, Jackson, and Nashville. He had served one term in the legislature, 1831-33, while living in Jackson.
2. This paper was edited by Pendleton G. Gaines from 1834 until its discontinuance in 1838.

TO JAMES L. EDWARDS

Sir

Enclosed I send you a letter from Richard Long, accompanied by his pension certificate and deposition. It appears that in consequence of having failed to apply for his pension for more than a year, the Pension Agent at Nashville has refused to pay the pension due him. From my personal knowledge of him, I can say that he is the same person to whom the Pension certificate was issued. Upon my application at your office in Jany, 1835 his pension was increased from $80 to $84 per annum. Will you cause a Pension certificate to be issued to him for the latter am per annum, and cause an order to be issued to the agent at Nashville to pay him his last years pension, and also the increases of $4 per annum for previous years, or from the date of increase.

James K. Polk

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

1. A resident of Bedford County, Long had served in the Virginia line during the Revolution. See Polk to James L. Edwards, January 11, 1835, and Polk to Richard Long, January 11, 1835.

FROM ANDREW J. HENRY

Somerville. September 19, 1837

Henry says that the Whigs in his county have won the elections in August and are now trying to get a Whig appointed as postmaster at La Grange. He recommends the appointment of Campbell P. Stewart to that vacancy. Henry also believes that the Whigs are working covertly to have him removed as postmaster at Somerville.
Addressed to Washington.

1. Andrew J. Henry, an early settler in Fayette County, served as postmaster at Somerville from 1828 until 1839.

2. Known as a strong administration supporter, Stewart was appointed postmaster at La Grange on December 1, 1837.

FROM JOEL M. SMITH

Nashville Tennessee Septr 19th 1837

You will have seen before this that the Union News paper has been transferred to me. ¹ I have purchased a separate and independent office and intend that the paper in politics shall be conducted in a manner, not only to appear better than heretofore, but really to be a better one than it ever has been.

In taking upon me the duties of this office I have been influenced solely with a view to promote the cause in which it has been engaged from its commencement and although I foresee many many difficulties before me yet by the assistance and cooperation of the friends of the party whose principles it advocates I trust to [be] able to brook them all.

As I am now prepared to execute with neatness and dispatch every description of printing I have to request that you will use your influence to procure the publishing of the laws of Congress, and such other printing as either of the Departments may have to give, in this place from time to time. I would also be glad to have a Correspondent in the City during the session of Congress, who would give me the most important items of news from time to time by the express mail. I dont like the idea of being outdone by the filthy Republican Banner. Tell the Editors of the Globe that I should be glad to receive a slip occasionally for experts, from their office.

I must take this occasion Sir, to congratulate you on your success to the Speakers Chair, sincerely hoping that you may be able to surmount the obstacles which no doubt your enemies will endeavour to throw in your way. I am sorry to hear of the defeat of Blair and Rives. ² Surely there is something wrong among ourselves. Please write me if you can find time.

J. M. SMITH

Addressed to Washington.

1. See John Catron to Polk, September 2, 1837, and James Walker to Polk, September 7, 1837.

2. Initially, the chief rivals for public printer in the balloting by the
Correspondence of James K. Polk

House of Representatives were Gales and Seaton of the National Intelligencer and Blair and Rives of the Washington Globe. With the division generally along party lines, the latter led each ballot but were unable to obtain a majority. Thomas Allen, editor of the Washington Madisonian, gradually gained ground at the expense of Gales and Seaton and won on the twelfth ballot. This was widely interpreted as a rebuke to Blair as well as further evidence of disunity among the Democrats.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Coln       Murfreesboro. September 20, 1837

I am as you may suppose highly gratified at your success over John Bell for the Speakers Chair. Your enemies were very sanguine this time in the expectations of your defeat, and some preparing for great rejoicings & illuminations when they should learn that the Whig candidate John Bell was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives by a Whig majority but in this they are greatly disappointed and mortified. Your friends here are however a little shagrined at the news of the defeat of Blair & Rives for the public printing by the same artifices that were employed to defeat you when you were first run for Speaker. But possibly I may be misinformed on the subject of the true position of the Editor of the Madisonian. If I apprehend aright it augers unfavorably for the success of the proposed measures of the Executive in regard to a severance of the Treasury from all Bank agency in the management of the fiscal concerns of the Government. The Talmage & Rives party when combined with the Federalists will be too strong for the Van Buren party to carry their plans of establishing subagencies, and most likely nothing will be done on that subject this Session. Possibly that may be the best thing that can happen.

I reckon upon the whole that the most relief that will be relief that can be afforded to the suffering community will be by allowing time to every interest to work out its own deliverance by prudent management and active industry. The crops are said to be good every where and if the products of Labor should command good prices it is probable the country will get out of her embarrassments in 12 or 15 months. Perhaps it may be politic in you, situated as you are, not to commit your self unnecessarily on the subject of the difference between the two branches of the republican party with regard to the measures of relief that may be proposed. There are mighty objections to either view of the subject. The most fearful consequences I apprehend may arise from angry discussions between our friends on the
subject of the Subtreasures and Bank agencies, and thereby widen the breach and by that means bring about the establishment of another United States Bank and all its concomitant federal evils.

I suppose you have learned before this time that our friend John R. Laughlin is dead. He as you know had his character most wantonly assailed with a view to his defeat in his Election. Until he became a Politician I suppose he had not an enemy in the world but it was necessary to ruin him in order to have him defeated and a little fellow named Blair¹ whose father lives in Bedford was induced to go around the precincts to retail the most base slanders about him, alleging that he had defrauded the County & State out of many thousands of dollars. He & Laughlin had a rencontre at that time in which Laughlin proved too hard for him. But unfortunately for Laughlin he attended a horse race at Bradley’s track at which place he became intoxicated and Blair sought an opportunity to avenge himself, got engaged in a combat and stabed him in many places in the bowels & groin of which wounds he died on the eighth day. Blair has been taken into custody & has given bail to the amount of 12 thousand dollars for his appearance at court to stand his trial. A great many think he will not appear but I think he will; and furthermore I predict that he will get clear. His friends are busily engaged in making it a political matter and is producing great interest in his favor. We are all well. My respects to Sarah.

W. R. Rucker

Addressed to Washington.

¹ Two Blairs were listed on the census of 1830 as residents of Bedford County: Alfred, between thirty and forty years old, and Thomas, between fifty and sixty years old. It is probable that Thomas and Alfred were father and son, and that Alfred is the person who killed John R. Laughlin. There were no Blairs in Rutherford County according to the census of 1830.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dr Sir Columbia Sept 20 1837

I enclose you copies of our bids. I suppose that all which is necessary for you to do is to see that they are filed in the Post office by the 10th of October and that we have justice on the decisions.

I have made these bids according to the wishes of my partners and at lower rates than I wished. I really want the route from Florence to Nashville and care nothing about the ballance. I have put the names of the parties to each bid so that if any of them are accepted the
contracts can be filled up with the individual names if necessary. But we would rather have the contracts sent out in blank with authority to the P M to let us fill up with what names we may agree on to each contract. Our bargain is that what contracts we may get we will divide and each one run his own part as he chooses, but we will all be responsible for each other. Please let me know the result of the mail letting as soon as it is over.

James Walker

Addressed to Washington.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother

New Haven Sep 22 1837

I received yours of the 13th a few days since, stating that you had not been advised of the receipt of the funds which you remitted.

When I received the remittance, I immediately wrote you, acknowledging the same and requesting if convenient, that you would remit to me $250.00 more which would cover my expenses. Were I not to give some reason for making so large a demand, you might and justly so think me extravagant. If I recollect rightly, I wrote you in June last, stating that the May remittance had been consumed by travelling. Consequently my bills have been on the increase, both for two months previous to that time and four months since. This I hope will appear sufficient, for making the request I do. I do not pretend to urge that economy has been my guide relative to my expenses. Neither do I believe that I can be charged with extravagance, every thing considered. I would like very much to visit Washington but the Senior year commences in about a week, which renders it impossible.

Samuel W. Polk

Addressed to Washington.

1. This letter has not been found.
2. See Samuel W. Polk to Polk, September 10, 1837.
3. See Samuel W. Polk to Polk, June 7, 1837.

FROM WILLIAM S. HATCH

Cincinnati, Ohio. September 23, 1837

William S. Hatch, a prominent citizen of Cincinnati, hopes that the suspension of specie payment has forever broken the connection between
the government and banking institutions. Saying that he has given much attention to the subject of handling government money, he describes what he calls a warehousing system and argues cogently for its adoption. His plan closely resembles the subtreasury plan.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Although he is generally listed as a Whig, Hatch obviously did not agree with the Whigs on banking affairs.

FROM J. KNOX WALKER

Dear Uncle.

Some time since I received your letter enclosing remittances for myself and Sam. Caldwell, but have neglected acknowledging the receipt of the same until I could collect and pay off Samuel's debts and send you a list of the creditors and the amount of their bills. Such a course I have thought most likely to suit the Dr.'s business habits. I believe I have collected all his bills and have paid the most of them as you will see

Hull & Townsend's  $89.48 paid  
E. Boyd          $50.93 Do  
E. Gorham        $30.04 "  
Hanley          $9.07 "  
Mrs. Prescott    $7.00 "  
College Bills    
(including board) $45.80  " $232.32 paid  

There is in addition to these bills which I have paid a washing bill of $12.00 which I have not paid, not being able. So you will perceive there is still necessary for a complete settlement of his accounts $14.32. This you can send with my remittance of $100 or not as you think proper.

I thank you for your invitation to spend a few weeks in Washington. It will not be convenient for me so to do at this time; indeed our vacation continues no longer than the present week. I hope to see you next spring vacation if not sooner, that is in case Congress should at that time be in session. Give my love to Aunt Sarah—please to remind her also of a long due and long promised letter. Also to Mrs. Campbell & daughter.

J. Knox Walker
Addressed to Washington.

1. Samuel Polk Caldwell, Knox Walker's cousin, had recently left New Haven.
2. Dr. Silas M. Caldwell.
3. It is not clear how this figure was derived, unless the remittance to pay young Caldwell's debts was $230.
4. This probably refers to Mrs. George Washington Campbell and her daughter Lyzinka.

FROM ARCHIBALD YELL

Friend Polk Sunday Sept the 23rd 1837

You mentioned the other night you would aid me in procuring for Whinry the sub agency for the Osages. Will you this evng drop the Secty of War a letter. It will ensure him the appointnt which will be a matter of grate interest to Whinry never to be forgoten. He is an other sort of a man to any that have been proposed.

I am better to day.

A. YEll

PS. Will not Mr. Grundy sign it.

Addressed to Washington.

1. In 1837, September 23 came on Saturday. It is likely that the correct date of this letter is September 24, 1837.
2. Abraham Whinnery was a former resident of Bedford County, Tennessee, where he was known personally to Yell and Polk. He moved to Arkansas, where he took part in politics, being elected first to the territorial legislature and then to the convention that drew up the constitution for the new state. On September 28, Joel R. Poinsett wrote to Polk saying that there was no vacancy as subagent with the Osages.

FROM ABIJAH MANN JR.1

Dear Sir Frankfort [New York] Sep 24, 1837

I have noticed in your arrangement of committees that my friend and successor A. Loomis² is omitted from all of the committees. I confess that this circumstance is as [much] my fault as yours because I ought to have advised you in respect to him. He is a modest & gentlemanly man & when you come to know him well you will find him one of the most valuable and reliable men from this state in the House. He is one of the best lawyers as well as best men you have and you may de-
pend upon him (as a wheel horse) in your term when the load is heavy. The circumstance of his omission is of no consequence of itself but improper inferences may be drawn from it here. Let me therefore solicit that when you want a good & reliable man from this state on select committee detail him. He has no experience in Legisln. but will learn it readily. The position of the administration is a favourable one & the opposition seem at a loss upon what point to make an issue with the President.

The treachery of those men from this State who turned out Blair is insufferable and they will reap the reward of Judas.³

Present my kindest regards to your excellent Mrs Polk. . .

A. MANN JR.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Mann had served two terms in the House of Representatives as a Jackson Democrat.

2. A Democrat, Arphaxd'l Loomis served a single term in the House of Representatives and was not a candidate for re-election.

3. A part of the Democratic delegation from New York voted against Blair and Rives for public printer, with the result that Thomas Allen was elected.

FROM DAVID B. MOLLOY¹

My Dear Sir Murfreesboro Sept 25 1837

Our mutual friends Majr Jno W Childress & Majr M[oses] G. Reeves have been kind enough to write you requesting your friendly aid in furthering my views in relation to mail proposals;² made by me to the Post office Department for carrying the mail of the United States on Routes No 3465 and No 3466 in the State of Tennessee, from Nashville to McMinnville through this place and from Nashville to Huntsville through this place, three times a week and back in four Horse Post Coaches. I am exceedingly anxious to get the contracts out of the hands of the opposition as they are always busy in using all the power they may have to prejudice the minds of the people against the operations of the Genl Government. War to the knife is their motto and it seems they are making that motto good for they have butchered one of our friends (the late Jno R Laughlin Esqr) in a most savage manner.³ But it is all considered well enough by the no Party-Party here. He was an administration man, and of course did not deserve to live among such worthies.
I do not know what will be bid by some of these gentry, for these contracts but, would cherfully take the contracts for fifty dollars a year less than what any man or set of men from this county may bid for it. I know the men that are bidding but cant find out what their bid would be, but know one thing, that if they get them, their whole force will be brought to bear upon our elections.

My proposals were mailed at Nashville. I could not trust them to be put in the office here, as the opposition have such a perfect understanding to try and keep all contracts and offices from the Genl Government among themselves, I could not have had a dogs chance, if they had had the most remote suspicion of my offering a bid. This will explain the reason why they were not mailed here. My friend Majr Childress explained in his letter to you the reason the Post Masters certificate was not annexed to my bid. Mr Grundy has also been written to [by?] some of my friends on the subject.

Any assistance that you may be able to render me consistent with your feelings and the public interest will be greatfully acknowledged.

D. B. MOLLOY

P.S. The Presidents Message is popular here with all unprejudiced men. It certainly will give satisfaction to the great body of the American People. Our anties here, are at a great loss to know what kind of opposition to make to it. The great Big Bell,\(^4\) has not given them the cue as yet. They are sadly disappointed in his not being made speaker. Most astonishing! that such a wonderful panic making could not have affected any thing; but the dying struggle has been made and Republicanism yet lives, as I trust it ever will.

D. B. M.

Addressed to Washington.

1. David B. Molloy became postmaster at Murfreesboro a little more than a year after this letter was written and served in the position for many years.

2. The letters from Childress and Reeves have not been found. Molloy did not get the contracts on which he bid.

3. Laughlin, a brother of the editor of the Nashville Union, had been recently stabbed to death by a man named Blair.

4. John Bell.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother New Haven Sep 26 1837

I received from Mr Campbell\(^1\) this morning $200.00 in Gold. which sum, he informed me, you forwarded by him to me. Knox [Walker]
also received from the same $100.00. I intend exchanging the Gold for New Haven bills, if I can get a premium worth the trouble. I expect however it will be very small. Yesterday it was only 2 or 3 per cent.

Your letter of the 23d came to hand this morning.² The delay of the $50.00 will cause no inconvenience either to me or my Creditors.

SAMUEL W. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. This probably refers to George Washington Campbell. An elder statesman among the Tennessee Democrats, he had served as a congressman, 1803-09; as judge of the state supreme court, 1809-11; in the United States Senate, 1811-14 and 1815-18; as Secretary of the Treasury, 1814; as Minister to Russia, 1818-21; and as a member of the French Spoliation Claims Commission, 1831.

2. This letter has not been found.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My dr Sir. Nashville, Septr 27th '37

In the midst of the Fdl. court, with a very large docket, I have only had time to read the currency bills, and glance at all else youv. been doing. Yet I am in a condition, to hear public opinion from almost all quarters. The members of Assembly are coming in, & the court full of Whigs. The 10 million bill, is producing quiet like an opiate.¹ It had only five Senators against it [and] will it is admitted furnish the only money worthy of confidence. The State Banks are unpopular, decidedly unpopular. The U.S. treasury is looked to for relief. Relief, in form and substance, must come to the merchant so that he can pay his Eastern debt, or he presses the debtors to him, & they of course will clamour. Since Mr. Calhoun's opposition the U.S. Pennl. Bank is deemed dehors the contest. A new U.S. Bank has never been seriously thought of. The community will settle like the swarm around the King Bee, around the Treasury, and be unable to form or conjecture a substitute for the Treasury circulation. Mr. Woodbury's report is timid & Mr Reeves project ridiculous (inter nos).² His Speech of 20th got here last night is useless. He is trying his new fledged greatness upon the strength of broken State Banks!! for the public think all broke who do not pay. Let him. If he reaches the Presidency through this channel, he is what we never suspected him for—a deep calculator.

Mr. Woodbury, & the Presdt have as I believe mistook the better policy in this. The treasury notes should not bear interest—no bank notes ever have. No one desires to pencil up percents every time he
passes a treasury note. It would be most inconvenient did they form a
general circulation, as they soon must. Again, notes for 100 dols. are
too large, and will make up a clumsy circulation, & are unpopular,
because inconvenient. The notes should come down to twenties. You
must look to popularity, to numbers. Your party has nothing else to
look to at present. Loose the next election, & we loose our principles, &
sacrifice our power for idle nothings. The interest feature is unac-
ceptable, & the 100$ minimum decidedly unpopular. Let me repeat
what I said in my letter to you on reading the message. \textsuperscript{8} Strike boldly;
it [is] your habit, & the means of your elevation. It is expected of you.
Go in for 30 or 40 millions, to be circulated fast as may be by the govt.
Go for 20ties & over, in graduations of tens. Strike out the interest
feature, boldly declare that the farmer will hoard the notes bearing 5
pr cent. Sir I'll file my salary, & live on Fedl. money. It looks like the
govt was giving its note. It is the very truth confessed, charged upon
it, that the treasury is broke. The report shoud receive no countenance
by so useless a feature. The circulation should not be [ . . . ] \textsuperscript{4} by a
system requiring a man to travel with Roulett's interest tables in his
pocket! As that shrewd personage Fletcher, \textsuperscript{5} said to me yesterday, the
notes for large sums bearing interest will be packed away in the bot-
tom of the Farmer's chest, and only be draged out by heavy premiums;
& further, that without interest the circulation will be the best possible.
No man will wish safer or better money.

Think of this my friend: The treasury, in every country on Earth
is the government, be it a Monarchy or Republic. In the latter it is
emphatically so. The U. S. Bank when the Treasury, was the Govt.
It was worshipped as a golden God, & its nominal master, the Govt.
scoffed. So it must ever be. With the Treasury we must be governed,
not the controll by the appointing power, giving offence to ten, &
securing one, & he paralized. What does every candidate for office in
the State bawl about from the stump? The U. S. money, & the rights of
the people over it, & to it. It is the idol of our worship. Keep it, and
make it do its office honestly, & fairly, not by bribing in the form of
retainers all that is distinguished in Congress that will take the bribe,
& all of influence not there. Let the popular will through Congress
arange the matter. It is the legitimate mode, & the only honest policy.
A corrupt use of the public money, by the officers of Govt. to any, even
a petty extent is most improbable—almost impossible; and the idea
of its being any safer in private hands, is, with all due defference to
Mr. Reeves, hardly fit to be declaimed at a crossroad, by a candidate
for a militia captaincy. The State Banks, & State treasuries, our
strongboxes! Much better would it be to sink the money in the
Chesapeake, where waste & corruption wd. be cut off, & state strife be prevented.

J. Catron

Addressed to Washington.
1. This bill, passed by the House on October 9, 1837, empowered the Secretary of the Treasury to issue $10 million worth of interest-bearing notes.
2. Woodbury's report suggested two possible schemes. One would permit government collectors, postmasters, and other agencies to receive, disburse, and store public funds. The other proposed a new system of subtreasuries. William C. Rives favored a bill designating the type of funds that the government should receive in collecting public revenue and opposed the subtreasury scheme.
3. See Catron to Polk, September 10, 1837.
4. One word at this point has not been deciphered. It appears to be "colged." Possibly, it was intended to mean clogged.
5. This seems to refer to Thomas H. Fletcher, a prominent Nashville lawyer and banker.

FROM LEONIDAS POLK

Dear Col:

Raleigh [North Carolina] 28th Sept. 1837

I arrived just a day after Mrs. P.—as usual—though as she did not propose to go farther, I found her safely at her fathers. Lucius & family reached this the day after, all well. I hope Mrs. P. has heard again from home & that she finds less damage done than she anticipated. The mention of it has put Lucius quite on thorns lest he shd experience a similar fate.

You will find a letter Enclosed to Bp. Otey which it is very important shd reach him before the meeting of the Episcopal Convention in Tenn. & I know not how to effect its transmission thither in time except through the express mail via Washington. I have therefore taken the liberty of enclosing it to you with the request that you wd. forward it immediately pr express to him.

Your attention to this will oblige me. With respects to Mrs. P.

L. Polk

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), 199.
1. Leonidas Polk, a son of William Polk of Raleigh, North Carolina, lived in Maury County, Tennessee. Later he was a bishop in the Episcopal church and a general in the Confederate army.
2. Leonidas Polk was married to Frances Ann Devereaux, the daughter of John and Frances Devereaux.

3. Lucius Polk was a brother of Leonidas Polk. He, also, had moved to Maury County.

4. This reference to damage remains obscure.

5. James H. Otey, a native of Virginia, moved to Franklin, Tennessee, where he was rector of the local Episcopal church. In 1833 he had been elected as the first bishop of the Episcopal Church in Tennessee.

FROM MOSES DAWSON

Cincinnati 29th Sept. 1837

I have been instructed by the committee of a meeting of the democrats of the first Congressional district of Ohio to transmit to you a copy of the proceedings of that meeting held at Carthage on the 23d. instant, with a request that you will have the same laid before the House of Representatives over which you preside.

It gives me the greater pleasure to mention to you this communication on the conviction that the principles avowed at that meeting fully accords with your opinions on the various points which it embraces.

I would take the present opportunity to express to you my sentiments upon the important question of the settlement with the deposite Banks which will no doubt come into discussion in your House soon if it has not already done so.

I have observed the terms of the Bill passed by the Senate on that subject, and am very apprehensive that the time fixed on for payment of the debts due to the government by the Banks is too short. I much fear that by the western Banks at least it would be entirely impracticable to make the payments in the terms prescribed by the Senate's Bill. This money is all in the hands of the traders and as they have been in the constant habit of paying Bank loans at the rate of ten per cent upon the amount due, to demand more than at that rate would not only be productive of embarrassment but in many cases absolute Bankruptcy, and that difficulty also extend to the Banks themselves by which the government might suffer. I have no sympathy for the Banks for I believe their suspension of payment was induced by the mammoth in Philadelphia, but I am perfectly convinced that the terms of the Senate's Bill would if insisted be productive of great injury to government and the debtors of the Banks, and that 24 months at least would be required to make the payments practicable.4

Moses Dawson

Addressed to Washington.

1. Moses Dawson was editor of the Cincinnati Advertiser, a loyal Jackson Democrat paper. In 1841 he sold out his interest in that journal. Irish-
born, he had been forced to flee Dublin where he had helped devise a school system for that city.

2. Carthage was a village on Mill Creek, just north of Cincinnati. Incorporated in 1861, it was annexed by Cincinnati in 1911.

3. The Senate version would give the deposit banks only eight months in which to return to the government the federal moneys deposited with them.

4. The bill that finally became law provided for repayment in three installments spread over twenty months.

FROM GEORGE W. TERRELL¹

Madisonville, Mississippi. October 3, 1837

Terrell is eager to succeed William M. Gwin as United States marshal for Mississippi and says that he is entitled to favorable consideration from the administration. He asks that Polk call to the President's attention Terrell's loyalty to the Democrats in the election of 1836.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Formerly a prominent lawyer in Paris, Tennessee, Terrell had moved to Mississippi about two years before this letter was written. Later he moved to Texas, where he had a distinguished career as a judge and diplomat. He was secretary of state for the Texas Republic at one time.

FROM FRANCIS W. PICKENS¹

Dear Sir

Washington Sunday Morning

[October 8, 1837]²

I have just understood that nothing was done last night, and that the bill is further from its passage than ever. I have been very sick with an affection of the bladder, very painful, so as to be unable to go out, or I would go & see you. If you ever intend to push the divorce bill now is the time. A passage of that bill is more important than all other measures. The game is lost unless we push now with boldness & fearlessness. Lay the Treasury Note Bill aside and take up the Great Bill.³ You can get along without the one during the recess, but you will be prostrated without the other.

Let me hear from you.

F. W. Pickens

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.

1. Pickens was a nullifier who served South Carolina in the House of Representatives for five consecutive terms, 1834–43.
2. The context of the letter indicates that it was probably written on Sunday, October 8, two days before Pickens rose to support the so-called Divorce Bill, or Independent Treasury Bill.

3. This refers to the Independent Treasury Bill. The Senate version of the bill reached the House on October 5. Pickens was permitted to make the first speech favoring the bill but wandered off into sectional recrimination, arousing members from the North to extreme anger. The bill was not passed during the special session, but was eventually approved in the summer of 1840.

TO A. O. P. NICHOLSON

My Dear Sir

Washington Oct 9th 1837

I see from the Tennessee papers that it is likely a great effort will be made to bring on the Senatorial election at your present Session. Your opinion I know accords with my own on this subject; and as it seems to be probable that you will have a discussion on the subject, I have thought it might be useful to you to make a suggestion or two on the subject. The decision of the Mississippi election by the House Repts settles this principle; that the office of Representative is one always existing, and that a *vacancy has happened* in the meaning of the Constitution when the office is not filled by an incumbent; and that therefore the Governor of the state, had the power, to order writs of election, to fill a vacancy, which vacancy occurred because of the expiration of the term of the members of the last Congress on the 3rd of March last; or in other words that the Governor had the power to issue writs to fill a vacancy, which vacancy happened at the commencement of a new term, and before an election had taken place under the state laws.

In the case of Sevier* the Senator from Arkansas, the same *principle* had been decided by the Senate of the U. States. Sevier's case was this: His term as Senator expired on the 3rd of March last; and on the 4th of March a new Senatorial term of 6 years commenced. The Governor of Arkansas, anticipating a special session of the Senate on the 4th of March, appointed Mr. Sevier temporarily a Senator from that state, to take his seat on the 4th of March, and to hold the same until the next meeting of the legislature of the state; and the Senate decided that the Governor had the power to appoint Mr Sevier in the recess of the legislature, and upon full discussion he took his seat in the Senate on the 6th of March; and now he now holds his seat, at the present Session of Congress, having no other authority, than the Executive appointment of the Governor.

This reverses what was understood to be the decision of the Senate
in the case of Lanman² of Connecticut some years ago, which case was relied upon in 1827, when Judge White was elected in advance. In looking into Lanman's case, it is found to have involved this point, upon which probably it was decided: for instance the legislature being in Session, had made an ineffectual attempt to elect, and had adjourned. The case of Anderson³ a Senator from Tennessee, settled the principle, precisely as it has been settled in Sevier's case. Anderson held his commission from the Governor, to fill a vacancy occurring by the expiration of the Senatorial term, & he took his seat accordingly. You can learn the facts of his case, by consulting the records and journals of Congress, as also the State records, on file in the Secretary of State's office. The argument relied upon by our opponents, to justify forcing the election now is, that from the 4th of March 1839 to the meeting of Congress on the first Monday in December 1839 the Governor could not fill the vacancy by a temporary appointment. This argument is swept from under them by the decision in Sevier's case, and in the case of the Mississippi election.

You remember that when Judge White was elected, it was upon the erroneous opinion, that the Governor would have no power to appoint after the 4th of March 1829, and that on that day if Genl. Jackson was elected, as it was anticipated he would be, there would be a special Session of the Senate on that day, and that it was desirable to have the Senate full, and especially from Tennessee. These suggestions are hastily given, and will be received for what they are worth.

Is it possible that our opponents are afraid to trust the people at the next Election? Our friends I hope will spread fully before the people their reasons for opposing bringing on this election at this time. Make an issue with them on this point, and the verdict of public opinion cannot be doubted.

This is very hastily written, whilst in the Chair, & is sent without revision or correction.

JAMES K. POLK

P. S.

I will set out home on the 17th in company with Turney, Governor Clay & Judge Martin of Alabama, and will loose no time that I can avoid on the way.

J. K. P.

Addressed to Nashville, but the envelope has not been found. Marked "Private."

1. Ambrose H. Sevier, grandson of John Sevier, had moved to Arkansas in 1821. After serving several terms as Territorial Delegate to Congress, he
was elected to the United States Senate when Arkansas became a state. Sevier was in the Senate from September 1836 until March 1848.

2. James Lanman was elected from Connecticut to the United States Senate in 1819 and served until March 3, 1825. When he presented his credentials as senator designate to fill the vacancy in the term beginning on March 4, 1826, he was not permitted to qualify.

3. Joseph Anderson served in the Senate continuously from September 26, 1787, until March 3, 1815. The appointment cited here occurred in 1809.

TO MAHLON DICKERSON

Sir Washington Oct 16th 1837

I have received the inclosed letters from Mr. Joseph Dwyer and Dr. William G. Dickinson. I have no personal acquaintance with Mr. Dwyer. With Dr. Dickinson who recommends him for the appointment of Purser in the Navy, I have been long and intimately acquainted, and would place implicit confidence in any thing he would say.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Connecticut Historical Society.

1. A Joseph Dwyer resided in Sumner County in 1830, but it is not clear whether he was the person referred to here.

2. Dickinson was born and educated in New England. He moved to Franklin, Tennessee, in 1816 after a brief sojourn in Nashville. He was a well-known surgeon and was prominent in Masonic circles. His daughter, Belinda, was married to William H. Polk in April 1837.

3. On October 18, 1837, Dickerson replied to this note, saying that Dwyer will be considered when a vacancy occurs.

FROM FELIX GRUNDY

Dear Sir, Washington, Octr 17th 1837

Upon your arrival at Nashville, should the Senatorial election not have taken place, you will, upon a careful examination of the whole subject, make such use and disposition of my name, as will in your judgment best promote the public interest. Should a withdrawal of my name, in a future election for the office, promise anything favorable, you are at liberty to pledge yourself, that my claims shall be withdrawn, and your pledge shall be redeemed. So thoroughly am I convinced, that the good of the Country requires, the preservation of the
principles of the present Administration, that I am willing to make any personal sacrifice to aid in giving them effect.  

FELIX GRUNDY


1. This is an extraordinary expression of Grundy’s confidence in Polk’s political acumen as well as a tacit acknowledgment that he was the leader of the Democrats in Tennessee.

2. In the published version mentioned above, the last sentence of the letter was enclosed in parentheses. No explanation was given, but the original of the letter bears no such marks.

FROM W. BOWLING GUION

Vicksburg, Mississippi. October 25, 1837

Guion again asks Polk to support him in his efforts to be appointed to a vacancy in the Topographical Engineers.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Guion was from Mississippi and had been Jefferson Davis’s roommate at West Point. After being expelled for participating in a drinking bout, Guion enlisted in the army and was currently engaged in surveying for the government in Missouri and Arkansas.

2. See W. Bowling Guion to Polk, August 7, 1836.

FROM WILLIAMSON SMITH

Dear Sir, Cherokee Agency 25th Oct. 1837

As Congress has adjourned am at a loss to know where to address you but as Mrs Polk is with you suppose to Washington City.

Since my arrival it has been determined by the Superindant of Cherokee Emigration (Genl. Smith) not to send any more of the Cherokees by land if he can avoid it. On making a calculation of the cost of a detachment of about 400, which left a few days ago for Arkansas by land, it was asertained the cost would be about forty three or four dollars pr. head. They can be carried by water for at most $20. The superindant has therefore determined to make contracts for transporting them by water. I have made a contract for transporting 6,000 and many more as may go by water from Tuscumbia Ala. to Little Rock or to Jefferson City or Boonville Missouri, at $10 pr. head.
The detachment which went by water last spring cost $18.28 per head for the same distance. It was however only to have cost $13.00 per head which was the lowest price it could be done at by contract. As it is a large contract Genl. Smith prefers consulting Mr. C. A. Harris for his approval.3

The object of this letter is to get you to see Mr. Harris and to give me what aid you can feel I deserve in the faithful performance of such a duty. I will go to Maury where I will be able to give ample and satisfactory security &c to the government. I have a slight acquaintance with Mr. Harris which I am hopes4 will at least have no bad effect in this matter. If sir, you can render me any service in this contract it will place me under additional obligation to you. Should I get this contract confirmed by Mr. Harris if I should be fortunate it will I am hopes relieve me in some degree of my pecuniary embarrassment. I think it probable I will be in Washington City about the 15th or 20th of Nov. Genl. Smith will send the contract on to Mr. Harris and inform him more fully on the subject.

I reserve the political news until I see you.

WILLIAMSON SMITH

Addressed to Washington.

1. The letter was posted at Calhoun, Tennessee, where the agency was located.

2. In spite of their names, General Nathaniel Smith and Williamson Smith seem not to be near kinsmen.

3. Carey A. Harris, a Tennessean, was Chief Clerk in the War Department and sometimes served as Acting Secretary of War.

4. At this point and a few lines below, Smith ran these words together, obviously meaning "I am in hopes."

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Col. Mr. Loves1 October 29th 1837

Understanding from Col. Earl2 that you intend remaining in Nashville for a few days, and also Mr. Turney, it would afford me pleasure if you & him would ride up & spend a day & night with me. Had I understood that you would have remained, as I now do, until Mrs. Polk returned to Nashville I would have claimed the right of having you and Mr. Turney with me for a few days, and made this request personally. Please present my compliments to Mr. Turney and say to him this for me.
I am truly gratified, at the attention paid you three patriots,² by the Democracy of Nashville & Davidson, & I may truly add of the state of Tennessee, for as far as the state was represented here, its Democracy attended the dinner to proclaim well done thou faithfull servants. I would have cheerfully attended, if my health had permitted and united my approbation with those of the Democracy to the approval of your course, but tho absent in the flesh, my whole spirit was with you.

I leave here for the Hermitage about 11 o'clock this morning. I intended returning to church & going direct from there home; but I fear the cold of the evenings ride for I am really more feeble than is generally known, & the least cold falling upon my lungs at this season, remains with me thro the winter.

My Dear Sir, will you & Mr. Turney ride up this evening or tomorrow & spend a night and day with me. It would afford me great pleasure as I have many inquiries to make about our new conservators.⁴ I thought when the first number of the Madisonion was sent me that it was the Roman Horse⁵ to be introduced thro the walls of the Republican ranks, to divide & destroy it. This as far as I can see, was the basis of the conservators. Altho this horse has got within the walls of the Republicans, still I trust it will only destroy the conspirators & the walls of Troy will be able to resist its power and the Democracy triumph.

Let me have the pleasure of seeing you & Mr. Turney at the Hermitage. I suppose Govr. Clay is off this morning.

ANDREW JACKSON

Addressed to Nashville and delivered by hand.

1. This probably refers to Samuel Love, a son of Jackson's recently deceased friend, Charles I. Love. Samuel Love lived near Haysboro, at a point roughly equidistant from Nashville and the Hermitage.
2. Ralph E. W. Earl, a portrait painter, had for some time resided at the Hermitage. Jackson valued him as a friend and traveling companion.
3. Polk, Hopkins L. Turney, and Clement C. Clay arrived together, and were honored by a gathering of Nashville Democrats.
4. This refers to a movement of conservatives in the Democratic ranks who were opposed to the subtreasury plan. Led by William C. Rives of Virginia and Nathaniel P. Tallmadge of New York, they posed for a while as friends of Van Buren but drifted into the Whig ranks.
5. The use of Roman instead of Trojan seems to have been a slip rather than the result of ignorance. Elsewhere Jackson used the term correctly. The Madisonian was the Washington newspaper established by the "new conservators."
FROM JOHN H. PRENTISS¹

Dear Sir:          Cooperstown, [New York] Nov 2, 1837²

I arrived at home on the 20th instant, and, much to my gratification, found my family in good health. Being not unmindful of our conversation at Washington, in regard to my friend, Mr. Beach, on the 23d I addressed him a letter, stating the subject of our interview, and requesting his answer whether, with suitable inducements he would undertake the editorship of the "Nashville Union."³ I mentioned that a competent person for the station could obtain a permanent salary of $2,000, or, if he chose, might purchase an equal interest with the present owner for $2,000, that sum to be raised for his benefit by persons in Tennessee, and the $2,000 secured to the persons advancing it by a mortgage upon the interest itself.

Enclosed you have Mr Beach's answer to my letter, which I send in the hope it may reach you before you start for Washington, and in season to enable you to confer with your friends in regard to its contents, and give an answer to the enquiries contained therein.⁴ I take this occasion to send the assurances I gave you when in Washington, that Mr. Beach is exceedingly well qualified for the post, as well on account of being a ready and able worker, as having had much practice in the pursuit, and being perfectly familiar with the politics of the country, and in principle a sound democrat. The situation being a very desirable one in his estimation, he would like to effect an arrangement for that purpose, and I am decidedly of opinion, if effected, it would prove mutually advantageous to all concerned.

Our election commences on Monday next, under favorable auspices, and I have no doubt the state of the polls at the close of the contest will show that New York has maintained its strong position in the Democratic family of the Union. Of this county, I can expect with the utmost confidence she will prove herself true to the Administration by a majority vote of 1500.

JNO. H. PRENTISS

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Prentiss was Polk's colleague in the House at this time. He established the *Freeman's Journal* at Cooperstown in 1808 and continued its publication until 1849. He was a faithful Democrat, but his brother Samuel was a Whig senator from Vermont.

2. Through some error both this letter and the second, a postscript from Prentiss on the same day, while clearly dated November 2, were postmarked November 1.
3. This is the first hint that Polk foresaw another change in the editorship of the Union. Samuel B. Beach of Oneonta, New York, replied promptly on October 26, 1837; Prentiss's letter to Beach has not been found.

4. In the letter Beach showed immediate interest in the editorship of the Nashville Union but made inquiries as to details of pay, ownership, and the like. The Beach letter was dated at Oneonta, October 26, 1837, and postmarked there on October 27, 1837. In a postscript to Polk that was mailed under separate cover on the same day as his letter, Prentiss said that he had just talked to Beach again and that Beach was eager to take the job if his conditions were met.

**FROM FRANCIS THOMAS**

**Dear Sir**

Frederick [Maryland] Nov 7, 1837

One of my trunks filled with clothing was put by mistake on the stage in which you travelled from this place to Wheeling and has not been returned to me. The stage agent at this place has been informed that all the baggage on your stage was taken to the steamboat in which you descended the Ohio, and it is highly probable that my trunk was left on board the boat as each one of your party took of course nothing not his own baggage. I shall be very much obliged if you will on your way to the City, enquire of the Captain of the steamboat in which you sailed, whether he saw a large oblong black leather trunk which was claimed by no one of his passengers.

With my respects for Mrs. Polk.

Francis Thomas

Addressed to Maury County, Tennessee, and forwarded to Washington.

**TO A. O. P. NICHOLSON**

**My Dear Sir**

Columbia Nov. 9th 1837

I wrote you on Saturday enclosing for publication the substance of my Nashville speech,¹ and asking the favor of you, to correct the proof sheet.

I have heard nothing from Nashville except through the newspapers since I saw you. I hope yourself and others friends, have or are taking the measures of which we spoke, preparatory to a concerted action, in the contest which is before us. We must not be inactive. Concert and energy, are all that is required to insure success. Without these however good our cause, we cannot hope to succeed. I will per-
form my part, and hope to be seconded by the exertions of our friends generally. I hope our friends will be in motion by the time I reach Nashville which will be on Tuesday or Wednesday next.

I have been to Bedford, made a speech on Monday; and am well satisfied that the political aspect of affairs in that county, are looking better now than at any former period. I will give you particulars when I see you.

In my absence a number of the citizens of Maury, assembled at court on Monday, addressed me a written request to address the people at this place on Saturday next, and taking it for granted that I would not refuse, had given notice in the country, that I would do so. Of course I will comply with the request.

Write me what is doing by our friends at Nashville.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville. This letter is in the Special Collections Department, Northwestern University Library.

1. This speech was made by Polk at a collation given in Nashville honoring Polk, Hopkins L. Turney, and Clement C. Clay of Alabama, who were traveling together from Washington to their homes after the special session of Congress. The speech was delivered on Saturday, October 28, 1837, and lasted for more than an hour.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia Nov. 10th 1837

Yours of yesterday with its enclosure has been received. I have heard something of the character of Mr Cunningham, and shall regard it as most fortunate, if his services can be secured. The difference between his offer and the sum Mr [Joel M.] Smith proposes to give him, should not prevent an engagement. The establishment if well managed will more that justify Mr S. in agreeing to the terms he proposes. Should the arrangement be made, Mr B's assent can I have no doubt be obtained. I shall be in Nashville on Tuesday evening, (where I shall remain two or three days) on my return to Washington. Can you not meet me there on Wednesday? I am anxious to see you before I go on. If you will do so, I will if possible, return with you to the Hermitage, as I desire much to see the General before I go on. I return Mr P's Letter.

JAMES K. POLK
Addressed to Nashville. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. This letter has not been found. The enclosure was, perhaps, the letter which Polk notes in the last sentence that he is returning.

2. Joshua Cunningham of Louisville, a newspaperman, was soon to become editor of the Nashville Union.

3. John O. Bradford, who had been editor of the Union for only a few months, seemed quite willing to relinquish the post.

4. The reference is obscure. It is possible that the "Mr. P." is Shadrack Penn, but there is no evidence.

FROM JOHN S. YOUNG

Sir Rawlingsville C. Nation Ala 16th Nov 1837

In the spring of 1836 through your recommendation I obtained a situation in the Cherokee Emigration and subsequently early in January 1837 through your friendly aid I obtained another appointment in the same service and afterwards for good conduct received from the Superintendent the second highest appointment in the service that of Asst. Superintendent in which capacity I am now acting. When your friendship was extended to me I was quite a young man, poor and comparatively little known. It has been the sole means of giving me an opportunity of improving my pecuniary condition, establishing a character, and securing the confidence of one of the Departments at Washington.

At the point most convenient for the discharge of my public duties I some time since made this place my residence where I will continue at least during the residue of the time. The appointment which I hold will expire with its duties during the next spring. Having been nearly two years in public life (and having during the time exerted myself to deserve the favours of the Govt.) I feel desirous through my friends to secure other employment after my present duties cease, and in doing so I again find it necessary to ask your friendly aid.

It is confidently expected that there will be a separate Land Office established for the sale of the Alabama Cherokee Lands. I have made an application to the President for the appointment of Receiver of the public monies for sd. office in the event it is established, and if it is not presuming too far I must ask you to address a letter to Mr Van buren in my behalf. As it is an office involving considerable responsibility and in order to remove any doubt you might entertain as to the propriety of granting my request I must refer you to the Hon H. L. Turney who has an intimate knowledge of my character, capacity & qualifications.
I will be supported before the President by the following persons in addition to several members of both houses of Congress. Viz Gen. [Robert] Armstrong Gov [William] Carrol and Gov Lumpkin of Georgia, and should I be fortunate enough to obtain the sanction of your name it would add to the many obligations I am already under to you. My residence may be set down at this place within the limits of the land district alluded to.

JOHN S. YOUNG

Addressed to Washington.

1. Rawlingsville was located in DeKalb County in northeast Alabama, about fifteen miles from the Georgia line and forty miles south of the Tennessee line.

2. See Young to Polk, January 24, 1837.

3. Wilson Lumpkin, a Democrat, had served three terms in the House of Representatives and one term as governor of his state. Later he was in the United States Senate for one term.

FROM ALBERT G. HARRISON

Fulton [Missouri] Nov. 18th [1837]¹

Hon. James K. Polk

As you have been in the habit of placing me on the Committee on Public Lands, I shall not hesitate to speak to you on the subject. I have designed all along to leave here on tomorrow (Sunday, the 19th) for Washington, but I feel compelled to decline that idea on account of the continued indisposition of my wife. She has now been confined to her bed for two weeks by sickness, and instead of starting tomorrow I have concluded to remain here until Tuesday next, which will give me 13 days to reach Washington by the meeting of Congress. My object in informing you of my delay is to let you know that I will certainly be there before the announcement of the committees, and that there would be no risk in giving me my old station. I would not miss being on that committee for any consideration.² I think in a conversation we had about the close of the late session, you informed me it was not usual for the committees to be announced before Thursday after the meeting. This being so I am sure I can be there in ample time without some accident. I expect to be there on Tuesday, certainly on Wednesday, after the meeting of Congress. Nothing but a deep sense of the importance to my constituents that I should occupy my old position has induced me to take the liberty I have to address you on the sub-
ject. I shall certainly be there before the announcement of the commit-
tees.

A. G. HARRISON

Addressed to Washington.

1. No year for this letter was given, and the Library of Congress has
suggested 1836. The statement that November 19 was a Sunday, however,
places it in 1837. November 19 fell on Saturday in 1836.

2. Harrison was again placed on the Committee on Public Lands.

FROM JOSEPH FICKLIN¹

Lexington, Kentucky. November 20, 1837

Joseph Ficklin, postmaster at Lexington, asks Polk to deliver a letter to
Col. W. Smith² of Tennessee, who had accompanied Polk en route to Wash-
ington. He reports that Joshua Cunningham is well qualified to become
editor of the Nashville Union.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Ficklin had been postmaster at Russellville, Kentucky, 1802–12, and
was postmaster at Lexington, 1822–50, except for 1841–43. At one time he
had been the publisher of the Kentucky Gazette.

2. This refers to Williamson Smith of Maury County. See Williamson
Smith to Polk, January 10, 1838.

FROM HENRY A. MILLER

Mt. Pleasant. November 20, 1837

Henry A. Miller, a merchant at whose store the Mt. Pleasant post office
is located, reveals that the postmaster has resigned. Miller has acted as
deputy postmaster for more than a year and seeks appointment as post-
master.¹

Addressed to Washington.

1. Miller received the appointment on December 15, 1837.

FROM JOEL M. SMITH

Dear Col. Nashville 20th Nov. 1837

I shall want about three copies of the message when delivered.¹
Dont fail to have them furnished. My Editor has not arrived nor do
I know when he will be on.² I hope however to see him soon. Bradford
dont attend to the paper. I shall be in a bad box if I dont get help. The Whigs are really run crazy at the N. Y. news. They had a meeting this evening and resolved many things, among others the town is to be illuminated tomorrow nt. and 100 round of cannon fired &c. Please write me if you have time. I cannot imploy a letter writer for want of means.

J. M. SMITH

Addressed to Wasington.
1. This is an apparent reference to the Presidential Message that was received by Congress on December 5, 1837.
2. This refers to Joshua Cunningham of Louisville, who took over the editorship of the Nashville Union on November 30, 1837.
3. Although the full returns had not come in at this time, it was evident that the Whigs in New York had won a sweeping victory in the state election recently held. The Van Buren membership of the two houses of the state legislature dropped from 121 to 49, while Whig membership rose from 39 to 111.

FROM WILLIAM TROUSDALE

Gallatin 21st Nov 1837

Dear Sir,

A Post Master will shortly be appointed for this place. Among others Capt Richard A. Tompkins who has been raised here is an applicant. Should it not be wholly out of your course of action I should be thankful for your aid in procuring that office for Captain Tompkins.

W. TROUSDALE

Addressed to Washington.
1. In another letter, this name was given as Joseph R. A. Tompkins. When Tompkins received the appointment, his name was entered as Joseph R. A. Tompkins. There seems no doubt that these refer to the same person.

FROM JOSEPHUS C. GUILD

Nashville Nov 23d. 1837

There is a vacancy in the appointment of Post Master in my town, Gallatin, Maj A. D. Bugg having resigned. I feel solicitude in the appointment of Capt R A Tompkins a warm political friend of ours who
was a rare instance last session in Tennessee of a merchant being openly opposed to the establishment of a U.S. Bank. There is several letters to the General P. M on this subject.

Please see the P. M. Genl. and lay them before him. Tompkins must be appointed.

The news of N.York elections has caused great triumphing among our enemies. They have celebrated it by bonfires, firing cannon, illuminations &c.

It has stagered us here for a season but we are recovering from it, tho its effects abroad is much feared. Tho if it is viewed right, it would be an advantage in rousing the planting states in favour of Mr Van Buren, for if their interest is to be protected Van Buren is the only man in the U. States to do it and they will see it this ensuing year. It will have this good effect, it has already emboldened the Whigs, in their meeting the other day the speakers spoke of runing Clay which was favourably received by the Whigs. Let them go on, commit themselves and we have them.

I am fearful of that cursing man Bell. He will endeavor to name Rives for P. and Talmage of N. York for V. P. to distract Tennessee, Virginia and New York. Mark me if they do not endeavor to effect this and Mr. Bell will explain himself to his loving brother federalist Webster with whom he is now in close communion and [ . . . ], and it will be made a part of the plan of the opposition. There are a good many things I want to write you about but they have taken the bill to grant Banking privileges on the Cincinatti Railroad² and I must close for the present.

Jo. C. Guild

Addressed to Washington.

1. Anselm D. Bugg served as postmaster at Gallatin from February 14, 1835, until the autumn of 1837.

2. This apparently is a reference to the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad Company. See Daniel Graham to Polk, November 26, 1837, and James Walker to Polk, December 7, 1837.

FROM GRANVILLE S. CROCKETT

Dear Sir Murfreesboro Nov 25th 1837

I am induced to trouble you with the enclosed papers for two reasons, first because I know your competency, and secondly because of your acknowledged willingness to oblige a friend at all times. I have
undertaken to have the claim of Curtis Ivy¹ who was an officer and soldier of the Revolution established, and which I believe will be done without any difficulty if properly managed. I know of nothing more necessary to be done here and beg of you to attend to it for me at Washington, if not incompatible with your official duties.

You will very much oblige me and the heirs of Col Ivy by writing me immediately & let me know if there is anything more to be done and what it is. I would have sent the papers to the Hon Mr Grundy but he being chairman of one of the Committees of the Senate was fearful he would not have time to attend to them. Besides old Capt Perry² has such an exalted opinion of your character and standing that he is unwilling that any other person should present the claim.

If it is necessary the character of the two witnesses can be established equal to any in the country for honesty & veracity. David Ivy is a citizen of Williamson county and Mrs. Liddon is now dead, both of unimpeachable character.⁸ Write me fully on the subject.

G. S. Crockett

Addressed to Washington.

1. Ivy had served from North Carolina. He was an officer, although the records are not entirely clear as to his rank. On the envelope, Polk wrote that the application was for commutation and bounty lands. A bounty land warrant was issued to Ivy in 1792, and a letter of January 9, 1838, from the Secretary of War informed Polk that Ivy's claim had been satisfied.

2. Nathaniel Perry of Rutherford County was married to Curtis Ivy's daughter Nancy.

3. Mrs. Liddon is unidentified, but she was probably a granddaughter of Curtis Ivy. David Ivy was a Revolutionary War veteran and a younger brother of Curtis Ivy.

FROM RANSOM H. GILLET¹

My Dear Sir, Buffalo N.Y. Nov 25, 1837

You see that I date from a distant part of my state. I am unexpectedly from home a few days. It has just occurred to me, that I owe our friend of the Nashville Union $5. I enclose a bill which the Whigs will be bound to take, whether good or not. Be so good as to send it to him. If he sends a receipt, please hand it to friend Spencer.²

You see the Bank power has triumphed in most of our state. Thank Heaven St. Lawrence³ has weathered the storm & stands in triumph.

Allow me to say that unless you pass Mr [Silas] Wright's bill,⁴ now on your table, before the first Tuesday in January next, I fear
that the consequences cannot be calculated, as connected with affairs at Washington. Don't talk, but act. This should not be mentioned as coming from me.

Please remember me to Mrs. Polk who I suppose is with you. Mrs. G. often speaks of her & seems to consider her as democrats do gold, the standard by which to compare.

I hope you will not work yourself into your grave in the speaker's chair. You must spare yourself more than you have done.

R. H. Gillet

Addressed to Washington.

1. After serving in Congress from New York for two terms, 1833-37, Gillet was not a candidate for re-election. He served in a number of appointive offices thereafter but never again was elected to an important political post.

2. James Bradley Spencer was a congressman from New York, 1837-39. He supported the administration strongly.

3. Gillet lived in St. Lawrence County.

4. This refers to the so-called Divorce Bill.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir, Nashville, Tennessee 26 Nov 1837

Our assembly was closed the eighth week & achieved little else of profit or of glory. Nearly all the local questions which they brought up with them have been acted on, & they are generating a few others. The currency, the U S. surplus, the school fund hobby, Internal improvements &c have been brought directly before them during the past week by reports from the Committees & incidentally by the sayings & doings of Gov. Hayne\(^1\) as President of the great cross section railroad,\(^2\) who has been speechifying for the common edification of us all.

The three leading measures proposed are, the naked Bank bill, brought forward by N. S. Brown before you left; A magnificent scheme by Martin, of Internal Improvements, Banking & Common & Uncommon schools all in one fraternity; and a twaddling scheme under the joint paternity of Barrow and Whiteside,\(^3\) of seizing upon all the U S. Surplus and more than our own surplus for all sorts of schools, for hacking out and finishing to order a read, write & cypher man for any of the lower vocations of life; a teacher for the Common schools; a teacher for the Academies; a teacher, professor or President for the Colleges; & finally for furnishing Presidents for the use of the United States.

Either of the three schemes, if adopted will defeat the other two.
Gov. Hayne arrived here ten days ago; was at a Seminole festival yesterday week, made a neat speech lauding Tennessee Valor &c, addressed both Houses of assembly in full joint Committee on Wednesday after, & Thursday forenoon about the Railroad Banking privileges, acquitted himself decently of course; dined by invitation with Genl Jackson on Friday in company with Gov. Carroll, said nothing about politics there, but on taking leave alluded to their final interview with becoming intimation of forgive all & forget all; dined yesterday at Vauxhall at a public Citizens dinner given him; made a pertinent reply to their complimentary toast, the gist of which was that South Carolina motives are always pure & patriotic, whatever might be the opinions of others as to their wisdom or policy. Today he attended Presbyterian Church with Judge [George W.] Campbells family & dines with them at this moment in their family capacity. This much & no more for the present of Gov. Hayne, except that I have not yet seen him except on horseback at a distance & today in church. My inattention has been from any other cause than indifference or unkind feelings, but from accident, other engagements, general aversion to such convocations as he has been obliged to frequent &c. My relations in the south & myself have had very friendly intercourse with his brother Arthur P. in bygone days, and it may be that I may see something of the Gov. before he leaves us. Of his movements intended after today I know nothing.

The [New] York election news came upon us like a tornado in the unwatched, unguarded hand of midnight. What of it, and what of its effects? Will it not certainly trammel all the York delegation? Will it not certainly prevent a renewal of the divorce bill, and if so what will be done about a permanent plan for the collection & disbursement of the public revenue?

As to the effect upon a future presidential election, as one can tell so far before hand what will be the attitude or position of those [ . . . ] of free suffrage which wheeled off by sections & grand divisions with so little preparation & so much inconsistency.

How does V. B. bear himself? He has usually borne his [cross?] with much moral gallantry, (as Darby might express it) on such occasions but this was an unkind cut & if not in joke deserves to be parried with all the skill of a master of Fence.

Cunningham has just arrived as successor of Bradford at the Union. I saw him yesterday. He looks the sturdy yeoman and may have more experience & know better what things are made of in a wooden Country than Bradford did. The two to one majority are still looking with malign eye to my sitting at the Kings gate. Anderson,
Barrow, Cocke & Rodgers are endeavouring with Foster at their head to arouse their party urgence, but they know I defy their machinations, & have as little use for them & their office as they have for me.

GRAHAM

For once, & for the first time I have a curiosity to use the Express post.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina, famous for his United States Senate debates with Daniel Webster, had been a nullifier. After he left the senate, he was governor of his state.

2. Hayne was president of the railroad company popularly called the Charleston-Cincinnati. Its proper name was Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad Company.

3. Washington Barrow and James A. Whiteside were members of the state senate. Barrow represented Davidson County; and Whiteside represented Rhea, Meigs, Bledsoe, Marion, and Hamilton counties. Whiteside became an important promoter of railroads, especially in the Chattanooga region.

4. Vauxhall Gardens in Nashville was a large assembly hall.

5. Arthur P. Hayne had served under Jackson at New Orleans and had many Tennessee Volunteers under his command in Florida.

6. This probably refers to Patrick H. Darby, formerly a newspaper editor and lawyer in Nashville. He specialized in disputed land claims and was employed by Andrew Jackson in the Allison land affair. Frequently accused of being a shyster, Darby defended himself in the columns of his newspaper. He failed to sustain himself, however, and left the state under a cloud.

7. Ephraim H. Foster had been recently elected by the state legislature to succeed Grundy in the United States Senate although Grundy's term had many months yet to run. Cocke was probably John Cocke, a long-time political power from East Tennessee, even though he did not serve in the state legislature between 1813 and 1843.

FROM ROBERT MATHEWS¹

Dr. Sir

Shelbyville Tenn. Nov. 27 1837

I have endeavored to make you out a perfect list of names for this County, but finding that I could not arrange it [so] that it would be satisfactory I have declined for the present, to forward you such list. Mr. Blanton & myself have thought that we could deistribute any documents you may please to send to us, better than franking all yourself. The arrangements of the P. Office in this county renders it very
difficult to make a list to send to each office & we have thought that the most of the Publick Documents are sent for this county to this place at any rate & we think that if you wish to send documents to your friends that we can distribute them to good advantage, which shall be strictly attended too.

The news of the New York election has caused greate joy amongst to the tory Whigs of this county. The news was received here by Express on Sunday before last in the morning & the little editor of the Advocate printed and put in circulation an extra or slip crying glorious tidings “the friend of the people is about to fall” which I take the liberty to enclose to you for your benefit. Amongst the Whigs is rejoicing & hope without foundation that the defeat of Mr. Van Buren is shure at the next Presidential Election. I have understood that at the late Whig meeting in Nashville the Whigs nominated Henry Clay for President & Danl. Webster for Vice President, which when made publick will prove where Tennessee stands in politicks. Our friends are glad that the nomination has taken place, & we look forward with confidence to the next election that the triumph of the Democratic ticket is shure. I had almost forgotten to mention that the little Advocate, gave you a teribal dressing for your last speech in this place. It has again endeavoured to place your name amongst the nullifiers. I do think that that print is the vilest little thing that is in existance.

I Recd. a few days ago a letter from your friend Col. Anderson at then at Hempstead Ark. on his way with his family to Texas. Our county election in March next will I have no doubt terminate for the friends of the Administration by a large majority.

Nothing more at present.

Robt. Mathews

Addressed to Washington.
1. Mathews was an Irish-born Shelbyville merchant whose political interests later earned for him a place on the state Democratic committee.
2. Blanton has not been identified. Benjamin Blanton was a Bedford County farmer, but nothing has been learned that would connect him with Mathews.
3. Although the Shelbyville Peoples Advocate did not list an editor at this time, John H. Laird, publisher and proprietor, seems to have functioned as editor also.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir, Clinton [Mississippi] Nov. 28th, 1837

I am now in Mississippi as I told you. It was absolutely necessary for me to quit politics & make some money. I had not the means to
continue my contest with C.\(^1\) without bringing ruin on myself so I concluded to come here and pursue my profession. [Alexander M.] Clayton & myself will form a partnership & one reside at Jackson, the other at Vicksburgh. I shall give him choice. Since I have reached here I learn that Gwin will be elected to the Senate & of course there will be a vacancy of the office of Marshall,\(^2\) which is considered the most profitable office in the state and on that account I would gladly receive it. I am sure that you & Mr. Grundy will assist me as far as you can & I am inclined to think that Claiborne & Gholson & Walker\(^3\) will be disposed to do so if they can consistently with their duty to others. I do not yet know whether there will be a vacancy but it is probable. You will manage I am sure in the way you think best. It is thought the office will be worth 40 or 50 thousand and as an additional argument I have today written to a widdow telling her that I was a candidate for matrimony & I think she is well disposed & you will verry probably hear before long of my being a married gentleman, a great revolution in me—a candidate for matrimony & applicant for a office, neither of which I was expected to be.

The elections here have resulted favorably to the admn; 7 or 8 majority in the Legislature. McNutts\(^4\) majority near three thousand.

I think I shall locate at Jackson. You will be informed soon. I shall write Mr. G. soon in the meantime ask his assistance.

I am astonished at every thing I see here; 2 or 3,000 returns to count, 40 or 50 lawyers in a county, 5 p. cent for collecting or defend-ing, $3 pr day for a man, an office in Vicksburgh two small rooms $200 rent—better ones rent in Clarksville for $40, & every thing upon a similar scale.

Allow me to suggest that you can sound the members on the subject of the appointment without letting them know that I am directly an applicant.

C. Johnson

I shall be pleased to hear from you. Direct to Jackson until other-wise advised. Ben Harden\(^5\) is expected to settle here this winter.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Richard Cheatham defeated Johnson in the August election and continued as a dangerous political opponent.

2. In spite of the rumor, William M. Gwin did not resign as marshal at this time.

3. John F. H. Claiborne and Samuel J. Gholson were Mississippi Democrats in the House of Representatives, and Robert J. Walker, also a Democrat, represented Mississippi in the United States Senate.

4. In a three-man race, Alexander G. McNutt polled slightly over three
thousand more votes than his nearest rival but did not receive a majority of the votes cast.

5. Ben Hardin served five consecutive terms in the House of Representatives from Kentucky. He drifted into the Whig ranks and did not serve in the House after 1837. He moved to Mississippi, where he set up a law practice, but continued his practice in Kentucky. In 1844 he became secretary of state for Kentucky and gave up his law practice.

FROM ROBERT P. HARRISON

My Dr. Sir Shelbyville Tenn Nov. 29th 1837

The recent intelligence from New York is viewed here by the Whigs as a great triumph over the administration and one of the most memorable epochs in the annals of history. The news reached here on the Sunday morning after you left Nashville, by Express and such were their joy on the occasion they could not wait for the Sabbath to pass away before they commenced firing the cannon and continued until the break of day. But I am informed the company was small and looked quite diminutive, headed by the Edditors of the Peoples Advocate and some few others of less noteriety, and after finding so few here that felt like joining them in their celebrating and rejoicing they have dropt the subject, and appear to think they have acted perhaps too precipitately.

However I feel much gratified to say to you with candour, that your friends in Shelbyville & Bedford County, stand as firm and as unshaken as ever and stand ready to send you when called on as their faithful representative in Congress and unchangeable politician. This looks a little like flattery but I hope you will believe me to be sincere. I can recollect of nothing else at this time worth your attention more than you see in the public prints.

While dropping you a line I will remark to you, that I have just reed. a letter from my Son John W. of Nashville informing me that he saw you on your way to Washington and that you had the goodness to say to him that you woud. write to him soon after you reached the City in relation to his getting a situation there. I hope my Dr. Sir as soon as circumstances will admit you will use the necessary influence in his behalf, the result of which I hope you will inform him by letter.

I feel extremely anxious for him to succeed in his wishes in obtaining an appointment under the Government, however small his pay may be at the commencement. I have the vanity to think that his qualifications and experience in business for the last 2 or 3 years will soon entitle him to higher things, consequently I feel the stronger solicitude
December 2 1837

for his welfare & prosperity, and shoud. he succeed I shall receive [it] as an additional mark of respect from you to me & my family. . . .

Ro. P. Harrison

Addressed to Washington.
1. Robert P. Harrison was for many years a hotel keeper in Shelbyville. In 1836 he became clerk and master of the Bedford County chancery court.
2. See Robert Mathews to Polk, November 27, 1837, footnote 3.
3. John W. Harrison was employed by an insurance firm in Nashville.

FROM JOHN I. DEGRAFF1

Schenectady, New York. December 1, 1837

Fearing that the illness of his father will delay his arrival in Washington until after House committees have been announced, DeGraff asks that Polk not drop him from the Committee on Commerce because of this tardiness.

Addressed to Washington and marked “Confidential.”
1. DeGraff was a merchant and banker who served two nonconsecutive terms in the House, 1827–29 and 1837–39. He declined an offer to become Secretary of the Treasury in Van Buren’s cabinet.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Columbia. Dec. 2d 1837

I reached home a day or two ago. I would have written you from the plantation had I not thought it best to defer it until my arrival at home as I would be more properly able to give you a detailed account of the situation of the plantation. The crop was fairly represented to us as the best in the neighbourhood; it has proved itself so. We, it is true, had a better stand of cotton being less injured by the late frost in the Spring. We will make from seventy five to eighty Bales averaging in weight about 450#, with 100 Bls. of corn to sell, over and above what will supply the farm and raise our Pork next year. We have about fifty shoats half grown, with an equal number proportioned in size down to suckling pigs, all of which will answer for Pork next year.

The Negroes are all well with the exceptions of Dicy who is very weakly, unable to do any thing, and Phil who still attends to his buis­ness, but has to be favoured on account of a weakness in the Breast.
Barbary had a spell of fever in the summer, from which she has not entirely recovered. Her mother (Lucy) says from her complaints of her breast, she fears she is going in the manner in which Alston, Henry and Charity did, though it may be only the fears of a mother occasioned by solicitude for her welfare.¹

I have employed Mr. [George W.] Bratton for the next year at $500.00. There was no pork in market when I left Coffeeville. I left money $500.00 with Abbert McNeal² to purchase it for us. The probability is that it will sell from 6 to 6½ or 7 cts. It cannot sell for more as I met a great quantity making for that market. I apprised A. McNeal, from Bolivar by letter, of the number I had met, so as to put him on his guard against purchasing too soon. From the quantity I met on the road making for that place, the market must be surfeited, and of consequence sell lower. When I left the plantation they had made 42 Bales of cotton, a part of which I had sent to the river and left word for them to haul it as fast as it was baled.

The news of the New York elections has produced some sensation among us. The petty politicians of Columbia know no bounds to their assertions of the certain down falls of the Administration and all who support it. The fact of New York having deserted or apparently so will effect nothing about home but it is to be feared that it will mar the exertions of our political friends in other portions of the state, unless your speech³ which, as it happens is well timed, serves to keep alive their confidence in the success of the true principles. To judge from the confident manner and delirious rejoicings of our home politicians, one would think they already had their feet upon our neck's, and were singing hosana's of triumph. They say your fall is certain, and with you must fall the party in the state. You will have seen from the newspapers, before the reception of this, the effect which the course of N. York has had upon our State Legislature. It has inspired them with confidence sufficient to induce the Whig party in the Legislature, to introduce a resolution, instructing Mr Grundy & Judge White to vote for a National Bank. They had not acted upon it, the last account we had. The fate of the resolution is said to be uncertain.

The family are all well, except Sister Ophelia,⁴ who has a fine daughter. Her situation is very delicate, though she is something better this evening than she has been. Myself & George Moore have settled our business relative to the Negroes. He attempted by soft words and professions of friendship to seduce me into his terms, which he saw were fruitless, and at last agreed to pay me my money. Give my love to Sister Sarah.

WILL H. POLK
December 5 1837

Addressed to Washington.

1. All persons mentioned in this paragraph were slaves. Most of them had been moved to Polk's Mississippi plantation.

2. Albert McNeal, a brother of Ezekiel Polk McNeal, was Polk's first cousin.

3. This refers to the speech Polk made in Nashville upon his return from the recent special session of Congress.

4. Polk's sister Ophelia was the wife of Dr. John B. Hays of Columbia.

TO MAHLON DICKERSON

Sir

Washington City Dec. 4th 1837

I have received and herewith forward to you, to be placed on file in your office, the enclosed letters from highly respectable gentlemen in Tennessee, in behalf of Mr. Joseph Dwyer who is an applicant before your Department for the appointment of Purser in the Navy.¹

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Connecticut Historical Society.

1. These letters have not been found. See Polk to Mahlon Dickerson, October 16, 1837.

FROM JOHN CATRON

My Dr Sir: Baltimore, Decr. 5th [1837]¹

Came here to clear up the doubt as to lodging &c. at Washington. Find all confusion, & the plan adopted to wait until Congress is located first & then provide, perhaps at Gadsby's, to which I object as the court secrets leak at a tavern, judging the future by the past.²

Shall be at Washington in some 8 or 10 days.

Not seen a single Tene. paper since I saw you. Did not reach me in Ky. as I instructed & none taken there. Know little of us, nay less than we [know] of Connecticut. Got on well there the past term. Heard much of politics past & prospective in Ky. & on the way hence. The Whigs have no doubt they come in 4 March '41. Mr. Clay runs for Presdr. certainly, Webster for vice, if hel submit to it; if not, hel be dropped, & soothed—deemed a wheel-horse who will always run by coaxing.

With our frd. Calhoun, there will be no peace, but bitter war. Of this, rest assured.
The cause of the Post-master Genl. and the Contractors has come up, the Ch. Justice informs me. I must desire a copy of the opinions of the Court, and of the atty Genl.; but do not wish either party to know the fact, nor any one else, except yourself. If without going out of your way, or trouble, you can obtain them, say by note to Mr Butler send them to me to Philda.

The Bank Convention at N. Y. have risen I understand without coming to any conclusion. As things stand the State Banks must be soothed by the Republican Party. They combine more Democratic strength, by far than any other money combination. Should they go to the Whigs, the Party in power will be in the minority, & loose the helm, as it seems to me, & the old adage, of the half loaf is perhaps the only course left for the Admtn. when acting on the Sub-Treasury Bill, taking the State Banks into the arrangement for a time at first. We cannot wrench the country out of the paper system, but must get out, as we got in, by degrees. I only judge from the public pulse as I have seen it lately, & may be wrong.

J. CATRON.

Probably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found.
1. This letter was tentatively assigned to 1838, but the contents of the letter indicate that it was written in 1837.
2. Gadsby's was a famous boarding house on Pennsylvania Avenue.
3. Roger B. Taney was the Chief Justice, and Amos Kendall was Postmaster General. Kendall had attempted to reform lax practices condoned by his predecessors that had brought on an investigation of the department. In particular, he sought to avoid payment of large sums to mail contractors whose arrangements with the government were questionable. The case of Kendall v. Stokes was brought before the Supreme Court and was given considerable attention by newspapers.
4. Benjamin F. Butler was Attorney General.
5. More than a hundred bank representatives from nineteen states met in New York on November 27, 1837, but adjourned on December 2 without agreeing to a fixed date for the resumption of specie payments.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia Dec 7th 1837

I have been at home about 10 days. Spent part of last week at Nashville. I saw Gen'l [Samuel] Mitchell and informed him I would provide ½d of the $500 and 1000 when it was necessary. He said it was the half of $500, that Gilchríst was not in that. He said 4 months hence would do for that debt and I am to assist him to renew the
$1000 about 11 January. Let me know if it is right to pay one half or third of the $500.

You have seen that Banking privileges have been conferred on the Charleston & Cincinnati Railroad Co. This no doubt settles the question of establishing a State Bank. Either the bill reported by [Andrew L.] Martin or Nicholson will pass, I think. Whether this is to be for good or evil ultimately, time alone will develope. Two effects are pretty certain that must operate in favor of the policy of the administration. It will afford at least temporary relief to the people; the state bonds will furnish English & of course Eastern Exchange. This relief will prevent the Whigs from using the pressure for political effect and certainly, if the people own a bank of their own, they cannot be in favor of a U.S. Bank that will crush it. I therefore think the establishment of a State Bank will operate in our favor politically, and I am astonished the Whigs do not see it.

Mr Bradford is here. He retired from the Union without showing any displeasure; expresses the opinion that the employment of Mr. Cunningham is for the advantage of “the friends.” His course has been very gentlemanly and he must not be forgotten. He is now at my house and is desirous of being reinstated as a student of divinity. There is some difficulty in this but I hope it can be accomplished through the influence of the Bishop and Leonidas who will have strong influence, but not full power to do what we want. Mr. Bradford will not go as chaplain unless he is ordained & sanctioned by his church. Get him the appointment as early as you can and on as good a vessel as in your power, but I think it would be advisable for him not to be ordered to leave here for a few months.

What is to be the effect of the New York election? I fear we cannot do without the empire state, and I fear the monied power. The great desire in the mass of the people to have a uniform paper circulation has always struck me with force. I would fight the devil with fire. But I believe the administration is obliged to carry through or fall on the policy proposed. I fear the result.

I hope you will urge Mr. Grundy & Gov Clay to attend to our Bill as early as practicable. It is a matter of great importance to us to have this matter disposed of as soon as possible.

James Walker

Addressed to Washington.

1. William Gilchrist, a Shelbyville lawyer, was a personal friend of Polk and one of his strongest supporters. Gilchrist was at one time the law partner of Archibald Yell.
2. See Daniel Graham to Polk, November 26, 1837.
3. Bishop James H. Otey and Leonidas Polk were on the church committee that failed to ordain John O. Bradford.

FROM JOSEPHUS C. GUILD

Jas. K Polk Esqr Nashville Decr. 11th 1837

Yr. favor by the express has just been received.¹ You will find that at the time I wrote you on the subject of the appointment of Mr. R. A. Tompkins² I then mailed to Mr. Kendal the recommendations of Mr. T. I enclosed to him a large majority of the citizens of Gallatin. The letters of Genl. Trousdale and Genl. Armstrong, and hundreds of others might have been obtained if it had been thought necessary. The appointment would be well filled by either of the applicants, Tomkins, Anderson or Watkins,³ but Mr. Tomkins ought to have it for reasons stated in my previous letter on which I shall not now enlarge. Those papers must have arrived.

I have concluded to remove to Memphis as soon as this Legislature adjourns for the purpose of exclusively devoting myself to the practice of law. My pecuniary affairs imperiously demand this of me. My political and pecuniary prospects in Sumner are reasonably good, yet my debts are numerous though not large, and I must make a bold push to better my pecuniary condition.

Jo. C. Guild

Addressed to Washington.
1. This letter has not been found.
2. See Guild to Polk, November 23, 1837.
3. Samuel R. Anderson was a Gallatin merchant. The Watkins referred to here was probably Charles Watkins who, despite his advanced age, was still politically active.

FROM AMOS LANE

Sir Indianapolis [Indiana] Dec. 11th 1837

I have the Honor of inclosing a letter from the District Atty., your friend and old acquaintance Genl Howard¹ who has also addressed the Secretary of State upon the same subject. You will I doubt not most cheerfully present the subject to the President in such manner as shall be most agreeable to your own sense of propriety.

You may take the liberty of stating the Fact to the President:
That while Ohio has had her full minister, 5 Charge d'Affairs, 4 Surveyor Generals, 2 Post Master Generals, 4 Commissioners of the Genl. Land office, 3 Gov. of Territories, 7 Judges of Territories, one Judge of the Sup[reme] C[ourt] U S, Solicitor of Land office, and 31 Clerks in the different departments at Wash[ington], one Quarter Master Genel, and 2 pay masters of the Army; And Kentucky a Vice P., a Secretary of State, 2 Post Master Genels, 3 full ministers, 4 charge d' affaires, 3 auditors, 27 clerks &c, 5 gov of Territories, 6 Judges of Territories, and many other minor office from the Federal Govt.; And Michigan a Secretary of War and a Foreign Minister; and Illinois, one full mission, 2 Charge d Affairs, one Judge of a Territory; Indiana, 000, never having had conferred upon any one of her citizens such favor with the Exception of a Comr of Genl. Land Office and one clerk. I compare our favors from the Genral Govt. with these four States in as much as they encompass Indiana, and adjoin her on all sides, all of which have a less population, Ohio excepted. I[ndiana] gave from 3 to 4 thousand votes more for president than Kentucky, and at the next election the State will give the[ir] 5 popular vote in the Union. This is not to be taken as the language of complaint, but to present our claims. This much I will say, that whatever cause may have overlooked I[ndiana] the people cannot under stand it. They feel their claims to have been and still are equal to these neighbor states. Our political enemies use it by saying that they serve for nought.

I take the liberty also to inclose Judge Holman & Howards letter to Mr. Forsythe which you will also please present.²

I shall also forward through our Senator³ many other letters and the expression and urgent solicitations of all the democratic members of the General Assembly, now in session, urging my claim⁴ and that of the state. No other person is or will be presented. The Hon John W. Davis, late member who stood as an applicant, is so no longer an applicant; his health forbids it. He is an applicant for a land office and has addressed an expression to that effect to the Com. and has reported a letter from him to Mr Woodbury to the same effect.

You are at liberty to make all these facts known to the Presdent & Secretary.

The Democ[rac]y is on the rise in Indiana, the parties are assuming their true positions, Fed. & Repub. That issue will not, cannot, be doubtful.

I should be pleased with a confidential letter from you.

Be pleased to tender my best respects to the P. & Secretary, and accept them for yourself & Mrs. Polk. . . .

Amos Lane
Addressed to Washington.

1. Tilghman Ashurst Howard, a Democrat appointed by Andrew Jackson, served as attorney general for Indiana from 1833 to 1837. Born in South Carolina in 1797, he moved to Tennessee in 1816 and practiced law and politics in Knoxville before moving to Indiana in 1830. His letter of December 7, 1837, to Polk recommended Lane for a diplomatic post.

2. Jesse Lynch Holman served as district court judge for Indiana from 1834 to 1842. He was also a Baptist minister, a pioneer in Indiana, and a legislator. Polk forwarded the two letters to John Forsyth.

3. The senator was John Tipton, a Democrat who had been born in Tennessee. The other senator from Indiana at this time, Oliver Hampton Smith, was a Whig.

4. Lane wanted to be appointed Chargé d’Affaires in Bogotá, New Grenada. He did not get the post.

FROM JAMES C. MITCHELL

Clinton, Mississippi. December 11, 1837

In spite of having received a discouraging letter from Polk, Mitchell persists in his effort to be appointed as surveyor at Mount Salus. He says he is being badly treated by the Democrats and believes that Foote will resign as soon as he is assured that Mitchell will succeed him.1

Addressed to Washington.

1. See James C. Mitchell to Polk, September 13, 1837.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Washington City Decr. 12th 1837

Deeming it to be of great importance that the true character of Mr Bell’s late associations and “alliance” with the Northern Federalists should be understood and known at home, at the instance of some of our democratic friends, the two letters enclosed have been written by consistent and leading democrats on the spot, in the trust and accuracy of whose statements, complete and entire reliance, is to be placed. The one from Hartford especially is very important, and I am assured, that if controverted or denied the facts stated by him are susceptible of the clearest proof; and that if occasion should require it, the proof will be given by the most respectable people in that part of the country. The same may be said of the facts given in the letter from New Haven, a part only of which need be published as bearing directly on the points most important to be known. The accompanying commentary, has suggested itself as appropriate. It can be changed or modified as your
December 12 1837

Judgment may direct. It may be the first of a series of notices in the Union; I say the first, for the subject should be vigorously followed up, for the purpose of awakening the people, to the true character of the "alliance" which has been formed by the leaders who would transfer them to the keeping of the Hartford Convention Federalists. I send you also the Federal papers giving the Federal accounts of the celebrations at Hartford and New Haven, and containing the speeches made by Mr. Bell and Mr. Graves at the former place. The speech of Mr. Bell furnishes a theme for extensive commentary, and should in successive editorials in the Union be thoroughly exposed.

I have as you know no personal acquaintance with the new Editor of the Union, and know of no one whom I can so safely trust with these suggestions as yourself. When the enclosed documents are published, the Editor may safely challenge his opponents, to controvert or deny their truth. If they make issue with him, the proofs will be forthcoming. Let the Editor take especial care to preserve the newspapers I send you, for they are the only copies I have.

A large Extra Edition of The Union, containing these documents, should be issued and extensively circulated in the State. Surely if anything can wake up our people, the startling facts they contain will do it.

I have no time to day to write you in relation to other matters here. Our news from S. Carolina & Georgia is of the most cheering character. The N. York conservative members of the House will I think, most of them act with us, and we confidently calculate on a great accession of strength from the South. The prospect is, that the Sub-Treasury will pass, possibly with some unimportant modifications, not affecting the principle of the measure. Make my kind respects to the general. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

N. B. The Blank in the enclosed Commentary is intended to be filled with an extract from Mr. Bell's Vauxhall speech in which he insisted that he and the White party were the friend of Genl. Jackson and of his administration. I have not the speech before me, but remember it. You can procure and insert it.

J. K. P.

Presumably addressed to Nashville, but no envelope has been found. Marked "Private and Confidential," this letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. These enclosures have not been found. But see Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, December 18, 1837.
2. William J. Graves, a Whig, served in the House of Representatives from Kentucky, 1835–41.
3. Joshua Cunningham.
4. Bell delivered his Vauxhall speech on May 23, 1835.

FROM SAMUEL MARTIN¹

D Sr, Campbells Station² 12 Dec 1837

The Engineer of the state has made a report to the Legislature on the survey of the Road from Mississippi to the Virg. line. It was ordered on my suggestion regular session after the convention.² I wished the examination in order to ascertain the practibality of a Canal. It has been made to the 3 forks of Duck river some what on the route of a canal. Now it is necessary from Duck River to the Tennessee about the Suck³ be examined by a first rate Practical Engineer who has name & character. It is probable the Secretary [of] War could spare such a one for that object. One month would be sufficient. Mr. Featherstonhaugh⁴ might be the best. With a canal from N. C & from Georgia passing on through Duck Creek Valley to the Mississippi & if once there the people of Arkansaw would carry it to Red River. Once there it will still keep going. Your people on Duck River engaged in cultivating the beet roots & making sugar would become anything you might wish to be. The seat of government of course you would have. I wrote Mr. Poinsett of this matter last summer. I will send you the Engineers Report shortly. Please write your friends in the Legislature on this subject.

SAMUEL MARTIN

Addressed to Washington.
1. Irish-born Samuel Martin came to East Tennessee as a young man. After living in Jefferson County for some years, he moved to Knox County in 1823 and lived there the rest of his life. A wealthy businessman and a Democrat, he was one of the more influential men in East Tennessee.
2. Campbell’s Station was a village about fifteen miles west of Knoxville.
3. The Internal Improvements Convention.
4. The Suck was a point on the Tennessee River only a few miles from Chattanooga. The name was derived from the peculiarity of the current at that place.
5. George William Featherstonhaugh was a British native who spent many years in the United States and published extensively about his travels and his experiences here. He also performed diplomatic services for the British government.
FROM J. KNOX WALKER

Dear Uncle,

New Haven Ct. December 12 '37

I received a letter from my Father this afternoon enclosing the enclosed check, & requesting that I would send it you for collection.\(^1\) Being somewhat in want of the needful I thus hastily comply with this request and I would be obliged to you if you would collect & forward it in the most convenient way you can. As the amount is somewhat an odd one you may send me 290 or 300 $ and account to my father for the difference.

I have not time this afternoon to write you any other than this short businesslike letter. We\(^2\) are well and doing well and would be happy to receive any thing from you either of a public or private nature.

We still continue to be much concerned as to the politics of the nation and stand forth here as the fearless champions of equal rights and anti monopolies. "Loco foco"\(^3\) to the core! Although this College is and always has been strongly federal yet "the elite" of our class are politically sound and indeed strange as it may seem the aristocrats of nature are to a man here democrats in politics. All at home are in usual good health. My love to Aunt Sally\(^4\) and remind her again for me that she is in my debt. Samuel is sitting by and joins me in love to you both.

J. Knox Walker

Addressed to Washington.

1. Polk noted on the envelope that on December 15 he sent to young Walker a check from the Bank of Metropolis on Manhattan Company for $291.67.
2. Samuel W. Polk was also a student at Yale at this time.
3. The Loco Focos, a wing of the Jacksonian party, originated in New York City in 1835 and became known for their radically egalitarian and hard-money doctrines. At times the term loco foco was applied to all Jacksonians.
4. This refers to Sarah Polk. The familiar version of her name, however, was not commonly used.

FROM RICHARD H. ALEXANDER\(^1\)

My Dear Sir. Mobile [Alabama] December 15th 1837

The District Attorney of the United States for the Southern District of Alabama\(^2\) has resigned or is about to resign his office.
Correspondence of James K. Polk

John Bragg of this place, and late of North Carolina, is a candidate for the office. He is a gentleman of great moral worth and talent & will fill the office to the entire satisfaction of this community. Mr. Bragg is a democrat of the old school and is devoted to the measures and policy of this administration. The members of North Carolina are all acquainted with him, especially Mr. Hawkins, as Mr. Bragg resided when in that state in Warrenton. In this matter I am actuated entirely from personal considerations, my political views and opinions being directly the reverse of the applicant.

R. H. Alexander

Addressed to Washington.

1. Alexander was a native of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. He was graduated at Chapel Hill in 1817, one year before Polk received his baccalaureate there.

2. John Forsyth Jr., son of the Secretary of State, had just resigned. See John Bragg to Polk, December 16, 1837.

3. John Bragg, brother of Braxton Bragg, the Confederate general, and of Thomas Bragg, governor and United States senator from North Carolina, studied law and served for a short time in the state legislature. In 1836 he moved to Mobile, Alabama, where he was for a while associated with the Mobile Register. He served in the Alabama legislature and was elected to the United States House of Representatives for one term, 1851–53.


TO ROBERT JOHNSTON

Sir, Washington City December 15th 1837

I send you sundry letters relating to the appointment of Post Master at Mount Pleasant, Tennessee. The letters of Benj. R. Harris, Dr. Simon P. Jordan, Henry Hoge, T. A. Crisp and Colnl. Wm. K. Hill, recommend the appointment of Mr. Henry A. Miller. The letters of Colnl. Samuel Stockard, Thomas Whaley, Esq. and Dr. Jno B. Hayes, recommend the appointment of Mr. Isaac Duncan; and the letters of Geo. M. Ridley and Richard Stockard Esqr. recommend the appointment of D. J. Craig. I am personally acquainted with all the gentlemen by whom these letters have been written, and know them to be highly reputable citizens.

I am also personally acquainted with Mr. Henry A. Miller, Mr. Isaac Duncan and D. J. Craig, the applicants for the office, and have no hesitation in saying that they are all persons of good standing, and
either of them would be qualified to discharge the duties of Post Master. As between them I leave it to the Post Master General to make the selection from the testimonials and recommendations in their behalf now on file in his office.\(^5\)

\[\text{JAMES K. POLK}\]

Addressed to Washington. This is an unsigned letter, not in Polk's handwriting. On the envelope, however, Polk wrote "Copy," and noted that the letter pertained to the appointment of a postmaster at Mt. Pleasant. The address on this envelope is also in Polk's handwriting.

1. Johnston was the second Assistant Postmaster General.

2. In March 1836, Robert M. Cooper's announcement that he would resign as postmaster at Mt. Pleasant brought out so many candidates that Postmaster General Kendall was asked to provide a plan for selecting one. When Kendall provided no satisfactory answer, political strife became so heated that Cooper remained in office, apparently hoping that the bitter controversy would soon die down. See letters mailed to Polk from Mt. Pleasant during March 1836. That from Joseph Mason to Polk, March 26, 1836, is very informative.

3. The principal contenders had, by December 1837, been reduced to three. Most of the recommendations were from the Mt. Pleasant community, although a few were from other parts of Maury County.

4. Although Cooper's resignation was dated October 1836, he apparently served until Miller's appointment on the day this letter was written.

5. It appears that Polk was avoiding taking part in a controversy where the Democrats were split.

FROM JOHN BRAGG

Sir Mobile [Alabama] Dec 16 1837

My personal\(^1\) friend Mr. R. H. Alexander formerly of NC informs me that he has written to you & asked your aid for me on an application I have just made to the President for the appointment of U.S. Atto. for this Dist.\(^2\) I do not know sir, that I should have taken the liberty of adding any thing to what Mr. A. has said, had he not informed me, upon inquiry when & where he made yr. acquaintance; that he was at school with you at the University of N. C. The association of ideas immediately suggested to me another fact, that at a period subsequent, I too was at the University & that yr. Brother Martial\(^3\) was my classmate & friend. I knew him well when a boy & I knew him after his marriage with Miss Wilson. He had chosen the old north State for his home & of his age there was no man whose prospects
were brighter or whose qualities both of head & hand promised more either of ornament or advantage to the country.

Such reflections have emboldened me sir, to drop you these lines. Personally we are strangers. Still we know each other thro. another. Politically we are friends fast & true. From that very boyhood of which I have spoken I have been constantly laboring in the Republican Cause. But for such things, I refer you to the Senators from Ala. & N.C. & all the N.C. delegation of both parties in the House and testimonials from other sources in their hands. I did not see Mr. A’s letter and know not what he has written you. His conduct in the matter has been magnanimous. In politics we are as wide as the poles asunder. He is a gentleman & I am pleased with his friendship. If not incompatible with yr. feelings may I ask some little exercise of the influence I know you to possess in procuring for me the appointment for which I have applied?

I must repeat that it is in consideration of the relation once existing between your bro. & myself & a conviction that if he was alive he would do all in his power to favor my views that I address you on the subject of this letter. If I have presumed too much from such circumstances be pleased to pardon the liberty.

JOHN BRAGG

Addressed to Washington.
1. On the manuscript, the word personal was enclosed in parentheses.
2. See Richard H. Alexander to Polk, December 15, 1837.
3. Marshall T. Polk was graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1825. Bragg received two degrees there, 1824 and 1828.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother

Knox received your letter on yesterday, enclosing a check on the Metropolis Bank,\(^1\) for $291.67 cts. I was somewhat surprised at your not having received an acknowledgment of the receipt of the fifty dollars remitted by you to me in Oct last. I wrote you immediately on the receipt of the $50.00 acknowledging the same.

You request me, in your letter to Knox, to inform you how large a sum of money I need. Upon enquiry I find that I owed more in N. Haven, than I anticipated when I wrote you in May last. I am anxious to purchase a number of English works, before I leave here. The sum requisite for this and for settling up almost entirely my debts will be
about *four hundred dollars*. This year has been much more expensive so far than any preceding. It would be tedious and I might also say useless to enumerate to you the *why* and *wherefore*. You may rest assured that I am quite economical when compared with many in my Class. If you think I had better defer purchasing books until I graduate, I have no objection to doing so. The only difference will be, that by not purchasing them now, I will lose the reading of some of them this year. We are all well and true to our principles.

SAML. W. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. This Washington Bank was established during the War of 1812 and became a federal depository in 1833 after deposits were withdrawn from the Bank of the United States.

FROM ANDREW BEAUMONT¹

My Dear Sir

Wilkes Barre [Pennsylvania] Dec 18 1837

I am anxious that my friend Dr. Petrikin² should not be overlooked in any little honour that you may have it in your power to bestow in the discharge of your official duties. He is a very intelligent man prompt and accurate in business and very capable of doing himself honour in drafting reports. One great reason why I ask this courtesy from you is the peculiar position he occupies at home. He is denounced and opposed by a most unprincipled band of graceless & faithless politicians. He ran in over all the damnable plots and insidious machinations formed by a league of men (such as Jno Bell & his coadjutors) professing democracy while they are in close league with N. Biddle and, we have great reason to believe, using his cash to aid on their schemes. The Dr. is a little eccentric, but of a great fund of common sense made efficient by a sound education and thorough business habits. It would gratify his friends very much to have his merits duly appreciated and an opportunity afforded him to manifest his fidelity to his constituents & his country.

With my sincere congratulations for your second triumph over the traitor bands³ and my best wishes for your future welfare. . . .

A. BEAUMONT

Addressed to Washington.

1. Andrew Beaumont had just completed two terms in the House of Representatives, where he had been very friendly toward Polk. Later he was Commissioner of Public Buildings in Washington.
2. David Petrikin, a Democrat, had just been elected to the House from Pennsylvania. He served two terms, 1837-41.
3. The reference is to Polk's re-election as Speaker of the House; his opponent was John Bell.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

Hon. & Dr Sir: Nashville Dec 18th [1837]

With the facilities afforded me by a poor pen and a set of sorely crippled fingers (being upset in a stage) I have seated myself for the purpose of writing you a few lines mostly in relation to my humble self. Before this you have no doubt heard that my connection with the "Union" is dissolved, and that I am now "out at sea." What will be my course in future I am as yet unable to say. Every thing will depend upon the advice I may receive from you upon the subject of our conversation in Nashville.

I regret very much to inform you that my difficulties with my friends in the church are still unsettled, and there is a strong disposition on the part of some to make me feel the unpleasant consequences of presuming to think and act for myself, as no moral wrong is alleged against me, the Bishop stating in his address that my name was "dropped from reasons not implicating my moral character." In pursuing the course I did I may have acted injudiciously, but I am conscious that I done all for the best, and after reflecting upon the whole subject I can see no cause for regret except it be the violent, unjust, and uncalled for opposition of those from whom I had a right to expect better things.

Bp. Otey is my friend and would willingly reinstate me at once but he must be governed by action of the Standing Committee which is composed of the Rev. Messrs. Weller and Polk, Dr Shelby and Francis B. Fogg, all good and true Whigs, and from whose tender mercies much cannot be expected for a Van Buren editor. Mr [James] Walker is of the opinion that every thing can be arranged satisfactorily. I have no doubt that such will be the case ultimately but not immediately, and I am at a loss what course to pursue in the meantime as my funds are now low and decreasing. Could you succeed in procuring for me the appointment of Chaplain, I could make one trip to Sea, and by the time I would return the canonical time would have expired, the asperity of feeling will have subsided and I could receive ordination without any difficulty whatever.

I have just returned from a visit to the Hermitage; the "Old Chief" is in fine health and fine spirits. He regrets that my editorial
services are dispensed with, and says I shall be provided for, and will furnish any letters that I may desire. I do not however think them necessary as I feel every confidence in the success of your kind exertions in my behalf. In a few days I will leave for Columbia, where I shall remain until I hear from you which I fain hope will be soon, as my situation at present is a critical one and my future course is involved in profound uncertainty.

In relation to political matters I am happy to say that prospects are brightening. The Presidents Message has produced a fine effect here. The Whigs cannot say aught against it, and as a matter of course [our?] friends are in fine spirits and our numbers daily increasing. Gov Carroll it is now certain will run for Governor, and if you are brought out as the Candidate for V.P. Tennessee will be safe; if not she may fly the course as it is an undeniable fact that old Tecumseh has not much hold upon the affections of the people of the state.

Please remember me to Mrs P. and believe me to be as ever truly your friend. . . .

JOHN O. BRADFORD

P. S. Mr. Nicholson has formed a law partnership with Judge Wm R. Brown, and Col. [Josephus C.] Guild, and will remove to Mississippi. The candidates for the vacant seat upon the bench are Genl. [William] Trousdale, and Mr Rucks. Who will succeed is uncertain. I am requested by Genl. Armstrong to inform you that our county meeting is called for the last day of this month, of which you shall hear a good account.

Addressed to Washington.
1. This year was correctly suggested by the Library of Congress.
2. James H. Otey.
3. George Weller was the minister at Christ Church in Nashville from 1829 until 1837, when he moved to Memphis. John Shelby received his medical training at the University of Pennsylvania and was practicing in Nashville at this time. Francis B. Fogg, an able Nashville lawyer, was a partner of Ephraim H. Foster for many years.
4. Bradford had been in Columbia for about two weeks prior to the time he wrote this letter. See James Walker to Polk, December 7, 1837.
5. This is a reference to Vice-President Richard M. Johnson, who was believed by many to have been the man who slew Tecumseh.
6. James Rucks was a lawyer who had practiced in Carthage and Lebanon before moving to Nashville.
7. The postscript was written across the top of the second and third
pages of the letter. For a description of the Democratic county meeting, see Samuel Mitchell to Polk, January 2, 1837.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dear Sir

Washington City Decr. 18th 1837

I forwarded to you on the 12th documents containing information important to be known to the people,¹ which I hope you will not fail to have given to the public through the Union. I repeat to you what I then stated, that the Union may confidently affirm the truth of the statements contained in the letter from Hartford, and challenge the Banner or other Whig organ to deny them. If denied the proof can be, and I am assured will be, forthcoming. The Editor² of the Hartford Times (the Democratic paper in that City) will furnish them. Should the Republican Banner with its accustomed boldness and recklessness of truth make a denial, you have only to forward a copy of the paper to the Editor of the Times at Hartford, with a note from the Editor of the Union requesting the proofs, & you may rely upon having them furnished. Our political friends at Boston, and New Haven, will I understand shortly give a full account of the Federal Festivals at those places, accompanied with a history of the political characters, actings, doings and political opinions, of the principal persons engaged in them. It is very important in my judgment, that the political alliance, which Mr B[ell] has made with the Hartford Convention Federalists of the North, should be extensively known in the State. Large Extra Numbers of the Union should be circulated in every County in the State.

The new Editor of the Union has not as yet met my expectations. Is he a man of talents and fit for the station? If so why does he not infuse into his paper more energy and ability? I have waited with great anxiety to hear what steps were taken by our political friends at Nashville to advance our cause in the State. A month has passed away since I saw you, and I have not had a syllable upon the subject. Why was not the public meeting of the citizens of Davidson, spoken of before I left, holden?² Such a meeting would have put the ball in motion. Surely our party did not become disheartened at the news of the New York election and cease the struggle. Rely upon it this is the moment for active exertion in the State. If any thing can awaken our people to a sense of their present position in politics, it will be the disclosure of the fact, that Bell and other leaders of the late White party, now openly propose to transfer the State to Clay &
Webster and their Hartford Convention Federal supporters in the North. Mr [Joel M.] Smith of the Union, writes that he is unable to engage a correspondent for his paper, to reside here during the Session of Congress. Such a correspondent he ought to have, who could write him by the Express mail, once or twice a week. It would not cost much to procure one, and I hope through your advice he may be induced to authorize Turney to procure one for him. It is almost indispensible that he should have one in order to counteract the falsehoods, which the Federal letter-writers here are daily propagating.*

As to Turney, McClellan & myself, we exhaust all our means, in distributing documents in [different?] parts of the State, and even then cannot give one half as extensive circulation to them as is desireable. We are at a great loss for names of the prominent men in many of the Counties to whom to send documents. We were promised that they should be furnished to us by the members of the Legislature, but have not yet received them.

Has our Legislature run mad about Banks? Will they pass the Bank instruction Resolutions?•

But few developments have as yet been made here by the opposition. They are however manifestly preparing for a vigorous onset; & you need not be surprized (for such is at present the indication) if the great battle in the House is fought on the preliminary question of the President's message.

JAMES K. POLK

* Note. A correspondent of the Union [who?] if a man of talents, would by his letters by Express mail, give interest to the paper, and be [a means?]5 of extending its circulation.6

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. These documents have not been found. The nature of the documents, however, is revealed in Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, December 12, 1837.

2. The editor of the Hartford Times seems to have been Henry A. Mitchell.

3. The meeting apparently was postponed until the end of the month. See John O. Bradford to Polk, December 18, 1837.

4. Polk feared that the Whiggish legislature might try to instruct the Tennessee senators to oppose the establishment of the Independent Treasury and to support the establishment of a new national bank.
5. Deterioration of the manuscript at this point makes this rendition uncertain.
6. This note appeared on the left margin of the last page of the letter.

FROM SAMUEL MARTIN

Campbells Station. December 18, 1837

Repeating much that he included in his earlier letter to Polk, Martin emphasizes the importance of presenting to Congress his plan for a canal from North Carolina westward through Tennessee, Arkansas, and Texas.

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Samuel Martin to Polk, December 12, 1837.

FROM WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD JR.

My dear Sir

Raleigh, N.C. Dec 19 1837

I am pained at the vote of your legislature chartering the Rail Road Bank. It is a monstrous measure and I comforted myself that in its passage here that we had been taken by surprize and Tennessee would save her mother! I do not endorse the thought of it with any degree of patience. In our State it passed in consequence of representatives going home before the final vote upon it.

The [President's] message is well read in No. Caro. and I hope you may be able at Washington to bring up the true issue now that the Fed's are emboldened by their apparent successes. It will be our turn then to find fault on details. Force out a Bank proposal. Can't it be done by refering one of their memorials to a sel[ ect committee] and you appoint such as are for the Bank, naming only one of our party to watch them.

I have noticed Mr. Fletcher's position. Poor fellow he had better resign and go home.

I shall be pleased to hear from you occasionally and if my business allowed of it [I would] visit W. City. You promised to bring Mrs. Polk to Raleigh. Why may we not hope to see her here and you too Xmas holidays. It would be well for Congress to take a short recess I think as there is every probability they will be in Session a long time.

Mrs. Haywood offers her warmest respects to Mrs. Polk. I heartily unite with her in this. . . .

WM. H. HAYWOOD JR.
I have taken the liberty to enclose a letter for Louis D. Henry Esq.\(^5\) Spanish Consul. Do me the favor to hand it to him at your first convenient opportunity.

Presumably delivered by hand, since no address appeared on the envelope. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, "Unpublished Letters," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 200.

1. All this information appeared below the signature.

2. This refers to the passage of an act by the Tennessee legislature that gave banking privileges to the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad Company.

3. Deterioration of the letter along the folds has made words illegible in several places.

4. Richard Fletcher, a Whig from Massachusetts, was a member of the House Ways and Means Committee during the special session of 1837. Between adjournment of that special session and the regular session in December, Fletcher made a speech in Boston in which he charged that the committee was a rubber stamp of the executive. He asserted that the bills considered by the committee had originated with the executive and that the committee passed them along without change. The members of the committee attacked him so vigorously that he resigned from the committee.

5. Louis D. Henry was employed in Washington by the United States under the convention concluded with Spain on February 17, 1834. It is not clear whether or not his official title was that of consul. On the government listings, his name was spelled *Lewis*.

FROM JOSEPH BROWN

Cave Spring. December 20, 1837

Brown writes in behalf of his sister, Ann Anderson, widow of a Revolutionary War veteran who had died two years before, leaving her destitute. Her husband never applied for a pension, but she has claimed compensation for property lost to Indians in May 1788.\(^1\)

Addressed to Washington.

1. The Brown family was en route via the Tennessee River to the Cumberland settlements when the Indians attacked, killing her father and two brothers and keeping others in captivity for varying periods. Mrs. Anderson and her husband were traveling on foot but lost their belongings, which were sent with the rest of the family.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Murfreesboro December 20 [1837]\(^1\)

I have frequently been applied to by friends of the Administration in this county to write to you upon the subject of sending to them...
public documents and such other political news as you might think would be interesting to them. They complain that they see but one side of the controversy and that our immediate representative does not even furnish information upon that side except to his political friends.  

I know that you are opposed to sending documents into the district of a colleague, but your Enemies have established the practice themselves by flooding your district upon several occasions with papers designed to injure you. They of course could not object. It seems to me that the friends of the President do not use half the exertion to disseminate political information as their opponents and that they have suffered materially in consequence of their apathy. We are badly represented in the way of newspapers in this state and the deficiency might be supplied in some degree by the exertions of members of Congress. I have heard many of Mr Grundy's friends complain of his neglect. He knows every body in this county and could be of great service. Below I give a list of some who have expressed a desire to be furnished with such papers as yourself & Mr Grundy & others may choose to send to them. They are men who will take some pains to circulate them in their neighborhoods. Unless something is done in this way, we fight under great disadvantages and had almost as well give up the contest. The 'Union' publishes very little information, and we don't get that little until it is old. The Globe is taken by but two or three in the county, and we scarcely ever see anything except through the medium of the Banner. Even the Message has been neglected and scarcely a man has got it except the subscribers to newspapers.

We have nothing new of a political character. The friends of the Administration hereabouts seem to be desponding and have come to the conclusion that we are certainly to be defeated at the end of Mr Van Buren's first term unless the current now setting against us can be stayed.

We are all in good health; have gathered our cotton and are now in winter quarters. Today is the first winter weather we have had. Tell Sarah that Mah expects to go to Alabama about the 1st March, and that her carriage horses are in good condition. I know of no other news that would interest her.

JNO. W. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.

1. No year was written on the letter. The Library of Congress tentatively assigned it to 1835, but the reference to Van Buren's administration clearly places it at a later date. The content of the letter seems to argue for 1837.
2. Abram P. Maury of Williamson County represented this district in Congress.

3. Below the signature were sixteen names, fourteen of them from Murfreesboro and one each from Jefferson and Bradyville.


FROM ELIHU C. CRISP

Dear Sir

Nashville Ten Decr. 20th 1837

I have been so busily engaged Legislating for the Dear people that I had forgotten my promise to send you a few names on to Washington, until I have been reminded thereof by the appearance of the President's Message. We have done nothing of importance since you left here. For the last two days however we have had Martin's Bill\(^1\) under consideration on its last reading in the Ho. of Rep. The Senate have not yet done any thing with it.

Now for the names and post offices, Viz.\(^2\)

The foregoing will do you I think for some time, and before I leave here I will try and send you an additional list.

Henry Clay is a bitter pill for the Whiggs of Tennessee to swallow, and I think that a large Majority of them will gag at start. Darnells Preamble & Resolutions\(^3\) are yet on the Table, and there I think they will lie the balance of the session.

E. C. Crisp

Addressed to Washington.

1. Andrew L. Martin had introduced a bill promoting internal improvements and a state bank.

2. Below this statement appears a list of seventy-seven names listed by post office.

3. On November 28, 1837, Nicholas H. Darnell of Henderson County introduced into the lower house of the General Assembly a preamble expressing disapproval of the executive experiments with the currency and a resolution that United States senators from Tennessee be instructed, and representatives be requested, to use all honorable means to establish an institution similar to the United States Bank. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, December 18, 1837, for Polk's uneasiness about such a resolution being passed.

FROM SAMUEL A. GILLESPIE\(^4\)

Dr Sir

Vicksburg Mississippi Dec 21st 1837

Since I had the pleasure of seeing you last at Columbia have declined taking the Agency for the Nashville Texas Land Company.\(^5\)
There being a prospect of a vacancy in this state as Doct Gwin our present marshall will in all probability suffer his name to be nominated for senator in Congress from this state in opposition to [John] Black. I have not yet seen Doct Gwin but will see him in a day or two. He has just passed through this place going out to Jackson. I now wait his return here.

On seeing Doct Gwin should his views meet that of mine, I think then I shall offer for the office of marshall of this state. It is one of the most profitable offices in the U. States. It is worth at least thirty thousand dollars annually. This year it will greatly go beyond that amt.

I am very anxious to get this office, if I possibly can. I am well assured that I can perform the duties of the office equal to any in the state & better security cannot be offered than what I can give.

My Dear Sir you can do a great deal for me if you will only enlist your self for me. I may not suffer my name to run but in case I do shall expect you to do all you can to forward my views. Please let me hear from you at Natchez.

If I conclude to apply for this office I will be at Washington soon. I will write you again in a few days.

S. A. Gillespie

Addressed to Washington. Because of the writer's practice of capitalizing almost every word, unusual editorial liberties have been taken in transcribing this letter.

1. Gillespie was a former merchant of Columbia, Tennessee, who had moved to Mississippi in 1833.
2. The Nashville Texas Land Company was the same company to which Robert Leftwich and Sterling C. Robertson had been agents. It had received a Texas grant second in size only to that received by Stephen F. Austin. The lands of these two grants adjoined. See Samuel A. Gillespie to Polk, May 4, 1835.

FROM JOEL PINSON¹

Sir;

Pontotoc [Mississippi] Dec 22nd 1837

Time was, when, claiming the privilege of your Constituent, I troubled you freely with my little wants & wishes. Altho. that relation has now ceased, I trust you will allow me to approach you as an old Friend, and to introduce the name of Benjamin D. Anderson Esq of this place as a person in all respects qualified to fill the office of Marshal of the Northern District of Miss. when that office shall have been created.²
Altho a whisper may reach you that I am not in regular com­munition yet I trust you will believe me when I assure you that my friend Mr Anderson is a Virginia Democrat of the Jefferson School and an unwavering friend of the late & present adm.

Should the new District be made & the appointment of Marshal be conferred on Mr. A. the office will be well filled.

With my best wishes for your health & prosperity . . . .

JOEL PINSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Pinson had lived in Lincoln County, Tennessee, before moving to Mississippi. He had been a surveyor in West Tennessee and had practiced law in Fayetteville. Mt. Pinson in Madison County was named for him.

2. About this time, the old district, which included all of Mississippi, was divided into two parts. Gwin remained as marshal of the southern district. Anderson did not receive the appointment, but was elected to the Mississippi legislature, where he served, 1838–39.

3. Pinson was displeased that Jackson had chosen Van Buren as his successor.

FROM JOEL M. SMITH

Nashville. December 23, 1837

Smith acknowledges receipt of five dollars in payment for Ransom H. Gillett's subscription to the Nashville Union.

Smith says that he is pleased thus far with the new editor of the Union, Joshua Cunningham, and hopes that, as Cunningham becomes acquainted with Tennessee politics, he will become a real help to the Democrats.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Gillett to Polk, November 25, 1837.

FROM CHARLES G. GREENE

Dear Sir:

I arrived here on the morning of the 24th after a pleasant journey from Washington. I am busily engaged in preparing the document I mentioned to you, giving a description of Mr. Bell's political associates here, and find the most ample material to establish the points I wish to, conclusively. I think that I shall publish it in the form of a letter addressed to the Editor of the Nashville Union.
Please say to Mr. [Hopkins L.] Turney that he shall [hear] from me in the course of a day or two.

CHARLES G. GREENE

Addressed to Washington.
1. Charles G. Greene founded the Boston Morning Post in 1831, after having been connected with several other newspapers, particularly the Boston Statesman (1825–29), which was being published by his brother, Nathaniel Greene. The strongly Democratic Post prospered for forty-eight years under Charles Greene’s leadership.

2. The year of this letter is positively identified by Polk’s notation on the envelope that he had received it December 30, 1837.

3. The Nashville Union had already published communications from the Post. See Andrew Jackson to Polk, December 28, 1837, footnote 4. Greene’s plan as stated here appears to have been changed, as he sent this article to Polk when it was completed. See Charles G. Greene to Polk, January 10, January 18, and January 23, 1838. Greene’s articles were part of an attempt to establish John Bell’s “alliance” with New England Federalists. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, December 12 and December 18, 1837.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

D. Sir [Nashville]1 December 28 1837

You must not be mad because I am so long in answering your several letters by express mail.2 I am here to day and have submitted to our friends a set of resolutions to be presented to a meeting of the citizens day after tomorrow.3 You will see them in the papers. Tho drawn up in great haste they will put the ball in motion which is destined to give us a lasting victory.

The article disclosing Mr. Bells transfer of Tennessee to the Hartford conventionists has produced a good effect and will be followed up in good time.4 Our friends are becoming aroused and cannot but succeed if they do their duty. The Bank bill will pass. I do not object to it, tho have kept aloof, preferring that the White men should stand where they do on the question.

Our new editor is yet a stranger. We must be patient and not expect too much of him. The truth is that talents for such a station cannot be found at this time. If he is like Penn5 there will be much outcome (as the racers say) in him.

Tell Mr. Van Buren who has so ably met our highest expectations in his message that he will find Tennessee right before two years pass
away. Our citizens have in the huzza for the General forgotten the
great principles for which he contended. They will soon see the
difficulties into which they have been entrapped by Mr. Bell and
acknowledge with the more warmth their obligations to those who
have kept the true faith.

I write late at night after a long interview with Genl Carroll,
Nicholson, Guild, [Jonas E.] Thomas, Dr. Robertson & Genl Arm-
strong; and cannot say much.

Remember me to Mr. Grundy; and with my kind regards to Mrs.
Polk accept the assurances of my sincere friendship and esteem.

A. J. DONELSON

Addressed to Washington.
1. The point of origin was determined by the postmark.
2. See Polk to Donelson, December 12 and December 18, 1837.
3. See Polk to Donelson, December 18, 1837, and John O. Bradford to
Polk, same date.
4. The Nashville Union had already carried a communication from the
Boston Morning Post, December 16, 1837; and on the day this letter was
written, it carried a communication from Hartford, probably sent by the
editor of the Democratic paper there.
5. Shadrack Penn Jr. was the editor of the Louisville Public Advertiser,
which began publication in 1818 and became the strongest voice of Jackson
in Kentucky and, perhaps, in the West. In 1828 Penn declined a position in
Jackson's cabinet.
6. Felix Robertson, a son of James Robertson, studied medicine at the
University of Pennsylvania and returned to Nashville, where he developed
a lucrative practice.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Dear Sir Bolivar Decr. 28 1837

I addressed you during the call session of Congress tho. too late
for you to have received it before the adjournment, & I fear it may
not have reached you at all. Col. W. C. Dunlap subscribed for the
Tri-weekly Globe for J. J. Williams at this office about the 1st Decr.
1836 and he does not recollect whether he paid for it or not. Please
ascertain and pay up all demands & have the paper discontinued. I
wish you to pay for the "Farmer & Gardner" $2.50 for one year,
published in Baltimore, and have it directed to me at this office. Advise
me of the amt. paid the Globe office.

Albert McNeal is here direct from Coffeville and reports every
Correspondence of James K. Polk

thing going on smoothly on your plantation at present. I shall be able
to rent for the ensuing year this land of M T P’s H[eir]s for about
$675.00 having already rented $490.00 worth. When the present years
dues are collected I will pay over, agreeable to your order, to W H
Polk. My very best respects to Mrs. Polk. . . .

E. P. McNeal

Addressed to Washington.
1. On October 12, 1837, McNeal had written to Polk about magazine
subscriptions, as described in this letter.
2. Except that he was one of the organizers of the Episcopal church at
Bolivar in 1834, nothing has been learned about J. J. Williams.
3. Established in Baltimore in 1819, The American Farmer was pub­
lished under various titles until 1897. From 1835 to 1840 it was edited
by Edward P. Roberts.
4. This refers to the heirs of Marshall T. Polk, who had died in 1831,
leaving two children.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir, Nashville Dec. 31 1837

I wrote you by last nights express mail on the subject of the
meeting here on yesterday.1 I may be too sanguine, but I think every
thing is working most admirably for our political interests, and the
chances are two to one that Tennessee will go for the administration
next August election, and five to 1 for the Presidential election. There
is a firmness, stability, and honesty in our cause, that I believe the
Whigs cannot conquer, with all their intrigues & bragging. The passage
of the State Bank & Internal Improvement Bill2 is to have a fine
effect for us, and our people all seem to be secretly sensible of it.

I have a note due at the Bank of Metropolis for $1800 upon which
$1350 is called payable 27/30 January. C[arey] A. Harris is my
endorser. I have remitted him funds which cannot fail to amount to
$800, and orders upon the Post Office Department, which (if no
orders are sent out for collection) ought to amount to fully $1600. Out
of these orders I think Mr. Harris cannot fail to get the amount
necessary to pay up the call & discount on my note. I am however
particularly desirous that Mr. Harris should be put to no incon­
venience on account of being my endorser and if he cannot realise the
necessary sum from the means I have furnished him, I wish you by all
means to furnish him with the amount which may be necessary to
pay the call &c. If you have to borrow it by the day at usury, do so; it
will be but a few days after the 30th Jany, until I will supply it. If the blank post office orders should reach here in a few days I will understand that I am not to act on the orders given Mr. Harris & will provide the $450 in time. Do me the favor to see Mr. Harris and to provide that he is not put to the slightest inconvenience in this matter.

Ellen Walker has been dangerously ill, but is now supposed to be out of all danger. Ophelia has also been dangerously ill & still so. There is not much probability of her recovery.

My business is now so arranged that it is probable I shall soon be a gentleman of some leisure. I have wound up our Mail concern as well as it was possible to have done it. I am no longer a mail Contractor; have sold out nearly all our property. Still Mr. Hugh must look out for squalls.

James Walker

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Andrew Jackson Donelson to Polk, December 28, 1837, and Samuel Mitchell to Polk, January 2, 1838.

2. Andrew L. Martin, a former supporter of Hugh L. White, and A. O. P. Nicholson proposed similar bills on these questions. Long debates and extensive amendments resulted in passage of legislation that was such a mixture of their proposals that they might be called co-authors. Martin, at this time, was thought to be moving into the Democratic ranks. See Elihu C. Crisp to Polk, December 20, 1837.

3. Ellen Wormely Walker was the wife of Walker's oldest son, Samuel Polk Walker. The nature of her illness has not been learned.

4. Ophelia Hays, Polk's youngest sister, had given birth to a daughter in November 1837. See William H. Polk to Polk, December 2, 1837.

5. This reference is obscure.
FROM ADAM HUNTSMAN

Dear Sir

Jackson Ten Jany 1st 1838

I thank you for the documents you was so kind as to send me. Altho I am actively engaged in the practice of the law yet at leisure moments, I like to look how the concerns of our government progresses. Between Abolition, the Texas question and the subtreasury I expect the session is to be exhausted without any profit to the people, in useless irritating debate. A few political jugglers amongst you will concoct as much mischief as Satan pland in the high concil of Hell when (according to Milton) he was about to invade Paradise. Peradventure John Baliol¹ will distinguish himself as far above his compeers in this instance as Belzebub² did in that.

It seems the Whigs think they have got Van upon the hip, that N. York has slipd from under him, that Clay & Webster united can carry the next election. How stands the matter. As against these gentry I am resolved to go for Kinderhook³ even to mounting the stumps. Will any body else be run. It seems your friend Bell has thrown off the mask and become the protege of Mr Webster & shines most resplendant in Northern Federalism.⁴ His friends in this quarter are grumbling about it considerably. He will find it more of an up hill business to give this State to Webster or Clay or both than he has ever yet been engaged in. The truth is Van is gaining in the District rapidly and daily. Since Calhoun pulled off his hat and bid good bye to the Northern Whigs, all the Nullifiers who were the bitterest enemies of the administration has changed their abuse and vituperation into total silence in relation to Van but acknowledge quite frankly they cannot go for Clay or Webster. Nine tenths of them in this District will go for Magic⁵ and the Sub Treasury, (which scheme you are to loose through the influence of the State Banks).
There has been some glorious fun here. The Millers\(^6\) and [Andrew L.] Martin have quarrelled. Their friends are taking part. I stand off and hiss. Martin & his friends have become extremely cold towards Foster & Bell. There never was such a time since Judge White has been defeated for Van's friends to organize a powerful and energetic party and such as would beat Clay and Webster easily. The game is for Carroll to offer for Governor. Cannon has become very unpopular this session. Grundy should offer against Bell. By the next election he can either beat him or cripple him so bad that he will be broke down & would afford him a sufficient employment in his own district to prevent his mischief getting out of it. If these persons would offer the subordinate candidates can be easily arranged. What say you to the plan. I am ripe for a frolick and have been and intend to be engaged occasionally in writing little pieces in the papers for the sole purpose of setting mischief afloat in the ranks of _____\(^7\) and creating quarrels among themselves.

I could have been elected I believe but if I had it would have been like Pyrrhus's victory.\(^5\) The party had so arranged slanders, purchased presses, told lies and no body here to counteract them, that in two years more they would have lied my friends and self into the Pacific Ocean. I therefore concluded to stay at home and attend to them for a while. I have got them in a glorious way. They are quarrelling amongst themselves bitterly while I am drinking apple [toddy?]\(^6\) and eating Mutton.

Tell Van if [he lets?] these fellows beat [him] in New York I wish he may get choked to death eating sour crout. And furthermore tell Mrs Polk she must preside as Speaker untill you write to me.

Adam 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), 340-341.

1. John de Baliol, an English baron, founded Balliol College, Oxford, as an act of penance for having "vexed and damnified" the churches of Tynemouth and Durham. The similarity of names confirms this as a reference to John Bell.

2. Beelzebub was spoken of in the New Testament as the "prince of devils." In his *Paradise Lost*, John Milton gives the name *Beelzebub* to one of the fallen angels who was second in power only to Satan.

3. Kinderhook, Martin Van Buren's birthplace and home, became an appellation for the man himself.

4. See Charles G. Greene to Polk, December 26, 1837.

5. This is another reference to Van Buren, "the Little Magician."
January 2, 1838

6. Pleasant M. Miller and his son, William B. Miller, had both represented Madison County in the General Assembly and remained politically influential in that county. In the 1947 edition of this letter mentioned above, this name was read as Nullers instead of Millers.

7. For some unknown reason, the writer merely drew a line at this point and did not insert the word intended.

8. Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, won a victory over the Romans in 279 B.C. but lost most of his army. A pyrrhic victory, therefore, is one too dearly bought.

9. Flaking of the manuscript along folds renders a positive reading impossible at several points.

FROM SAMUEL MITCHELL

Dear Sir.

Nashville January 2nd 1838

Accompanying this letter you will receive the instructions of the War Department to Jesse B. Mitchell¹ in relation to the claim of his Mother and my affidavit in relation to the identity of the claimant. Will you and Judge Grundy and Messrs Yell and Turney be so good as to drop notes to the Department in relation to my character and standing as I am not known to any person connected with that part of the Government.

If the money is paid be so good as to remit it to this place by the express mail as soon as practicable.

The Legislature is still in session and no probability of an adjournment any time soon. The Senate is now engaged in the discussion of Messrs Nicholson & Martins Internal Improvement Bank Bill.² It has already consumed nearly one week of our time and probably will waste another before it is finally acted upon, but there is but little doubt but it will finally pass into a Law.

The Davidson County Democratic meeting took place on Saturday last:³ it was well attended and the true Democratic faith set forth in strong and eloquent language, was warmly supported and heartily adopted without a dissenting voice. Of the Preamble and Resolutions it is unnecessary for me to speak as you will receive them in a few days in the Union.⁴ Nicholson was the first who was called upon for a speech and he acquitted himself with a great deal of credit. Guild was then called out and surpassed himself and the expectations of his friends.

L. P. Cheatham, Mr Ewing, and Dr. Overton⁵ were successively called out and addressed the meeting in appropriate and warm speeches.

This question was put by Nicholson. Are you the people of Ten-
nesssee ready and willing to ratify the transfer, lately made by a leading Whig of this City, of the people of Tennessee to the blue light Federalists of Boston and the word ‘no’ was sounded from almost every person at the meeting.

The politics of Tennessee are rapidly improving and this Genl. Assembly is looked upon as decidedly Anti Van Buren, but since it has been understood that Mr. Clay is to be the candidate of the opposition, some of us have taken some pains to ascertain the probable strength of Mr. Van Buren in opposition to Mr. Clay, and I am decidedly of opinion that there are at least two thirds in favour of Mr. Van Buren. One member of the House of Representatives who says he has taken a good deal of pains to ascertain their relative strength and that he finds sixty two of that branch in favour of Van, and twelve in favour of Clay. The calculation was made before the arrival of the new member from Sullivan and Hawkins, who is decidedly with us and always has been. You can judge from this that two years from this time, Tennessee will be herself again.

Give my best respects to Yell and tell him that I expect to be a citizen of his state before another election.

My Compliments to Grundy, Turney and my old friend McClellen.

SAML. MITCHELL

Addressed to Washington.

1. Jesse B. Mitchell is unidentified, although he was obviously a kinsman of the writer of the letter.

2. See James Walker to Polk, December 31, 1837, footnote 2.

3. See James Walker to Polk, December 31, 1837, footnote 1.

4. The issue of the Nashville Union mentioned here is missing; no other copy has been found. Other editorial comments, however, suggest that the Preamble and Resolutions not only set forth the credo of the Democrats, but also branded the Whigs as probank, high-tariff neo-Federalists.

5. Andrew Ewing, a grandson of Jackson's old enemy of the same name, was a Nashville lawyer in partnership with his brother, Edwin H. Ewing. Andrew was a Democrat, and Edwin was a Whig. James Overton, a Nashville physician, was prominent in medical affairs and active in politics.

6. The new member was David Shaver Jr. The incumbent, Abraham V. Hulse, died on December 4, 1837.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Washington Jany 3rd. 1838

Your letter of the 28th by the Express mail, was received last night and I am much gratified to learn that our friends at Nashville,
January 3 1838

are at last in motion. The meeting to be holden on the 31st. cannot fail to have its effect.¹

I have not yet received the Union containing the proceedings of the Federalists at Hartford. I expect it by the regular mail in a day or two. You must follow up the publication. Nothing can produce so much effect, in opening the eyes of the people, to a sense of their true position. The Editor of the Boston Morning Post,² will make a publication shortly upon the same subject, accompanied with the proof & etc. You must cause it to be republished in the Union and extensively circulated. Indeed I think the whole as well as what has appeared in the Union, as the publication which will be shortly made in the Post, should be published in pamphlet form at the Union office & circulated in every County in the State.

I send you an article hastily prepared and have no time to copy or revise. The extract given from Judge Hopkinson's Speech³ is truly copied from the American Sentinel.⁴ I wished to preserve the paper, and have therefore caused a copy to be taken.

You will of course have the article copied before it is sent to the Union office for publication. You will of course make such alterations as you may choose. I do not wish the manuscript sent to go to the office in my hand writing.

I write in haste. The hour of meeting of the House has arrived, & must close. I will write again in a day or two.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

¹ See Samuel Mitchell to Polk, January 2, 1838.
² Charles G. Greene.
³ Joseph Hopkinson was a distinguished lawyer and judge from Philadelphia. He was associated with the defense in the impeachment trial of Samuel Chase and was the author of the song "Hail, Columbia." In his speech, made before the Pennsylvania Convention, Hopkinson predicted a resurgence of the old Federalist party.
⁴ The American Sentinel was a Philadelphia newspaper published from 1816 to 1846.

FROM THOMAS J. HALL

Farmington. January 3, 1838

Hall, otherwise unidentified, is secretary of the Rock Creek Colonization Society and wishes to forward a small sum to the parent organization.¹ Un-
able to obtain paper that will circulate in Washington, he asks Polk to advance the money and to designate some local place where he might deposit a like sum to Polk's credit.

Addressed to Washington.
1. The American Colonization Society, the parent organization Hall wished to aid, was organized in 1817 to transport free Negroes to Africa. The money that Hall wanted to contribute was to be given to Joseph Gales Sr., who was treasurer of the organization.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Sir, [Nashville] January 4th 1838
You will have seen in the Union our proceedings on Saturday last. Nothing ever went off better. If the address described in the last resolution can be put forth soon and extensively circulated the task of overthrowing the fabric of Mr. Bell will not be difficult of accomplishment.

Nothing has yet been done toward the organization of an efficient plan for the circulation of our views. This will probably be done on next Saturday when our committee are to meet at Nashville for the purpose of fixing the outlines of the address and designating some one or two to draw it.

Do not be uneasy at what the Legislature will do on the subject of a new Bank. In a political point of view no injury can result from it to the Republican party at this time. Its immediate and best effect will be its tendency to counteract the intrigues of those who are paving the way for a U S Bank.

I will write you again on Saturday after consulting with our friends in respect to the adoption of further means to help the good cause.

A. J. DONELSON

Addressed to Washington.
1. No point of origin was indicated, but the letter was posted at Nashville on January 5, 1838.
2. See Samuel Mitchell to Polk, January 2, 1837.

TO EDWARD J. ROBERTS, ET AL.

Gentlemen, Washington City Jany 4th 1838
I have received your invitation to "be present and participate" with "The Democratic Republicans of the city of Pittsburg, and
county of Alleghany, in celebrating the ensuing anniversary of the battle of New Orleans." My public duties here must deprive me of the pleasure of being present on an occasion so interesting to every patriotic citizen. I heartily respond to the estimate you place on "the merit, the virtue the firmness and constancy" of the venerable Ex-President, and agree with you that "an adherence to the great democratic principles that governed the administration of the illustrious Jackson, is necessary to the security, the advancement and permanency of our free institutions." The life of that illustrious citizen has been an eventful one. He has at every period of his brilliant public career been found on the side of his country, upholding her honor and her interests, and vindicating the constitution from the innovations and assaults of that powerful party in the country, who have been at all times since its adoption, and still are, actively engaged in attempts to undermine, to overthrow and destroy the cardinal doctrines of the democratic republican party. At every step of his career he has encountered these opponents of the principles, which he and a majority of the people have steadily maintained. At the close of the war it is well known, there were those in the country, who had denounced the war, in which he and his brave associates in arms, had won so many laurels for themselves and imperishable glory for their country, as wicked and unjust; who engaged in the unholy work of detraction and calumny to destroy his fame. Even the glorious event you propose to celebrate did not save him, from the assaults of this party. And now that he is in honored retirement the same party pursue him, with a bitterness that can only be accounted for upon the ground that it is thought to be necessary to destroy the influence of his public character and opinions, that they may the more successfully assail his principles.

The event you celebrate Gentlemen, is among the most glorious which has occurred in our annals, and your assemblage "on the approaching occasion, to testify your sense of the services of the soldier and the statesman," is well calculated to revive the recollection, and waken up in every patriotic bosom, that love of country, which upon the achievement of the victory of Orleans, dismayed not only the enemies of Jackson, but his country's enemies and gladdened every heart which could feel for the country's honor. Let his enemies continue to assail him. His political principles are the principles of the Democratic Republican party, to which he has been proved during a long life to belong, and must endure. The culumniators of Jefferson, the revilers of Madison, the persecutors of Jackson, will be forgotten, whilst their names shall live in the grateful hearts of millions of their countrymen, and be transmitted to posterity as the champions and
defenders of public liberty, and their country's greatest benefactors.

Regretting that I cannot be present on the occasion of your celebration, and returning to you my thanks for your flattering invitation, permit me through you to tender to the company the annexed sentiments.³

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and marked "Copy." The letter is not in Polk's handwriting, but he signed it.

1. Edward J. Roberts was Clerk of the United States District Court at Pittsburgh for many years; he was a local politician of some note. At the end of Roberts's letter are listed seventeen others who had signed the letter of invitation to Polk.

2. The letter of invitation to Polk has not been found.

3. The annex has not been found. See, however, the final sentiment expressed in Polk's letter to James Page, et al., January 6, 1838.

FROM JEREMIAH DAY¹

Sir, Yale College, Jany. 5th 1838

It has become my duty to state to you some proceedings of a portion of the students of this college, in which your brother,² a member of our present Senior class, took a part. On the evening of Saturday the 23rd of December, between the hours of eleven and twelve, a number of them, from thirty to fifty, mostly dressed in disguise, formed a martial column, and paraded the streets, furnished with clubs and other weapons for attack and resistance, supplied with various instruments of annoying and discordant music, and disturbing the order and quiet of the place, till they were encountered and stopped, by a body of the city watch, at a distance from the college.

After this, a considerable number of them returned, and remained together, for some time, in front of the college yard. When they observed some of their instructors approaching, they met them with insolent and abusive treatment. Your brother, particularly, used reproofful language, and offered them violence.

For this outrage of his, and open contempt of the authority and laws of the college, the Faculty have judged that they could pass no adequate censure, short of a termination of his connection with the institution. They have, therefore, decided to dismiss him, and to return him to the guardianship of his friends.

It is deeply to be regretted, that when so near the close of his collegiate course, he should thus rashly put it out of our power to complete in the usual way, his academic education. But a student can
hardly remain, with advantage or safety to himself, in an institution where he has so little confidence in the instructors, as to treat them with gross disrespect. You must also be well aware, Sir, that no government can stand, which suffers itself to be openly insulted and abused, without taking the measures which are necessary to sustain its authority.

With painful regret for the necessity of this communication, and with sentiments of high consideration.

JEREMIAH DAY

Addressed to Washington.

1. Day was graduated from Yale in 1795 and became a Congregational clergyman. He served as tutor and professor at Yale and eventually became president of the college, serving in that capacity from 1817 until 1847.

2. Samuel W. Polk, the youngest of Polk's brothers, seems to have been in no trouble at Yale until the event related in this letter.

FROM LEVIN H. COE

Dear Sir

Nashville Jany 6, 1838

My Father1 is an applicant for the office of Marshall of Missi. shortly expected to be vacated by the resignation of Dr W. M. Gwinn. Col C. Kyle Gnel Rayburn² & others from Missi. have written to their representatives Messrs C. & Gholson asking their aid. My Father is looked upon as a citizen of that State, votes there, intends to remain there & I believe from his extensive acquaintance that his appointment will be favorably recd. A. J. Donaldson [Donelson] Esqr of this County informed me that he would write on and also enclose a letter on the subject from J. C. McLemore. Mr Grundy also has written me that he will aid my Father all in his powr. He is also known to Judge C. C. Clay and most of the Alaba[ma] delegation. Mr. D. H. Lewis³ will I have no doubt join most warmly for him.

Nothing here of moment. The Legislature will make a state bank which will I think settle all cry for a National Bank. Resolutions are lying upon the table in the H.R. condemning the sub-treasury system. The Whig presses here wish them acted on. They shall not run it thrd the Senate without voting for or against a United States Bank.

L. H. COE

Addressed to Washington.

1. Joseph Coe, a former resident of Maury County, lived in Holly Springs, Marshall County, Mississippi. This county adjoined Fayette County, Tennessee, where Levin H. Coe resided.
2. Claiborne Kyle also lived in Marshall County and represented that county in the Mississippi legislature. General Rayburn was probably John Rayburn, a former resident of Wayne County, Tennessee, who lived in Yalobusha County, Mississippi.

3. Dixon H. Lewis, a lawyer from Montgomery, Alabama, served in the United States House of Representatives, 1829–44, and later served in the Senate. He was heartily disliked by Polk and many of Polk's friends.

TO JAMES PAGE, ET AL.¹

Gentlemen, Washington City Jany 6th 1838

I have had the honor to recieve your letter of the 29th ultimo inviting me in behalf of "The Democratic citizens of the city and county of Philadelphia" to be present at their celebration of the approaching "anniversary of the battle of New Orleans."

Upon each return of the anniversary you celebrate, every patriotic citizen looks back with national pride and delight, to an event which filled the land with gladness, and gave so much character to the prowess of our arms.

If my public duties would permit I would gladly participate with you on an occasion so interesting.

Thanking you Gentlemen for the invitation you have given me, and regretting that I cannot be present I beg to tender through you the enclosed Sentiment. . . .²

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Philadelphia and marked "Copy." The letter is not in Polk's handwriting, but he signed it. The handwriting is by the same person who copied the letter from Polk to Edward J. Roberts, et al., January 4, 1838.

1. James Page practiced law in Philadelphia, where he was prominent in the Democratic party. Below his signature Polk listed four other names besides that of Page. It is almost certain, however, that there were other signers of this petition.

2. At the bottom of the last page of the letter appeared the following: "The victory of New Orleans closed the war 'in a blaze of glory,' and the civil administration of the great Commander who achieved it, has endeared him still more to the Democracy of the Union." This is probably the same sentiment that Polk sent to the committee in Pittsburgh on January 4, 1838.

TO ANDREW JACKSON


[ . . . ] regards the great measure of the administration.² I have taken some pains to ascertain the state of opinion, particularly in the
January 7 1838

House. The S. Carolina delegation with two exceptions will support the Bill, as will also Lewis of Alabama, and my opinion, is that with some modifications in the details, not affecting principle, that it will pass by a small majority, not exceeding half a dozen, if so many. If we can pass this measure as I am now satisfied we shall, all will be well.

I have letters requesting me to return through East Tennessee, in the summer, and my impression is, I shall do so. We learn here, that Heiskell of Knoxville is about to establish a democratic paper at that place. I hope it may be so. I would be very useful. I shall be happy to hear from you, when you have leisure.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to the Hermitage. This is a fragment found in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. This letter is postmarked “Jan. 7”; the year is taken from Jackson’s endorsement, which is dated “1838.”

2. This reference is to the Sub-Treasury Bill.

3. Reference to Polk’s source of information is not identified; however, for other discussion of Frederick S. Heiskell’s editorial plans, see Daniel Kenney to Polk and Felix Grundy, January 29, 1838.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir, Washington City, January 7th, 1838

I am rejoiced to learn from Nashville, that our democratic friends are at length roused to action. It is what I have been for months labouring to effect. If there had been half a dozen active energetic men in different parts of the State to aid me during the Presidential canvass, the state might at that time have been secured. With energetic exertions during the last summer, if we had not succeeded we would at all events have much reduced the overwhelming majority which was cast against us. And now since Mr. Bell has presumptuously and arrogantly undertaken to transfer us en masse, and to make a bill of sale of the whole people of the State, to the Hartford convention Federalists of New-England, all that is wanting to bring the state back to the democratic ground which she has always occupied, is ordinary exertion on the part of our friends, to carry the truth as it is to our people. Before I left Nashville I urged our friends to action, and suggested the propriety and indeed necessity of the public meetings, which I understand has been held. This will put the ball in
motion and should be vigorously followed up. County meetings, as I suggested should be held in all the Counties where they can be got up, and extra numbers of the Union containing important matter, should be extensively circulated throughout the State. The Editor of the Boston Post is now preparing and will shortly publish a circumstantial account of the Federal rejoicings at Boston, Salem &c. at which Mr. Bell gave opinions that the people of Tennessee were identified in feeling and interest with them, and were travelling side by side with them in the same cause. He will give the names of the principal actors, with their former political opinions and course, and will show that these rejoicings were gotten up and conducted exclusively by the Federalists of the worst stamp. As soon as this publication appears, it should be extensively circulated through the Union.

From here we will co-operate with our friends at home. Among other means of disseminating correct information, Blair has agreed to issue an extra Globe for six or nine months, to commence by the 18th March, or earlier if practicable. His prospectus will be out next week accompanied with a sample number, as also with an able review of the existing state of parties, and the principles which divide them. This review has been drawn up with great care and ability. We will forward it to all our leading friends in the State, accompanied by letters, urging them every where to procure subscribers, or raise funds in their respective counties, to have the paper extensively circulated. The central committee at Nashville and the subcommittee in the other counties, can render much aid in giving it circulation.

Now is the time for active exertion in the State. White is dropped and not thought of; Clay is to be the Federal candidate. This is a point well understood by all parties here as being settled. They will go through the forms of a national convention for the purpose of ruling Webster and Harrison off the field, and of settling upon their Candidate for Vice President. Webster it is believed will be placed on Clay's ticket for Vice President, unless they should believe [it should be feared?] that he will be too heavy to carry. If he is not their man, they [will] probably look at Sergeant or Granger, or to some other anti-slave holding, anti Masonic man, so as to conciliate those interests. Surely the democratic people of Tennessee can never support such a ticket, with the proper lights. I know they will not.

You may rely upon my active and constant cooperation. All public documents and speeches, which I may think will be useful, shall be distributed to our leading friends, at least in my part of the State.

The forthcoming extra Globe being issued weekly will be a great auxillary in advancing our cause. Nothing is so important at present,
as to press home upon our people Bell's shameless amalgamation with the Federalists. I have written to Major Donelson upon the subject, and hope that he will see that a constant fire upon this point is kept up by the Union. You have probably seen Judge Hopkinson's boast in the Pennsylvania Convention—that the "Federalists were again coming into power." This should have a place at the head of the columns of the Union, and form the subject of an article weekly, for months to come.

J. K. Polk

Presumably addressed to the Hermitage. Marked "Private," this is a typescript in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. The original has not been located.

1. See James Walker to Polk, December 31, 1837.
2. See Charles G. Greene to Polk, December 26, 1837, and January 10, January 18, January 23, 1838.
3. The brackets here and in the following sentence are reproduced as found in the typescript.
4. John Sergeant of Pennsylvania and Francis Granger of New York were members of the House of Representatives. Sergeant, a lawyer and a friend of Nicholas Biddle, served as a legal adviser for the Bank of the United States. Granger had been prominent in the Anti-Masonic movement but was now a Whig.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

My Dear Sir: Nashville Jany 7, 1838

I have been looking with much impatience for weeks for a letter from you, but the only intelligence I have had, has been through others who have been more fortunate than myself in hearing directly from you. The last month has been to me a period of unknown perplexity and trouble. I have been forced from circumstances to turn my attention to the situation of my private affairs and I assure you, the examination has been any thing but agreeable. At one time I resolved to cut my connection with political affairs and devote myself exclusively to mending up and restoring my wasted and wasting property, and still when I have looked to the condition of our political affairs and listened to the solicitations of friends I have been induced to falter in my resolution and suspend a final determination. If I could be endowed with the spirit of prophecy but for a moment and could be permitted to know the course of events on
two points I should have no difficulty in taking my course. In both these events you are the leading object. Will you be the candidate of our party for the Vice Presidency—if not, will you again run for Congress? If I could be allowed to have these two questions solved, I should be relieved of all embarrassment, and as you alone can solve them, I must be excused for requesting of you a free disclosure on this subject. Let me here remark, that I am solicitous that you should occupy the position named. And yet if you should, I feel that it will be difficult for me to resist the temptation of seeking to be your successor in Congress, a situation which I have no wish to occupy under the present state of my private affairs. The truth is I both desire you to be the republican candidate for the Vice Presidency and also to run again for Congress. I presume you have had full time and opportunity to gather something of the probable course of our party on the Vice Presidency question. Col. Smith¹ has just reached here, but he is unable to satisfy me on this point, and only gives me the impression that you will again be a candidate for Congress. In the event of your not running for the Vice Presidency you must be a candidate for Congress. The party cannot get along without you. I entreat you to answer me fully on these points by express mail.

You have seen our proceedings here at the Republican meeting. The contest is commencing on both sides. Mr. Clay has a new organ here, which distinctly takes ground for him.²

The Union is not materially improved in the hands of Mr. C[unningham]. He lacks industry or talent, I dont know which. Our friends are confident of success, but it will require zeal and harmony. The Legislature will sit two weeks longer. The Whigs will instruct our Senators to vote against the Sub Treasury scheme I think. They will not give instructions on the subject of a National bank.

I shall wait with impatience for an answer.

A. O. P. Nicholson

Addressed to Washington.

1. Williamson Smith had just returned from a visit to Washington. See Williamson Smith to Polk, January 10, 1838.

2. The Nashville Whig, established by Caleb C. Norvell in January 1838, was in reality the revival of a newspaper by the same name that had been established by Norvell's older brothers, Moses and Joseph, some twenty-six years earlier. C. C. Norvell resigned as associate editor of the Nashville Republican Banner only a few days before the first issue of his paper appeared. From the beginning, the Nashville Whig supported Henry Clay and advocated the establishment of another United States Bank.
TO JEREMIAH DAY

Dear Sir

Washington City Jany 8th 1838

I have this moment received your letter of the 5th and hasten to reply it. The information which you communicate, was as unexpected as it is painful to me. No one can regret more than I do, the necessity of the severe judgment which the Faculty of your college have felt it to be their duty to pass in my brother's case. I do not mean to palliate or justify his conduct, (about which I know nothing except what you have communicated) but to say, that the sentence is most severe, as regards his own future prospects and the hopes of his friends. He is the youngest of our family, was deprived of his father at an early period, and placed under my guardianship. My course of life has been such as to prevent me, from being much with him personally, that I might give him the aid of my counsel and advice. Unaccustomed to the restraints of a parent, and far removed from his relatives & friends, he is I doubt not, thoughtless, indiscreet and imprudent. And though he may have violated the laws of the college, and brought upon himself the sentence which has been pronounced, still from my knowledge of him, I do not believe that in a moment of reflection, he would wantonly commit an act to deserve the punishment which you have thought it necessary to inflict.

You state that his connection with your institution has been terminated, but I am at some loss, whether to understand by this, that he has been expelled, or simply suspended for a time. I appreciate fully the necessity which you state, of maintaining the authority of the college, and my purpose is not to contravent anything you say upon that point, but to appeal to you to know, whether upon assurances of future good conduct, for which I will stand his guaranty, the punishment may not be mitigated, so that he may be restored to college.

If this can be done consistently with your sense of propriety, I am sure that he would submit to the authority of the college and that you would find no further difficulty in governing him. I am sure that his dismissal must be mortifying and distressing to himself. I have not heard from him since his dismissal. He wrote me early in December, and dwelt with manifest pleasure on the prospect of closing his collegiate course. He has at all times since he has been with you, seemed to be satisfied, has made no complaints of any kind, and I am quite satisfied that the indiscretion into which he has possibly been led by others, cannot have been premeditated.

I will write to him this morning and ur[ge] him to make all
honourable amends in his power for his past conduct, and hope it may yet be possible for him to be restored to college.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to New Haven, Connecticut. This letter is in the Yale University Library.
1. See Jeremiah Day to Polk, January 5, 1838.
2. See Samuel W. Polk to Polk, December 7, 1837.

TO WILLIAM C. DAWSON

Sir

Washington City Jany 10th 1838

In answer to your letter of the 12th ult. written in pursuance of the order of the Committee on Mileage, of which you are chairman, I have the honor to state, that as far as my information enables me to speak, "the usual route travelled" from my residence at Columbia Tennessee, to this City, is from Columbia to Nashville, a distance of 40 miles, from Nashville to Louisville Ky. a distance of about 180 miles, from the latter place by Steam Boat to Wheeling, Va. and from there to Fredericktown Maryland, to this City. A portion of the travellers from Nashville to the Eastern Cities take the route by the way of Lexington, and strike the Ohio River at Maysville Ky. a distance of about 275 miles, and thence by Steam Boat to Wheeling &c, and others in the winter and spring when the Cumberland River is navigable, take a Boat at Nashville, descend the River to its mouth, & thence to Wheeling Va. and thence to Washington. Merchants and most other persons travelling to the Cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York, usually take one of these routes, and I believe most usually the one by the way of Louisville. For several years past, I have travelled upon one of these routes in coming to, and returning from the Seat of Government. At the close of the late Extra Session of Congress, I returned to Tennessee by the way of Louisville, and in coming back travelled by the way of Lexington to Maysville Ky. and thence by Wheeling and Fredericktown to Washington. I am unable to state with precise accuracy, the distance of the route usually or actually travelled from my residence to this City.

When I was first chosen a Representative in Congress, in 1825, I travelled to Washington by the Stage route through East Tennessee and Western Virginia, by the way of Knoxville, Abingdon, Charlottsville and Fredericksburg. At the close of that Session, I returned by the Western route, by the way of Louisville Ky. Since that time, in
coming and returning I have occasionally travelled the Virginia route, sometimes in a private conveyance and once in the Stage. Since 1834 I have travelled on the Western route. The distance of travel for which I have received compensation, was originally estimated upon what was supposed to be the shortest and most direct route, and by that estimate I have received my compensation annually, without regard to the route usually travelled or the one actually travelled.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I shall during my continuance in Congress, travel the one route or the other, as may at the time be convenient, and am perfectly satisfied with the amount of mileage as it is, as I will be with any other distance, upon which the Committee in determining upon a uniform mode of charge and compensation, for all the members of the House, may fix.

Addressed to Washington. On the envelope, the writer noted that the letter was not sent.

1. William C. Dawson served in the House of Representatives from Georgia, 1836-41. He also served in the United States Senate, 1849–55. He was elected to the House as a Whig.

2. This letter has not been found.

FROM CHARLES G. GREENE

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of yours of Dec 30 and Jany 7. I intended to have published my document before this, but owing to an alteration in the size of my paper, &c. I have been unable to complete it as soon as I at first contemplated. A very few days, however, will now enable me to finish it, and lay it before the public, when I think that the democrats in Tennessee will be perfectly satisfied that John Bell mingled with Hartford Convention federalists, and attempted to turn his constituents over to the interests of the “blue lights” and “Essex Junto” aristocrats of 1814, during his last visit to the East. I am very glad that the subject has been taken up in a public meeting in Tennessee. It was a good way to commence the work; it shall be closely followed up here, depend upon it. My publication will appear in the course of next week, and will contain parts of much importance.

C. G. GREENE

N B I will procure Mr Hill’s Speech and forward it to you.
1. These letters have not been found.

2. Isaac Hill, ardent Democrat and former member of the "Kitchen Cabinet," had served in the United States Senate and was, at this time, governor of New Hampshire. Delivered on December 9, 1837, at a meeting of Democrats at Concord, New Hampshire, Hill's speech attacked the Whigs as Federalists.

3. This postscript was written on the left margin of the letter.

FROM WILLIAMSON SMITH

Dear Sir, Nashville Ten. 10th Jay. 1838

Enclosed I forward one hundred and five dollars in United States money being about the amt. I borrowed of you in Washington City when I was there. The hundred dollars I got of you was about 5 pr. ct. better than United States money. I therefore send you the other five.

I have made my purchases in Boots & will be ready by the twentyeth of January which will I fear be sooner than there will be any Indians ready.\footnote{Genl. [Nathaniel] Smith wrote me he thought he would not be able to get any there before the first of Feb. Just as they were in a good way and began to enroll letters were written from Washington by some of Ross delegation that he [John] Ross would get back all their lands lying in North Carolina, Alabama & Tennessee which belonged to the Cherokees and that the white People would all be driven off of their land and much more such as that. Mr [Carey A.] Harris told me when I was there that all communication would cease in 10 or 12 days & they duly notifyed. I wish that could be done.}

Please write whether there is likely any thing to be done & whether they have been notifyed that no further proposition will be received &c. I am sorry to trouble you with this matter but it is of vast importance to me.

The State Bank bill has this moment passed its third & last reading in both houses.\footnote{I have just had a conversation with Mr. Nicholson. He says there is not more than one third of the Whig members of the Legislature that can stand Mr. Clay for President. I have not been among the people enough since my return to hear what they say but I have no doubt all will be wright.}

Tell H. L. Turney I have not seen H. Turney\footnote{Tell H. L. Turney I have not seen H. Turney but will see him in a few days & will write to him immedeately.} but will see him in a few days & will write to him immedeately.

I talked with Nicholson on the money subject. He says there is
committee raised for the purpose. For fear I weary you will conclude.
Pleas present my respects to Mrs. Polk.

WILLIAMSON SMITH

Addressed to Washington.
1. Williamson Smith was working under Nathaniel Smith, Superintendent of Cherokee Emigration. See Williamson Smith to Polk, October 25, 1837.
2. See Elihu C. Crisp to Polk, December 20, 1837.
3. Henry Tumey 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 slaves to William Pillow and moved to Mississippi. He was probably a relative of Hopkins L. Turney, but this relationship has not been established.

FROM SAMUEL A. GILLESPIE

Dr Sir

Jackson Miss. Jan 13th, 1838

I addressed you from Vicksburg some time since communicating to you my views at that time requesting the probability of a vacancy in this state for marshall. Since that time my views of the matter has thus far not been realized. Since the Legislature of the state has convened it seems that Drt Gwin is not the strongest of the democratic party & after learning this fact has declined the idea of running for senator. Judge Trotter of Columbus is now considered the prominate man of the party. Was it seems some little stronger than Dr Gwin. The Legislature has set 22d of this month for bringing on the election. Trotter or Gov Runnels either one or the other will be run by our party & the Whigs it seems is also divided as to the man. They will I think nominate Col Bingaman of Natchez. Gen. Fott & Judge Bodly of Vicksburg is spoken of but Bingaman will be their man. The Van Burens have a majority in the legislature of about fifteen and of course will elect their man. The present election will only be for two years, therefore not so much desired as if for the term of six years.

You will perceive from the Globe of 29th Dec last that a large amt lands are offered for sale in this state & Arkansaw. I calculate on attending the sales at both places. There will be a glorious chance for men who have money. Some of the best lands in each state will be obtained at Goverment price. The papers respecting the lands I floated on in Arkansaw I will forward as soon as I return to Natchez to you at Washington. Wish you to attend to the matter for me.
The Eastern tier of Sections in 10.S. of R 1 West is yet all vacant. Except the land claimed by myself & one other half section the other five sections would be a great bargain at three times the amt of Goverment price. One of the same is a front on Miss. River. Should you have any more funds to spare than what you have already sent to Arkansaw I think there will never be a better opportunity to lay it out. The land sales at Chocchuma there is a large quantity of first rate land situated on Cold Water embraced in the sale advertised in May next.

Please let me hear from you. I shall be at Natchez until middle of Feby after [which] I shall go to the woods. I wish to make some little examination further before the sales. In hast.

S. A. GILLESPIE

Addressed to Washington. The writer's poor handwriting and his practice of overcapitalization have caused the editors to take more editorial license than is usually practiced.
1. See Samuel A. Gillespie to Polk, December 21, 1837.
2. James F. Trotter, who had lived for a while in East Tennessee, was a prominent lawyer and judge in Mississippi. He was chosen for the United States Senate at this time, but resigned after serving only a few months. Afterwards he served as professor of law at the University of Mississippi and as a member of the state supreme court.
3. Hiram G. Runnels was governor of Mississippi, 1834–35.
4. Adam L. Bingaman was a wealthy resident of Adams County who had served in both houses of the state legislature.
5. This refers to Henry L. Foote, whose political allegiance wavered frequently. A Democrat only a year before, he was now considered a Whig.
6. William S. Bodley, an early settler in Warren County, Mississippi, was a prominent Vicksburg lawyer. He lost to Trotter, 62 to 32, in the senate election.
7. Chocchuma was the site of a federal land office in north-central Mississippi.
8. Running generally west and southwest in northwestern Mississippi, the Cold Water River empties into the Tallahatchie.

TO A. O. P. NICHOLSON

My Dear Sir Washing. City Jan 13th 1838

I have received your letter of the 7th by the express mail, and hasten to give you a frank answer, though one that is not so certain and satisfactory as I could wish it were in my power to make it. In
reference to your first inquiry, it has not yet been settled who is to be the “candidate of our party for the Vice Presidency.” One thing seems to be agreed by all I have heard express opinions and that is, that there must be a new selection. It will too I have no doubt be generally agreed, that the candidate selected should reside west of the Alleghany, and be from a slaveholding state. This will narrow very much the range of selection, and from your knowledge of the political men in that region of the Union you will be enabled to judge of probabilities. In making the selection much will probably depend on the choice which our friends in that quarter may themselves indicate. Though several individuals have conversed with me on the subject, it seems to be thought, that pending the vexed questions now before Congress, this is not a moment propitious to the agitation of the question here, lest it might have the effect to distract and possibly weaken us for the time being in Congress. At the proper time it will doubtless claim the serious consideration of all our friends, and I do not doubt but that they will ultimately harmonize and unite. But though it is not deemed prudent at this time, to agitate the question here, the same remark would not apply with the same force to the South West itself to which we must probably ultimately look for the candidate. From the position of Tennessee at this moment, she would not probably be the state where the suggestion of a suitable candidate should first be made. It would come better from Mississippi or Alabama, and let Tennessee follow. You can think of this, and act upon your better judgement in this respect. Before long our party will doubtless begin to speculate on the probabilities, and suggest their favorites in various quarters.

In regard to your next enquiry; you know I have no personal desire, to be again a candidate for Congress, and nothing but an imperative sense of duty to my friends, and a belief which may be entertained that it may be necessary to sustain our principles, could induce me to be again upon the field. I have been long here, and a change of position would as you know be in many respects desirable to me. Some of my friends have been of opinion, that I could be of most service to our cause, by running for Governor, and thus being enabled to make the canvass of the whole State. But this I suppose is not now to be thought of, as Governor Carrol has intimated a willingness, and a wish to run. Under the circumstances, I do not see that I can at this time, positively decide upon my course. Before my return home in the summer, there will be fuller developments, upon some important points, and I can upon a conference with my friends determine upon what may be deemed best. One thing I can now say
with certainty, and that is, if I run again for Congress, I must after that, decline. I cannot be a candidate more than once more. Upon this you may rely.

By letters received here some days ago I was surprised to learn that you were thinking seriously of emigrating either to Memphis or Mississippi, and forming a law-partnership there, with Judge Brown and Col. Guild.² This I did not think was probable, for in all our conversations when I was last in Tennessee, you did not intimate to me any such intention. If I may be permitted to give my opinion I would say that you ought not to think of such a step for a moment. I know of no man of your age who has so fair or so bright prospects before him, if you remain where you are. If you leave the district, these prospects must be postponed for many years at least. I urge you therefore by every consideration of interest and future prospects of advancement, to remain where you are. At all events suspend your decision for the present, and until after my return in the summer. By that time I will be prepared to act decisively.

You may put it down as certain that Clay is to be, or rather is now the Federal candidate for the Presidency. His party will go through the forms of a National convention for the purpose of ruling Webster & Harrison off the field. His Vice must come from the non slave holding states, and most probably be an anti-mason & an abolitionist, interest[s] that he will think it necessary to conciliate. Against such a ticket can there be any doubt of our success in Tennessee? Now is the time to produce effect in the state.

I am grieved that the Union is not more efficient. We have indeed been unfortunate in not having a talented man in the establishment. An Editor of talents we must have, and if upon further trials it is found that Mr. C[uningham] will not do, let our friends write to me, and we will endeavour to find a man who can do the cause justice, who may be induced from the prospects of the profits of the establishment to take charge of it.

You must fight off and prevent instructions to our Senators if possible. If you find our opponents resolved to instruct on the Sub-Treasury, goad them to an expression of opinion, upon the Bank question also, for that is what they mean.

This letter is strictly confidential, and is intended for no one but yourself.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. It is now understood in my District, that [I] will again be a candidate for Congress. Let this be so. I told my friends when pressed on the subject, that I might be considered a candidate, unless I
should hereafter decline; that I would rather be beaten than be
driven of[f] the field &c. 8

J. K. P.

Addressed to Nashville and marked “Private and Confidential.” This is a
copy and is so marked.
1. See A. O. P. Nicholson to Polk, January 7, 1838.
2. This refers to William T. Brown and Josephus C. Guild of Gallatin. Brown was a former resident of Nashville, where he was a law partner of James P. Grundy. After serving as judge of the sixth circuit, he practiced law in Memphis.
3. As further evidence that Polk recognized the great importance of this letter, he wrote below the postscript: “The above is a literal copy, except the Postscript, which is a substantial & very near a literal copy. The Postscript was copied, after the original was sealed & mailed, from memory.”

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir Murfreesboro, Jany 14th, 1838

I received yours of the 5th Inst. a few days since and have this
morning started a boy to Columbia for the carriage. 1

Mr Bells movement at the north has not created any sensation
in this county. Our politicians here are quiet and the papers have not
been sufficiently active. I however understand from Genl. [Samuel]
Mitchell & others at Nashville that it is not likely to work so well
with the Legislature. Upon a count in that body it is said the parties
stand for Clay 20, the balance for V.B. or non committal. I think if
some pains are taken the people can be awakened to a sense of their
position. Dr. Duncans speech has been read extensively here & will
be published in our little paper. It has pleased our friends greatly,
and the Whigs are much surprised that the Doct. is still alive. 2 Send
us as many more such as you please. The old hero has made another
O'Bryen & O'Bradly case of Mr A M Hughes as you will see by the
papers. 3

JNO. W. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.
1. Polk's letter of January 5, 1838, has not been found. On the envelope of this letter from Childress, Polk noted that in the earlier letter he had agreed to sell his carriage to Childress for $1200, payable on June 1, 1838.
2. Alexander Duncan was a Cincinnati physician who served in Congress, 1837–41 and 1843–45. On December 18, 1837, he defended the administration
and vigorously attacked Henry A. Wise for defaming the president. The com-
ment on Whig surprise that Dr. Duncan was still alive is related to Wise's
reputation for violence.

3. On December 19, 1837, Archelaus M. Hughes, clerk of the state senate,
inserted in the Nashville Banner an unsigned statement that reliable persons
had recently heard Jackson say that the Van Buren administration was
bound to fail. Under pressure the Banner revealed Hughes as the author.
When two witnesses failed to corroborate Hughes's story, it was generally
discredited. One of the witnesses, A. W. O. Totten, accused Hughes of de-
liberately starting a rumor for political effect. The "O'Bryen and O'Bradly"
affair pertains to John O'Brien and Orville Bradley, both of East Tennessee,
who were cited by Hugh L. White in his appearance before the Wise Com-
mittee as witnesses to other statements that Jackson was alleged to have
made. Others present at the time the statements were purported to have been
made published denials and, like Hughes, O'Brien and Bradley were largely
discredited. O'Brien quoted Jackson as saying that Adam Huntsman was on
the fence politically and that he did not know which way he would fall.
Bradley said that when he told Jackson of his preference for Hugh L. White
as the presidential nominee, Jackson had suggested, as a compromise, making
White the vice-presidential candidate. Jackson, of course, publicly denied
Bradley's statements.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir, 

Clarksville 17th Jany. [1838]\(^1\) 

I must beg of you to look into the Metropolis Bank for me. I 
read a notice to day that a Bill drawn by me on the 14th of December
1837 on Richd. M Johnson had been protested amounting to $3,327
& that I was looked to for payment &c.

I never heard of any such Bill in my life & was in New Orleans
at the date, never drew or endorsed or was in [any] manner con-

nect ed with such a Bill.

I enclose the protest. I also sent there for a payment a note on
Mr. Harrison for $500 an order on Col Boon for 800, to be deposited to
my credit when paid & they have been protested & formal notice
given me, as if I was to be made liable.\(^2\) I know the pressure of
business you have on hand but hope you can spare a few moments &
look into these things for me. I shall start to Nashville in pm boat.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. The year was correctly suggested by the Library of Congress.

2. Albert G. Harrison of Missouri and Ratliff Boon of Indiana were mem-
bers of the House of Representatives. Both Democrats, they were colleagues of Johnson when he was a member of that body. The nature of the misunderstanding at the bank has not been learned.

FROM CHARLES G. GREENE

Dear Sir

My document is all prepared and in the hands of the compositor; it will appear in the Post on Saturday or Monday, as a reply to the attacks of the Banner and other papers in Tennessee upon my paper. It will fill five or six columns, and afford you material enough to work upon for half a dozen campaigns. I shall show that Bell was not only received, entertained, and introduced by Hartford Convention federalists in Boston, but in every principal town which he visited. The principal value of this statement will consist in the conclusive evidence it will present on the points in question, by revising the sayings and doings of Webster, Davis, Saltonstall, and many other prominent enemies of the government and friends of Mr. Bell. I think that it will wake up old Tennessee, and dispel the illusion that has enabled many of her servants to betray her trusts with impunity for some years past.

I have written to Concord for copies of Gov. [Isaac] Hill's Speech, but as yet have received no answer. Should I receive any of them they shall be immediately forwarded to you. I shall send you a dozen or two copies of the Post containing the matter above referred to.

C. G. GREENE

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Charles G. Greene to Polk, January 10, 1838.
2. Daniel Webster, John Davis, and Leverett Saltonstall were prominent Whigs in Massachusetts. At this time, Webster and Davis were in the United States Senate. Davis had served in the House of Representatives and as governor of the state. Saltonstall had served in the state legislature, and a few months after this letter was written, he was elected to fill a vacancy in the United States House of Representatives, serving there 1838–43.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

In the course of the discussions which took place at the late extra session of Congress, the charge was made that the administration,
Correspondence of James K. Polk

under "the disguise of Sub-Treasuries," sought to establish a Treasury Bank, "founded upon the public revenues." Mr Bell among others made this insinuation, and in a reported speech published in pamphlet form, and which I presume was revised by himself, using the following language in reference to your opinions and views in reference to a Treasury Bank, viz: "I happen to know Mr Speaker, from a source entitled to the highest confidence, and I presume you Sir, know quite as well as myself, that the war commenced upon the Bank of the United States in 1829 by the late President, was entered upon with a determination, to establish a Bank upon its ruins, founded upon the revenue and credit of the Government. I happen to know that the election of a highly distinguished gentleman of the State of Tennessee, to the Senate of the United States, was urged by a high public functionary, upon the ground that he would be highly useful to him, in executing his plans, in relation to a new Bank. How long these original views of the late President continued to operate, I cannot undertake to state." This is the language used in the printed speech. As delivered the terms employed were stronger and more direct. As I was directly appealed to, they struck my attention, and I made a note of them at the time. Being in the chair, I was not permitted by the rules of the House to reply. I knew that I had no such knowledge as that which was imputed to me. I knew that your opinions against the constitutionality and expediency of a National Bank were publicly known before you were President.

When I saw you in October I mentioned the substance of Mr B's speech to you, and found, (what indeed I did not doubt before) that I had understood your views correctly. It is more than probable, that in the discussions upon the same subject which are to come up this winter, the same charges may be repeated. If so it will be proper to repel them, and my object in addressing [you] is [to] obtain your direct authority to do so, if in my judgment it should become necessary and proper to do so. I know how much you desire to be freed from all participation in any public controversy, and none of your friends will be more disposed, than I will be, to avoid any unnecessary introduction of your name into the party discussions in Congress. But if it is introduced by others, and erroneous opinions attributed to you, and improper charges made against you, it will be proper, and may be important to repel them.

JAMES K. POLK

N.B. I have preserved the original note, which I made of Mr Bell's remarks, taken down at the time he made them. They are much
stronger than the language employed in the printed speech. Your answer will not be used, unless it shall be deemed to the maintenance of truth that it should be. Mr B. might well be asked, how it happened if he had such knowledge, in 1829, as he now says he had, that by his votes he supported the executive measures in relation to the Bank of the U. States. He might well be asked, why he now raises up the spectre of a Treasury Bank, in order that he may oppose such Bank, when he knows that neither the administration, nor its friends have brought forward any proposition for such a Bank, but on the contrary disclaim such intention.2

J. K. P.

Presumably addressed to the Hermitage, but no envelope has been found. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

1. In 1829, when John H. Eaton resigned from the Senate to take a cabinet post, Jackson favored Felix Grundy as his successor in the Senate.

2. Below the postscript, Jackson scrawled: "Col J. K. Polk's 18th January 1838 extract of Mr Bells speech to be preserved. Answd. His statement given the positive contradiction & Col Polk requested to make it part of his speech in reply &c."

FROM RICHARD WARNER

Dear Sir

Nashville 21st January 1838

Inclosed you will receive a power of attorney from James M. Chilton a private in my Volunteer company under Major General Gains's last requisition.1 When my company was paid Mr Chilton was absent from the state and had not authorized any person to draw his money. Each private drew [ . . . ]2 (if I recollect correctly). Your attention to the above to bring the victory home with you will much oblige Mr. Chilton, one of your constituents.

The Genl. Assembly have agreed to adjourn on the 25th Inst. I should not however be disappointed3 if we do not adjourn before the 29th. The Senate have passed a preamble and resolutions disapproving the sub-treasury system.4 They are made the order for Tuesday night. The Whigs can easily carry them through the house. The friends of the Administration will meet the preamble & resolutions and offer such amendments as they consider right and proper. If the Whigs will meet and vote like men on the proposed amendments we will vote on the preamble & resolutions but if they (the Whigs) unmanly lay our amendments on the table without a direct vote of the house I think the
friends of the Administration will have nerve sufficient to leave the Whigs without an occasion to enjoy their tyrannical glory.¹

Please excuse this scribble. I remain with unshaken confidence, your personal and political friend.

RICHARD WARNER

Addressed to Washington.

1. James M. Chilton has not been otherwise identified. Edmund Pendleton Gaines had called for troops during the Seminole War. Tennessee troops were mustered in, but then almost immediately discharged.

2. At this point, poor handwriting and letters struck out and written over have made perhaps two words illegible.

3. Disappointed is used here in the sense of surprised.

4. This refers to the preamble and resolutions introduced by Nicholas H. Darnell on November 28, 1837. See Elihu C. Crisp to Polk, December 20, 1837.

5. The action described could be accomplished by "friends of the Administration" absenting themselves and preventing attendance of a quorum.

FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother

I have delayed answering your letters of the 14th and 15th Inst. until I should hear the final decision of the faculty. The check for two hundred dollars I received enclosed in one of the letters.

The decision of the faculty I received through the President this morning. It was follows: Suspension until August. In August our commencement comes on. I am permitted to receive my degree with the Class, provided I stand a satisfactory examination. This punishment is somewhat severer than I or my Class anticipated. The laws of this Institution require that I should leave New Haven in 24 hours, but owing to the necessity of settling a part of my expenses here, they have permitted me to remain until I receive a remittance from you. I should like therefore, if possible to receive from you about three or two hundred dollars more. If it is decidedly inconvenient to remit this sum, I can satisfy my creditors, by a promise to send it on when I arrive at home. This however I would dislike very much to do, owing to the severity with which they talk of any one who leaves bills unpaid. I have not time now to give you the particulars of my trial. I can satisfy you or any other reasonable man that injustice has been shown me. Had they believed me or my witnesses the issue would have been far different.

SAML. W. POLK
January 23, 1838

Addressed to Washington.
1. This part of the date was supplied from the postmark.
2. These letters have not been found.

FROM JESSE F. CLEVELAND

Sir

This morning the Sergeant at Arms delivered me a check on the Bank of the Metropolis for six hundred dollars in pay for the mileage due me as a member of the 25th Congress. Also a check on the same bank for two hundred and fifty dollars in part pay for the per diem due me. I called on the officers of the bank and presented them for payment, and demanded the Specie for the six hundred dollar check due me for mileage. They positively refused, and said they would give me Treasury notes. I left the bank and placed the checks in the hands of a Broker of this city, who immediately went to the bank and reed. two thirds in Gold, and the remainder in Treasury notes. I would be pleased to learn from you whether the bank acted with authority in its treatment to me, and if this is the mode adopted by the Secretary of the Treasury, for the payment of the members of Congress. If it is, I shall certainly never approach the Bank of the Metropolis again but those who have treated me with more justice & courtesy,

JESSE F. CLEVELAND

Addressed to the House of Representatives and delivered by hand.
1. Jesse F. Cleveland was a Democrat who represented Georgia in the House of Representatives for two terms, 1835–39.
2. Roderick Dorsey.
3. See George Thomas to Polk, January 24, 1838, for an explanation of the bank's action.

FROM CHARLES G. GREENE

Dear Sir:

At length I have finished my task. The delay in its execution requires some explanation to relieve me from the suspicion of dilatoriness. In order to show that Mr. B[ell] was received in Massachusetts, throughout the State, by Hartford Convention federalists, it was necessary to make journeys to Salem and Worcester to procure the requisite evidence. In procuring the authentic facts which I have produced, I found much trouble but, aware of the importance of my undertaking, I was determined to accomplish it satisfactorily, if pos-
Correspondence of James K. Polk

sible, and persevered through all obstacles. The result is before you, and I merely wish to know if it realises your expectations, or is equal to what I promised?

The stoppage of the Commonwealth bank here has produced considerable excitement amongst us, and will afford an opportunity for misrepresenting some of the best friends of the party here; but I hope the government will not be hasty in crediting the rumors that will meet its ears. Three or four individuals, who managed the Institution entirely, deserve the severest reprobation, but even their immediate relatives, friends, and associates, were as ignorant of their conduct as yourself, and to hold them at all responsible for the sins of men in whom they have been more deceived than any one else, is unjust. After all, I suspect that the Commonwealth bank is in as good a condition as some half dozen other banks here, and has been as well managed, but this is no apology for that Institution. We wash our hands clear of it, admit its errors, and adduce its conduct as evidence of the strongest character in favor of adopting the sub-treasury scheme, the success of which every candid man must now acknowledge is of vital importance to the interests of the nation. . . .

CHS. G. GREENE

Addressed to Washington and marked "Confidential."

1. The Commonwealth Bank of Boston failed in January 1838, and later in that year the state legislature repealed its charter. The largest failure among Boston banks to that time, it was alarming to Democrats for several reasons. Roger B. Taney had designated the bank as a depository of federal funds after the Bank of the United States was destroyed. Moreover, it was run by David Henshaw, the Democratic boss of Massachusetts, who helped to formulate Jacksonian financial policies.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Sir, [Nashville] 24th January 1838

I have submitted to the committee an address which we shall endeavor to have printed by Saturday next. Its object is to prove the identity of the Federal & Republican parties throughout our political existence. Judge [Joseph] Hopkinson's speech is of some service in this respect, and has been used as an important link in stripping Mr. Bell of his mask. As soon as the address is published I shall send you a copy. All that I can say of it is that it is as good as we can make it without books or journals.
January 24, 1838

Your friends in the Legislature will have kept me advised of what is done there. The instruction of our Senators on the subtreasury subject must of course pass the House constituted as it is of Federalists & Bank men. I am pleased for my own part that they have determined to put on record so strong a proof of their principles.

After the address is printed I shall have some time to assist the Union, but nothing can aid us so much as a strong writer steadily at his post, acquainted with our political history, and sagacious enough to discern the true points in our controversy with the Federal party.

If we had such a paper as the Globe in Nashville, Tennessee would soon be free from Federal shackles.

The Genl. is still in weak health, but will weather the winter and live I hope many years; long enough at least to see the principles of the administration confirmed by the reelection of Mr. Van Buren.

I did not write you by the express mail, because the committee could not be got together and I had in truth nothing to say.

My kind regards to Mrs. Polk.

A. J. Donelson

Addressed to Washington and marked “Private.”

1. The point of origin was taken from the postmark.

2. On Saturday, January 27, 1838, the Nashville Union carried an address to the people of Tennessee from the “Republican General Committee of Davidson County.” The address was over the signature of Felix Robertson and consisted of almost nine full columns. It was devoted largely to the history of political parties in the United States prior to this date.

3. See Polk to Donelson, January 3, 1838.

FROM GEORGE THOMAS

Sir Bank of the Metropolis 24 Jany 1838

The letter of the Hon. J. F. Cleveland addressed to you on the 23rd inst, which you shew me this morning, details the facts therein treated of precisely as they were represented to me by the Teller of the Bank.

Explanation is due to Mr. Cleveland which I promptly & frankly make, & hope it will be satisfactory. The word travel was not observed on the ck, and if it had been, the teller wd. not have understood it, it being the first ck thus marked under the new arrangement with the Treasury Department. As soon as the ck was brought to me by the Broker, it was paid ½ in Coin & ½ in Treasury notes. You are aware
that payments now made by the Bank to members of Congress, except for travel, are to be made in Treasury notes if required.

GEO. THOMAS

Addressed to the House of Representatives and delivered by hand.
1. George Thomas was cashier of the Bank of the Metropolis.
2. See Jesse F. Cleveland to Polk, January 23, 1838.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir, Nashville Jany 25, 1838

I have been here several days endeavoring to bring my mail business to a close with my partners. This I have not quite accomplished. I received on yesterday a letter by express mail from Mr. Harris1 informing me that the orders I forwarded him would not be paid until the acknowledgements for the 4th Quarter are returned. As no blanks have been forwarded & no collections made, no acknowledgement can be returned. To remedy the deficiency which I see will occur I sent to-day by express mail to Mr. Harris, a note for $500 on the branch of the Alabama Bank at Mobile. The last quotations I have seen this money was $51\frac{1}{2}$ to $6$ per cent dis. in price and is the cheapest remittance I could have made. I was unable to find any eastern checks of suitable size. I hope it will go safe and very nearly cover the payment I wish to make.

In politics there is not much that is new. Car[r]oll is willing to run for Governor, and this in my opinion will be settled upon. I think it is desired here that you should be taken up for the V.P., and it seems to be necessary that you should again run for Congress. Nicholson says he wishes it to be certain that you will run the next time that he would individually prefer it so. He will remain in the district, and I think it best that you should commit yourself positively in no way until you return home.

The Whigs are becoming more bold. They are following up Mr. Bell’s Boston movements. The scene on Tuesday night in the House of Representatives was farcical, if not outrageous. It had been determined that Grove’s resolutions² should be adopted without alteration or amendment. They would vote upon nothing, but their own preamble & resolutions. Every proposition was voted to the table, and the previous question forced upon our friends without giving them an opportunity to speak upon the main proposition. They were passed on Tuesday night. The vote 36 to 12, not a quorum. On the next morning it was moved that three other Whig members have leave to vote, which after
January 27 1838

much squabbling was granted. So they regard the administration as rebuked by the General Assembly of Tennessee and Mr. Grundy instructed to vote against the Sub-Treasury Bill. I think it doubtful whether Mr. Grundy is fairly instructed or not. As his vote can be done without perhaps the safest course is for him to vote against the Sub Treasury Bill and say that he does so contrary to his own convictions, in obedience to the instructions of the Legislature of Tennessee. This would be better for us than either his resignation, or a question as to whether it is a fair instruction or not. But he must determine what is his correct course. I think this affair has injured the Whig party very much. It may be that my hopes deceive me. It is now war to the knife on all sides. I do hope & believe the people will have intelligence enough to see the true issue. The Whigs will go for Henry Clay the U S. Bank, and a full amalgamation with the old Federal party.

[The] new editor of the Union I think is a failure. Not so good as Mr. Bradford. The main cause of the ascendancy which they have over us, is the defect in the press on our side. How is this to be remedied?

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Adlai O. Harris, brother-in-law of Walker and Polk, was the partner of Madison Caruthers in a commission business operating chiefly in New Orleans. He had resided primarily in that city since the death of his wife in 1836. See Silas M. Caldwell to Polk, May 4, 1837.

2. On January 6, 1838, William B. Grove, a Whig from Haywood County, introduced resolutions to instruct Tennessee's United States senators to oppose the subtreasury plan being recommended by President Van Buren. The resolutions passed on January 23, 1838, although some members present and opposing the resolutions refused to vote, hoping to prevent a quorum.

3. Joshua Cunningham.

FROM JOHN A. THOMAS

Dear Sir

West Point N.Y. Jan. 27th 1838

I have learned from the newspapers that two projects are now before Congress for the increase of the Army. If they have been printed & it be convenient, I would thank you to send me a copy.

It must be evident to all who have looked into the subject, that the dignity, honour & interest of the country demand the increase recommended, as Mr. Van Buren truly says, on the score of “superior efficiency & greater economy.”

The history of the Florida war fully demonstrates the truth of this
assertion; and it moreover shows that the citizen soldiers are not to be relied on to fight Indians.

It is much to be regretted too, that this fact has not long ago been pressed upon the consideration of Congress, and it doubtless would have been done, if the Regular officers had represented the militia in their true light. This they have uniformly forborne to do, sometimes from a mistaken policy and sometimes from want of moral courage. The result has been vastly prejudicial to the interests of the Army, conveying a false impression to Congress and the Country. It is time now to cease from working out our own ruin, & to tell the truth about the matter, which I hope Col. Taylor will do in his official account of the late disastrous engagement in Florida. I saw yesterday a letter from an officer who was in the fight. He writes as follows: "Our citizen soldiers (the Missouri Volunteers) behaved as they always do, & ran out of danger so soon as the action commenced. Poor Col. Gentry a brave man, fell mortally wounded, & not enough of his men remained around him to carry him off the field. He was carried off by men from the 6th Infantry." Who would place his life much less his reputation in the power of such men. The volunteers have uniformly acted in a similar manner.

All that Mr. Bell and his coadjutors say about "patronage" in opposition to the army is groundless. If the Administration desired patronage they would keep things as they are, which now afford double the patronage that would be given by the proposed measure.

Volunteers may be politicians but Regular Soldiers may not, and have no right to be. The President should strike every officer from the Army List who engages in politics. Our aim should be the honour & welfare of the country and with a respectable force, and our "chivalrous Secretary" to direct, we may indulge the reasonable hope of achieving it. And we think the Secretary's measures are entitled to consideration before Mr. Benton's.

JOHN A. THOMAS

P.S. We have no particular choice in the Bills, but shall be happy, if either should become a law.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri was the sponsor of a measure that would allow the army to take in volunteers from the western states generally. Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett advocated that the regular army be doubled in size.

2. Col. Zachary Taylor achieved an important victory over the Indians at Lake Okeechobee on December 25, 1837. For his service, he was brevetted
brigadier general, and in May 1838 he took over command from Gen. Thomas S. Jesup.

3. Richard Gentry, who commanded the Missouri troops, had been Senator Benton’s choice for the command position.


FROM SAMUEL W. POLK

Dear Brother

Yale College Jany 28th, 38

Your letter of the 25th containing a check on the Manhattan Bank for two hundred and fifty dollars, was received on yesterday. Your other letter of advice, as to where I should spend the time of my suspension was also received. I have read it over carefully, but cannot agree with you entirely. I did wish to go home and spend the greater part of the time, from now until August. You seem however to be of a very different opinion. It is not my wish to act contrary to your desires, in any case whatever, knowing full well the right, as my Guardian, you have over me. About remaining here, either at another Institution or under a private Instructor, I must say that I think entirely unnecessary, for several reasons. 1st, The studies which I will have to prosecute are all English, Paley’s Philosophy, 2 Polit. Economy &c, not requiring an instructor to be understood. These I could study equally as well by myself as under a private Tutor. 2d, The expense would be much greater than it would be were I to remain here in College. It would be from ten to twelve dollars a week, a much greater sum than I should be willing to lay out, for such a purpose. It would be spending money, without the least advantage to myself. Did I not know how easy the studies were I would not for a moment, oppose your wish for me to remain here. But knowing them to be easy requiring not over an hours study a day, I cannot consent to employ a Tutor. I will only loose by leaving here the lectures on Geology. It is hardly necessary to go to another Institution to hear these (not embracing over ten or twelve).

Knowing that you will agree with me, when I can have a personal talk with you, I have determined to leave here for Washington in three or four days.

I received Sister Sarah's letter in which she seems to think it inadvisable to go home. Opposed by both of you, I of course will not go home, but will prefer staying in Washington. You I am almost confident will think it impossible to do any studying there. I know the amount of study which I must do, and hope at least if I find it impossible to do it at Washington, that I will have sense enough to leave
and go to some other place where I can study the requisite amount. Two hours a day will be over sufficient to prepare me for the August examination. If I cannot be permitted to go home the most profitable way of spending my time, will be, I'm sure, to remain at Washington prosecute my studies there and enjoy the debates. We can agree I hope when I see you.

SAMUEL W. POLK

P.S. I shall leave New Haven as soon as I can settle my bills. You may expect me about Saturday.

S. W. POLK

Addressed to Washington.

1. Neither letter from Polk has been found.
2. William Paley was the author of several prominent books, including *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, which went through several editions and seems to have been used as a textbook at Yale at this time.

FROM MOSES WOOD

Jackson. January 28, 1838

Moses Wood, the acting postmaster of Jackson, Tennessee, asks Polk's support for the request for mail routes from Jackson westward to Ashport and eastward to Columbia. He thinks that the Democrats are gaining in his region and that the establishment of the new mail lines would help them immensely.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Ashport was on the Mississippi River in Lauderdale County.

FROM DANIEL KENNEY TO JAMES K. POLK AND FELIX GRUNDY

Gent. Jonesborough Tennessee January 29, 1838

After so long a time I have now written you. The reason of my delay has been on account of my not having recd. a letter from Mr. Heiskel, to whom I had written not long after I reached home. I wrote to Mr Heiskel upon the subject of his establishing a press at Knoxville and publishing a Newspaper in support of the present Administration; related to him in my letter the information I had gotten whilst at the City of his intention of doing so. I gave the authority of Mr. Turney for my addressing him on the subject. So soon as I receive his letter I will enclose it to you. I jud[g]e Mr. Heiskel is not at home.
The political affairs of our State are to say the least encouraging. The dawn of better and brighter days seem to be all around. I do believe the scales are falling from the eyes of many of our friends in Tennessee. They can not understand why it is, that a Whig National Convention is now talked of by those political drillers in our State who but a little upwards of a year since, denounced all conventions of the people as dictation by a few over the many, and damnation to all. This pill cannot be swallowed in Tennessee with heads up, tho’ never sugared so stoutly as by the great Hal himself. The candid and discerning opposition here say that Clay cannot get Ten. I have no doubt of this truth tho’ it came from a Whig. The principles of Republican Ten. which have stood firm for the last forty years, cannot now be torn up by the roots, by a set of men whose principles are at war with each others and against the very genius of our government, and against the people themselves. No! Sir! This can never be. Gallant and Republicanly distinguished Ten. both in peace and in arms can never meanly stoop to Federal power, tho’ its mighty arm should reach from Nashville to Boston.

It is now understood here that Henry Clay is to be the candidate against Mr. Van Buren, but who is to be run as a candidate for the Vice Presidency on the Clay ticket is not yet known. Who is that to be? Who will Judge White go for? Can he go for Clay? The divorce of bank and state as fast as the people understand it is gaining ground in this section. Leave not a stone unturned to effect the passage of this bill. The United States Bank has no advocates here among the New Whigs, but the old Adams Federalists want nothing but Biddle’s money. They say they like it better than gold & silver. Be it so, I envy not their choice.

You no doubt have seen the increase of banking capital in our state by our legislature. This I will put down at least for a while a cry for Biddle’s Bank.

Mr. Van Buren’s Message stands high with the people here, but our kind Representative Genl [William B.] Carter has sent but few to this county. Would, or would not it be well for the Editors of the Globe to score the Ten. delegation for derilection of duty to the people, but especially Carter.

I think it would do good, and if the war upon them were commenced there we will keep it up here. A pretty story indeed that these apostles of Jefferson (for such Carter professes to be) are afraid to let the people see and know the doctrines upon which their own government is to be [administered?]. But how important it will be after a while when these gentry want to get back to Congress that the people
should have the true light. Hence from one to two thousand of their 
precious circulars will be sent to every county in their district to 
"enlighten every man that cometh into the world." Then in their Holy 
Political Oracles Mr Van Buren and his Messages will be denounced 
in long and measured terms as destructive to the peace and happiness 
of the people, and endangering the integrity and permanancy of the 
Union itself, tho their kind and fair souls had not so much as sent 
fifty of his Messages to two thousand voters. What a specimen of 
Whig honesty!! The people called upon to condemn what they never 
saw. This may do in other states but wont do in Ten. depend upon it.

I have read several documents from Judge Grundy, also a letter 
a few days since for which I return my thanks. My respects to Mc-
Lelland [sic], and H. L. Turney. Duncan's speech was fine indeed; 
done good here. Tell McLellan not to be uneasy about Gifford.8 We will 
keep all things in blast here. You will here from me soon again in this 
way.4

Danl. Kenney

Addressed to Washington. Inconsistency in punctuation and capitalization has induced the editors to make, in those areas, more than the normal modifications on the manuscript to render it understandable.

1. Frederick S. Heiskell had been connected with the Knoxville Register for more than twenty years. He had been a Jackson man, but in 1836 he supported Hugh L. White. After he ended his connection with the Register in 1837, the Jacksonians hoped for his return to their ranks.

2. "Prince Hal" was a frequently used nickname for Henry Clay.

3. Lawson Gifford was publisher of the Jonesboro Tennessee Sentinel. For a possible reason why McClellan might be uneasy about Gifford, see Gifford to Polk, February 6, 1838.

4. Under separate cover, Kenney forwarded on the same day the names and addresses of 177 voters from Greene County. In an accompanying note, he asked whether Richard M. Johnson would again be the party's choice for vice-president. Enclosed in the envelope was a second list of 118 Greene County residents, on which Polk wrote, "List forwarded by Mr. Hale of Greenville, Tenn." On the envelope, Polk noted that it contained "Mr. Hale's List."

FROM AARON FINCH¹

Indianapolis, Indiana. January 30, 1838

Finch says that he left Tennessee when young and has never met Polk, but that they are of the same political faith. He says that, locally, patronage
has fallen to men who are not loyal to the Democratic party and urges appointment of a true Democrat to take over the land office at Crawfordsville.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Finch was a lawyer who practiced in Tippecanoe, Carroll, and Clinton counties in Indiana. At this time he was a member of the Indiana legislature.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

Dr. Sir, Hermitage February 1st. 1838

Your letter of the 18th. ult. is before me. I sincerely thank you for the extracts, it contains of the speech, to which you allude, delivered by Mr. Bell at the late extra session of Congress.1 As I had never seen that speech and probably never should have heard of it, I am entirely indebted to you for the opportunity of exposing the groundlessness of the Statements on which Mr. Bell has thought proper to impeach the sincerity and consistency of my conduct in regard to the U S Bank. These statements are as follows

"I happen to know, Mr. Speaker, from a source entitled to the highest confidence, and I presume you, Sir, know quite as well as myself, that the war commenced upon the Bank of the U States in 1829 by the late President was entered upon with a determination to establish a Bank upon its ruins, founded upon the revenue and credit of the Government. I happen to know that the election of a highly distinguished gentleman of the State of Tennessee,2 to the Senate of the U. States was urged upon the ground that he would be highly useful to him in executing his plans in relation to a new Bank. How long these original views of the late President continued to operate, I cannot undertake to state."

The assertion that my opposition to the late Bank was entered upon with the determination to establish upon its ruins another Bank, based on the credit and revenue of the Government, is warranted by nothing that ever eminated from me: and equally unfounded & false is the other assertion connected with it, if the idea is intended to be conveyed that I urged the election of a distinguished gentleman of Tennessee to the Senate of the U. States with the view of obtaining his aid in the establishment of such a Bank. No one better knows than Mr. Bell what were the views I entertained previous to my election to the Presidency of the powers of the General Government, over the subject of Banking; and no one ought to know more certainly than he does that these views were precisely those, which were communicated to Congress in my veto of the bill rechartering that Bank.
I say that Mr. Bell cannot be under any mistake on this subject for he cannot have forgotten how reluctant I was to confide in the protestations often made to me through his friends at Nashville of his willingness to cooperate with me in carrying out those views. My convictions, freely and frequently expressed to many friends that will now verify them, were, that Congress had no power to charter the late Bank of the United States—that the existence of such an institution was incompatible with the due execution of the general provisions of the constitution which secure to the people a metallic and uniform currency and an equality in the burdens of taxation, and was calculated in many other respects to weaken the structure of the Federal system:—and that Congress having full power to lay taxes and collect the revenue necessary to the wants of the Government, and having also as full power to provide for the safekeeping and disbursement of this revenue, violated its duty in entrusting the execution of this power to corporations constituted as the Bank of the U States was, irresponsible to the Government and hostile from its very nature to all other interests but that which concerned its ability to make money for those who owned its stock and controlled its operations. Now I assert without the fear of contradiction from any source that these were known to be my general views before my election to the Presidency, in respect to the unconstitutionality and inexpediency of a U S Bank; and that no one can with truth say I have at any time, or on any occasion, countenanced any policy or measure not consistent with them. I am aware that my suggestions to Congress in the messages of 1829 and 1830 are sometimes referred to as evidence of a willingness on my part to establish such a Bank as the one described by Mr Bell: but I am persuaded that no candid mind can examine these suggestions and not see that such an inference from them is wholly gratuitous, if not malicious. In those suggestions, it is true, that I used the term Bank as the designation of the fiscal agency, which it was thought practicable to organize as a substitute for the U S Bank, but the slightest attention to the details which accompanied them will shew, that nothing was more foreign to my purpose than to connect with such an agency the functions of Banking as generally understood in this country. Speaking of such an agency my language was that "not being a corporate body, having no stockholders, debtors or property, and but few officers, it would not be obnoxious to the constitutional objections which are urged against the present Bank, and having no means to operate on the hopes, fears, or interests of large masses of the community, it would be shorn of the influence which makes that Bank formidable." It would be just as reasonable to say that the present
administration, in its support of the bill recently introduced by Mr Wright in the Senate, designs to build a revenue Bank on the ruins of the late Bank of the U States, as to infer that such was the design of my opposition to the same Bank because I suggested the practicability of managing the fiscal concerns of the Government on principles similar to those contained in his bill.

Denying thus generally the statements made by Mr. Bell may I not express my surprise, even if they were true, that he should at this late date attempt to extract from them materials to injure my character. At that period and down to the nomination of Judge White for the Presidency it is known that he professed to be friendly to me and to the measures of my administration. Did he not urge the support of Judge White on the ground that he could be relied upon much more than Mr. Van Buren to maintain and carry out the general principles of my administration, amongst which were the position I occupied on the Bank question? If there was any thing therefore unworthy of my character as Chief Magistrate in the Senatorial election to which he refers, or if this spectre of a Treasury Bank had then really been visible to him, why was he so anxious to be known as cooperating with me? Or may it not be asked with still more emphasis why it is that he is still annoyed by this spectre, when it is notorious that neither the administration nor any of its friends have brought forward, or intend to bring forward any such measure.

The truth is, Sir, these allegations against me shew that it is quite a different spectre from that of a Treasury Bank which haunts Mr. Bell. It is his own inconstancy and morbid apetite for slander.

I need only add in reference to the appeal which he makes to your knowledge of the facts stated in these extracts, that I hope you will answer it. I have no secrets or private correspondence which may not be unfolded, if they are deemed of any importance in shedding light upon conduct or measures of mine, deemed worthy of the public scrutiny. All that I desire is truth and justice. This I cannot expect from Mr. Bell.

ANDREW JACKSON

Addressed to Washington. This copy is found in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. Written in Andrew Jackson Donelson's hand and interlined by Andrew Jackson, it is a signed draft of the letter sent. Also in the Jackson Papers is a second copy of this letter, written in the handwriting of Polk and marked, "Copy of Letter from Genl. A. Jackson to J. K. Polk."

On the draft signed by Jackson there appeared the following in Jackson's
handwriting: "Col. J. K. Polks letter of the 18th of January 1838, and copy of my reply 1st February 1838—extract of Mr. Bells Slander Speach of extra Session of Congress in 1837. To be kept for the historian & an evidence of Mr. Bells faculty at Slander. A. J."

Below the signature of the copy in Polk's handwriting the following appeared: "P.S. This reply to Mr. Bell's slander you will please use in any way your judgment may direct, to bring my response before Congress. I wish your reply to his appeal to your knowledge, in the extracts sent me, to be made when this letter is made known to the House."
1. This speech was delivered on October 7, 1837.
2. This is a reference to Felix Grundy, whose election to the Senate was approved by Jackson.
3. This entire paragraph was underlined in both copies of the letter.
4. This quotation was underlined in both copies of the letter.
5. Silas Wright Jr. was a prominent New York lawyer. He served as a Democrat in the United States House of Representatives, 1827–29, resigning before the end of his term. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1833 and served until 1844.

TO JAMES L. EDWARDS

Sir

Washington City Feby 2nd. 1838

Enclosed I hand you the papers in the case of the Heirs of Curtis Ivy¹ and desire to be informed whether their claim is embraced under the provisions of the commutation act of 1828 or any subsequent law. It appears from Mr Hagner's letter herewith sent to you,² that Curtis Ivey was a Lieutenant in the N. Carolina line at the close of the Revolutionary war.

When the claim is examined I wish you to inform me of your decision; and to return to me the letters of the Secretary of War, and from the Bounty Land office, and the Third Auditor, which I send with the other papers, to facilitate your examination.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found. This letter is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
1. See Granville S. Crockett to Polk, November 25, 1837.
2. This letter has not been found.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

My dear Sir,

Hermitage February 2nd 1838

Your letter of the 18th ultimo came duly to hand, and on yesterday I answered it, which you will receive by the mail that conveys this.
February 2 1838

My desire is, that you take an occasion to bring it before the House & have it made part of your speech by which the calumny of Mr Bell may receive my reply thro the same channel that his slanders have been promulgated. If no opportunity offers for you to reply to him, I would suggest that you make a communication thro the Globe, making my letter the subject, and adding your reply to Mr. Bells appeal to you in the extracts sent me. This will have a good effect here, in exposing his disregard for truth. You will see that Hughes slander,¹ which was a concerted plan between him and some of the Editors of the Republican Banner, has been traced to him & when Totten came to Nashville he fled, it is said, leaving his papers & business unfinished, as Col Johnston did also.² The statement of Mr Barker⁸ plainly shows, that Hughes told him, that he heard me in presence of many make this statement. I will if I live place Mr Bell in the same predicament.

I see from the proceedings of Congress that it is intended to make another judicial district of the Western District of Tennessee and give to them the benefit of the United States court. Should this be carried out, the appointment of a good & true man for Marshall should be attended to. I now take the liberty to say to you that Robert J. Chester¹⁴ is a good & true man, capable & worthy, and I have no doubt, if the District is made that no better or safer appointment could be made & that in these days of political apostasy the Executive ought to be carefully to select men good & true that would sustain him in a due execution of the laws, and marshals have great influence & opportunity to aid much, or to poison the minds of the common people, and of the Bell papers. I beg you to present this to Mr Van Buren, and if your oppinion accords with mine to say so to Mr Van Buren, and that Mr. Chester is the proper man to fill that appointment.

I have to add a little business of my own, that has given me a little pain and mortification. You will find from a note from Mr. Cazenove¹¹ of Alexandria which I now enclose that he has an account of $8.48 cents (eight forty Eight) against me for storage & shipment of some articles. I have the Specie and did intend to have sent it on by you when last here. Your not calling disappointed me in this, and I have thro Andrew⁸ been trying to get a ten dollar Virginia note to remit Mr Cazenove, without effect, & altho I know your heavy expense, I have to ask you, if convenient, to pay Mr Cazenove the $8.50 for me & I will pay to any one to whom you will name, the amount here in Specie. If convenient for you to pay this for me, please take Mr Cazenoves receipt for the same. It is the only debt I owe in the District, and did not know that I owed this until the receipt of the note from Mr Casenove.
With my kind regards to Mrs. Poke in which Sarah\(^7\) & Andrew unite. . . .

Andrew Jackson

Addressed to Washington and marked “Private.”

1. For details of Archelaus M. Hughes’s anonymous charges against Andrew Jackson, see John W. Childress to Polk, January 14, 1838, footnote 3.

2. William H. Johnson, a state senator from Henry County, was one of the two witnesses to the exchange between Hughes and Jackson. Archibald W. O. Totten, a lawyer and later a member of the state supreme court, was the other.

3. George Barker, formerly a resident of Carroll County, was on a visit from Missouri when the Hughes affair was at its peak. His statement about Hughes carried weight in the argument and showed that Hughes had modified his original story.

4. Chester, a friend of Jackson, had married a niece of Rachel Jackson. After moving from Carthage to Jackson, Chester was successful in business. He was postmaster at Jackson, 1825–33, and received the appointment mentioned here. Chester County was named for him.

5. Anthony C. Cazenove was a merchant and importer who traded in a wide variety of commodities. On March 6, 1838, Cazenove acknowledged receipt of $8.50 from Polk in payment of this bill.

6. Andrew Jackson Jr., adopted son of the former President.

7. Sarah York Jackson, wife of Andrew Jackson Jr.

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL JR.\(^1\)

Sir Maury Ct Ten Garland\(^2\) Feb 3rd 1838

Capt Jas. Armstrong\(^3\) wishes to know whether you have collectd the money that was due the estate of Wm Stubbins\(^4\) for a horse & equipage that was transfered to the United States service. He, (Armstrong) says he has written to you on the subject but has not received any answer from you\(^5\) & got me to drop a few lines to you on the subject as you might in the bustle of business neglect to have a law passed for the benefit of those who lost there horses or transfer them to the general government, as was the case with Stubbins who died on his way home from Florida. As Armstrong administered at the estate of Stubbins & their are some debt pressing him he is anxious to know whether their will be any chance to procure the value of his horse or not. You will pleas apprise me or him of the situation.

I wish you (if it is not too mutch trouble) to bring me $500 in gold when you return home as I have promised to furnish Mother\(^6\) with that amount by the 1st Sept. next. She will be in [from?] Missouri at
that time. She wishes me to furnish her in that amount of gold. I think it doubtfull whether I can unless the Banks resume Specie payment. Your compliance will mutch oblige yours &c.

ROBT CAMPBELL JNR.

All well.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Robert Campbell was a son of Ezekiel Polk's oldest daughter, Matilda Golden, who had married John Campbell in 1792. Robert Campbell was born in 1797; the Junior was attached to his name to distinguish between him and his uncle of the same name.

2. Garland seems to have been the name given to John Campbell's home in the Carter's Creek settlement. A post office was established there in 1837, with Robert Campbell Jr. as postmaster. The post office lasted only until 1839, but Campbell continued to head his letters with that name.

3. This was James L. Armstrong, son of James Armstrong, a Revolutionary War veteran who was one of the original settlers in the Zion Church neighborhood. The elder James Armstrong had died in 1837.

4. William Stubbins, a private in the Tennessee Mounted Brigade in the Seminole War, died at St. Augustine, Florida, on November 22, 1836.

5. On the envelope for this letter, Polk noted on February 24, 1838, that he had written to Capt. James L. Armstrong a few days before.

6. Polk's elderly aunt seems to have been away on a visit with relatives in Missouri.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dear Sir

Washington City Feby 4th 1838

I have received your letter of the 24th ultimo. We look with anxiety for the forth-coming address of your committee. I am satisfied with the use which you propose to make of Judge Hopkinson's Federal Speech. My only desire is that it should be given to the public in the most effective form. Could it do any harm to publish it in both forms: first as an editorial as I suggested, and second as a part of your address. Sometimes a short editorial paragraph is read and produces an effect, which the same matter incorporated into a long essay fails to do. I enclosed to you some days ago, the Boston Post containing a long, but well written expose of Mr Bell and his Federal associates in New England and suggested to you, that it should not only be re-published in the Union, but might be a valuable part of an extra, in pamphlet form, to be extensively circulated under the direction of your committee.

I see the Banner is publishing a series of editorials, bearing upon
their face as I think evidence that they were not written at Nashville but elsewhere, defending Mr. Bell, and insisting that he is a good Jeffersonian Democrat. They ought not to go unanswered. You can be at no loss for the proper answer. Facts are all that it will be necessary to state. Judging Mr. B. from his votes and acts for the last two years, you might as well doubt, that Caleb Cushing, Horace Everett, John Quincy Adams or Daniel Webster, were Federalists as that he was one. Noscitur a sociis, is the only rule by which he can be judged. He is found in their camp voting with them, speaking with them, and feeling with them. The sophistry and false statement of facts in the Banner should be exposed.

Turney tells me that the Central Gazette, (the Democratic paper) at McMinnville will be compelled to stop or go into the hands of the opposition soon unless the proprietors can obtain a loan of a small sum, for a period of twelve months. He says the proprietors will give good security, and promptly repay at the end of that time. This is a proper subject for the consideration of your committee. Genl. Armstrong has I understand been written to, on the subject. It is a matter of such importance in the Mountain District, to have the Gazette sustained, as it is the only paper in that District. Will you see Genl A. on the subject.

I send you by this mail the Baltimore Republican of yesterday, containing an article on the subject of the Mississippi election which Mr Claiborne desires to have published in the Union as soon as it can be conveniently done. The vote on admitting Prentiss & Word to seats in the House, will be a very close one. Indeed it is thought by some that it may be divided by the Speakers vote, and from what I can learn I think this probable, especially if two of our sick members, who would if present vote against Prentiss and Word are unable to be brought to the House. I have never anticipated more feeling or greater exertions on any question before Congress, than the Mississippi election produces. We will probably decide the question on tomorrow. Should the election be sent back to the people, we have no doubt of the return of Claiborne & Gholson.

Mr. Grundy has prepared a letter in reply to the members of the Legislature who voted to instruct him upon the subject of the sub-Treasury. It will be sent off as soon as the instructions reach him, in an authentic form. Make my kind respects to the General.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. See Donelson to Polk, January 24, 1838.
2. See Polk to Donelson, January 3, 1838.
3. Caleb Cushing and Horace Everett were Whig members of the House of Representatives from Massachusetts and Vermont, respectively. Cushing served in the House, 1835–43, but, during the Tyler administration, when the Whigs split, he moved into the Democratic party. Everett served in the House from 1829 to 1843.
4. *Noscitur a sociis,* "he is known by his companions."
5. The McMinnville *Central Gazette* was edited by John W. Ford from 1835 until 1842. For an early account of his financial difficulties with the paper, see John W. Ford to Polk, February 5, 1837.
6. For background of the controversial Mississippi elections, see John F. H. Claiborne to Polk, June 17, 1837, especially footnotes 3, 4, and 5; and Polk to John F. H. Claiborne, June 26, 1837.
7. Grundy's letter to the legislature was dated February 6, 1837. He admitted the right of that body to instruct him and said he would abide by their instructions to vote against the subtreasury. In a calm but forceful and persuasive manner, however, Grundy let it be known that he believed that the legislature's action was partisan and that it did not reflect the will of the people.

FROM JAMES M. HOWRY

Oxford, Mississippi. February 5, 1838

Howry asserts that there is great dereliction among postmasters and mail contractors in his region and says that the special agent of the Post Office Department has resigned. Howry is interested in becoming special agent if the pay is sufficient. He discusses national and state politics, commenting that Tennessee must be humiliated by Bell's paying homage to blue-light Federalists and consorting with Daniel Webster. He thinks the Tennessee legislature has disgraced itself, adding that the Wise-Gholson affair and others of that kind lessen the respectability of Congress.

Addressed to Washington.
1. Until recently before 1838, Howry had practiced law in Hickman County, Tennessee. Just prior to his move to Mississippi, he was engrossing clerk for the state senate.
2. Oxford was the county seat of Lafayette County, Mississippi.
3. This quarrel stemmed from the debate over the seating of Gholson in the House. Despite the heated disputes and the danger of a physical encounter between the two, a duel was averted.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother, Columbia Feb. 5th 1838

In your letter which I this evening received, you desire me to give you a statement of the expenses of the plantation for the past year. It
is not in my power to do so entirely, as the Store accounts which are inconsiderate [sic] were not presented to me when down, and if they had been, I had no means [to] pay them, having to incur when down other expenses sufficient to consume all the means I possessed. The Doct Bill was not presented, of which I am unable to tell the amount. Exclusive of these and a balance due [George W.] Bratton of 250$ my expenses, money laid out for our joint interest, amounts to $1385.07\frac{1}{2} including the purchase of three mules at $100.00 each, and another mule bought by George Moore last summer and sent to the plantation, at $125.00, and the Horse purchased by Bratton at $72.00, and the $150.00 paid to Bratton in part for his services. Also $500.00 deposited with Albert McNeal to buy our pork, and other little expenses not necessary to mention which will make out the amount stated above. I have all the articles set down in my Book. Albert McNeal has purchased our Pork at seven cents. As to the deed I ascertained in Coffeeville, certainly, that Mr. Wilkerson was not at home, and that it would be useless for me to make a trip to Manchester. I wrote to him on my return home and received an answer a few weeks since. He said he had not the calls [landmarks] and could not make a deed until I sent them to him, which I intend doing. I have not been as yet able to make any collection for you. Messrs Caruthers & Drake were off in the lower parts of the State or at least some distance from home attending court and I was unable to see either of them. The debt in Fayette was not due when I was down and I could do nothing with it. The C. C. Jones note, I paid over to Mr. Walker for some money which I owed him, as you give me privilege of using any of your money collected. The money for the rents had not been paid in, and McNeal could not pay me any. I told him when it was collected to pay himself out of it, for the Negro clothing which was purchased of him and sent to the plantation last fall. Your $125.00 debt on the Estate of Gillespie can be saved without purchasing the Negro. I will use every exertion to make collections for you.

I have purchased since you left Alfred Nicholson's place near Town. I gave him $8,000 payable in one, two and three years. There is in the tract 275 acres, 180 of which is wood land, which wood land is worth the money and more. I am at this time living on it, farming on a small scale. I had but one negro to hire. Doct Dickinson furnished me with hands to work it and a good cook. You I know will disapprove of it, and I have no excuse to offer except that I wanted a Home. There is nothing new. Give my love to sister Sarah.

WILLIAM H. POLK

P.S. I was very sorry to hear the bad report of Samuel. I told mother.
February 5 1838

It was a severe blow. She requested me to say to you not to permit him, if in your power, to return home, but to influence him to stay & graduate. Please write to me.

W. H. Polk

Dear Brother, February 6th 1838

Please write to me, your opinion about selling our plantation. I may be after this year constrained to do it, though it depends greatly upon circumstances. It may be our interest to sell, if landed property and Negroes should rise to their former fictitious value. You will ascribe my desire to sell to my embarrassed situation, occasion[ed] by the purchase of this place, on which I now live, but it is not the case. I can pay for it by selling my district land. You as I said above will disapprove of the purchase, and you are the only one to whom I acknowledge the right of disapproving. Write me on the reception of this concerning the propriety of selling.

W. H. Polk

Addressed to Washington.
1. This letter has not been found.
2. Uncertainty in deciphering at this point is due to a tear on the margin of the page.
3. Wilkerson is unidentified.
4. Manchester, on the Yazoo River in Yazoo County, became Yazoo City during 1838.
5. Caruthers and Drake are unidentified.
7. See Ezekiel P. McNeal to Polk, December 28, 1837.
8. This reference is obscure.
9. This refers to A. O. P. Nicholson.
10. Dr. William G. Dickinson was William H. Polk's father-in-law.
11. See Jeremiah Day to Polk, January 5, 1838; Polk to Day, January 8, 1838; and Samuel W. Polk to Polk, January 22 and January 28, 1838.

TO LEVI WOODBURY

Sir, Washington Feby. 5th 1838

I desire to be informed in what description of funds, the requisitions for pay & mileage of the members of the House of Representatives will be paid, when the appropriation Bill for that purpose shall pass Congress. What proportion will be paid at the Treasury in specie, and what in Treasury notes, and what interest will the Treasury notes
paid, bear? You will oblige me, if it shall be convenient for you to do so, by giving me an answer to day.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Letters from Congress, Treasury Department (RG 56), National Archives.

FROM MATTHEW D. COOPER

Dear Sir. Columbia Tenn Feby 6 1838

Yours of 24 ult covering Mr. Harris notes taken by Mr. Key came duly to hand. For the trouble given you in this matter which has been great, permit me to tender you my sincere thanks.

In relation to my application for a Cadets warrant for my son, I at once perceive that it will not be possible for you to serve me further than you have done, and when I wrote you, I knew you would do all in your power, and I assure you that I feel under the same obligation to you as if you had obtained the warrant.

I feel some delicacy in addressing Judge White or Judge Grundy on the subject altho I am confident either or both of them would willingly serve me, and will therefore abandon the idea and send my son to Yale College where my eldest has been educated.

M. D. COOPER

Presumably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found.

1. A wealthy merchant in Columbia and Polk's friend in politics, Cooper had been a partner of Madison Caruthers in a commission business in New Orleans.

2. This reference is obscure. The Mr. Harris mentioned is probably Adlai O. Harris, who had succeeded Cooper as the business partner of Madison Caruthers. Mr. Key is unidentified. Polk's letter has not been found.

3. Cooper's son Edmund was born in 1821. It appears likely that Polk reminded Cooper that there was already a cadet from his district at West Point.

4. William F. Cooper was a student at Yale at this time.

FROM LAWSON GIFFORD

Jonesboro. February 6, 1838

Reminding Polk that Jonesboro is near to both Virginia and North Carolina, Gifford suggests that advertising of mail contracts in those states should be printed in his Jonesboro Sentinel. The paper is in debt, and it will be diffi-
cult to continue publication if it is not favored with some government printing.

Addressed to Washington.

TO ALEXANDER G. McNUTT

Sir

Washington City Feby. 6th 1838

By an order of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, it is made my duty to communicate to your Excellency the enclosed Resolutions\(^1\) passed by that body on the 5th of February 1838.

JAMES K. POLK

Probably addressed to Jackson, Mississippi, although no envelope has been found. The original of this letter is in the New York Public Library. There is a duplicate copy in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

1. The resolutions passed on the fifth of February, 1838, concerned the recent controversial elections in Mississippi and declared that neither Samuel J. Gholson and John F. H. Claiborne nor Sergeant S. Prentiss and Thomas J. Word were members of the Twenty-fifth Congress. The third and last part of the resolutions declared that the Speaker should notify the governor of Mississippi of the House's resolutions. On February 21, 1838, Governor McNutt wrote to Polk acknowledging receipt of this letter of February 6.

FROM JOHN GOLDER\(^1\)

Sir,

New York 7th Feb 1838

I had the honor at the last session of Congress of communicating to the house thro' your polite & prompt attention my respectful memorial in furtherance of the establishment of the Mutual credit system which I have invented & with the aid of a number of citizens of Philadelphia had successfully tested the value of. The chairman of the committee of ways & means has furnished me with a printed copy of [House] Document 33 showing that upon referring my communication to that committee it was published for the information of the citizens of the United States.

Impressed with the belief that at this crisis no other system of finance can command so general a confidence & so free a currency as that which may be based upon bonafide security & issued in accordance with the Constitution of the United States, I venture to urge the deliberate attention of your honorable body to the subject pending
the discussion of the Sub Treasury bill because, if I am not deceived, the right I am vested with practically used without respect to party interest is the chief desideratum that will improve if not effectually restore the public confidence in mercantile exchange.

The right of petition not unlike the mutual confidence & mutual credit of every American citizen is numbered with the inalienable privilege of his national birth right, it was subscribed to by our Patriot fathers 4th of July 1776 & is studiously insisted upon by their children.

As it may be asked in discussion what are the distinguishing features of this improvement I answer it is a Constitutional right to create a safe currency by virtue of the practical application & use of the mutual credit check which derives its power from the Act & its useful purpose as a safe currency from the principle patented "contribution of actual capital" before it circulates as money.

As labour is unquestionably the parent of money this article used as a currency is only intrinsically valuable when drawn by the hand of industry from that prolific fountain; the true economy of finance I humbly apprehend is to maintain credit upon vested security. Without this we may look in vain for an early return of a safe & popular currency & risque the greater part of our Commercial advantages abroad.

J. GOLDER

Addressed to Washington.
1. An inhabitant of New York, John Golder referred to himself as an actuary. In September 1835, he had obtained from Congress a patent to test his mutual credit system.

FROM ANDREW C. HAYS

Dear Sir

Columbia Ten Feb. 7, 1838

Your friends and relations are well. My health continues about as it was when you left. I am unable to do more than set in my room and give directions to my deputy, and converse with our political friends from the country, who are constantly calling. From them I learn that the Administration is rapidly gaining strength. It is generally believed here that Mr. Clay will be the opposition candidate for the Presidency and many, very many of the Whigs say they will not vote for him. At least two thirds of the Legislature it was understood at the adjournment, decidedly against him. The Bank Bill passed by
February 7 1838

the Legislature is a popular measure in this County. Nicholson has
gained strength by his course on that measure & Cahal has lost friends
by his. Confined as I am, I am unable to give you the local news, but
presume you get all of that from your other friends.

My principle object for writing at present is to ask of you the
favor to call on Mr. Kendall and see (if he has the power) if he be
willing that I be allowed House Rent for my office. You can represent
the case as it really is. I have for several years had to Rent a House
especially for the office at an expense of $75 to $100. pr year, because
the business of the office has grown to be of such consequence it
could not safely and to the accomodation of the public be kept in a
room where other business was carried on. I am aware that Rent is
not allowed to Village offices generally, because they are almost uni­
formly kept in some store or shop where other business is carried out.
Not so however with this office for as before remarked, the safety of
the office, and its proper management requires a seperate house. I
now keep it in my brick building that I could have rented for $150.00.
It is true that one cause of moving to it was to make me more com­
fortable in my wretched state of health, as the office I left could have
answered all the purposes for the Post Office, and it would rent for
about $100. I was however compelled to have the office where I could
assist in its management. I flatter myself that after Mr. Kendall takes
into consideration the importance of this office, as to its income &c.
its business being about the second in the State, he will, if he can,
think favorable of my application.

Your attention to my request will be thankfully received & grate­
fully remembered.

Be pleased to write me soon on the subject. My best compliments
to Mrs. Polk and for yourself renewed assurances of my high regard.

A. C. HAYS.

Addressed to Washington.
1. See James Walker to Polk, December 31, 1837.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir Columbia Feb. 7, 1838

I enclose you a letter to Samuel [W. Polk], which you can read,
seal & forward to him. I do not think his is a serious matter¹ except
the additional expense, which the circumstance may cause him. I have
thought it probable that he had better come to Georgetown, where
there has always been said to be good opportunities for literary acquirements. He could probably get as good & cheap private instruction near you as any where, and be more immediately under your controul and advice. You can however best judge of this.

I believe I have replied to all your letters that it is material I should; to the contents of some of them before I received them. I think we are doing every thing here which it is prudent to try. Until the last week I have been too much engaged to pay much attention to the Democrat, and you will see I then got into a scrape with Mr. Grundy's letter. But I can get out of it and the circumstance will do us more good than harm. All that was said Mr. G. might have said with much propriety over his own signature. It is all true and defensable and all that Allen Hall can make out of it is that the Democrat used Mr. G's language, with slight alterations, verbatim. I have received the Boston Morning Post, and will have the valuable article in it published next week with suitable comments.

I have written to S. C. Posey & W. T. Caruthers on the subject of the V. P. and will write to R. M. Williamson as soon as I can ascertain his Post office. My opinion and wishes are that you should run once more for Congress, and be put in nomination for the V. P. and I will do all I prudently can to accomplish this. Carroll will run for Governor. Nicholson will contentedly wait until after the next election, and then take his chances. In the mean time do all he can to strengthen our cause and himself. I believe I fully understand him. The State Bank will take away a powerful argument from the Whigs. And gloomy as our prospects may seem to be I think our chance good to reclaim Tennessee at the next election.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. This refers to Samuel W. Polk's suspension from Yale. See Jeremiah Day to Polk, January 5, 1838; Polk to Day, January 8, 1838; and Samuel W. Polk to Polk, January 22, 28, 1838.

2. Early in February, a copy of a letter from Grundy to "a gentleman," dated January 18, 1838, was published in the Gallatin Union, while almost simultaneously there appeared in the Columbia Democrat three editorials quite similar to the reprinted letter. On February 5, 1838, Allen A. Hall of the Nashville Republican Banner published them side by side, showing that long passages of the editorials were taken verbatim from Grundy's letter. In this letter, Walker admits his responsibility for the editorials, but Hall continued to accuse Grundy of trying secretly to influence local public opinion from Washington.
3. See Charles G. Greene to Polk, January 10, January 18, and January 23, 1838.

4. Walker was obviously trying to get out-of-state support for Polk’s vice-presidential candidacy. Sidney C. Posey of Florence, Alabama, was a man of known political influence, as was Russell M. Williamson of Madison County, Mississippi.

FROM ALEXANDER H. COFFEY 1

Shelbyville. February 13, 1838

Coffey writes in behalf of his brother, Benjamin B. Coffey, who desires appointment as Register of the land office that is expected to be created in the Cherokee country. 2 He also asks Polk to show his letter to Archibald Yell of Arkansas.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Alexander H. Coffey, Benjamin B. Coffey, and Henry B. Coffey were sons of Rice Coffey, who had moved to Bedford County from Virginia. Coffey is the spelling used by this family, although others probably used Coffee more often than the correct form.

2. Land offices to distribute the lands ceded by the Cherokees by the Treaty of New Echota, 1835, were not created until 1842.

TO JOHN FORSYTH

Sir

Washington City Feby. 14th 1838

The undersigned take the liberty of recommending to the favorable consideration of the President, Richard M. Woods, Esqr., a citizen of Greene County Tennessee, as a suitable person to be appointed Marshall for the Eastern District of Tennessee. They understand that the time of the present incumbent will expire shortly. 2 Mr. Woods is a man of highly respectable character; resides in that part of the State in which the duties of the Marshall for the Eastern District of Tennessee are to be performed; and if appointed we have no doubt he will discharge his duties satisfactorily to the Government, and to the public. We have no hesitation in recommending his appointment.

A. McCLELLAN
HOPKINS L. TURNLEY
JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Letters of Application and Recommendation 1837–45, Department of State (RG 59), National Archives.

1. Richard M. Woods was sheriff of Greene County, 1826–40, and was a
trustee of Tusculum Academy. He was appointed as Marshal of East Tennessee and served for eight years.

2. The incumbent was William Lyon.

FROM A. M. M. UPSHAW

My Dear Col

Nashville Febry 14th 1838

I have frequently called on you for assistance, and you have always heard my call. I am compelled to make one more call on you for help. I have understood from Washington, that it would be of service to me, to have some strong applications [sic] for me to be Agent for the Chicksaw Indians west of the Mississippi. I wish you to see the President and let him know who I am, let him know that I am one of those men that never deserts a friend, either political or personal. Shortly after my return from Florida, or in May last I was sent in the Chicksaw Nation, to move them west to their new homes. Since that time I have moved the whole nation except about three hundred, which I shall move early in the spring. Our old friend Col [Benjamin] Reynolds who is their Agent at this time has recommended me in the strongest manner to the War department, Gov Carroll has done the same, Genl Armstrong the same, and the Old Chieff will write on tomorrow. I can say to you with great confidence that I do not believe that their is a Chieff or Indian in the Nation but wishes me to be their Agent. Will you be so kind to see Mr Van Buren your self and give him a good Tennessee talk. I am in hopes he has not raised me up to give me a hard fall.

Present Mrs Upshaws and my respects to Mrs Polk.

A. M. M. UPSHAW

N B I have not written to the Hon E. J. Shields because I have no confidence in him.

A. M. M. U.

Col William Armstrong¹ Superintendent of the South western Nations will be in Washington in March with a delegation of Indians. I have but little doubt, but what he could convince Mr Van Buren, that I ought to be Agent of the Chicksaws.²

Addressed to Washington.

1. William Armstrong, the brother of Robert Armstrong, was the Superintendent of Indian Affairs at the Choctaw Agency, West of Mississippi. He succeeded his brother, Francis W. Armstrong, who died in April 1835.

2. Upshaw received the appointment as agent to the Chickasaws in 1839 and served through 1849.
FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Dear Col

Nashville 15th Feby [1838]\(^1\)

I have not heard from you for some time. I know you are every moment engaged.

Doctr. [John S.] Young a friend of ours whose letter I enclose is an applicant for Register or Receiver in a new district of Alabama.\(^2\)

He is a true honest & worthy man has been engaged in the Indian Service for some time. Will you see Judge Clay and others so as to aid the Doctor.

And our good old friend Solomon Clark\(^3\) is an applicant for Receiver at Pontitoc Miss. Say to Mr Grundy that he ought to see the President in relation to Clarks appointment. Any aid you can give him will be bestowed on one of the best men living and one that has been as faithfull & as true to the late & present Administration as man could be. I would be glad if you could assist Clark in his application. Genl Jackson has writen Mr Van Buren but he was not able to say as much as he wished.

And again our friend Col [A. M. M.] Upshaw has nearly by his industry and close attention got the Chickasaws on over & wishes the appointment of their agent. It was promised him when [he] took the controll of the emmigration which he has nearly completed to the satisfaction of the Government the Indians and all concerned. No man could be more acceptable to the Indians. Bell is on the Indian Committee. The way in which [we stand]\(^4\) I some times fear that he may reach my Brother William, Superintendent of Indian affairs west of Miss. William fears it and I must ask you to look somewhat to his Interest. I understand Capt. Brown\(^5\) of the Army is a great favourite with [Horace] Everett & Bell and that some change is proposed in the Indian Dept. west.

If I was in reach of Bell (free to act) he would cut his own throat sooner than interfeir with us. (I will reach him yet.)

The Good Old Genl. has been Very Ill for some days. I returned this morning from him. He is much better and out of Danger. He was attacked very severely with Hemorrhage.

I have asked much from you in this Letter but you will excuse me. I try to stir up Joel's Editor but he will not, I fear, do.\(^6\) He wants Tact & Industry—does not seem to understand what is necessary to do. If the Sub Tr[easur]y Bill is passed all will go well. This state will not go for Clay. A majority of the legislature left here opposed to him, particularly the East Tennessee members.
I will write you again and give you the news in a few days. Please attend to my requests as opportunity may offer.

R. ARMSTRONG

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."
1. The correct year has been supplied by the Library of Congress.
2. The enclosure has not been found. The new district involved lands ceded by the Cherokees in 1835, but it was not assigned by Congress to land offices in Alabama until 1842. Nobody, therefore, got the position at this time.
3. A resident of Davidson County, Solomon Clark was apparently the son of the artisan by the same name who arranged for Rachel Jackson's tombstone. The younger Clark received the appointment at Pontotoc and remained there for several years.
4. This manuscript has been quite difficult to decipher. The handwriting is very bad, and there are numerous places where it has been blotted. The reading at this point is uncertain.
5. Capt. Brown is not further identified.
6. By this time most of the Democratic leaders in the area had concluded that Joshua Cunningham was a failure as editor of the Nashville Union.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Sir, Nashville Feby 15th 1838

Your letter of the 4th February reached me at this place to day. I agree with you to the necessity of having prompt and frequent exposition in the union of the treachery of Mr. Bell and the shameful perversions of fact by which his papers here hope to shield him. But the misfortune is we have no one in Nashville, if capable, willing to devote his time to such an object and the Editor of the Union is I fear not equal to the undertaking. What little I can do is cheerfully done, but situated as I am it is impossible for me to do much. Money is the scarecrow to all our enterprizes in regard to the circulation of paper matter even when we have it. Something I hope will be done in a short time to better our condition in this respect, but so often have past promises disappointed me that I almost despair of such as are now made.

In regard to the paper at McMinnville Genl Armstrong thinks that if [John W.] Ford can give the proper security he can obtain money here. He will start an enquiry with the view of aiding him.

We are looking with anxiety for Mr Grundys answer to his instructors; and doubt not that it will be useful to his friends and to the Republican party here and elsewhere. I see that you have sent the Mississippi contested election back to the people of the state—a
February 16 1838

decision unlooked for by us and one that cannot but strike with
surprise the whole country. If there were no new facts before the
House I cannot see how it is to be satisfactorily explained. The article
you refer me to has not been received—I mean in the Baltimore
Republican.

The General had another attack of Hemorrath of the lungs three
days ago. He was so much better to day at 12 o'clock as to relieve us
of all doubt as to his recovery. His constitution seems to be stronger
than when he left Washington, but these serious attacks must gradu­
ally undermine it. He is in good spirits.

My respects to Mrs. Polk & to Mr. Grundy.

A. J. DONELSON

You will see one or two articles of some interest in the Union next
week.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."

FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT

Dear Sir Jackson [Tennessee] Febr. 16th 1838

I have heard nothing from you in a long time. I have however
been watching the political elements, and have come to the conclusion
that it is indispensable for the success of Mr. Van Buren to unite the
Van Buren party in Virginia by some compromise or concession. If
so, the whole South will support the administration with as much
unanimity as they did Genl. Jackson. The Nullifiers are coming over
to us slowly, but certainly. They cannot support Mr. Clay, and must
take Mr. Van Buren as a choice of evils. If we can only become united
amongst ourselves in the South, it will be easy for the administration
party to controul New York and Pennsylvania, which will make every
thing safe.

Strange as it may seem I have no doubt we shall beat the oposi­
tion in this state at the next election if we are only true to ourselves.
The late Legislature has embarked in an extensive system of Banking
and internal improvement, and if we can only succeed in making the
election turn upon the question of a National Bank we have them.
This system on Bank and internal improvement is all the go. Although
passed by a very small majority it has become very popular with the
people and the members who voted against it are already beginning
to apologize. We will say it would be a suicidal act to consent to have
a National Bank to destroy our State Bank and with it our whole
system of internal improvement, stockholders and all. Foster and his
party secretly opposed the measures, because they saw the effect it would have, first to relieve the pressure upon the money market, and next, the impolicy as far as this State is concerned in consenting to have a National Bank. I discover Mississippi is about to fall into the same policy. You will therefore see the necessity of caution, to do nothing that would seem to wage a war against State Banks. I go for the Sub treasury, because I know the incapacity of the State Banks to act as the fiscal agents of the Government, and that we must sooner or later dissolve the connexion in a great degree or have a National Bank. I will accept of anything before the latter, because even if I had no constitutional scruples, I believe it the most dangerous institution to our liberties we could have, particularly when in the hands of wicked men, who would certainly get the control of it if chartered under the present state of things.

Mr. Clay will not go down in this State. What position does Mrs. White occupy in this question? I discover her relations in this county are making a noise about Mr. Clay and I had supposed possibly she was thus inclined. I think we had better run our old friend Felix against Bell, and Carroll for Governor, unless you should determine to take the field. I do not wish to lose you however in Congress unless we can supply your place. Nicholson has become very popular with the members of the Legislature in East Tennessee and the district. We must plan the campaign early. At the last election we had no organization. We fought under every disadvantage.

I see there is some prospect of the establishment of a Federal court at this place. If so, and my friends think me worthy I would accept the office of district attorney.

I should like to hear from you and hear your views upon matters generally. You may rest assured your communications shall not be abused.

Jos. H. Talbot

Addressed to Washington.

1. This appears to be a reference to Hugh L. White's second wife, Ann Peyton White, who was thought by many to be quite ambitious. Her relatives in West Tennessee have not been identified.

FROM WILLIAM CARROLL

My dear Sir; Nashville, February 17, 1838

I have not written to you since the commencement of the present session of congress, because I could communicate nothing of interest
but what you would see in our papers. It may not be amiss to remark however that we had a meeting of our friends at my house, a few days before the adjournment of the General Assembly, and after a good deal of conversation on various subjects, each one pledged himself, on his return home, to do all that he could to advance our cause. We determined that it was sound policy to have opposition in every county and district for every office; and if nothing better can be done, health permitting, I am under promise to give Cannon a four months campaign. I shall fight without gloves, and you may rely upon it I will make him and some others ashamed of their position before the battle is over. I am now certain that the Editor of the Union is wholly unfit for his situation. He is idle vain and incompetent, and can render us no useful service. His place must be filled by a man of talents, energy and industry, and such an individual must be found even though at a higher salary. I have had a conversation with Mr. [Joel M.] Smith on the subject, and he is willing to do whatever his friends think right. You can no doubt be able to select a suitable person at Washington, and as I expect to be with you about the last of March, the whole business can then be suitably arranged.

In the course of a day or two, Oliver B Hayes, Esquire, and Mr. Wm. Nichol will leave here for the Eastern cities to dispose of twenty five hundred thousand dollars of State bonds to aid in putting our new bank into operation. Nichol is a fair Van Buren man and Hayes has not sinned away his day of grace. I have told them that you could probably be of great service to them, and they intend to call on you immediately on their arrival at Washington. The first point to which I wish to call your attention is, that a little kindness on your part and such aid as you can render them, will be almost certain to secure a branch at Columbia, which your constituents want, and which Mr. Nicholson deems important for various reasons, most of which will readily occur to you. Again, I have thought that in the course of the present year, the Secretary of War might have a considerable amount of Indian funds to vest in State securities. In that event you could be of essential service, and if by your aid a million of dollars can be had it will secure to us the control of the bank and its branches. I request therefore that you will on receipt of this letter see the Secretary of War, and if he has, or expects to have any funds to invest in State bonds, to get him to make no final arrangement before the arrival in your city of Messrs. Hayes & Nichol. I am confident that as safe and profitable investments can be made in our bonds, as in those of any of the other Southern or Western States. The Commissioners will apply for aid to no other
Correspondence of James K. Polk

gentleman of our Delegation, and I am sure if you can be of no service to them, that you will at least send them away in good temper.

Expecting to see you in a few weeks, I will only add my kind respects to Mrs. Polk.

Wm. Carroll

N.B. I shall be pleased to hear from you.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Oliver B. Hayes moved to Nashville from New England in 1808 and established an extensive and profitable law practice. Later he retired from law practice to become a Presbyterian minister. William Nichol was a wealthy merchant, banker, and steamboat owner in Nashville. Nichol and Ephraim H. Foster had married sisters.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

Dr Col. Wilmington [Delaware] 2 mo. 20th [1838]¹

At the request of the editor of the republican paper here² (who is unable at present to perform his regular duties) I have been preparing a few articles as editorials for his paper, and to day I have presented to the public your nomination for the Vice Presidency by the Florence [Alabama] Gazette. Whether or not you will think the remarks I have made upon the subject are appropriate I am unable to say, but I thought it best to make the article what it is in fact, a response of the North to "a voice from the South." Here the subject takes well with our friends, and I am proud to say it.

I have only time at present to express the hope that in this matter as in all things else you may realise the wishes of . . .

John O. Bradford

Addressed to Washington.

1. The year was supplied by the Library of Congress.

2. The Republican newspaper was the Delaware Gazette, edited by E. E. Camp. See Bradford to Polk, March 5 and March 6, 1838.

FROM CLEMENT C. CLAY

My dear Sir, Philadelphia, Feb[y. 20th 1838]

I am rejoiced to be able to say, my son¹ underwent the operation of lithotomy more than forty eight hours ago, bearing it with a degree of fortitude which I could not have supposed possible, and every in-
dication is favorable. I will not go into particulars till we meet. I hope
to be able to leave my son safely in three, or four days, but I cannot,
will not, do so, till I am sure he is safe. The Doctor, however, con-
siders his case better, for the time, than one in five hundred.

I wrote to Doct. Gessner Harrison² of the University of Virginia,
the day before I left Washington, that is, on Thursday last, and his
answer will probably be in Washington by the time this reaches you.
You are at liberty to go to the Postoffice of the Senate, and call for
my letters, and open any one postmarked "University of Virginia," or
"Charlottesville Va.," there is a post office at each place, and you can
read, & make use of, the reply of Dr. H. in your own discretion.

C. C. CLAY

P.S. Tell our friends they must speak out this week on the sub-
treasury, or they will loose my vote.
P.S. My letters may have been brot to Ellio.³

Addressed to Washington.
1. Senator Clement C. Clay's son, Clement Claiborne Clay, was at this
time a law student at the University of Virginia.
2. Dr. Gessner Harrison was a highly respected member of the faculty at
the University of Virginia and served numerous times as chairman of the
faculty. It was probably in Harrison's capacity as chairman of the faculty
that Senator Clay had written to him about the welfare of his son.
3. Clay and Polk both lived at Elliot's during the current session of
Congress.

TO MAHLON DICKERSON
FROM JAMES K. POLK AND JOHN WINSTON JONES¹

Dr. Sir

Washington City 22d February 1838

We beg leave, to present to your favourable consideration, the
claims of Mr. John F. Young² of the County of Isle of Wight, Vir-
ginia, who is an applicant for a Lieutenants Commission, in the
Marine Corpse. With Mr. Young we have no personal acquaintance,
but from the great respectability of his family, and connexions, and
the favourable opinion entertained of him, by gentlemen in whom we
have entire confidence, we unite in soliciting for him the appointment.³

JAMES K. POLK
J. W. JONES

Addressed to Washington. The letter is not in Polk's handwriting but is
signed by both him and Jones. It is in the Connecticut Historical Society.
1. Jones represented Virginia in the United States House of Representatives from 1835 to 1845. He served as Speaker, 1843–1845.

2. See John Y. Mason to Polk, March 27, 1838; and Polk to Mahlon Dickerson, May 24, 1838.

3. On February 23, 1838, Dickerson acknowledged receipt of this letter, saying that Young would be given due consideration when a vacancy occurred.

FROM JOHN H. DEW
Murfreesborough Tennessee
February 23, 1838

Hon. Sir

I have partially perused the Jan. & Feb. Nos. of the "U. S. Magazine of Democratic Review," published by Messrs Langtree & O'Sullivan in the City of Washington and am so well pleased with the work, that I have concluded to become one of their subscribers. I am well satisfied that a work of the kind will be a source of immense advantage to the true friends of our democratic republican party. I mean the sincere friends to civil and religious liberty and those who desire the perpetuation of our happy form of government and the Confederacy. I sincerely wish the publishers great success in their laudable and praiseworthy undertaking. Be pleased to hand the publishers $5, one years subscription for me; and take their receipt for the same; and direct them to forward the periodical to me, at Columbia Tennessee, and I will refund the money to you on sight.

Your compliance with this request will confer a favour on your friend that will be remembered and appreciated.

Accept assurances of the high regard and unfeigned esteem.

JNO. H. DEW

P.S. I presume you have read in the Alabama papers the nomination of the Hon. Jas. K. Polk of Tennessee, the Speaker of the H.R. of the Congress of the U.S. and distinguished Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, as the Candidate for the Vice Presidency of the U.S.A. on the Democratic Republican, Jackson, Van Buren ticket at the next elections; and that the Editor of the Nashville Union respectfully suggests that the nomination is premature. This suggestion from the Alabama papers was expected. I had been apprised of the contemplated movement some weeks since; and it is equally well understood in this community that Col. Bell is to be the Candidate on the Clay Whig ticket. The Administration party have it in view to run Gen. Carroll as their Candidate for Gov. of Tenn., you for the Vice Presidency; Mr. Grundy to open the eyes of the People of the State upon the proceedings of the late beautiful Legislature and if possible to get a subsequent Legislature to undoe [sic] the late election of Col.
E[phraim] H. Foster to the Senate of the U.S. Consequently a democratic Legislature must be elected or the project fails. I have very little doubt but that the next Legislature will be opposed to the election of Mr. Clay. If we can succeed in this effort Tennessee will be found in her former ranks, the democratic states. These things are understood only by the faithful and good and true of our party. Judge Grundy's address to the late members of the Legislature who voted for the Sub-Treasury resolutions, is a truly good one, a happy hit, one of his best efforts. The prime movers of the measure are quite ashamed of it. I approve of the Judge's course and commend him highly for his sarcastic and bold address but why, let me modestly enquire, has he not taken such bold and statesmanlike stands before this, for the want of an occasion that apology will not, cannot suffice. Will he be provided for by the Executive?

Things are easy in old Maury, except a deep solicitude for a Branch of the new State Bank to be located at Columbia, the prospects for success in beginning to be considered very doubtful.

Col Cahal and Mr. Nicholson both decline being Candidates for reelection, and say they are quite done with political strifes. All in my eye, true they will not be candidates for reelection perhaps but I guess they are both anxiously looking for the time when you are out of the way in that congressional district.

Gen. Pillow wears a suit of homespun Janes, says it is the handy work of the fair hands of old Maury, seems very attentive to the good people, and smiles complacently, and talks loud and much for the democratic principles of Jefferson, Jackson, Van Burin & Polk. I wonder if Mrs. Polk wont guess that commendable alteration of the manners & dress of the General, dont mean that he wishes to represent the good people of Maury in part in the next General Assembly.

Maj Barkly Martin too seems courteous and polite and looks a good deal like and talks more like a devoted humble servant of the good people than the Gen. My acquaintance in Maury is too limited to give an opinion as to their probable success. I fear I am tedious with my domestic and home matters, but you will appreciate my motives. They have just commenced the publication of an anti adm[inistration]n paper in this place. Things are equally in statu quo in old Bedford. I have attended two courts at Shelbyville and find your friends unflinchingly true there. Your friends in Columbia were well when I left there on Sunday morning. I spent the evening at Dr. Rucker's last. His family & Miss Childress were present and all well, and the friends as far as I heared. Some talk of Tho. H.
Fletcher's running against Col Bell for Congress at the next election. Then greek against greek. My respects to Mrs Polk and the Judge.

J. H. D

Addressed to Washington.

1. Published first in Washington, the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* appeared under various titles from October 1837 until 1859. John O'Sullivan and Samuel D. Langtree were editors and publishers, 1837–39. The magazine was moved to New York about 1840, and although it was devoted largely to public affairs, it achieved a literary reputation based on contributions from such writers as Hawthorne, Simms, Bryant, and Whitier.

2. The *Florence Gazette* had come out in support of Polk for Vice-President. See John O. Bradford to Polk, February 20, 1838.

3. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, February 4, 1838.

4. Gideon J. Pillow, a Maury County lawyer, was well known to Polk. He was a firm Polk supporter.

5. The *Tennessee Telegraph*, a Whig weekly edited by E. J. King, was launched in Murfreesboro in February 1838, and ran until September 1845.

6. Which Miss Childress is meant here is uncertain. Possibly, she was Mary Childress, daughter of Anderson Childress, deceased brother of Mrs. Polk, Mrs. Rucker, and John W. Childress.

FROM JOSEPH N. JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville Feby 25th 1838

I must beg the liberty of troubling you with a letter to my Nephew.² I have written him several times & he has never recd. them.

Cave Johnson was married to Mrs Brunson⁸ on the 20th, a happy couple.

Grundy's letter to the Legislature has & will have a happy effect in our State.⁴

I should be glad to hear from you.

J. N. JOHNSON

I wish you would persuade Cave not to come home. It will be expensive, & perhaps keep him here, which would be a death blow to his prospects. Send me some govt papers of the true faith.

J. N. J.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A younger brother of Cave Johnson, Joseph N. Johnson was a lawyer and farmer in Montgomery County.
2. The nephew was Cave Johnson Couts, who was attending an academy in Alexandria, Virginia.

3. Mrs. Brunson was Elizabeth Dortch, Cave Johnson's childhood sweetheart, who had married Mr. Brunson in 1817 but became a widow in 1826. Sometime after Johnson's defeat in 1837, he renewed his suit, and they were married February 20, 1838.

4. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, February 4, 1838.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia Feb. 27, 1838

I have not written you for some time principally because I have been continually expecting to receive a letter from you. I am solicitous of hearing upon what plan Sam'l [Polk] has settled down upon, and what is the progress and prospects of our Bill.¹ If it passes this session it is important to us that it should get through as soon as possible, that we may have the chance of getting the report of the referees, in time for the final action of the Senate, if the decision be favorable. I have another motive for desiring an early action in your house. I think my presence and explanations will be important before the referees. I have consented that Jane² shall go on to Washington with Mr. & Mrs Johnson.³ I should like to make a trip to Washington in time to go with her as far north as New Haven and I do not wish her to remain more than a month or 6 weeks at Washington. I am willing to let her see for a short time the Northern country & people that she may become sensible of the superiority of her own. When will Mrs Catron & Mrs McKinley return?⁴ Will either of them or your wife wish to take a short excursion to New Haven or New York?

I am informed Will. Nichol & Hays [Oliver B. Hayes] were anxious to obtain letters to you, and count much upon the value of your assistance in enabling them to sell the state bonds, which I presume they wish to do to the Government for the benefit of the Chickasaws. It does indeed seem strange that the Whig Governors Directors should apply for aid to one so violently denounced as you are by the Whig party. The thing however ought to be turned to account. Nichol & Hays I am told are both personally friendly to you, and will do you justice. Young Hays⁵ here although he hails as a Whig is one of our folks here. All his personal predilections are for us. If therefore it is known that you have rendered important aid in the sale of the bonds, it will help you in the state. It may also help some in securing a branch in our town, which we much want, and which will add greatly to the improvement & prosperity of Maury. The Supplemental
law is strictly a Whig measure, and contains some odious features, and especially the one giving the Directors the power of locating the branches. But it is the law & we must make the best of it. All the towns, even Mt. Pleasant want a branch, and those that fail to get them will be loud in abuse of the Whig Legislature for failing to take a just responsibility upon themselves. You see I am in favor of your helping the Bank plenipotentiaries, and making them sensible of the value of your aid. If any thing is to prevent us here from being overpowered by the bank party, it will be the creation of the Bank of Tennessee. We must make it as available to us as possible and as popular. Such is my judgment of political effects. Mr. Grundy's letter threw the Whigs into consternation. Little Allen [Hall] &c. are now engaged in writing off its effects, and abusing you for your vote on the Miss. election. We fight the battle as well as our limited means will enable us. Whig presses seem to be multiplying on us. They seem determined to hold the State, through the multiplicity and misrepresentations of their Press. No doubt Mr. Biddle's or some other breeches pockets, pays the piper, or the Printer.

Chesley Bynum has filed a Bill in Chancery against Andrew [C. Hays] & myself. He commences with false premises, and lies or dreams throughout. It is a strange document, and has required 20 pages of writing from each of us to answer it. I have managed this matter so that Chesley cannot have the power to swindle us.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Walker and his associates in mail contracting made a claim for extra allowances from the United States Post Office to cover losses sustained by them over several years on their mail routes. On March 30, 1838, a house committee reported unfavorably on their claim, but on February 27, 1845, Congress finally passed a private act for their relief.


3. The identity of the Johnsons has not been ascertained.

4. This refers to the wives of John Catron and John McKinley, justices of the United States Supreme Court.

5. The young man mentioned here was Richard H. Hayes, a son of Oliver B. Hayes of Nashville. Young Hayes soon became A. O. P. Nicholson's law partner.

6. The Bank Bill passed the legislature on January 19, 1838; the Supplemental Bill that established control over the branch banks by the president and directors of the principal bank was passed January 26, 1838.

7. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, February 4, 1838.

8. Bynum had been pressed to withdraw from the Columbia Tennessee Democrat by Walker and Hays and was seeking redress in the courts.
FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

Dear Sir,        Nashville Tennessee, 1 March 1838

  I have written to all of you & have not received a word except Grundy's manuscript Circular,¹ which was badly managed between the Gallatin & Columbia people, much to the temporary edification of Mr. A. A. A. Hall.²

  The Express mail gives us the surface of things as seen amongst you but our vision is confined to the surface. What will be done when you fail of the Treasury plan; as fail it must for the present? The responsibility of managing the collection, safe [carting?], & disbursement of the whole revenue as at present will be very great & I can see no remedy. Grundy's letter³ to the Assembly takes very well with his friends & the others say nothing except Hall's matter of course strictures. Orville Bradly is here preparing Hall for falling in for Clay so soon as the Knoxville Register comes out openly. After they have tried the effect of flattering old Harrison off, if he does not take they will resort to the Convention but the present expectation is to bribe him with compliments &c. that he will be satisfied to retire with a large stock of that material.

  I will go to the district in a few days and will be glad to hear from you at Jackson any day before the 15 April.

  The Genl's attacks & free bloodletting keep him feeble.

                        Daniel Graham

Addressed to Washington.
1. See James Walker to Polk, February 7, 1838.
2. There were three characters where the initials are written, and it seems that all three are A's. The reference is clearly to Allen A. Hall.
3. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, February 4, 1838.

FROM RICHARD C. HANCOCK¹

Chulahoma, Mississippi. March 3, 1838

Hancock is an applicant for marshal of Mississippi and calls Polk's attention to a recommendation sent to Washington by the incumbent, William M. Gwin.

Addressed to Washington. On the envelope, Columbia is given as the return address; the posting date is March 11. It is probable that the letter was sent by hand to Columbia and then forwarded.

1. A former resident of Williamson County, Tennessee, Hancock had been elected to the legislature as a Whig. Unwilling to support Hugh L. White,
however, he resigned. He moved to Mississippi and was elected almost immediately to the legislature of that state. See Jonas E. Thomas to Polk, March 21, 1838.

FROM WEST H. HUMPHREYS

SIR

Sommerville 4th March [1838]¹

I learn by letter that a branch of the federal court will be established at Jackson. If so I would be glad to receive the appointment of attorney general for the western Division of the State.² I would be glad if you would see the executive and use your influence in obtaining the appointment for me. I have as yet heard of no other certain applicant for the station except one individual who told me if I would not withdraw he would. I believe my appointment would give general satisfaction. As evidence of this I enclose to you the recommendation of twenty members of the bar of whom 3 are administration men, the balance opposition men.³ I have no reason to suppose my appointment would not give satisfaction amongst the members of the bar in the northern part of the district. A copy of this recommendation has been enclosed to Col [Christopher H.] Williams of the House of Representatives from this congressional district. If it become necessary I could procure the recommendation of Judges Turl[e]y and Catron in reference to my qualifications for minor appointment. I should be glad to hear from you in relation to this law or the appointment as soon as convenient. In reference to the State of Politics here I refer you more especially to my letter to Mr Grundy of this date. I will write you more fully in a short time.

WEST H. HUMPHREYS

Addressed to Washington.

1. The year has been correctly supplied by the Library of Congress.
2. On June 18, 1838, Congress passed the law establishing a separate court for western Tennessee.
3. This recommendation is partially illegible, but among the names that can be read are Adam Huntsman and Levin H. Coe. On the envelope, Polk noted that, subsequently, Humphreys declined making application for the position.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

Hon and Dr. Sir

Wilmington [Delaware] 3 Mo 5th [1838]¹

When I left Washington it was with the expectation of soon returning, but owing to a variety circumstances particularly the dif-
ference in expenditure between the two places, I concluded to remain here until I should hear from you, being satisfied that you would not neglect my case. My situation here however is not by any means an agreeable one, and could I be in any manner serviceable to you in Washington I would proceed there forthwith. I shall however wait until advised by you. I have seen with much gratification that your name has been announced as a "suitable candidate for the Vice Presidency." I have not been able to obtain a copy of the "Florence Gazette" which contained the original announcement, and would be glad if you could send me a copy if you have one to spare. As presuming upon my Ex editorship, I some days since introduced myself to the editor of the Democratic paper in this place; he thinks well of the matter, and coincided with me in the opinion that you besides being better known in the north than any other member of our party in the South, would in the south and southwest embody more strength than any man we could produce. If I can procure the article he will publish it. Aside from feelings of personal friendship and obligation it is my candid opinion, based upon pretty close observation, that the success of the republican party at least for some time to come, and especially the political regeneration of Tennessee, depends upon your nomination for the V.P.; as it cannot be disguised that Col [Richard M.] Johnson with all his amiable qualities, and claims upon the consideration of the people, was at the late election a mill stone about our necks; such it is plain was the case in Tennessee, and such I regret to say has been the case wherever I have been.

Since my arrival here have noticed that two appointments have been made to purserships in the navy, should there be any other vacancies to fill in that Corp, or in the list of consuls, I hope that I will be considered, as a suitable situation under present circumstance would be very agreeable.

I hope that you will be able to forward me the paper containing the article alluded to, and if convenient a copy of "Duncans speech." Please present my respects to Mrs P.

JOHN O. BRADFORD

P. S. I would be pleased to hear from you as soon as convenient.

Addressed to Washington.
1. The correct year was supplied by the Library of Congress.
2. See Bradford to Polk, February 20 and March 6, 1838.
3. See John W. Childress to Polk, January 14, 1838.
Dear Sir Washington City March 5th 1838

I have received the enclosed letter from the Revd. Thomas J. Hall of Tennessee, requesting me to pay over to you the sum of $12.25, which is herewith remitted. Will you be pleased to send me a receipt, that I may transmit it to Mr Hall.

JAMES K. POLK

P. S.

I have this day deposited to your credit in the Bank of Washing­ton, District of Columbia, the sum of $12.25, which you can obtain on application.

J. K. P.

Be pleased to return Mr Hall's letter.

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Papers of the American Colonization Society, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Joseph Gales Sr. was a reformer who had fled England in 1794 after advocating the principles of Thomas Paine and defending the French Revolu­tion. He founded the Raleigh Register and compiled the first two volumes of Annals of Congress. At this time he was Treasurer of the American Coloniza­tion Society. He is not to be confused with his better-known son, Joseph Gales Jr.

2. See Thomas J. Hall to Polk, January 3, 1838.

3. The Bank of Washington was founded in 1809 and continued until 1886, when it became the National Bank of Washington. In 1838 William Gunton was its president.

FROM WILLIAM J. WHITTHORNE

Dear Coln. Farmington March 5th 1838

Our county elections were held at the different precincts on Saturday last and resulted as follows viz Hill elected Sheriff without opposition, Oakly & Magahy clerks, James V. Ewing trustee. In this district we had three candidates for Justice of the peace and two for constable. [Benjamin C.] Brantly and Lile A. Ewing were elected magistrates and young Hunter, son of the Coln. [Ephraim Hunter] beat Sqr. Long for the constables office. It is whispered once in while that Cahall will be a candidate for Congress in this district. I think myself he would get badly used up, if he runs against you. It is also thought and said by some that the self styled Whigs will use every means to get a branch of the new State Bank at Columbia and
March 6 1838

one at Shelbyville for the purpose of using them to forward Mr. Cahall. All this is only rumor, but I think it right always to be wide awake and guard you against anything of this kind. There is an old Gentleman of the name of Thos. Jones lately came near this village from near Franklin, Williamson County.  He has three or four sons. Perhaps it might be well to send him some reports at convenient times.

My Dear Sir I have relinquished the Mercantile business. I wish to remove South West. Will you my Dear Sir, do something for me in Wisconsin, if possible. I will expect to hear from you. I remain my Dear Sir your sincere friend.

W. J. Whitthorne

Addressed to Washington. Peculiarities of capitalization and punctuation have persuaded the editors to take unusual liberties in the transcription of this letter.

1. John R. Hill came from Virginia to Tennessee as a young man. A farmer and a Democrat, he was deputy sheriff for four years in Maury County. When Marshall County was created, he became its first sheriff, serving 1836–42.

2. Martin W. Oakley, first clerk of the Marshall County court, served in that capacity, 1836–46. David McGahey was one of the organizers of the first county court and was clerk of the circuit court, 1836–46. James V. Ewing moved to Bedford County from Virginia. He, too, was one of the organizers of the first Marshall County court. An extensive farmer, he was trustee of the county, 1838–55, and was chairman for some eight years.

3. Born in Georgia, Lile A. Ewing became a well-to-do merchant at Farmington. He was magistrate of his district for sixteen years and was a Whig. Col. Hunter's son has not been further identified. It is not clear which Long is intended here.

4. The Jones family has not been identified.

5. Wisconsin Territory was being settled rapidly at this time. It appears that the writer thought it was to the southwest instead of the northwest.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

Dr Col

Wilmington, Delaware 3 mo. 6th [1838]

The enclosed letter for Dr Duncan, I enclose to you, as being better qualified than myself to judge of its propriety. Of one thing I am certain. If the reports alluded to are not contradicted they will produce a powerful reaction in public sentiment and be of immense disadvantage not only to Dr Duncan and Mr Benton individually, but to the whole democratic party. On no account however would I be
willing for Dr Duncan to see this letter if I thought it would produce personal difficulty. Upon this subject you will please exercise your judgment.

JOHN O. BRADFORD

P. S. I would be much pleased to receive a copy of Duncans and Calhoun’s speeches,3 and also to hear from you when convenient.

1. This letter was not dated by year, but Bradford’s presence in Delaware established the year as 1838.

2. Apparently Polk did not forward the letter to Dr. Duncan. It is in the Polk Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. In it Bradford related to Duncan some statements allegedly made by Senator Bayard in relation to the Graves-Cilley duel. Those remarks, according to Bradford, not only covered “the name of poor Cilley with infamy” but also brought dishonor upon Dr. Duncan and Benton, who allegedly were involved in the matter, as well as upon the principles of the Republican party. Bradford invited Duncan to send him a “communication” on the matter that Bradford could make public. See Andrew Jackson Donelson to Polk, March 8, 1838.

3. The reference to Calhoun’s speech is probably to the one he made favoring the Independent Treasury Bill on February 15, 1838.

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN

Sir Washington City March 6th 1838

Colo Gayle of Alabama has handed to me the enclosed letter of Mr Eastin of Florida.1 I have no personal acquaintance with Colo Gayle, but take pleasure in laying before the President Mr Eastin’s letter. Mr Eastin is I believe known to the President.2

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Letters of Application and Recommendation, 1837–45, Department of State (RG 59), National Archives.

1. Col. Levin Gayle was a brother of John Gayle, former governor of Alabama; Thomas Eastin was married to their sister. Eastin edited the Nashville Impartial Review, 1806–08, before moving to Alabama and then to Florida. Eastin’s letter was posted at Pensacola on December 8, 1837. Col. Gayle did not get the appointment.

2. William Eastin, a brother of Thomas Eastin, married a niece of Rachel Jackson. Their daughter, Mary, was married in the White House to Lucius J. Polk in 1832. Below Polk’s signature there is a note written by W. C. Rives recommending Gayle.
TO MAHLON DICKERSON

Sir Washington City March 7th 1838

I take much pleasure in recommending to your favorable consideration my friend John O. Bradford Esqr of Tennessee, as a suitable person to be appointed Purser in the Navy. Very satisfactory testimonials in Mr Bradford's behalf, for the appointment of Chaplain in the Navy are already on file in your office. A few weeks ago he delivered to the President and to yourself letters from the late President of the U. States. He is a man of talents, of literary attainments, of fine moral character and business habits. I consider him well qualified to fill either the office of Purser (which he would prefer) or the situation of Chaplain. Should a vacancy occur in either situation, I will, in common with his numerous friends in Tennessee, be much gratified at his appointment.

JAMES K. POLK

No envelope has been found; presumably this recommendation was delivered by hand. The letter is in the University of North Carolina Archives, University of North Carolina Library.

1. See Bradford to Polk, December 18, 1837, and March 5, 1838. Also see Polk to John Forsyth, March 7, 1838.

TO JOHN FORSYTH

Sir Washington City March 7th 1838

I take sincere pleasure in recommending to your favorable consideration my friend John O. Bradford Esqr of Tennessee, as a suitable person to be appointed to one of the principal consulates abroad. He is a man of talents, of literary attainments and business habits. A few weeks ago, he laid before the President a very satisfactory testimonial from the late President of the U. States. Should a vacancy in the office of Consul in any of the principal parts of the South American States, or elsewhere occur, I will in common with his numerous friends in Tennessee, be much gratified at his appointment.  

JAMES K. POLK

No envelope has been found. Probably delivered by hand, this letter is in Letters of Application and Recommendation, 1837-45, Department of State (RG 59), National Archives.

1. In the spring of 1838 Bradford was appointed consul to Puerto Rico. See Polk to Mahlon Dickerson, March 7, 1838.
TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

Washington City March 7th 1838

A vote has this moment been taken in the Senate on the motion of Mr Buchanan (who acts you know under the instructions of his Legislature) to postpone the Independent Treasury Bill, until the next session of Congress. The vote stood for postponement 23, against it 29. The calculation now is that the Bill will pass the Senate, without the votes of Messrs Buchanan and Grundy, by a majority of 2 votes. Mr Rives's amendment will be rejected by a larger majority.

The vote in the House will be exceedingly close, though I think we shall pass the Bill, unless opposition members should be returned from the vacant Districts in Maine and Mississippi. Your letter in relation to the statement of Mr B. in his speech at the earlier session upon the subject of a Treasury Bank &c. has been received, and if necessary will be prudently used at the proper time. In the discussions that will take place in the House, the same allegation will probably be made; and if it is I will meet it. Whether the charge is repeated or not, I may take a proper occasion (in Committee of the Whole) to state your opinions as given by yourself, and as I know them to have been.

I have caused the Revd. Mr Muller's claim to be presented to the Ho. Repts. and had it referred to the committee on Revolutionary claims. Before this was done, I submitted the memorial & the accompanying papers to the Secretary of War, who caused a full examination to be made, and ascertained that the claim was not embraced by the existing laws. As however it falls within the equity of the acts granting commutation pay, and Bounty land, I think it likely that Congress may grant relief by a special act. I have this day written to Mr Muller giving him this information.

I have paid Mr Cazanov's Bill as you requested, and herewith return it to you, with his receipt thereon.

I regret to learn that your health has been so bad. As the warm season approaches, I hope it may be improved.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I have just learned that the Democratic Convention of Pennsylvania, assem[bled] at Harrisburg, have nominated Genl Porter, as their candidate for Governor; and unanimously resolv[ed] to support the nomination. The division in the Democratic ranks in that state is now healed; harmony prevails, and our political friends confidently calculate on success in the fall.
Addressed to the Hermitage. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. On March 26, 1838, the Senate passed its version of the Independent Treasury Bill by a vote of 27 to 25, with Felix Grundy and James Buchanan voting against it. Later President of the United States, Buchanan served in the Senate from 1834 until 1845, when he resigned to become Secretary of State in Polk's cabinet. Grundy was following instructions from the Tennessee legislature.

2. William C. Rives was trying to defeat the subtreasury plan by advocating the selection of twenty-five state banks as depositories for government funds.

3. On March 27, 1838, the House tabled the Senate's Independent Treasury Bill by six votes. The new members from Maine and Mississippi had not yet taken their seats.

4. John Bell. See Jackson to Polk, February 1, 1838.

5. Muller was an Episcopal minister in Clarksville.

6. See Jackson to Polk, February 2, 1838.

7. David R. Porter, wealthy iron manufacturer and farmer, was elected governor and served two terms, 1839–45.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr Sir, Nashville March 8th 1838

I am here to night with our friend [Robert] Armstrong & [Joel M.] Smith, the proprietor of the Union. The Editor of this paper does not seem to be realizing the expectations formed of him; but it is almost impossible to find any one equal to our wishes. The patronage now possessed by the paper would authorize its enlargement and it would be done if there was any certainty of a proper and spirited support of the editorial department.

The extra Globe contains one of the most able examinations of the Sub Treasury project that has yet been made. Mr [Joshua] Cunningham will republish it; and he will be requested to make an analysis of it, presenting the leading ideas in such an expose as will suit the common reader. We are desirous of seeing how he will execute this request, before we decide definitely upon the steps which may be taken to improve the Union.

I am without information from Washington since the tragical affair between Graves & Cilley.¹ We look upon this movement of the opposition as a bold attempt to fight away the odium of the bribe given by the Bank to Webb.² It cannot succeed. The death of Cilley cant wipe away the infamy of that transaction.

You need not feel uneasiness about the course of things here. In
my judgment this state will sustain Mr. Van Buren and protest the
draft which Mr. Bell has drawn upon her in favor of the Federal
party. We have many prejudices to remove and much to do toward
the correction of error in respect to the sub Treasury scheme; but as
the people are honest and intelligent there is no room to doubt the
success of a cause which is identified with their true interests.

The General improves slowly and I am in hopes will be able to
ride out in a few days. Nothing discourages him. The corruption of
the times he sets down exclusively to the account of politicians. The
people in his judgment are with Mr. Van Buren.

Remember me to Mrs. Polk.

A. J. Donelson

Addressed to Washington and marked “Private.”

1. William J. Graves, Whig member of the House from Kentucky, had
killed Jonathan Cilley, a Democrat member from Maine, in a duel on
February 24, 1838.

2. James Watson Webb was editor of the New York Courier and En-
quirer who, until he received loans amounting to more than $50,000 in 1831,
had been unfriendly toward the United States Bank. After he received the
loans, he reversed his editorial policy toward the Bank. Cilley's remarks in
the House on Webb's character led to the Graves-Cilley duel.

TO BLAIR AND RIVES

Sir,

House of Representatives March 9th 1838

In pursuance of the order of the House of the 1st instant, and in
reply to your request to be “allowed the privilege of the Hall” as
Editors and reporters, for the Globe, you are permitted to occupy a
place within the Hall, and without the bar of the House, on the
right and left of the Speaker's chair. This permission does not extend
to the open space on the South of the Hall.

James K. Polk

Addressed to Washington. Signed by Polk, this is a clerk's copy, in the
Princeton University Library.

FROM J. KNOX WALKER

Dear Uncle

N Haven [Connecticut] March 9th 1838

I received a letter from Jane a few days since containing the
gratifying intelligence that she would be at Washington in a few
days.¹
No doubt, (if she comes at all) but this letter will be full a week in advance of her. You will give it to her if you please the moment of her arrival that I may be notified of it as soon as possible.²

If she comes you may expect still another addition to your fastly increasing family in a very few days. And if not you will please forward the enclosed as soon as you learn that this is the determination.

In great haste.

J. Knox

Addressed to Washington.

1. This refers to Jane Clarissa Walker, Knox Walker’s younger sister. See James Walker to Polk, February 27, 1838.

2. The enclosure has not been found.

TO WILLIAM M. BYRD,¹ ET AL.

Gentlemen Washington City March 10th 1838

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 20th ultimo,² informing me that I had been chosen by the Dialectical and La Fayette Societies of La Grange College,³ to address them on the sixth of June next, being the day before your annual commencement. Properly appreciating the honor which has been thus unexpectedly conferred, it would give me pleasure if it was in my power to visit your institution at that time; but as my public duties will probably detain me at Washington until late in June, I must beg through you respectfully to decline the duty which has been assigned me. Tendering to the literary societies of which you are members, my profound acknowledgements for this mark of their respect. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to La Grange College, Alabama, and marked “Copy.”

1. A native of Mississippi and one of the 1838 graduates of La Grange College, William M. Byrd was elected to the Alabama legislature in 1851 and served on that state’s supreme court for three years beginning in 1865.

2. The other signers of the letter were W. G. Fleming and R. F. Matthews. Byrd later served in the Alabama legislature. Fleming and Matthews are not further identified.

3. La Grange College was a Methodist school founded in Franklin County in 1830. Later it was moved to Florence and renamed Florence Wesleyan University.
FROM CHARLES DOUGLAS¹

New London, Connecticut. March 10, 1838

Douglas says that Grundy's letter to the Tennessee legislature is an admirable document, and he hopes that those members who have been misled by John Bell will be shamed when they read it.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Apparently a physician, Douglas applied to Polk several times for aid in obtaining a federal job. In 1845 Douglas declined Polk's offer of a consulate in Brazil, but in 1847 he accepted a position as Commissioner of Public Buildings in Washington.

FROM WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD JR.

My dear Sir, Raleigh [North Carolina]
10 Mar 1838

I have been confined to the house for 12 days with a most distressing disease, at present partially releaved but not wholly so. Still I am easy eno[ugh] today to think about politics and write you a short letter. It is not necessary for me to say to you that I can safely be trusted in the matter about which I wish to propound an enquiry and it is altogether inconceivable with me how a man like you can be unable to answer me. In a word then I desire to know for my own individual conduct whether the Independent Treasury Bill is to pass your House or not? No one shall know it if you will frankly answer me on this point & it is important to me to know it, as the knowledge of it is essential to me in determining the particular course of certain essays I have been preparing for the Meridian of N. Caro.¹ My own opinions do not depend at all upon the determination of Congress whilst it is obviously injurious to the success of the Admn. to lead off the people of this State in a direction whence it shall afterwards be necessary to recede, for in receding many will refuse to follow and be changed from friends into foes. Again, I shall probably find it necessary to retire from the Legislature at least one session and up to the present time it is wholly unknown, and a knowledge of the probable fate of the Bill will be useful to me and our cause; to me in determining the point of time for avowing this necessity, to our cause in improving that occasion to strike a blow for its success.

The very nature of this letter imposes the seal of confidence and I rely upon you to preserve it unbroken.

Our State has not a conservative within its borders, not one. The
chain of Virga. influence is broken, and the Old dominion will never be as she was till the democrats teach her that they can walk without her crutches and if they cannot they will dare to try it. Clay is trumpeted to the Union as a No. Caro. candidate. Not so, not so. A few Editors have nominated him, no more. Not a publick meeting has spoken it and very few others besides the old Adams party will vote for him. Even the Editors when their articles are closely scanned have not all ventured beyond a point of retreat. But I expect you will agree that it is too early to commence counting votes yet. You have always reckoned upon Tennessee coming right. I doubted it before when you was sanguine. I fear she will not cast off the "malign influence" that controls her for many years to come, yet "spero meliora."

Pray answer my letter as soon as you can. Mark what I say: Nothing specially occurring to disappoint our hopes, No Caro. is as surely in favor of Mr V. B's re-election as he lives to run again.

But my good old friend Col [Richard M.] Johnson will have to throw up, and the Vice Pres. must come from the South. It is not too soon to think of the mode & manner of bringing about this. I esteem the old Col. very highly; I supported him very heartily; preferred him to [William C.] Rives at the last election. But the people of our State will not support his re-election. Especially our new allies cannot be expected to do it and he ought not to wait to be asked out. Indeed, his proper course is to make it known sua sponte that he means to retire. He relieves himself and his friends by this course.

It will be a fatal policy if early action is not had upon this subject. The opposition are laboring to unite the South in base hostility to the Admin. & nothing beyond it, whilst they are combining the North & West against V.B. & for C. or W. or any other, meaning however no other. As soon as we can begin to talk of a Southern V. Pres. it will stop their operations here & in the South & embarrass them in all other sections. What a mess old Judge W[hite] made of it!! If no one else does it I shall some of these days write to the old Col. myself, impertinent as he & others may think it is. My personal respect for him might make it painful to do but the interest of the country depends upon the success of our cause and that cause cannot prevail if we adhere to Col J. as Vice Pres. The people did not elect him. He gave us not a vote in Electoral Colledge, probably lost several and if he has not the sagacity to see and the patriotism to feel that he ought to retire, then is he wanting in the elements that are requisite to constitute a fitness for the post. All which (though it
might be done in different words) I should certainly say to Col J.
himself if I were in Congress & thereby associated with him.

I look for an answer to this letter soon, very soon & with the best
respects of Mrs H & myself to Mrs P. . . .

WM. H. HAYWOOD JR.

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in McPherson,
editor, "Unpublished Letters," North Carolina Historical Review, XVI,
328.

1. Unidentified.
2. The editors have disagreed at several points with the editorial version
of this letter mentioned above. The greatest divergence comes upon this
word, which we believe to be trumpetted; the McPherson rendition reads
reempitted.
3. Spero meliora, "I hope for better things."
4. Sua sponte, "by oneself."
5. This seems to be a reference to Clay and Webster.

FROM JOEL M. SMITH

Nashville. March 10, 1838

Smith fears that Joshua Cunningham, the new editor of the Nashville
Union, will not give the Democrats the vigorous support they need and
asks for Polk's views. Smith believes that a man who can handle the
editorial department with skill and ability can be procured.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM ISAAC J. THOMAS1

Dear Sir [Columbia, Tennessee March 11, 1838]2

On the subject which we have often spoke of when together I am
waiting with desire to be employed by the government. I would go
to Europe, to South America, or to Wisconsin in an appointment that
would have that dignity & advantage that you would think I ought
to act in. Mr Grundy I hope will be with you in forwarding my
prospect & claim if an opportunity should offer.

The politicks of our county stand much as they have done. Mr.
[Terry H.] Cahal is about Columbia with his Wife.3 I had a conversa-
tion with him a few days ago. He is still a United States Bank man.
On the subject of Mr Grundys letter4 he did not say much, altho I
brought it up more than once. There is some sentiment in our
March 16 1838

county about a Branch of the New State Bank. Mount Pleasant want it & Columbia want it, both parties petitioning the Honorable Board at Nashville for a share in an institution that there is much danger will bring down our state.

I have Received several Documents from you with Mr. [Alexander] Duncans speech⁵ re Mr. Grundy's letter & the first No. of the extra Globe. They all Breath the Spirit of Mount Vernon, Monticello, & the Hermitage. You will please to send me one copy of the extra Globe & pay the printers fee & I will pay you on sight. The No. I Received is an excellent, Faithfull, & clear expose of the administration in relation to the publick money. (I read Mr Grundys letter with a great deal of pleasure. Nothing could have been better timed. It must make the Whigs feel like a goat in the Ball Room). Present my compliment to him. You Both have my ardent prayers for your Success in contending for & Supporting the principles of our great & unparalleled constitution.

I have written you a long letter but you will Receive it as an expression. . . .

ISAAC J. THOMAS

Addressed to Washington.

1. A native of North Carolina, Thomas moved to Maury County in 1814 and practiced medicine there for many years. He served one term in the state legislature, 1825–27. James H. Thomas, a future law partner of Polk, was his son, as was John A. Thomas, a graduate of West Point.

2. There was no place or date at the top of the letter. Except for the year, this information was taken from the postmark. The text of the letter places it in 1838.

3. Cahal married Anne C. Saunders in Sumner County on March 9, 1837.

4. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, February 4, 1838.

5. See John W. Childress to Polk, January 14, 1838.

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN

Sir

Washington City March 16th 1838

Understanding that a vacancy has recently occurred in the office of Inspector of the Penitentiary in the District of Columbia, I take much pleasure in recommending Mr Eliezer Lindsley¹ as a suitable person to fill it. Mr. Lindsley is a reputable citizen, and I have no doubt will, if appointed discharge his duty faithfully. I have known him for many years, and shall be much gratified at his appointment.

JAMES K. POLK
Addressed to Washington. This letter is in Letters of Application and Recommendation, 1837–45, Department of State (RG 59), National Archives.  
1. Unidentified.

FROM CARUTHERS, HARRIS & COMPANY

New Orleans, Louisiana. March 17, 1838

The firm acknowledges receipt of forty-six bales of Polk’s cotton. Some of the cotton has been wet, but this will probably not cause serious damage. They also report that they have not obtained a settlement with the underwriters for some cotton that has been lost.  

Addressed to Washington.

1. This commission firm of Madison Caruthers and Adlai O. Harris had existed since 1834. Caruthers once had been Polk’s law partner in Columbia. Harris had married Polk’s sister Naomi, who died in August 1836.

2. This was probably cotton that Polk had aboard the *Gladiator* when it sank in January 1838. See Caruthers, Harris & Company to Polk, June 8, 1838, and George W. Bratton to Polk, November 24 and December 24, 1838.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Columbia March 18, 1838

Jane [Clarissa Walker] started to-day in company with Mrs. Johnson for Washington. I have doubted some whether I ought to have let her gone or not. It seemed to me rather an unnecessary expense in these times of difficulty in raising money. I feared too, that instead of the trip improving her and giving her a just notion of the country, she hears much of, that she may imbibe false notions, and instead of gaining a correct judgment, become extravagant in dress and expectations. However she begged me out of it and I may or not regret her trip. I do not wish her to remain long at Washington, and for that reason very particularly desire to be able to form a pretty correct opinion whether or not it will avail me anything in our claim to visit Washington this spring. I should like very much to go on in April, (if it would do any good in my business) remain a short time at Washington, take Jane to New Haven, and bring her home. Please write me, as soon as you can give me an opinion I ought to act on, upon this subject.

I have given Johnson $200 Ten. money to get exchange, pay her exps. to Washington, and to give her the ballance for pocket money. I have to-day sent to C. A. Harris the Post office acknowledgements for the Huntsville Routes for the last qr. of 1837. The amount due on the
orders I forwarded to him will be about $600. There may be some draw backs on this sum, and Harris is in advance a small sum for me which he will retain out of what he gets. I have requested him to hand over the ballance to you out of which I wish you to forward Knox [Walker] $200, as early as convenient and retain the ballance for Jane's expenses at Washington. What more is necessary for her I will forward. Please advise me how much Harris pays over to you, and how much will be necessary in addition for Jane's use. Sarah will be the judge of what is necessary in the way of dressing &c. I do not wish her to indulge in any extravagance, but to have whatever is necessary & proper.

I suppose you are so accustomed to the continual slang and abuse of the Republican Banner, the Whig, and Observer, that it has ceased to cause you any emotion. The next Democrat will notice them, I think with severity, and [throw]³ little [Allen A.] Hall into a furious rage. These fellows [deserve] no other treatment but scorn and contempt [when] it is necessary to notice & express them. I am go[ing] to Nashville to-morrow, will see J. M. Smith. The Union is still of little or no account. [John O.] Bradford done better than [Joshua] Cunningham. By the way what has become of Bradford?

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Which Johnson family remains obscure.
2. This refers to claims for supplementary payment on mail contracts on which Walker allegedly had lost money.
3. Editorial insertions shown in brackets in this paragraph are made necessary by mutilation of the manuscript.

FROM GEORGE W. JONES

Dear Sir. Fayetteville Ten. March 19th 1838

Some short time since I received pr your favor a specimen number of the Extra Globe and prior thereto some other public documents. For your kindness accept my acknowledgements and thanks.

There seems to be almost a perfect political calm amongst the people in this quarter notwithstanding the extraordinary exertions of the Whig press to arouse and excite the prejudices (not to inform the judgments) of the people against the Democracy of the nation embodied and fully personified in the measures and policy of the present administration. The name of Machivaelian¹ as used to illustrate the
acts and intrigues of corrupt and designing Politicians is I think doomed to irrevocable oblivion in order to give place to the more significant term “new born whiggery” (Clay—Biddle—Bankism). But all will not do; their acts will be unavailing. “Mr. Clay can’t shine here.” Tennessee is democratic to the core, no mistake, and will manifest herself and sustain her ancient principles whenever the issue shall be fairly made; principles to which she is attached by the ardent devotion of her unchanged and unchangeable first son.

Tennesseans supported Judge White because they believed him to be a sound Republican, “true and faithful,” devoted to the great principles of democratic Government, opposed to all the doctrines of the “Federal School” in whatever party name they should be attempted to be brought into the administration of the General Government or under whatever available leaders.

Tennesseans will oppose Mr Clay because they are satisfied he was guilty of “corrupt bargain and intrigue” in 1825; because they are satisfied he is in favor of the establishment of a National Bank, by means of the Power of which the “Federalists,” should they “again come into power,” would be greatly enabled to establish by construction of the Constitution such a Government as their predecessors sought to have established expressly by the convention which formed the constitution; because they are satisfied he is in favor of a “protective tariff” and consequently of his own darling Federal consolidating System of Internal Improvements by the General Government, his odious and anti-Republican “American System.”

Tennesseans will oppose Mr Clay because they believe he is identified in feeling and bids fair to be in practice with the fanatical Abolitionists of the North whose design is to deprive us of our property if they can, and if not, to excite the slaves to insubordination and rebellion, subject us to a war more cruel and sanguinary than any ever had with the savage Indians, the uncultivated “children of the forest.” In short to deluge the entire South with blood.

Enclosed I send you five dollars on the Alabama Bank for which you will please have forwarded Six copies of the Extra Globe, which agreeable to the Prospectus is the number for $5. To witt.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>James Bright</td>
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<td>Andrew Buchanan</td>
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<td>John Goodrich</td>
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<td>Gideon Lay</td>
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<td>George W Jones</td>
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The editors of the Globe will signally favor the Democrats of this town if they will send to the Editor of the Standard of the Union. Express ship regularly, as by that means we could get the news much early than present.

Your attention to the above request and to having the Extra Globes forwarded promptly, back number and all, will much oblige your political and Personal friend.

GEORGE W. JONES.

N.B. Should Mr. [Thomas Hart] Benton make a speech on the Independent Treasury bill please forward me a Pamphlet copy.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Niccolò Machiavelli, early-sixteenth-century Florentine statesman, espoused a political doctrine affirming the right of a ruler to use unscrupulous means to maintain strong central government.

2. A weekly newspaper in Fayetteville, the Standard of the Union was established in 1836 and terminated in 1838. W. L. Berry was the editor in May of 1837 and presumably still ran the paper at this time.

FROM ANNE ROYALL

Dear Sir

Washington D.C. March 19th 1838

I am very sorry to trouble you once more on the subject of Col [John W.] Hunter (Asst Doorkeeper of the House). Having indispensible business with some of the members (whom I was unable to find at their boarding houses) I went to the capitol a few days since, & with a view of avoiding this man & his insolent crew of boys I withdrew as privately as possible into the lobby that leads to the lady's gallery west of the Post office & as far from Col. Hunter as I could get. I was not their long however before a parcel of rude boys rushed in & commenced an attack by shouting & all manner of insolent epithets. The messenger who has care of the lobby or who happened to be there, a very amiable man by the name of [Samuel] Goldsmith, very gallantly pushed the boys out & reprimanded them sharply & as he turned round from the door one of the little ruffians had the impudence to run up behind him & kick him! & the man turning round to see who it was, took the insult in silence. The boy was very small, about eight or nine years old. Upon inquiry I found his name to be Scovel, a grandson of Col. Hunters! To ascertain whether Col. Hunter was privy to this conduct I walked to his door & without entering complained to him of the fact of his grandson. His scorpion eyes glistened with rage & he jumped up & came out & ordered me out of the capitol & if I did
Correspondence of James K. Polk

not go out he would put me out, calling me old Hag & using such like language & raised his hand as though he intended to strike me. This happened near the door of your room where you were then present & I sent in your messenger for leave to come in but you were engaged with company at the time & referred me to call at your Boarding house. I have done so several times but was always told that you were either out or engaged. But Hunter, after escaping from him I went into the Post office & craved the protection of some of the members who had just come in. Some time after this the old ruffian had the effrontery to follow me in there & in the presence of the members exclaimed, you old hag or old something to that account. "I'll have you indicted before the grand jury." Such conduct is insufferable. I trust you sir will put in a speedy remedy. I some times think the man must be hired to do so or what inducement can he have. I hope for the honor of the chair at least you will turn out the little ruffian as I do not wish to make an expose of it. Twenty-six of this family are now pensioned upon the government.

Anne Royall

PS Please present my best respects to Mrs Polk & say to her, her party the other evening has gained for her much praise. All parties, both Ladys & gentlemen, pronounce it the genteeltest party that has been given this winter by far.

NB This is the third time, Sally [Sarah Dorret Stack] once myself twice, that the boys have mobed us.

This letter was written at the Capitol and delivered by hand.

1. Anne Newport Royall wrote several books describing her travels in the United States, but she was better known for two newspapers that she published in Washington, Paul Pry (1831–36) and The Huntress (1836–54). Her acidulous pen was dreaded by public figures, and it was charged that she practiced a sort of blackmail by threatening to castigate persons in her publication if they did not extend special favors to her.

2. Not further identified.

3. Sarah Dorret Stack was Mrs. Royall's chief assistant in conducting her gossipy news columns.

FROM JONAS E. THOMAS

Dear Col. Columbia March 21st 1838

I owe you an appology for not writing to you before, especially while at Nashville. I did not do so because I understood from Majr. Donaldson [Donelson] and others that you had been advised of all
our movements there in due time both upon the subject of our attempt at organization as a party and also with the proceedings of the Legislature which might interest you, and I did not, therefore, trouble you with a letter. I rec'd. in due time your letter enclosing the anonimous letter\(^1\) to you with the prospectus of the Globe. There never was any thing said about it, whoever done it kept it a profound secret. I compared the hand writing with that of some Gentlemen whom I supposed might have been guilty of such an act, but could make no discoveries; and as there was not a word said either publickly or privately, so far as I could ascertain on the subject, I said nothing myself.

We have no local news here; we look to Washington now for all the news of the day. I take it to be settled now that Mr. Clay is to be the opposition candidate for the Presidency. Some say that in that event Clay will get Tennessee, that she never will consent now to go into the support of Mr. V. B. and his administration and that therefore taking it as a choice of evils (as they say), she will go for Clay, and I find some of the Whigs falling into the support of Clay, but I cannot believe myself that Tennessee can vote for him; however you know strange things take place in these latter days and this may be added as another one of the political miracles of our times.

I am requested by some of Dr. [Richard C.] Hancock's friends here to solicit if consistant with your feeling your influence so far as you can consistantly do so in his behalf to enable him to get the appointment of Marshal in Mississippi for which he is an aplicant. You are acquainted with the Doctor and know that he is a man of character and sufficient capacity to meet all the responsibilities of the office. He represented Williamson County you know in 1835. In the spring of 36 he moved to Miss. and has since been elected to the Legislature there by an overwhelming vote in the county where he settled.\(^2\) I should be gratifyed myself for him to get the appointment inasmuch as he was virtually ostracized in Williamson on account of his politicks.

I have received divers documents from you for which I acknowledge my obligations and return you my thanks. I have no doubt but that the oposition in your district intend to give you a race at the next Election if you should be a candidate. I believe that your leading political enemies are now daily at work.

Let me hear from you. Give respects to H. L. Turney and Mrs. Polk.

I will write to you at any time when I think I can give you any information or news which you would like to hear.

_Jonas E. Thomas_
Addressed to Washington.

1. This probably refers to an abusive anonymous letter to Polk, dated February 22, Maury County. It was postmarked at Franklin, Williamson County, on February 26, 1838.

2. This is a reference to De Soto County, Mississippi.

FROM POWHATAN GORDON

Williamsport. March 22, 1838

Saying that Polk's mailing list for his part of Maury County needs revision, Gordon suggests a number of names to be omitted and an equal number to be added. He requests Polk's help in getting improved mail service for his vicinity.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOSHUA CUNNINGHAM

Sir.  

Nashville, March 23d, 1838

I hope you will not think I am taking an improper liberty in presuming to address you without the pleasure of being able to plead a personal acquaintance as an excuse. You are aware, I suppose, that I have been acting as the editor of the "Union" since last November, and the common interest which we both feel in the success of the principles we advocate, must be my apology for the few thoughts which I shall presume to offer. In one of your letters to Mr. Smith, shortly after I took charge of this paper, you remarked that it contained too little editorial. If you will consider all the circumstances, I think you will be disposed to change your opinion on that point. It is but a very short time since I became a resident of this State, and an undue forwardness in mingling in its political contests would have exposed me to the charge of presumptuous interference, and give my opponents an advantage over me which they were anticipating, and prepared to have used without mercy. I was also an entire stranger, ignorant of the local politics, and much of the local history of the politicians around me, and without that knowledge of our friends here, which might have enabled me to supply the deficiency to some extent.

Under these circumstances I judged it best to pursue a very moderate course for a while, and in the meantime to endeavor to make myself acquainted with the state of things around me, so as to be prepared to take a more active part when the proper time should arrive.

I may be mistaken, but the proper course of our party in this state
at the present time should, as it seems to me, be a moderate one. Our opponents have possession of nearly all the state offices, of a large proportion of the public press, and consequently, to a great extent, of the public ear. It should be our aim to maintain our principles with as little violence of language as possible, to extend the circulation of our papers, establish new ones, and, without any parade, to be prepared to take the field at the proper time under as favorable circumstances as possible.

One of the best methods, according to my judgment, of rousing the apathy of our friends, strengthening our cause, and insuring a full cooperation of our party, would be the holding of a State Convention a few months previous to the next general election. This would bring together most of the prominent men of our party from all parts of the State, ensure a free interchange of opinions, afford an opportunity for a complete organization of our strength, provide means for the communication of political information, and rouse up and reinvigorate the democratic spirit of the whole State. Nor need we fear that the opposition of the whigs to such a measure could produce an unfavorable effect, for they will either be obliged to resort to a similar measure themselves, or to take a candidate for the Presidency owing his nomination to a similar body. Every objection they could make might be retorted with the happiest effect.

From all that I hear, I am satisfied that we are gaining ground in this State; the full exposure which has been made of Mr. Bell's New England trip, and Mr Grundy's letter to the Legislature, have had the happiest effect. I draw my conclusions on this point from the expression of opinion around me, and from the correspondance of the office, which is very extensive. If Mr. Clay should be the candidate of the whig party, which present appearances seem to warrant, I deem it almost a matter of impossibility to carry this State for him.

I have thus thrown together a few crude thoughts, more for the purpose saying something, than with any hope of their being able either to amuse or interest you. I am well aware that you are much better acquainted with the state of public feeling both in this State and elsewhere than I can pretend to be, and should esteem it an obligation if you would occasionally favor me with your opinions when you find it convenient. I know that your public duties are of such an arduous nature that your time must be almost completely occupied, but perhaps you could find a few leisure moments to drop a passing hint.

Nearly the whole delegation in Congress from this State being of the opposite party, the task of supplying public documents to the
democratic press here must be burdensome to the democratic members, and I regret that but few have as yet found their way to this office. They are important as sources of reference, and I should feel under particular obligations to yourself and other friends for any attention on this point.

J. Cunningham

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Charles G. Greene to Polk, January 10, January 18, and January 23, 1838; also see Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, February 4, 1838.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir, Hermitage March 23rd 1838

Your letter of the 7th is just received. I am happy to be informed that my letter in reply to the speech of Mr. Bell which you had the goodness to send me has been received, and I hope an opportunity to use it may present itself. Mr. Bell I observe has found out more executive abuses, more corruption, but has not had the justice to name the officers guilty but criminates all and as usual makes general charges without specifications. This is the surest mode to slander & avoid detection, but fortunately for the communit[y] they have discovered that Mr Bell is prone to lying, & his charges, recoil upon him without injury to any one but himself.

I am proud to learn that the divorce bill will pass the Senate and I hope your house, and become a law. Rest assured that the people are firm in support of this measure, Mr. Richee, and our instructing Legislature to the contrary notwithstanding. Could it be otherwise? Is there a disinterested man in America that would advocate the receipt of our revenue in depreciated paper or intrust the revenue again to insolvent Banks, who make so many promises to pay & violate them all. I tell you the people are tired of depreciated rags.

The conservatives, are here, considered as identified with the Federalists, and I regret to say that Mr. [William C.] Rives has lost the good opinion of all the true Republicans and unless he unites with the Republicans (so soon as his ridiculous amendment is rejected) he is lost forever, & him & judge White will go down to posterity as apostates & Federalist.

I hope Mr. [Albert A.] Mullers claim may be allowed by congress. I have no doubt but it is founded in Equity.

I thank you, my dear Sir, for your kind attention to my little debt to Mr Cazenove. It gave me pain to make the request, but I could not
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get a [ . . . ] ten dollar note. Will you have the goodness to name to whom I shall hand over the amount you have paid for me & it will be promptly met.

I am aware how you are surrounded with business, but would be grateful to hear the fate of the Divorce bill. Be assured that Claibourn & Golston will be returned to Congress again by a very handsome majority. 4

Andrew & Sarah 6 unite with me in kind salutations to you & Lady & all friends. My health is slowly improving & I have a hope as the warm season opens it will improve so as to permit me to ride over my farm & visit my neighbours.

ANDREW JACKSON

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Jackson to Polk, February 1 and February 2, 1838.
2. Probably Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Richmond *Enquirer* for many years, 1804–1845. His paper was sometimes called the Bible of the Democratic party.
3. See Polk to Jackson, March 7, 1838.
4. Neither John F. H. Claiborne nor Samuel J. Gholson was re-elected to Congress.
5. Andrew Jackson Jr. and his wife.

FROM WILLIAM PATTERSON 1

Mansfield, Ohio. March 23, 1838

Patterson has heard that his brother was not reappointed as marshal for the district of Ohio. 2 He expresses great dissatisfaction with recent federal appointments in his state and charges that recent converts are being favored over the old faithfuls.

Addressed to Washington.
1. Patterson, a Democrat, was a member of the United States House of Representatives, 1833–37.
2. On February 7, 1838, Patterson had written to Polk expressing anxiety about his brother’s chance for reappointment. Contrary to this report, John Patterson was reappointed to the post that he had held since 1830.

FROM LEVIN H. COE

Dear Sir

Somerville March 25th 1838

The last Legislature as you no doubt are aware passed a memorial to Congress asking a relinquishment of the public lands S & West of
the Congressional reservation line. This embraces our Occupant interest{1} which is large & includes what may be termed the floating voters, those who know and care nothing about general principles in politics, who are swayed by personal preference or prejudice. In the three upper counties in this Congressional Dist and in the East half of Hardeman they are a majority. They also number strong in the other Counties. All together, ⅓rd or ⅙th at least.

The course Mr Clay has pursued in the U.S. Senate upon the pre-emption bill is looked upon as at war with this (Occts) interest. The District Telegraph² printed at Jackson which is in new hands & will be a supporter of Mr V. Buren at the next election, has broken ground against Mr Clay upon this question in the last number, in the shape of a communication. It will tell with a vengeance against him and make our success certain if he does not change his course when our memorial comes up to be considered.

Any bill introduced will in all probability lie over amongst the unfinished business both sessions. If there can be a certainty of Mr Clay taking a stand against the Occt interest it might be well to fasten it upon him even indirectly by his recorded vote against taking up the bill. If on the contrary there is the slightest shadow of doubt as to his course let the measure be introduced into the House and kept upon the table there. [Christopher H.] Williams & [John W.] Crockett will have a fee simple to their seats if they get it thro. It will also strengthen that weathercock Shields in the lower part of his Dist. The two first will set on unsteady seats if they fail & if Mr Clay does nothing to propitiate the Occts.

I find the Whigs already at work preparing to defeat me. Every sort of objection & every effort will be made. The Democracy will stand firm to a man and with the aid of Clays course &c. I have no doubt of giving them a drubbing by a good majority.

We will be at a loss for a proper candidate for the county as Mr Humphreys seems determined to run for no office whatever. We must persuade him out of this determination.

L. H. Coe

Addressed to Washington.

1. The occupant question had been political dynamite for many years. When the Western District was acquired from the Indians, settlers rushed in and occupied land to which they had no legal claim. The custom was, however, that if they remained on the land undisturbed for seven years and made minimum improvements, they were never removed. These occupants, or "squatters," were so numerous that a political leader who advocated removing them
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from the land they had pre-empted was doomed to defeat. Clay had been cool toward a bill that would have safeguarded the occupants' rights.

2. The Jackson District Telegraph and Whig Sentinel was first edited by B. H. Shepherd and later by David A. Street.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir, Clarksville March 25th 1838

I reed yours this evening of the 10th.¹ None will more deeply regret the failure of the subtreasury Bill than myself. I consider some such bill essential to the proper action of the Government in future. It is a misfortune our friends have been always cursed with a few straight jacket gentlemen, who wish the world to think them very independent, above party influence &c. We had better be without them. Shove them off above. The system would be popular here if understood. Every artifice & fraud is resorted to here, to deceive and mislead the people. I happened to day in the P. Office when the mail was opened & found 25 Whigs directed to [John H.] Poston the same number to Stacker & the same number to leading Whig just over the line.² I examined one of them & found they were the same number containing Clay's speech³ & supposed the State is flooded in the same way. They have the money & use it freely and unless some means can be used at Nashville to counteract such influence, we may again be defeated. We can do nothing here. [William] Overton is not worth a damn. He is worth 40 or 50,000 and lies upon his back twelve miles from town, day after day and week after week, reading novels or phrenology or some such stuff. We dont see him once a month. We intend telling him flatly that we give him up unless he sets to work. We can by a little pains return friends of the adm. to the next legislature in every county in this district. Robertson is the only doubtful one. I have written to Nashville & also to Grundy urging the adoption of some efficient course to counteract their schemes but I cannot hear of any movements. We lack then efficient active energetic men as much as we lack money.

Grundys letter is doing us much good, and the Extra Globe. I am taking some pains to give it circulation but then we can get here no money to transmit. But you may rely on this district. Our cause is stronger here now than ever before. I cannot tell whether I shall ever be a candidate. I am happy at home with my wife & 3 children; independent but not rich, and I dont see the sense of my entering again into politics. I have nothing to expect, hope, or wish for, from the public, tho I am perpetually harrassed by my old friends & many of my
former opponents to become again a candidate. My wife has just come in & I have read the preceding paragraph to her & she says it deserves a kiss.

I am much pleased that you have been able to procure an appointment for Cave. I read a letter from him declining to return. I was much pleased tho anxious to see him. I do not think his mother would ever consent to his returning alone to West point or with any company he could get. I have written him to day desiring him to continue with Mr Hallowell until the proper time to go to West point if Mr Hallowell [will] take him for part of the session, if not to get somewhere to a School & prosecute his studies until the proper time to go on.

I expect to make him some remittances soon which I must do thru you & which has been delayed owing to not receiving my money at Nashville.

I shall go to Charlotte tomorrow & will write you on my return. It is now bed time.

My best wishes to Madam & yourself.

C. Johnson

Addressed to Washington.

1. Polk's letter of March 10 has not been found.
2. The Nashville Whig had been re-established in January 1838. Samuel and John Stacker operated iron furnaces in Montgomery County in the late 1820s and early 1830s; which of the Stackers is referred to here is unclear. The reference to the Whig just over the line is obscure also.
3. Clay's speech in the Senate on February 19, 1838, on the subject of the Subtreasury was still a current item in the newspapers.
4. Caleb Hallowell headed the school where young Cave Couts, Cave Johnson's nephew, was currently enrolled.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir Washington City March 26, 1838

I have only time, to write hastily in reply to your letter of the 8th. I have been for some time satisfied, that there was not force or talent enough, in the Editorial Department of the Union. In truth I consider it wholly inefficient; and think our cause will suffer much, unless it can be placed in other hands soon. I received with yours a letter from Mr. J. M. Smith on the same subject. He thinks as I do, and expresses the hope that an abler man can be procured. I have set an enquiry on foot, in regard to two gentlemen of ability, the services of one of whom it is thought can be commanded.¹ One of them is a Pennsylvanian & lately edited a paper with distinguished ability, and Mr.
Buchanan says, is the ablest man in the country whose services there is any prospect of procuring. The other is a Northern man, highly spoken of by Mr Senator Niles of Connecticut.\(^2\) They have both been written to, and in a few days, I will learn, whether they would be willing to take charge of the Union and on what terms, and will write you. To command a man of the first order of talents Mr. Smith must expect to pay something more than he does to the present Editor; but he will be amply remunerated for it by the increased patronage which will be given to his paper.

You will see that the Senate have struck out Mr Calhoun's specie provision from the Sub-Treasury Bill; that Mr C. has on that account abandoned the Bill; but that it has been ordered to a third reading without his vote. It is deeply to be regretted that a few of the friends of the administration in the Senate gave way, and acted with the opposition to strike out. Still I do not think that that was sufficient cause for Mr C. to vote against the Bill. We must prefer the Bill with the specie provision retained, but it is better to take it without it than to pass no bill. I fear that all Mr Calhoun's friends in the House will follow his example, and vote against the Bill unless the specie provision is restored. On the other hand the body of the Conservatives will continue their opposition to it in any form, and we will not gain by striking it out as many as we will loose. Under these circumstances, I think it our true policy, and perhaps the only means by which we can hope to pass any bill, to take up and press the passage of the Bill reported by the Committee of Ways and Means. If we shall fail, we must next take the Senate Bill, or the next best bill for which we can command a majority. We must if possible pass some bill. The country requires it. I do not despair though. Since the vote was taken in the Senate, there is much dissatisfaction in the minds of many members of the House, and we will have much difficulty in uniting a majority for a proper measure. Make my respects to the General.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.  
1. Several persons were considered for the position as editor of the Nash-ville Union. It has been impossible to identify the two men of whom Polk was writing.  
2. John M. Niles had been a newspaperman prior to his long political career, establishing the Hartford Times in 1817. A Democrat, he represented Connecticut in the Senate, 1835-39 and 1843-49. In 1840-41, he was Postmaster General in Van Buren's cabinet.
FROM JOHN Y. MASON

My dear Sir,

South[ampto]n\(^1\) [Virginia] March 27th, 1838

I feel greatly obliged to you for the kind attention which you showed my uncle\(^2\) while in Washington, and especially for the affectionate terms in which you spoke of me. I assure you, the kindest feelings are reciprocated. I perceive that a vacancy in the Marine Corps has been produced by the death of Major Weed,\(^3\) and Mr. Young was impressed with the belief, that his son John F. would be appointed to the first.\(^4\) At his request, I beg that you will review the President’s recollection of his application, as I am aware in the vast multiplicity of business, such small matters are apt to be forgotten. Be pleased to drop a line to Nathl. Young Esq, Smithfield, Isle of Wight Cy. Va. in reply to this. I set out on my circuit in a few days and shall be absent for a month.

With the kindest regards to Mrs. Polk.

J. Y. Mason

Addressed to Washington.

1. Mason lived in Southampton County, but his post office was Hicksford, Greensville County. This letter was postmarked at Hicksford.
2. Nathaniel Young of Smithfield was a brother of John Y. Mason’s mother.
3. E. J. Weed was actually a captain who drew the pay of a major while Quartermaster of the Marine Corps.
4. See Polk to Mahlon Dickerson, May 24, 1838.

FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Dear Uncle

Columbia March 27th 1838

I would have written to you when Maj. Childress sent for the carriage,\(^1\) if I had not taken it for granted that he would write when he received it. When I received your first letter I had the carriage, Harness &c. rubbed up before Maj Childress sent for them. They were in good order.

Capt Wm Allen\(^2\) has not been in town since the receipt of your last letter. I will see him soon and arrange your note. If it is convenient you may let Mr Johnson\(^3\) have the amount as he will be in Washington about the time you receive this.

I have made a settlement with Dr Bretney for you, and as we could not agree I proposed leaving it to Jos Herndon Esq. and Pleasant
Nelson, to which he readily assented. The whole amount paid out for improvements, repairs &c was about $275. They decided that you should pay about ($60) sixty dollars. He is satisfied with the decision and has paid forty dollars on the balance of his note. I have renewed your notes in Bank by giving my note for one and A.C. Hays for the other. I have not collected my money from Chaffin but think I will get it out of him by the time it is necessary to renew your notes again.

There is but little doing or saying here in politics. The liberal of all parties agree in denouncing Messrs Graves & Wise for their outrageous conduct in the late duel.

Grand Ma has been sick but is now well enough to be up. Ellen [Walker] has been sick for a week or ten days; I think she is better though she is still in bed.

Aunt Ophelia has been unwell for some time. Dr. Hays thinks she cannot live long.

Give my love to Aunt Sally.

SAML. P. WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. See John W. Childress to Polk, January 14, 1838.
2. Except that he had been an officer in the militia in Maury County as early as 1819, nothing has been learned about William Allen.
3. Though he has not been further identified, it was probably this Mr. Johnson with whom Jane Clarissa Walker was traveling to Washington. It is clear, however, that it was not Cave Johnson. See Cave Johnson to Polk, March 25, 1838.
4. Joseph Bretney, a druggist, had rented a building from Polk. In 1838 he married a Philadelphia woman and moved away. Pleasant Nelson was a hotel keeper who had lived in Columbia for a long time. In the late 1830s he was clerk of the circuit court. Joseph C. Herndon was a Columbia lawyer who had rented Polk's home at one time.
5. Edward H. Chaffin was a prominent merchant in Columbia.
6. See Andrew Jackson Donelson to Polk, March 8, 1838.
7. This refers to Polk's mother, Jane Knox Polk, who continued as a resident of Columbia until her death in 1852.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Murfreesboro. March 28, 1838

Rucker forwards subscription money for the Globe extra and gives addresses to which it should be sent. He reports general disapproval of the behavior of William J. Graves and Henry A. Wise in the Graves-Cilley duel. Calling it murder, he says that they were merely doing the dirty work of John Bell.
408  Correspondence of James K. Polk

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Andrew Jackson Donelson to Polk, March 8, 1838.

TO JOHN FORSYTH

D Sir [Washington] March 29th 1838

In answer to your note of to day1 informing me that the Consulate at St. Johns Porto Rico is now at the disposal of the President, and desiring to know whether Mr [John O.] Bradford would accept it, I have to say that I have written to Mr Bradford who is now at Wilmington, Delaware, and will probably receive his answer in the course of two or three days. I think it probable that he will take it,2 and request that no nomination may be made until I can hear from him.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand. This letter is in Letters of Application and Recommendation, 1837–45, Department of State (RG 59), National Archives.
1. Forsyth's note to Polk has not been found.
2. Bradford accepted the appointment.

TO AMOS KENDALL FROM JAMES K. POLK
AND HOPKINS L. TURNLEY

Sir,  Washington City March 29th 1838

The undersigned have the honor to transmit herewith, two memorials, accompanied by letters from highly respectable citizens of the counties of Warren, Coffee and Bedford in Tennessee, asking the establishment of a line of Stage coaches, from McMinnville westwardly towards Memphis, Tennessee.3 Representing as we do a part of the country through which the proposed route passes, we are enabled, from our personal knowledge, to give the Post Master General, minute information concerning it. The proposed Stage line would pass from McMinnville, through the counties of Warren, Coffee, the town of Shelbyville the county seat of Bedford, the towns of Farmington and Lewisburg, the latter the county seat of Marshall, the town of Columbia, the county seat of Maury, the town of Mt. Pleasant, a part of the counties of Lawrence and Wayne, the town of Perryville on the Tennessee River, the county seat of Perry county, the town of Lexington the county seat of Henderson, to the town of Jackson, the county seat of Madison County, where it would intersect the Stage route al-
ready in operation from Nashville to Memphis. The estimated distance between McMinnville and Jackson is about 195 miles. The mail is at present carried on this route once a week on horse back. The country through which the route passes from McMinnville to Mt. Pleasant, a distance of about 100 miles, is one of the most fertile and densely inhabited portions of the State; while that portion of the route lying west of Mt. Pleasant, passes through the county towns, of Perry, Henderson and Madison Counties, each of which contains a large population, whose convenience would be promoted, by extending to them, the mail facilities which are asked. The great Eastern line of Stages at present in operation extends from Washington City, and Richmond thro' Western Virginia and East Tennessee (intersecting with the Stage line from Raleigh, N. Carolina at Knoxville) as far west as McMinnville. At that point the line diverges from the direct western route proposed, one line running Southward, by the way of Huntsville, Alabama, and the other to Nashville by the way of Murfreesborough, and then to Memphis by the way of Jackson. The proposed line would pass through the rich country lying between these two routes, leaving Huntsville to the left, and Nashville to the right, and nearly equi-distant between them, the distance from Huntsville to Nashville being about 110 miles. The road over which the proposed route would pass, is as good as the roads generally are, on which the mail is now transported in Stages in Middle or Western Tennessee. By an inspection of the map, the Post Master General will perceive, that the route proposed is the nearest and most direct from McMinnville to Jackson. Should the line of Stages be established as desired by the memorialists, there would be a continuous and direct route from the East to the Mississippi River, upon which there would be doubtless much travel and we are confident, that there are but few if any Stage lines now in operation in that section of the country, which accommodate a larger population, or a greater extent of country, than would be accommodated by the establishment of this line. In presenting the memorials of our constituents, we cannot too earnestly unite with them in desiring that the Post Master General may have it in his power, to grant the facilities asked. The Post Master General will perceive from the petitions before him, that different roads, are prayed for. In the county of Coffee the particular road over which the stage shall run, should the line be established, will of course be left to the decision of the Post Master General upon the petitions of the people interested in each route, and on the evidence which may be before him.

JAMES K. POLK
HOPKINS L. TURNEY
P.S. We call the attention of the Post Master General, to other memorials, in addition to those herewith enclosed, upon the same subject, numerously signed by other citizens of the Districts which we represent and which are now in possession of the Department.

J. K. P.
H. L. T.

Presumably delivered by hand, but no envelope has been found. This letter is marked "Copy" and is signed by both Polk and Turney. The handwriting has not been identified.

1. These enclosures have not been found.

FROM JAMES M. HOWRY
Oxford, Mississippi. March 31, 1838

In a long, discursive letter, Howry reports that mail service is so atrocious that people of his region are kept in ignorance of political developments for weeks on end. He hopes that the Subtreasury Bill will pass and thinks that the Tennessee legislature's instructions to its Senators on that subject has degraded the state. He reports that his health is not good and admits that he was foolish to leave Tennessee for the sake of a little property.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM SAMUEL B. MARSHALL

Dr Sir
Nashville 31st March 1838

The Lawyers of the Western district seem to think they will certainly get a United States Court at Jackson or Memphis this Session of Congress through the influence and exertions of Mr [John W.] Crockett[t]. He has written them at Jackson to that effect. The friends of Judge M. W. Brown, I mean his Whig friends, wish this court provided he can get his salary raised to $2500. The Bar west of Jackson want the court located at Memphis or Somerville & the Bar at Jackson want it located at that place. The Bar here say there is no necessity for a court at all & if a court is established in the district the United States Court will be so divided as to render it insignificant and lessen its respectability. Judge White has also written the Bar at Jackson that he will use his influence in getting the court. If the court is given the district Crocket will have the credit of it and he will be hard to beat. Col Brown2 of Memphis has written to Col [Willoughby] Williams upon the subject stating that they would rather postpone the court unless they can get it located at Memphis. So far as I am con-
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cerned I do not want the court. You will readily see, to divide my present district would lessen the business so as to make it not worth attending to unless one Marshal continues for the whole district. The Bar west of Jackson as you will see from the enclosed recommendation¹ wish me continued as the Marshal & if they get a court at all they want a district court with circuit court jurisdiction with the same Marshal, & to be held by the district Judge. I feel confident you will agree with me that the court is unnecessary but if it is allowed I wish to be continued as the Marshal and ask your kind aid in my behalf. Be pleased to show the enclosed recommendation to Col Williams & others & if necessary I can get others to recommend. This letter is for your eye alone.

The state of Tennessee will not vote for Mr Clay if Mr V. Buren & Clay run single handed. Mr V. B. will get the state. Mr. C.s invocations to Heaven for aid &c. & his speech is not much talked of but has lost him some of the strongest men about this place.² I mean men in the Country, farmers, & so it is in the district. I am pleased to see that the Treasury Bill has passed the Senate & I hope it will pass the House. It will regulate the shinplaster sistem. Our old friend Genl Jackson is improving in health. Present my respects to Mrs P. & Mr Grundy.

S. B. MARSHALL

Addressed to Washington.

1. Morgan W. Brown came to the bar sometime prior to 1830 and was, for a number of years, judge of the United States Court for the District of Tennessee. He died in 1853.

2. This is probably William T. Brown.

3. The enclosure has not been found.

4. At the beginning of his speech of February 19, 1838, in which he opposed the Subtreasury Bill, Clay said, "And I have thanked my God that he has prolonged my life until the present time, to enable me to exert myself in the service of my country, against a project far transcending in pernicious tendency any that I have ever had occasion to consider. I thank him for the health I am permitted to enjoy; I thank him for the soft and sweet repose which I have experienced last night; I thank him for the bright and glorious sun which shines upon us this day."

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir, Columbia March 31 1838

I enclose a letter to you addressed to Knox, because I do not know, but he may have dashed off to Washington upon being informed by
Jane that she was going there. A letter to Ellen, received a few days since from him renders it uncertain with me what he may do.\(^1\) If he is not at Washington when you receive this, please enclose it to him at New Haven. Jane will reach Washington, about this time. From the tenor of yours of the 13th\(^2\) I apprehend that I will not find it necessary to visit Washington this Spring, and consequently my views in relation to Jane will be disappointed. I hoped to have gone on about 1st of May, taken her to New Haven & brot her home. This I now think cannot be, and I am puzzled how she will get as far North as New York, and get home as soon as I wish her. Mrs Johnson may probably go to N.Y. about the right time, and it may be best for her to return home with Mrs Johnson.\(^3\) I would rather she would not spend more than 4 or 5 weeks at Washington a short time at Ph[iladelphi]a & New York, see Knox at Washington or further North & return home. I had hoped that yr. wife might wish to take some recreation as far as N.Y. and take Jane with her. Please write to me on this subject, and let me know if she has other chances than Mrs Johnson to get to N.Y. &c. & home. Mrs J. would suit very well, except that it might not be convenient for her to allow as much time at Washington &c as would suit Jane.

Please inform me how much Mr. [Carey A.] Harris pays over to you out of which I have requested you to remit Knox $200 and how much in addition will be sufficient for Jane. I do not wish it to be necessary for her even temporarily to draw upon your purse as I know your own & SWP.\(^4\) expenses must be heavy.

I feel a little discouraged about our Bill. I have however for some time been arranging my business so as to prevent feeling any serious inconvenience if it fails altogether. I know you will do every thing which you correctly can, and that Chapman & Martin\(^5\) will do so also. If you can not get it through, it cannot be helped. Write me when any thing interesting occurs in relation to it.

You will see that the [Nashville] Banner & [Columbia] Observer have been making a low & virulent war upon you. This has been repelled here in the manner I thought was proper. The degradation of these prints is provoking, but we must make the best of it. I do not like the Union man. He helps us but little.

James Walker

Addressed to Washington.

1. Knox and Jane were two of Walker's children, and Ellen was his daughter-in-law. For Walker's tentative plans concerning the travels of his children, see Walker to Polk, March 18, 1838.
2. This letter has not been found. It is obvious that Walker had not received it when he wrote to Polk on March 18, 1838.

3. See James Walker to Polk, March 18, 1838; and Samuel P. Walker to Polk, March 27, 1838.

4. Samuel W. Polk was in Washington at this time.

5. Reuben Chapman and Joshua L. Martin of North Alabama were members of the House of Representatives.

FROM ALFRED FLOURNOY

Dear Sir  Shreveport Louisiana April 2d 1838

Having moved from Tennessee and located myself in this section of the country I take the liberty once again to address you, and to solicit your aid in a little matter that I feel somewhat interested in. I have settled in the region of country recently purchased from the Caddo Indians on Red River. It is the finest country I have ever yet seen. The lands all yet unsold. An office I suppose will have to be established for the purpose of selling. If so, why not I, present my claims for an office as well as another. I have never sought any thing from the government, because I have never desired any thing. Now it would be a matter of convenience. I have encountered great expense in getting here, and the emoluments of a little office might in some measure reimburse me. What I desire is the appointment of Register if an office is established.1 I am no land speculator. My views are solely agricultural. I feel that I could render a faithful and honourable account to the Government of my acts if I were to get the appointment. I know you stand deservedly high with the President, and your recommendation would have its proper influence with him.

I have written to you, because I knew I was writing to an old friend. I do not wish however from that circumstance to be troublesome, or ask what you think I ought not to have. If any friend has a prior claim, or any individual has a right to expect your aid, my pretensions may at once be dropped. I have a much greater desire for an office to be located here, than I have to receive the appointment. If an office is located here, in the very region where the lands are to be sold, the speculators will not have the same opportunities for running us up on our improvements. I have written to the Hon. Alexander Mouton2 of the Senate, who was many years ago an old friend of mine. I have referred him to you. I have also written to Mr. Grundy.

If you can consistently with your duties as a member of Congress and your feelings as a friend render me any aid in this matter, it will be adding another, to the long list of obligations I am under to you.
Be so kind as to let me hear from you. Direct to Natchatoches. I beg to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Polk. . . .

ALFRED FLOURNOY

Addressed to Washington.
1. A land office was established at Natchitoches, but Flournoy was not appointed register.
2. Mouton was born in Louisiana but was educated in Washington, D.C. He was a lawyer and was prominent in Louisiana politics for a long time. After serving in the state legislature, he was elected to serve out a term in the United States Senate left vacant when Alexander Porter resigned in 1837. He was in the Senate until 1842, when he resigned and was elected governor of his state.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

Dear Sir

Washington City April 3rd 1838

I have received your letter of the 23rd ultimo, and in common with your numerous friends here, am much gratified to learn that your health is improving, and hope as the warm season approaches, it may be entirely restored. Death you will see, is again in our midst. To day both Houses of Congress will pay the last tribute of respect to the memory of our lamented friend Mr [Isaac] McKim, by attending his funeral and accompanying his remains to Baltimore, where he will be interred. The mortality which has occurred during the present session has been exclusively among the friends of the administration. Since December the administration has lost five of its friends from the House, three by death, and the two Mississippi members. However we may regret them, we must not repine at these Providential visitations. It is possible that in consequence of them, the great measure of the session, may be embarrassed, if not defeated. The vote in the House as I remarked to you in a former letter will be a very close one. We have a decided majority in favor of the principle of the divorce; but the difficulty is in uniting upon details. The South Carolina delegation & a few others will not vote for the Bill, without the specie provision is retained in it, while on the other hand there are a few of the friends of the administration who will not vote for it if the specie provision is retained. This is our present difficulty. We prefer the Bill with the specie provision in it, and nineteen twentieths of our friends will vote for it in that form, whilst less than a dozen may vote with the opposition and defeat it. Our present determination is, to take up and press the Bill of the House, and if after a hard and vigorous fight
we should loose it, then to take up the Senate Bill, as the next best measure we can carry, leaving it to a future Congress to supply its defects. I cannot encourage you, by saying that we will certainly succeed. Still I think we shall, especially if the five vacancies in the House are filled by our friends, before the decision is made. I will not neglect to notice and expose in a proper manner and at a proper time, the charges which have been made against you, in reference to your Bank opinions. In the discussions which will take place in committee of the whole of the House, an opportunity will probably be afforded me to do you justice, which I will not fail to embrace. The President is in good health and spirits. He will be firm to the last, and I have no doubt the country will ultimate sustain him.

I have had the Revd. Mr Muller's petition referred to the Committee of Revolutionary claims. I have seen Mr Craig, the present chairman, who promises me to give it early attention.

Make the kind respects of Mrs. P. and myself to your son and his good lady.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to the Hermitage, but the envelope has not been found. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. The two members who died, in addition to McKim of Maryland, were Timothy J. Carter and Jonathan Cilley, both of Maine. John F. H. Claiborne and Samuel J. Gholson, both of Mississippi, lost their seats in a contested election.

2. The Subtreasury Bill was the great measure of the session.

3. See Jackson to Polk, February 1, February 2, and March 23, 1838.

4. See Polk to Jackson, March 7, 1838.

5. Robert Craig represented Virginia in the United States Congress as a Democrat from 1829 to 1833 and from 1835 to 1841. Before and after his Congressional career, he served in the state house of delegates and engaged in planting.

FROM RICHARD M. WOODS

Greeneville. April 5, 1838

Woods thanks Polk for recommending him for Marshal of the East Tennessee District. He reminds Polk of his several terms of military service against the British and the Indians.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Abraham McClellan, Hopkins L. Turney, and James K. Polk to John Forsyth, February 14, 1838.
FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir  
Pulaski April 6th 1838

I am at home again having returned a few days since from Mississippi on account the sickness of my wife & child. I see it stated in some of the papers that a Bill is before Congress to establish a Federal court at Columbus.¹ I am very anxious that this should be done & therefore request you if consistent with your opinions of what is right, that you give it one of these strong surges, which I know you are so well able to do, when you are in the right humor.

We are all running to & fro, hunting up the speeches of the Senatorial Giants² & reading & commenting on them with the utmost freedom. On all hands it is conceded that Calhoun has sustained his position with unrivalled skill & power. If there is a full register of Debates now publishing in Washington order me one for the whole Session.

The Trumpet of Liberty has blown its last blast. Estes has been bought & Wm H. Field becomes the Editor.³ The administration is evidently gaining in this quarter & I see but little evidence that Mr Clay can get the state in any possible contest. The papers are giving it out that rumor has assigned the P. Office to Mr. Grundy. Is there any thing in this? I had desired a different arrangement. I wanted him to come home & stand a canvass for Governor, not for the purpose of being elected but to have a good reason for being in every County in the State & so settle the issue which has been made between him & his Instructors. It would afford him a fine opportunity to settle accounts between him & his enemies & would in my opinion completely prevent the state from throwing itself into the arms of the opposition so that if he lost the governorship, he would save the State. My opinion however is that he would be elected & even after that, might take position in the Cabinet or in some Foreign Mission. I know of no other man who could be half so useful in traversing the state as he could be. By taking it slowly & generally in a carriage he would not find it very fatiguing & if he did, each days triumph over any & all opponents would compensate him for the labor.

I see you are “being named” for the Vice Presidency & perhaps you would like to know “how it takes.” Our friends are a little backward in speaking out lest it should breed dissensions, but that point being overcome, “they will go it freely.”

I should like to hear from you soon as to that, & learn your views as to time places & manner of announcing the matter a little plainer & stronger.

Cultivate the friendship of the New Senator [James F.] Trotter.
April 8, 1838

You will find him a little distant in his manner, but he is warm & sincere in his friendships & wears remarkably well on acquaintance.

Forward documents speeches reports &c. to Fields in order to give him matter to go upon in his new Editorial career & a little job now & then to help out in the money line, if the like can be done in this obscure corner of the world.

I was very badly hurt by the upsetting of the Stage as I returned & so you must excuse the scribbling character of this letter.

My best respects to Mrs. P. & assure her that it is with great pleasure I have heard of no disputes about precedence between hers & the V. Presidents family.  

A. V. Brown

Addressed to Washington.
1. A Congressional Act of June 18, 1838, divided Mississippi into two judicial districts. The new federal district court for the northern district was established at Pontotoc, not at Columbus.
2. See Frederick P. Stanton to Polk, April 5, 1838.
3. Alston B. Estes and William H. Field [sic] had both been editing the Pulaski newspaper.
4. No details of this wreck or injury have been found.
5. In 1829 Sarah Polk had sided with the wives of several cabinet officers in refusing social intercourse with "Peggy" O'Neale Eaton. Richard Mentor Johnson, a bachelor, was the father of two illegitimate children by a mulatto slave, Julia Chinn.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

My dear Sir, Jackson, Tennessee. 8 April 1838

Your very satisfactory letter of the 17 ultimo found me here two or three days after my return from the Arkansas [Section?] where I had been "pitching the crop" and laying in supplies for the summers consumption. The land there, (opposite Randolph) is the richest and most productive I have ever seen but is too far north to be relied on for Cotton, and the operation in general is too onerous for my age & talents. Were I 20 years younger, I can conceive of no adventure that would suit me better. At my present age it is barely admissible & were I 10 years older it would be madness.

The Court is in session here. The judges are hurrying through the docket of trivial cases and will be off by the 11 or 12. All the lawyers are here, though little is said on general politics. They seem not to
have ardent preferences in men or measures. Miller was here for a short time yesterday, denouncing every thing in presence of a tavern committee. He seems to have no association with the lawyers or other public men and declared himself for a National Bank or any thing else rather than the d ____d corrupt set at Washington.

Martin strives to persuade himself that he can cease to care for the current politics, yet I have never seen him so anxious nor so excited. Like many others, he does not know what is the direction he ought to give his efforts, nor wherein does the chief good consist. He is, for the present, bitterly opposed to the success of Clay, Bell, Foster &c. His paper here has taken that course and will maintain it as against Clays present aspiration to the Presidency, yet he cannot come out affirmatively further than to say that V B. principles are more allied to the South &c. He has written a letter to Grundy suggesting that on failure of the Treasury plan the administration people could effectually cut off Mr Clays hopes by letting in a National Bank as the last resort forced upon them by the necessities of the times, quoting the parallel condition of Madison & the Republican party in 1816. Grundy has just returned a non-committal answer. He is also in correspondence with White & inter nos has just received a letter from the judge written after the final vote in the Senate in which White puts notes of admiration to Calhouns vote, speaks of "strange to tell," "inconsistent," "strange world we live in," &c all of which is worm wood to Martin, who takes pride in maintaining that Calhouns whole course has been perfectly consistent. From some of his throwingsout since I have been here I am inclined to infer that he would be more than willing to be taken up as the Anti-Clay Candidate for Governor at our next election.

Parker, the representative from Gibson County says that his people are for a Bank & agt Van B. Glenn of Tipton has been in several Counties & says that Clay will not take with the people. Both may be mistaken, & I apprehend that the people do not yet know their own minds sufficiently to make conclusive demonstrations.

Our last advices left you with the Senate Bill laid on your table by a decided majority. The motive of the vote we cannot conjecture; perhaps to take Mr Camb[releng's] bill & pass it in preference; perhaps for final quietus to the whole affair. Some of Mr Calhouns friends voted ag[ains]t laying on the table, perhaps from a wish to act promptly & reject without delay.

I am much inclined to believe that if you leave things as you find them that the cause of the U. S. Bank will gain strength before the meeting of the next session. The people are becoming more & more
impatient under the state of the currency, and Mr Biddle has it in his power to elevate & depress exchanges at any given point. It may be that by taking in & withdrawing all Kentucky money & making it good at his Bank its character is so much better than the Tennessee Currency, when in fact there is no difference in their relative solvency. So long as he refrains from paying specie he can at will stamp the value of the Western & Southern paper in the Phila. market and drive the trading portion of any recreant state to madness.

While the balance of trade is agt Tennessee in Philadelphia it is as easy to rate the Tennessee paper at 40 as at 4 per cent discount if the Tenn paper continues as at present irredeemable at the counter. This principle of capricious discount will operate more and more extensively if you do not make a permanent Treasury plan or a national Bank; and with us, the new state Bank will but increase the evil. It will certainly go into operation, sale or no sale of Bonds.

Daniel Graham

Addressed to Washington.

1. This letter has not been found.
2. Randolph was a Mississippi River town in Tipton County, Tennessee. At one time it was a rival of Memphis for river trade.
3. This probably refers to William B. Miller, recently a member of the state legislature. He was a son of Pleasant M. Miller.
4. Andrew L. Martin was a Whig member of the General Assembly.
5. In 1816 President Madison had signed a bill to create a second Bank of the United States although he had opposed the creation of its predecessor on constitutional grounds.
6. Calhoun voted against the Subtreasury Bill that passed the Senate 27 to 25 on March 26, 1838.
7. Felix Parker Jr., a Whig, represented Gibson County in the lower house of the General Assembly, 1835–41 and 1847–49. A lawyer, he also edited a newspaper in Trenton.
8. On March 28, 1838, the House voted 106–98 to lay the Senate bill on the table.
9. Churchill C. Cambreleng of New York introduced the Subtreasury Bill in the House of Representatives on March 6, 1838, but on June 25, 1838, his bill was defeated by a vote of 125 to 111.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

I received the package of seed you sent me a few days since, and have planted them by way of experiment, in the garden. I have also
received yours in answer to a letter of mine in which you ask me to enlarge the list of persons to whom it would be well to send documents. You will find at the end of my letter some names. I have selected such as I believed to be men of intelligence, and who would be likely to disseminate correct doctrines in their neighborhoods. The most of them live remote from this place and are not under the control of merchants & Banks. I have seen several of the persons to whom you have been sending papers. They are highly gratified, and have taken great pains in reading them in public places. The people of this county have heretofore seen but one side of the question, and the wonder is that the administration have so many friends. I hope by a little attention from the members of Congress and the exertions of our friends here the county will at the next election sustain the Republican candidates.

I set out on day after tomorrow for Alabama, and will probably be absent 4 or 5 weeks. Sarah will go with me as far as Mr Gilchrists; (Court Land) Mah has declined going altogether for various reasons.

I have been disappointed in getting some money I expected to receive about this time, and therefore can not pay at the 1st May as I desired. I have no doubt I shall get it before the 1st. June. You will please write to me by the time I reach home, whether you want to use it at Washington or in Tennessee. By that time I can ascertain to a certainty whether or not I shall fail to be punctual at the time agreed on and can advise you immediately. If my own resources should fail and I succeed in getting money for Mah in Alab. of which I have no doubt, I can borrow the amount from her. I promised to write to Sarah about this time, but must offer this letter & the fact that there is nothing new as an apology for not doing so. Tell her if I can learn any thing new in Alabama I will write to her from Tus Caloosa. We are all in good health. Our respects to Sarah.

JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Washington.

1. On one other occasion Childress had written the name of his home town as it appears here. Below, however, for some unknown reason, he uses a like form in two other instances: Court Land and Tus Caloosa, Alabama.

2. Childress appended twenty-six names, grouped according to post offices. Polk's letter has not been found.

3. The Gilchrist family here mentioned was closely related to William Gilchrist of Shelbyville, Tennessee.

4. For plans of a trip to Alabama by Childress's mother, see John W. Childress to Polk, December 20, 1837.

5. Childress had purchased Polk's carriage. See Childress to Polk, January 14, 1838.
6. Mrs. Joel Childress, "Mah," was the former Elizabeth Whitsitt. Her family had moved to Alabama, and she had inherited property there.

7. The first Sarah mentioned in this paragraph was Sarah Williams Childress, wife of John W. Childress; the other was Sarah Childress Polk.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Sir, Nashville April 10th 1838

I am in debt to Capt. Wm. A. Eliason\(^1\) of the Engineer Corps Three Hundred dollars, a check for which has been very difficult to obtain here. I have however succeeded to day in obtaining it, and must beg you to trouble yourself so far as to ascertain what it is worth above the money of the city and make the deposite for me in the Bank of the Metropolis to the credit of the Capt. The draft is on the Bank of Penna., Philadelphia, and I am told will be at an advance of 4 or 5 per cent in Washington. If so please sell it depositing Three hundred dollars to the credit of Capt. Eliason, and keeping the remainder in your own hands.

You must not be surprised at my troubling you with such a request. It is a matter of business which it is important to me should be promptly attended to, and I know of no one in the City that I could better call on than yourself to see that it is done rightly.

You are right about the new Editor and Smith will pay whatever we say is proper. I shall write you by the regular mail acknowledging the receipt of your last letter. No news here. The General has recovered usual health.

A. J. DONELSON

Converse with Mr. [George] Thomas on this subject. There is $200 more due from the transferee of A. Jackson Jr. which will no doubt be remitted as soon as this is.\(^2\)

A. J. D.

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."

1. Eliason was a native of the District of Columbia and was graduated from West Point in the class of 1819. He superintended the construction of several important fortifications before he died in 1839 at the age of 39.

2. This postscript appeared on the left margin of the letter.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir, Columbia April 10th 1838

Dr [John B.] Hays requests me to write you on the subject of providing for his note due the 11th of May. He has the money in
Tennessee funds, and has been trying hard to get exchange to remit to you. Eastern funds are nominally 20 per cent and really not to be had at scarcely any price. As the only remedy the Dr. could think of he has purchased & shipped Cotton to New Orleans to meet the debt. But the [sale?] cannot be made & funds remitted to Washington by the 11th. He will if in his power still purchase an eastern check & forward to you but this does not seem probable unless the new Bank [of Tennessee] commences operations and checks upon the North, which is confidently expected early in May. The present Banks it is said intend to issue eastern post notes at 12 mo in redemption of their circulation. And we hope that exchange will come down to or near par.

I apprehend the Dr. cannot make the remittance in time (perhaps he may a part of it) and the question is what is to be done. I think it best for you to see the President or some of the Directors of the Bank,¹ and see if they will not discount your paper for 90 or 120 days, to provide for the note, or agree to renew Dr Hays's note for that time. He can & will certainly pay it if he can get this extension. Write to him by express mail, if you want his note forwarded.

I have yours of 29th & 30th March, and will attend to contents.²

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.
1. Bank of the Metropolis. See John B. Hays to Polk, April 24, 1838.
2. These letters have not been found.

FROM DANIEL KENNEY

Dear Sir, Jonesboro, Ten. April 13, 1838

After so long a time I drop you an other line. I have not as yet heard from [Frederick S.] Heiskel. A few weeks since, I saw Mr. Gibbs of Athens Ten, who came to this place to buy [Thomas] Emerson's press.¹ He as you know is the publisher of the Athens Courier, an Administration paper.² Mr. Gibbs told me that some one had gone to New York to buy a press for Knoxville, the object of which was, to support the Administration. He promised me when he left here to find out all about it, and let me know. I have not heard from him yet.

The Whig Press of this place has gone down, but gone up to Elizabethton, Carter County, where it will do but little good to the Whig Cause. The simon Pure Whigs of this place tried hard to buy the press for this place but all in vain. The[y] wrote to Carter, I mean the Hon Wm B., for assistance. He sent on and informed his friends
that he would subscribe $100, but the bal could not be made up, and
the press was bought by an individual who resides in Elizabethton.

Upon a consultation with our friends here, it is thought best, that
you and any of our Congressional friends now in Washington, had
better frank any speeches, or public Doc. to the P.O. at this place and
in this way we can better distribute them with the frank only upon
them. This was the course pursued by Judge Grundy in his letter to
the Ten Legislature,8 which has had a most salutary effect upon the
public mind in this section.

The death of the Hon J[onathan] Cilley4 has produced the most
excitement of any matter I have ever known in this country; it is not
yet much allayed. I deplore it more than any event which I have ever
known. It haunts me by day and by night. It is too afflicting to write
about.

I am well convinced that the people of Ten. are fast getting their
eyes open to the true issue now attempting to be made up, between the
parties in the late Election for President, which is to transfer the White
party to Clay in this state. The intelligent White men here say that
this can not be done, that Ten. will never vote for Clay. This is true.

It will give me great pleasure to here from you if the tax upon your
time is not too burthensome.

DANL KENNEY

My respects to Grundy & McLelland [McClellan].

D K

Addressed to Washington.

1. Emmerson published the Jonesboro Republican from about 1832 until
1837. The paper supported Hugh L. White and, despite its name, was a Whig
paper. The press was not sold to Gibbs, however, but reappeared in Eliza-
bethton as the Elizabethton Republican and Manufacturers' Advocate. Gibbs
is not further identified.

2. The Athens Courier, a Van Buren paper, had been established quite
recently. It was edited by the Rev. Robert Frazier until 1841.

3. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, February 4, 1838.
4. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, March 8, 1838.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Dr. Sir, Nashville April 14h, 1838

It has been out of my power to visit this place, since I last wrote
you, sooner than to day. You are therefore without an explicit answer
to the inquiries in your last letter respecting the disposition of Mr Smith to increase the salary of an editor. If a suitable one can be obtained, such a one as Mr. [James] Buchanan or Mr. [John M.] Niles describes, Mr Smith authorizes me to say that he will pay $1500 for his services. This is as much as the patronage now bestowed on the Union will justify; but I have no doubt the accession on this score which would be the consequence of a spirited and talented head in the editorial department will soon increase the profits of the establishment; and in this event Mr. Smith will cheerfully vary the engagement with the editor so as to secure to his labors the just reward.

We are at present watching anxiously the progress of the subtreasury bill in the House; and the steps that are taking in the commercial cities to influence its character. There are diversities of opinion among our friends as to the necessity at this time of the specie provision which was stricken out in the Senate, but all agree that it is better to have the bill in this form than to have none. It is time for us to know what will be the action of the Government on the subject. We believe whatever this may be, that the moneyed interests of the country will be accommodated to it; and that the pressure none complained of will be relieved by the coming cotton crop.

Mr. Clay cannot get the vote of this state unless our friends are much at fault in the management of the questions that are identified with his name. We are at present, it is true, woefully inactive and inefficient as a party but there is time enough to rally and I am sure we shall as soon as there is editorial power in the Union. Send on this editor without delay, the sooner the better; and let him be instructed to communicate with no one on the subject but the proprietor of the Union at Nashville.

The Genl gradually regains his health and never loses confidence in the triumph which awaits Mr. Van Buren as the head of the Republican cause.

A. J. DONELSON

I sent you a few days ago a draft to be deposited in the Bank of the Metropolis to the credit of Capt. Wm A Eliason. Do not overlook this or forget to inform me of its receipt.

A J D

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, March 26, 1838.
2. See Donelson to Polk, April 10, 1838. This postscript was written in the left margin of the second page of the letter.
TO ANDREW STEVENSON¹

My Dear Sir  

Washington City April 19th 1838

I have the pleasure to introduce to your acquaintance, the Revd. Edward Philips² of South Carolina, who purposes travelling in Europe for health and recreation. I have not the honor of his personal acquaintance, but learn from his friends in Congress, from S. Carolina, that he is a gentleman of great respectability and high literary attainments. I know it will afford you pleasure to make his time agreeable during his sojourn at London.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to London, England. This letter is in the Papers of Franklin Pierce, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Stevenson was a Democrat from Virginia who was a member of Congress, 1821–34, and Speaker of the House, 1827–34. At this time he was Minister to England.

2. Philips is not further identified.

FROM PHILO WHITE¹

Dear Sir:  

New York, 20th April, 1838

I have had the honor to receive your favor of 17th inst.² My position here is permanent, if I choose to make it so. But the duties are un congenial with my habits of life, and of thought; and from choice, I should prefer some other vocation. But the Editorial charge of a tri-weekly paper, would be too arduous for me. Whatever I undertake, I "do with all my might"; and I found my health sinking under the management of my once-a-week paper at Raleigh. I feel certain, even if my mental powers were to prove adequate to the task, that my physical man would give way before the expiration of 12 months, under the labor of conducting the "Union." I verily believe, therefore, it would be imprudent for me to undertake it. Under other circumstances, I should covet no greater glory, than to aid in restoring the Democracy to its former ascendancy.

The discomfiture of the Democratic party in this State, is but temporary; our friends are rapidly recovering from it, and will carry a majority next fall. The enemies of the Democracy can only succeed when distress and panic pervade the land; the moment prosperity returns, the Democracy rise. Trusting your and your family's health is better than when I last saw you. . . .

PHILO WHITE
1. A native of New York State, White had a varied career. He went to North Carolina in 1820 and published the Salisbury *Western Carolinian* until 1830, when he was appointed Naval Purser at the port of New York City. He returned to North Carolina and established the Raleigh *North Carolina Standard*, a powerful factor in Van Buren's triumph in that state. After the election of 1836, he sold the paper and received a Navy Department post in New York. Later he moved to Wisconsin, and from 1849 until 1858 he served in various diplomatic posts.

2. This letter has not been found.

FROM ISAAC J. THOMAS


Dear Sir,

I have received the first regular number of the extra Globe & sir words cannot convey to you the pleasure & encouragement that I find in reading Mr Benton speech in defense of our glorious Administration. The true light in which he places our venerable & ever esteemed ex-President is truly amiable & just. He is a *toast*. The Report of Mr Chamberleng is also clear & satisfactory. My dear Sir, was I only at some point that I could give my feeble aid to you & our friends that are so ablely defending the rights of the people of our highly favoured country. Go on. The Blessing of *Heaven* will give you success & the aristocracy will be compeld. & must yeald to spirit of seventy six. Some of the noisy Whigs has become silent by the facts contained in Mr Chamberlengs Report & clearly established in that part of Mr Bentons speech that has come to hand in the paper, tho but few of them read it. Do send me a copy. Please present my compliments to Mr. Benton. Tell the Editor of the extra Globe to send my Number to Columbia. I will get it four Days sooner. The mail goes by Mount Pleasant & is only once a week.

I would rejoice to see you again in our state. The Whig Papers is untiring in misrepresentation but truth is eternal & will prevail. May the Banks cease to govern & the government cease to Bank.

ISAAC J. THOMAS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Thomas wrote the date below his signature and mailed the letter from Columbia.

2. Thomas Hart Benton's speech on the Independent Treasury Bill was delivered on March 14, 1838.

3. This was probably a report favoring the Independent Treasury, given
at the time Churchill C. Cambreleng introduced the bill to create that institution.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Bolivar. April 22, 1838

Bills says that Robert J. Chester, postmaster at Jackson, and John W. Fowler,¹ sheriff of Shelby County, are applicants for appointment as marshal in the Western District. He thinks both are good men and has no preference for either. He says he will be in Washington about the first of June.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Fowler was deputy sheriff in 1834. See John W. Fowler to Polk, July 11, 1834.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Washington City April 22nd 1838

I have received your letter of the 10th Instant, enclosing a check on the Bank at Philadelphia for three hundred dollars ($300), and have placed the same to the credit of Capt. Wm. A. Eliason in the Bank of the Metropolis according to your directions.

We have little news. The Independent Treasury Bill is in status quo. Its fate may & probably will depend, upon the result of the Elections in Mississippi, and to fill the vacancies, lately represented by Mr [Timothy J.] Carter of Maine, [Isaac] McKim of Md., and [John Mercer] Patton of Va.² It is not our wish to urge its consideration, until these vacancies are filled.

The select committee appointed to enquire concerning the late duel, reported on yesterday. They recommend the expulsion of [William J.] Graves, and that [Henry A.] Wise and Jones be censored by the House.²

In relation to the Union, I know not what to say. As at present conducted, it can render our cause comparatively little service. I have received several letters from Tennessee, on the subject and among the rest one from Smith himself, and have for some time been making diligent inquiry, for a person qualified to take charge of the establishment, but have not yet succeeded. I have not however despaired of success. I will know in a few [days] whether the services of a gentleman, of qualifications and experience, can be had, and will write to no one but yourself on that subject. When a person is found that will
answer, I will write you, and Smith can correspond directly with him.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville and marked "Private." This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Timothy J. Carter of Maine died on March 14, 1838; Isaac McKim of Maryland died on April 1, 1838; and John M. Patton of Virginia resigned on April 7, 1838.

2. Henry A. Wise and George Wallace Jones, delegate to Congress from Wisconsin, acted as seconds in the duel, in which William J. Graves of Kentucky killed Jonathan Cilley of Maine.

FROM WEST H. HUMPHREYS

Dear Sir

Lagrange [Tennessee] [Apr. 23, 1838]¹

I have received your letter in relation the office of attorney general.² I have declined the appointment and wish you not to present my claims for the station. Please notify those members of congress who have received communication from me, that may mention the subject to you, of my Desires upon the subject. My reason for this course are various which it is needless to enumerate. I wont expect to engage in politics again. Please accept my good wishes for the kind interest you manifest in my welfare and should be glad to reciprocate your kindness.

I know of no one whom I would prefer having the office of attorney general to H W McCory³ of Jackson. He is a young man of talents who possesses of more industry, ability, and knowledge of State business than most of the young men about Jackson. He is a decided democrat and is so from Principle without regard to men or party connexions. He is one of the few men about Jackson of the true faith. His appointment I think would give satisfaction. I have however no interest whatever in his getting the appointment except that I believe he is well qualified and that He is a democrat, honourable and poor.

One reason why I declined this appointment is that I began to doubt the propriety of extending the fabric or the jurisdiction of the federal judiciary. I fear that wing of federal power is getting too strong. Of this however I have only fears.

W. HUMPHREYS

Addressed to Washington.

1. This date was obtained from the postmark.
2. Polk's letter has not been found. For earlier information on Humphreys's desire concerning this position, see Humphreys to Polk, March 4, 1838.

3. Henry W. McCorry Sr. was a son of Thomas McCorry, a large landholder who moved from East Tennessee to Jackson about 1828. Henry McCorry received the appointment, but served as attorney general for only a short time. He is not to be confused with his son, Henry W. McCorry Jr., who was a distinguished lawyer in Jackson in the post-Civil War era.

FROM JOHN B. HAYS

Dear sir Columbia April 24th 1838

Yours came duly to hand. I had not been inattentive to the matter, but I have been totally unable to procure Eastern funds. Two months ago, I had arranged matters, as far as concerned Tennessee money. I did not then anticipate much difficulty in procuring funds that would be suitable at Washington. I endeavored to procure such money as would suit; also Bank stock. Several friends assisted me also, but we failed. I have spared no pains, and I offered to make any sacrifice rather than there should be a disappointment.

After failing, the mercantile gentlemen whom I consulted, advised me to purchase cotton for the purpose, which I did. I have purchased 45 bales of choice cotton for the purpose, which is directed to be sold by Caruthers & Harris as soon as received, to be, as soon as sold, remitted to me, or to you as may seem best by Mr Caruthers. In doing this I did all that could be done. I would feel as if I had been remiss, did I not know that the best mercantile and business men have had as little success as I have had in procuring Eastern funds.

I regret as far as concerns yourself, as well as the Bank, that there should have been a disappointment, but I hope that neither of you will be disposed to censure, or view me as having been remiss on the score of punctuality. Or in duly appreciating the favor which the kindness of the directory has extended to me, by their indulgence.

I have enclosed a note for renewal which I wish you to offer. I hope that there will be no difficulty after they receive the assurances that are here given of the great exertions and the willingness to sacrifice that I have made.

You can fill the blanks as to amount & extent of time, say 2 or 4 months as may be deemed proper. I have not sent money for interest because I have not any suitable, or do I know how much. And also because the cotton will bring more than the amount required to satisfy the note.
Whether renewed for 2 or 4 months the proceeds of the cotton will be sent to you as soon as sold.

JOHN B. HAYS

Addressed to Washington.
1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. For an earlier explanation of difficulties in paying this debt, see James Walker to Polk, April 10, 1838.
3. On the envelope, Polk wrote that Hays's note for $1,585 had been extended for two months from May 11, 1838, by the Bank of the Metropolis.

FROM WILLIAM H. FEILD

Pulaski. April 25, 1838

Feild says that he has just become editor of a Whig paper, the Pulaski Trumpet of Liberty, and asks Polk to send him such public documents as would help him in his new job. He explains that he is a Democrat and wants to avoid the heated exchanges that have kept the town in political turmoil.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM DAVID B. MOLLOY

Murfreesboro Apr 26 1838

We want Col [Thomas Hart] Benton's speech here on the bill to separate the Government from the Banks, in pamphlet. It is unanswerable. Tis just what we need to have circulate through the Counties. We can have Mr Bells speech on Indian affairs and Mr Websters, on the Subtreasury, Franked here by the Bushel by our Hon. Representative, but nothing on the other side of the question from him. I was Requested by some of my County men last winter, to ask of you the Favor to send them some public documents. The names of those Gentlemen I furnished Majr Childress, who addressed you a letter on the subject, they have since Informed me that you have attended to them, for which you have theirs, and my own thanks.

I herewith annex you a list of other names, who would be Pleased to Receive like favors. We are in high spirits; the Opposition are making a desperate struggle here to get the People to Huzza for Henry Clay, but it wont do. Republicans who voted for Judge White say they cant stand Henry nor Daniel, that they must go for Van buren. The state will soon be Erect. Go a head and fear nothing.

D. B. Molloy
Addressed to Washington.
1. Abram P. Maury of Williamson County.
2. The list contained the names of eighty-eight persons, together with their places of residence.

FROM JOHN CATRON


I have been home a week. The ex prest. was in Town same day, in better health than since his return from Washington. No political excitement here. The aspect of affairs better, & sounder than I had hoped to see. The new party (White) let into the Legislature inferior men, of rather lowly degree, in numbers to inflict odium on the session. The leader is forgotten, and the attempt to supplant him by Mr Bell, has created indifference approaching to enmity, in reference to the latter; and unless he does somthing during the remainder of the session to pluck himself up, the idea now afloat, that Peyton was the real debater and leader, will settle into a fixed conviction. I have not heard one young man, speak of the men in connection, since my return, who did not aver this to be the fact; and most declare Peyton had been chized out of his place, and the front rank, by adroit dezign. Foster's energies have sustained the party more than all beside. He acted on [Hinchey] Petway's judgment & was stimulated to the exertion. The excitement is off, & he will in future be, as he now is, a feeble timid neutral, more likely to go with his enemies than friends. He is flabbed down to a low state of torpor. The bread was withdrawn from Anderson,² as soon as he had performed all the Jobs, of dirty defamation, he was selected to perform, on the East Tene. people, and he is sent off to Vicksburg, in utter disgrace, where his last summer's eulogists & ardent supporters charitably predict, he will die the first year, a drunkard and gambler. Other instruments are disposed of much in the same manner. I speak of these matters to show you the prospect of party dissolution—if not this, of party feebleness at this point.

The administration side are in better spirits, and acting with more firmness of purpose and urgency (I will not say energy), than when I left here last fall. They have ordered and are printing 10,000 copies of Benton's speech for circulation. The Union office is doing well, & frd. Joel [M. Smith] is in good spirits, but the paper is not edited. Mr. Bell is flooding the country with Mr Webster's speeches, not Mr. Clay's. They abuse Gnl. Jackson, which is badly relished. The Federal clike here are noisy of Mr. Webster's greatness: there is no apparent effect that I can see. He proposes something & makes an issue on the
old U.S. Bank, Clay proposes nothing, & the issue is, & will be, on the old ground of Bank or no Bank. This I think inevitable; and if the state Banks go with the Republican side, no reasonable fears are to be entertained of success for the next Presidency, judging from the indications I have seen. But the great vantage ground to be gained is, the establishment by law of a treasury system at the soonest possible day, so that it may be understood and shaped, before the end of the next session of Congress to accommodate itself the resumption of specie payments on the first of Jny. 1839. If it works well, the murky cloud now hanging over the admtn. will go off in smoke; if ill, the consequences may be fatal for a time to the Republican side.

Strange as it may seem, Mr. Clay will find sore heartburnings when he receives the nomination over Gnl. Harrison, as the sole candidate of the party to which they belong, for they do belong to the same faction. In such an event it will be hardly possible for Mr. Clay to get Ohio agst Mr. Van Buren.

I saw Ben Hardin at St. Louis. He is sore, very sore, as are [Charles A.] Wickliff, & others, says he, of following longer a single leader for his exclusive benefit. Yet follow they must, or be mere croakers.

Have seen little of our frds here. Mny are busily engaged in organizing their new Bank, which is to be on the admtn. side, with Hy Ewing\(^3\) cashr, an ardent, silent man, of education skill and talent.

Will be at Frankfort next week, & drop you a line. This is inter nos, of course.

J. CATRON

[Daniel] Graham[ . . . ] home in the District

Addressed to Washington.

1. The year was correctly suggested by the Library of Congress.
2. William E. Anderson moved to Nashville from Knoxville. A Jacksonian in his early Nashville years, he later became an ardent Whig and, apparently, a pawn of local Whig leaders. He died at Vicksburg in 1841.
3. Henry Ewing was a son of Nathan Ewing and a grandson of Andrew Ewing. These three men held in succession the clerkship of the Davidson County Court from 1783 until 1835. Henry Ewing's brothers included Edwin H., another Andrew, John O., Albert, and Orville. Henry Ewing moved to Philadelphia about 1840.

FROM ISRAEL FONVILLE

Sir Bedford County April 28, 1838

You have sente me the speech of Mr. Benton and now that I have as much Love for you and him as the Deavel has for holeay water
April 29 1838

and your federal party. What kinds of haste cause you send me any thing when You treated me so last August election in Bedford County\(^1\) that I have no kinde of love for you or no such a man as you are that I want it distinked unstede that I am your polite enemy in this life and in the other and if we should luite in one plaice it will be a pereficke torment to me and you two, so I want nothing from you as longe as we live, for the torey party you belonge to, adieue for eavy, you fedrelist, as you are, and Mr. Benton. I returne you the Benton Speach with oute any thanks from me as this is the first one from you and I hope the last.\(^2\)

Israel Fonville

Addressed to Washington.

1. Fonville had opposed Samuel Mitchell in the race for the state senate, and Mitchell was the winner. Fonville's candidacy was not considered seriously by the politically wise, and it is likely that Polk's support for Mitchell had offended Fonville.

2. On the envelope Polk wrote, "Israel Fonville's milicious & silly letter returning Mr. Benton's Speech franked to him by me."

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Clarksville 29th April 1838

I have directed my brother who went to Nashville on yesterday to buy a Bill for $300 for the use of Cave & to enclose it to you,\(^3\) hoping that you would have a moments leisure to have it cashed for him at the Metropolis Bank & I hope my calls on your kindness will not be troublesome in future. Mr Grundy ought to be paid $18 out of [it] for the Extra Globes I requested him to have forwarded. I hope this sum will answer all the purposes of Cave & take him to the Academy. I do not see the propriety of his taking on $120 or 130, as I have sometimes noticed, to be deposited with the professors.\(^4\) I have heard of instances in which the money was concealed from the professors & kept for private uses & not applied to the ordinary expenses.

I do not know any other business unless you & Mr Grundy should get me an appointment as a Com. to settle private claims agt. the Gov. if your Bill passes establishing a board.\(^5\) I am perhaps better qualified for such an appointment than any other & besides the practice of the law does not go well with me here. I find great difficulties from my former canvasses, with one half of the people greatly prejudiced & the other half warm & zealous friends who insist & again expect me to [be] a candidate, & besides there is but little business. If such an appointment could be given me without prejudice to our cause any where I should be glad. Say so to Mr. Grundy.
We have but little going on here deserving of your notice. No excitement of any sort. The Whig leaders here evidently wish to take up Mr. Clay but are afraid & therefore keep up the cry against Van Buren, agt. the subtreasury, the extravagance of the Gov. White seems lost sight of & some of the Whigs openly acknowledge that they are ashamed of having voted for him. Overton is still on his back and we shall be compelled to give him up I fear. There is a great want of energy at Nashville on our side and unless you & Grundy can arouse them to action we shall be again beaten. I have written several letters there of late & perhaps induced them to make a move as I learn that an edition of Benton's speech (10,000) will be soon ready for distribution. I sent up for 1000 for distribution here. The Genl. covers this district with Clays & Websters & Wise's speeches. I hear of no other movements. Every now & then I meet a Whig who cant stand Clay or Webster. Clay Webster & Calhoun have all injured themselves in the great debate. [Silas] Wright has acquired more credit than any of them.

I shall commence my spring circuit in a few days and shall have a better chance to ascertain public opinion.

My respects to Mrs. P. & Mr Grundy & Turney.

C. Johnson

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Willie B. Johnson to Polk, May 4, 1838.
2. Johnson probably means that he does not wish his nephew to be given the agency of transmitting expense funds to the professors.
3. Reference is to House Bill No. 696, which was prepared by the Committee on Claims at the direction of a House Resolution passed February 19, 1838. A similar bill passed the Senate, but proceedings on the House version terminated on April 21 for want of sufficient support to consider it under special orders.
4. Richard Cheatham.
5. The Independent Treasury Bill evoked the only major debate of this session, involving all four United States senators mentioned by Johnson.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Columbia May 2d 1838

Dear Sir,

I enclose you a letter from Neville to Majr. Hobbie, again requesting the transfer of the contract to Price, Gordon & White. The stock on the road belongs to them and they are carrying the Mail in Neville's name. I sold the Mail stock to them and came under
obligations to have the control transferred. To be sure, if any thing
in relation to themselves, presents a difficulty, I cannot be accountable
for the failure in the transfer. Still it would be better, and prevent
all possibility of a difficulty between Price, Neville & myself for the
transfer to be made & bond sent out to Price, White & Co. at Lebanon
for execution. Notwithstanding Price's anxiety to get this contract I
am inclined to think it will be a losing one, and I would rather see
Price bound up.

My present calculation is to set out for Washington about the
15th. The business I go on is at Philadelphia & New York, but of
course I shall go by Washington. 10 of us, P. R. Booker, M. D.
Cooper, Evan Young, the Dr., Lucius & Leonidas Polk, [and] Gideon,
Granville & Jerome Pillow² have taken the stock in the Central
Turnpike road. Our stock $150,000, the state to take an equal amount.
We calculate that by purchasing the negroes ourselves, we can build
the road with the state stock, have the negroes left and a town on
the Tennessee river which will be second to Nashville in the state, and
clear our own stock.³ This may be too sanguine, but it is what most
of them count on. I go North for the purpose of endeavoring to borrow
$100,000, for 5 years, if we cannot get it on fair terms for a shorter
time, and if I succeed, shall remain until the money is vested by
proper persons to be sent on in negroes, under my directions.⁴ This is
what takes me north. I can avail myself while at Washington of the
opportunity of knowing what proof will be necessary to sustain our
claim if our Bill⁵ passes, shall be able to acquire information at
Louisville as to the time the steam boat Mail was finally stopped,
have the pleasure of seeing Jane, probably taking her with me to New
Haven, and being present at Knox's graduation &c. Therefore the
trip cannot be unpleasant, if I even fail in the main object of it. But
I cannot well fail to make the arrangement I wish, upon the securities
& testimonials I will take on.

I will of course take money with me for Jane & Knox. In the mean
while I suppose it is not necessary to make a remittance.

James Walker

Addressed to Washington.

1. Selah R. Hobbie was First Assistant Postmaster General in the Contract
   Office. Toliver Neville had been an employee of Walker's stage line for
   several years. The enclosure has not been found.

2. Major Andrew Price, Obediah Gordon, and E. A. White, a partnership,
   had taken over a mail route between Florence, Alabama, and Columbus,
   Mississippi, formerly operated by Walker's company.
3. All of these were men of some importance residing in Maury County. The three Polks were brothers, as were the three Pillows; "the Dr." was William J. Polk.

4. The Columbia Central Turnpike Company was incorporated by the General Assembly, December 26, 1837. It received $150,000 from the state and built approximately seventy miles of improved road from Columbia to Clifton on the Tennessee River. The scheme presented here was not approved of by Polk who, as governor about a year and a half later, pronounced such enterprises vulnerable to fraud.

5. See Walker to Polk, May 10, 1838.

6. See Walker to Polk, February 27, 1838.

FROM WILLIE B. JOHNSON
Nashville. May 4, 1838

Johnson says that he is undecided on the question of his running for a seat in the state legislature. He encloses a check for $322 for his nephew, Cave J. Couts, and requests that Polk determine what disposition should be made of the funds.¹

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Cave Johnson to Polk, April 29, 1838, and Cave J. Couts to Polk, May 17, 1838.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW
Columbia May 5th 1838

Dear Col.

You will remember to have promised me the refusal of your ten acres of ground adjoining me when it was for sale. I have sold my tract adjoining you to Judge Kennedy¹ who designs building & settling upon it & I must transfer your promise made to me, to him & request of you to be good enough to advise him when it is for sale & to give him the refusal of it in the sale. By doing so, you will confer upon me a personal favour.

The democrats of Maury have a meeting on Monday next (1st day of Circuit Court) for the purpose of adopting resolutions approving the measures of the Administration, avowing their principles & nominating a candidate for Governor. Gov. Carroll who is now on his way to Washington City will be nominated.

I would purchase your sulky at a fair price. It has been very much damaged since I saw it last summer. I spoke to Mr. [James] Walker upon the subject. He said he was not a judge of its value & would get Kerr² (the carriage maker) to examine it. Kerr has done
May 8 1838

so & says it is not worth more than $175. I imagine it has been worse injured that if it had been used constantly. If you are disposed to sell, I will pay you $175 for it 1st Jany next.

Be good enough to advise me whether Judge Kennedy can have the refusal of your land when it is for sale. I write you at his request upon this subject.

Present most respectfully to Mrs. Polk & accept assurance of my high regard & friendship.

GIDEON J. PILLOW

Addressed to Washington.

1. William E. Kennedy, a Columbia lawyer and circuit judge, was a cousin of John Bell and supported him loyally.

2. Andrew M. Kerr came from North Carolina in 1810 and settled at Spring Hill. He was a wagon-maker and farmer, and he reared a large family.

FROM JOHN GARDINER\(^1\)

Washington, May 7, 1838

Gardiner has in his possession an elegant mace that had been ordered for the House at the time the seats were being rearranged and the current Speaker's chair was being built. Failing to finish it at the appointed time, the artist left it with Gardiner in lieu of rent due. Gardiner now asks that Polk examine it and, if he thinks it appropriate for current use, Gardiner will have it finished. Although he mentions no payment, it is obvious that he wishes to sell the mace.

This letter was delivered by hand to Polk's boardinghouse.

1. Unidentified.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir Washington City May 8th 1838

I saw Dr. Martin last evening. He is hesitating, whether he will accept Mr Smith's offer and take charge of the Union.\(^1\) He wishes a few days, possibly a week to determine. If he can be had, he is the best man we can get. Indeed for talents, extensive acquaintance with the politics of the country, and ability as a writer, I do not know his superior. He regards the Clerkship which he now holds as merely temporary, and says he never intended to retain it longer than to look out for a more eligible situation. His present salary is $1540,
and I have said to him, that Mr Smith would make his compensation equal to that sum. If he accepts, as I have some reason to hope he will he would be induced to do so, not so much for the salary, but with the view to establish a reputation as the conductor of a leading Journal, and at the same time advance the great cause to which he is ardently devoted. He is an ambitious man, and I think, from an intimation he gave me, that one difficulty he has in accepting, is that he dislikes the idea of being regarded as a mere hireling writer. On this account I have no doubt, if he should, after a few months trial, be pleased with the situation, he would prefer to become interested in the establishment. I have said to him that there would probably be no difficulty in effecting such an arrangement with Mr. Smith. The moment I learn what he decides to do, I will write to you. If he should decline, some other must be procured.

I wish you to think of the suggestion which I made to you in my last in regard to the paper at Knoxville. This will be a very important matter, and I have no doubt, Mr Cunningham can do well, if he will undertake it. Turney tells me that our paper at McMinnville must go down, unless the proprietor can borrow for a year four or five hundred dollars. If he is sold out, the establishment will of course go into the hands of the opposition. This should be prevented, for upon his paper, we must mainly rely to keep the mountain District in its present sound state. Turney says he is able to pay, and will give ample security to do so. Surely he could be accommodated at some of the Banks.

I have nothing new, except that the Hon. Mr. [Joab] Lawler of Alabama, died at 9. O.Clock this morning. Both Houses have adjourned until tomorrow.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville. Marked “Private,” this letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Jacob L. Martin, then a clerk in Washington, declined the job. See Martin to Polk, May 16, 1838. Later, Martin became Chief Clerk of the State Department, 1840-41; Secretary of Legation at Paris, 1844-48; and briefly, Chargé d'Affaires to the Papal States before his death in 1848.

2. This letter has not been found. It appears that Polk felt some responsibility for getting Cunningham a job upon his being ousted from the Nashville Union. See Daniel Kenney to Polk and Turney, January 29, 1838.

3. John W. Ford was the editor and proprietor of the McMinnville Central Gazette. Hopkins L. Turney was the congressman from that district. See Robert Armstrong to Polk, December 26, 1838, regarding Ford’s success in raising money.
FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia May 8th 1838

On yesterday we had a meeting of the democracy of Maury. The people were in from all parts of the county. The meeting was more numerously attended (by both political parties) than any I think since the Jackson Dinner. The meeting was organized by calling Dr. I[saac] J. Thomas to the chair and appointing G[ideon] J. Pillow secretary. It was soon discovered, however, that we were not to be permitted quietly and orderly to express our approbation of the policy of the present and past administration. The peace and harmony of the meeting was disturbed by that party claiming the venerated name of Whigs. Their forces were rallied into the Court house (Friers­sons and all) and Mr. George Skipwith appeared to ask of the chair whether this was a meeting of the people of Maury or of any particular party. The chair explained the object of the meeting; he seemed to be still dissatisfied, when Dr Greenfield arose (perfectly sober) and told him it was a Van Bururen meeting and if he came there to produce a disturbance, he had better go away. An effort (but a very puny one) was then made by Jimmy Jones to break up the meeting & go home, but failed. The chair the[n] appointed a committee to draft resolutions &c. James Walker, Alex Johnson, Nicholson, Bobbit, and some others composed the committee. They recommended the adoption of the Hickman County resolutions, one of which, you know, condemns that portion of the Legislature which instructed Mr Grundy to vote against the Seperation of the government and the Banks. To this Mr. Cahal took exception and in his eloquent whining manner arose to defend himself. After he had spoken for some time against the Sub-Treasury and reiterated all the slang [of] the opposition press about gold for the office holders and paper for the people, he challenged any friend of the measure to come forward and advocate it. Nicholson accepted the chalenge and in a short speech (but one of his best efforts) explained what the Sub-Treasury was and avowed his preference for it over any other mode of collecting the Revenue. He told Cahal, it was then too late in the day for much discussion, but to name his day and place he would meet him and go into the full merits of the question. The vote was then put to the friends of the administration and the Resolutions passed without opposition. Cahal & Skipwith made two or three speeches afterward, to which Nicholson, Barkley Martin & [Jonas E.] Thomas replied. They have appointed the first Monday in next month as the day for the discussion of the sub Treasury.
The day passed off[ f] well for our folks & if I know any thing about the notions which the people entertain of good behaviour, Cahal must have lost a great many friends. Once Cahal was asked if he was for Clay; he said he was against Mr Van Buren.

I have now given you a history of the proceedings of yesterday. Our people are united and determined to stand by their principles and although we have been defeated in some of the late elections, we think the cloud will pass away and victory will yet perch on our standard. Waterson & Dr. Kineade of Bedford⁵ [are] also out as your friends and I understand for the sub Treasury. The Vice Presidency was spoken of yesterday by some of your friends. They are willing to sustain you for any office in their gift.

Give my love to aunt Sally, Jane, Sam & Knox if he is there. Tell Sam that nothing but neglect has [kept] me from answering his letter.

SAM P. WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. George G. Skipwith was a Columbia businessman and one of the founding directors of the Columbia Railroad.
2. Gerrard T. Greenfield was a wealthy physician and farmer in Maury County.
3. Unidentified.
4. William Bobbitt of Benton, later Santa Fe, in Maury County, subsequently moved to Mississippi and settled near Polk's plantation.
5. Harvey M. Watterson and Joseph Kineaid.

FROM WILLIAM SCOTT HAYNES¹

D Sir Murfreesbor' Ten May 9th 1838

Your kindness in attending to the wishes of your friends, I do not doubt, will lead you to forgive the liberty which I now take, in addressing you and prompt you to a compliance with the request which I am under the necessity of making, at least in part. Since my arrival in this state, I have determined to take charge of, and conduct the paper at this place, advocating the principles of the former and present administrations; and upon going into the office, find it entirely destitute of all reference documents. The member of Congress from this district, A. P. Maury, supposing that he has nothing to expect at my hands, in the way of support, has so far thought proper to overlook us in the dispensing [of] his favours. Will you my dear sir supply his deficiencies, and supply me with such documents and
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speeches as you, in your judgment, may think would be of benefit to me? I wish particularly to procure all Mr Clays speeches, both for and against a United States Bank and the Tariff; also the report of the committee ordered to investigate the charge of his bargaining with Mr Adams, for the Office of Secretary of State, in the contest between that gentleman and our own much revered “Old Chief.”

The present is a very critical time with the Republican party; and it is essential, to meet the machinations of its enemies, that the people should be kept well informed, not only as to the present course of the leaders of the “great Whig” party, but also as to what they have been in days byegone.

A desperate struggle is now making, by the Whig party in Congress from this state, and the Whig presses generally, to force Mr Clay upon the people and to do away [with] the effect of former prejudices. Hardly a mail arrives which does not bring out with it, as one from the wire workers behind the screen, [instructions] as to the course which their presses are expected and required to pursue.

The conspicuous stand which you hold in the confidence of the Democracy of the Country, and your standing somewhat in the way of one of the “Bell” weathers of the Whig party, have induced the managers for this state to mark you out, as an object upon whom to pour out the whole of their special vials of wrath and detraction. Should you wish, at any time, to lash them for their temerity and presumption, you have only to signify the sources from whence I can get the necessary correct information, in order to then having it done. This course is rendered necessary from my limited acquaintance with the local politics and feelings of the leading men of the state.

At any time that you may have a leisure hour that you cannot spend more profitably, you will confer a favour by dropping me such hints of the sayings and doings of the opposition, as you may deem of interest to be known; and upon doing so, may rest assured that you are committing them to the hands of a friend, who will, at all times and under all circumstances, hold them as sacred deposits.

The news from the Mississippi [sic] elections come in but slowly; but sufficient is known to render Claibornes election certain; and if the counties yet to hear from have remained firm, we may possibly have succeeded in returning both of our men.

An election was held in this county, in the 64th Regt. m[ilitia], for a Colo. Com[mandant], in which, the question of Van-Buren or Anti-Van-Buren, was made the test. After a desperate struggle, we succeeded in electing the Van Buren candidate, by a small majority.
The portion of the county composing this regiment, has hitherto been more strongly tinctured with Whiggery than any other section. Let me hear from you when convenient . . . .

W. SCOTT HAYNES

Addressed to Washington.

1. Born in Virginia in 1807, William Scott Haynes came to Tennessee in 1838; he took over the editorship of the Weekly Times, a Democratic newspaper in Murfreesboro. By January of 1839 he was editing the Western Star in Shelbyville.

2. In his predictions, Haynes was wide of the mark. Both Democrats lost. For the background of this election, see J. F. H. Claiborne to Polk, June 17, 1837.

3. William B. Lillard won. He was sheriff of Rutherford County, 1842–48.

TO ARTHUR P. BAGBY

Sir, Washington, May 10th. 1838

In execution of an order of the House of Representatives of the United States, of this day’s date, I have the honor, herewith, to forward to your Excellency a Certified Copy of a Resolution of that House, notifying that a vacancy has occurred in the representation of the State of Alabama in this House, by the decease of the Hon. Joab Lawler.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Tuscaloosa. Signed by Polk, this is a clerk’s copy in the New York Public Library.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir, Columbia, May 10th 1838

I enclose you a letter for Knox, supposing that he received my letter and is spending his May vacation with you, or with Jane wherever she is. If he should not be at Washington please forward the letter to him.

When I last wrote you I expected to leave home for Washington &c. about the 15th. My object was to negotiate a loan for the Stockholders of the Central Turnpike Co.¹ We have within a few days reason to believe that the Planters & Union Banks will furnish the means we want, and that we can purchase negroes lower in Miss.
than in Virginia, and the probability now is that I shall not go, at least not so soon. I will in a short time provide $400, for Jane, and what is necessary for Knox's debts and expenses and to bring him home. My wish is that he should be one of your party home, thinking his examination will about suit your time, and that it is hardly worth while for him to wait so long for his diploma. Of this however my opinion might change for good reasons.

I some time ago forwarded to Mr. C A Harris for collection two drafts drawn by Henry & A E. Gibson² for $962 50/100 dollars, payable out of their quarter expiring 1st of April. I designed this to assist in meeting a call on my note in the Metropolis Bank about 30th of May. Mr. Harris informs me that Gibsons contract was returned to Washington wanting some formality and that the sending out that for correction, and the forwarding orders & return of acknowledgements will consume so much time that this is not to be relied on to meet my note. I shall therefore remit Mr. Harris the necessary amount in a few days and it would be a considerable convenience to me if the Gibson drafts could with certainty be collected in time for the money to answer for Knox and Jane's expenses. The money is undoubtedly due the Gibson's for mail service to the 1st of April, and it seems to me that when Gibson returns the contract, properly executed, Col. Gardner² ought to pay this much without consuming the time of sending out the orders & return of acknowledgment. If you can aid Mr. Harris in making this collection and taking it for the use of Jane & Knox, you will save me some inconvenience in raising the money & loss in exchange.

Saml [P. Walker] gave you an account of the meeting of our friends here on Monday last.⁴ His letter and the Democrat of today, renders it unnecessary for me to say much on that subject. The result was most triumphant for us, and our friends so feel it. Our men were in from all parts of the county, and evinced great zeal and devotion to the good cause. The conduct of Cabal and Skipwith was outrageous, and is viewed on all sides as an impertinent interference, and unwarrantable attempt to break up the meeting in a row. Cabal & Skipwith have perfectly disgraced themselves and deeply injured their party. Our people all behaved well. The indignation of some could not be suppressed, but the cool heads that were looked up to kept an explosion from taking place. The Whigs are deeply mortified, but nothing can beat common sense or common decency into the leaders of that party here. Dr. Kincade & Watterson⁵ have declared for the administration. Bedford & Maury stand firm & erect. Let others do as they will, we will manfully maintain our principles, and
if we fall (which looks probable) we will go down with our flags flying.

Write to me about Gibson's draft as early as any thing certain can be known, that I may know whether to make a remittance or not.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Walker to Polk, May 2, 1838.
2. Henry and A. E. Gibson of Mt. Pleasant held several mail contracts in Mississippi. While it is not certain that they obtained any of Walker's former lines, they probably bought equipment from him as he was withdrawing from the business there.
3. Charles K. Gardner was Assistant Postmaster General.
5. Dr. Joseph Kincaid and Harvey M. Watterson of Bedford County were figures of some importance in their county, and their loss to the Whigs was significant.

FROM AMOS KENDALL TO JAMES K. POLK AND HOPKINS L. TURNLEY

Washington. May 12, 1838

Kendall tells Polk and Turney that the establishment of a line of stages from McMinnville westward to Jackson, as proposed in their letter of March 29, 1838, obviously is desirable, but as a mail line, it is not important enough to justify the additional expenditure necessary to establish it. He says, however, that when business revives across the country the Post Office Department will be inclined to review its ruling.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr. Sir

Haywood May 14, 1838

You wrote to me that there was a balance of Thirty two dollars of Samuels debts at Yale not settled. You will please pay it. You can send it by your Brother Samuel. I understand he is at Washington. I have advanced about that amount for you here. I will take it as a particular favor. Nothing more I believe. My family are well.

S. M. CALDWELL
ADDRESSED TO WASHINGTON.

1. This letter was posted at Dancyville, a post office in the southern part of Haywood County.

2. This refers to Samuel P. Caldwell, who had dropped out of Yale some months earlier. Polk's letter to Caldwell has not been found.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

My Dear Sir Wilmington D[elaware] 5 Mo 15th [1838]

Your favor of the 14th, enclosing a Circular from the "Dept of State" came to hand this day, the letter of introduction from Mr Toland arrived during my absence. I take great pleasure in stating that Mr Toland, has served me most faithfully and effectually. Although seriously indisposed at the time of my arrival he accompanied me to the different mercantile establishments and has spared no pains to render me good service, for which I am greatly indebted to him. I called repeatedly upon Mr Horn but was never able to see him.

As I have been disappointed in negotiating a note which is due me in six months in consequence of the scarcity of money, I determined to write to the Navy Dept respecting a passage in some one of the government vessels that may sail from the United States for the West Indies. As I do not like to ask too much, I have enclosed the letter to you; if you think the request not unreasonable you will please send it to the dept, as the arrangement would save me at least one hundred dollars which in the present depressed state of my funds is a large sum.

Please present my respects to Mrs Polk and family and believe me to be as ever. . . .

JOHN O. BRADFORD

P.S. You will see that I have determined not to go to New Orleans, the expense will be very heavy and I think being acquainted with Mr Walker and Harris, matters can be arranged there in writing. I have been endeavoring for some time to procure the last No. of the Democratic Review. The work is not taken here so far as I can learn. If you have a spare copy I would be happy to receive it. It is probable I will sail on Saturday next.

ADDRESSED TO WASHINGTON.

1. Although this letter was not dated by year, it is one of a series of letters between these two men in early 1838.

2. Henry Toland was a Philadelphia merchant who was a friend of Andrew Jackson and handled a considerable amount of business for him. Polk's letter has not been found.
3. A loyal Jacksonian and friend of Polk and Jackson, Henry Horn had served in Congress, 1831–1833; he conducted a hardware store in his native city of Philadelphia.

4. Polk forwarded the letter, and the Secretary of the Navy promptly offered Bradford passage on a ship to Pensacola. See Bradford to Polk, May 21, 1838.

5. Apparently Bradford planned to use the names of James Walker and Adlai O. Harris as references for credit or for more general business purposes in Puerto Rico, where Bradford had been appointed to a diplomatic post.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir, Nashville, May 15, 1838

The location of the branches of the state Bank has collected here men from all parts of the state, all in want of Banks and money. Nobody talks about anything else. If we were not so generally beaten in other States I should think in the coming struggle we could recover Tennessee. We shall at all events fight the battle, with all our energies, win or lose. I still retain my old opinions that if we do not make a bank or form a league of state Banks to regulate and equalize the exchanges, that the Whigs will get into power, and give us a Bank with a vengeance. My deliberate opinion is that a national Bank, owned exclusively by the States and the General Government, is our only salvation, is the only means of preventing us from coming under the dominion of a Federal Bank Monopoly. We can now prevent individual stock and monopoly. If the Whigs get the power as I fear they will, they will take this certain method of perpetuating it. This thing belongs to wiser heads than mine, but things look squally and I cannot avoid speaking.

JAMES WALKER.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JOHN H. DEW

Dear Sir. Columbia Tenn. May 16, 1838

I have been promising myself, since I had the honor to receive your very interesting and instructing communication,\textsuperscript{1} to answer according to your request; but my professional duties have hitherto prevented my doing so.

Since my last, I have attended a still more interesting term of the
Circuit Court in old Bedford County: two men were arraigned at the Bar for Murder, Wait for killing his Overseer & Henry for killing his wife. The former continued his case and the latter was tried and convicted and sentenced to the Penitentiary for life. A very large number of the Citizens were summoned as Jurors & Witnesses. The excitement and interest consequent upon such trials induced a very large concourse of people to assemble about the court-house during the term. A fine opportunity was afforded to ascertain public sentiment, upon the great political topics of the day. Your old political friends, or in other words the democratic friends of the late and present Admins., are true to their principles, and will zealously support the Democratic Candidates, Mr. Van Buren for the Presidency and would heartily rejoice to see your name on the ticket for the Vice Presidency and will sustain the Candidates of the party for the offices of the Federal & State Governments. But sir, the Webb Whigs are divided and dissatisfied with the nomination of Mr Clay. A goodly number of the more reflecting, of the late White party, obstinately refuse to go into the support of Mr. Clay. Dr. Kinkaid & Maj Water- son (both popular men) are bold converts to the whole hog Bentonian doctrines, & they say many others. The opinion is there, that there will be a considerable acquisition to the democratic ranks in Bedford County. Such is my opinion from what I heard from the better informed citizens with whom I conversed. Mr Nicholson was there a few days only. Col. Cahal & his devoted admirer Judge Dillahunty were also there; the Col. met with rather a cold reception, I think, and was much disappointed in his expectations. He remained but a few days and retired without one Manifesto of his future elevation in this Congl. district, by them citizens. Nicholsons reception was the more flattering of the two.

You will have reed. the number of the “Tennessee Democrat” containing the proceedings of the “public meeting” of the friends of the late & present Administrations, held in the court house in this place on the 7th inst., the first day of the present term of the Circuit Court. There were assembled a very large concourse of the citizens of Maury; things worked together for the good of the party. The proceedings of the meeting was interrupted by Mr. G. G. Skipwith & Col Cahal. One of the resolutions contained a direct censure upon the course of the late Speaker of the Senate; and he made several passionate appeals to the sympathy of his constituents, to reflect before they pronounced the sentence of condemnation on him. But it was all in vain, the sentence was pronounced in a voice not to be misunderstood by him and others.
The Sub- and Independent Treasury Bills were denounced in unmeasured terms of reproach by the Col. Mr. Nicholson challenged the Col to discuss the questions on any given day and at any specified place, but the Col declined the contest. And consequently his lamentations & denunciations were not so much regarded by the less informed part of the community. The party is well organized & disciplined in this County; this Meeting had the one good effect of satisfying your old friends here that all things were right & your course met with their decided approbation and applause. And as I said of old Bedford, I say of Maury, there are many decided Whigs that will not support Mr. Clay for the Presidency.

I frequently hear the Whigs speak of the probability of Col Cahal's being the Candidate of their party for Repr. in Cong. from this dist., but always suggest the probability of your declining, because of the fact that you will be nominated and run by the Democrats on the Republican ticket for the V. Presy. I am pretty well satisfied now that Nicholson could beat Cahal in the district in the event you decline a reelection; but it is so well understood that you will again be a Candidate little is said on the subject.

Gen. Carroll will be the Candidate of the Democratic party for the Governor of our State. Nicholson or Jonas E. Thomas will be the Candidate for the Senate, & perhaps Dr. Thomas & Dr. Greenfield will also run. Barkly Martin, Genl. [Gideon J.] Pillow, & Robert Webster perhaps for the H.R. At least it is obvious they are courting the popular breeze. On the other hand Col. Cahal, Maj [Edwin A.] Keeble, Mr. Skipwith & others are in training on the other side. Your Bro William pledges himself to oppose Maj Keeble. I think he has nearly gouged the Maj. out of the notion.

We are still all anxiety about getting a Branch of the State Bank located in this place. Things grow more and more doubtful. The directors are now in Session in Nashville for that purpose, but we have not heard the result. Your friends & relations are all well except Mrs. Dr. Hays and her health is thought by the Dr. to be improving. Prospects are very unpromising; the late frosts have greatly blasted the high expectations of the farmers in this vicinity. The health of the Country is very good.

Mrs. Dew wishes to be respectfully remembered to her good friends Col. & Mrs Polk, & pledges herself to show a finer match of boys on your return than can be produced by any one else. I shall be pleased to hear from you when convenient. My respects to Mrs. Polk, Judge Grundy, Turney, & McClellan & yourself.

Jno. H. Dew
May 17 1838

Addressed to Washington.

1. This letter has not been found.
2. These cases have not been identified.
3. This reference is obscure. It could mean Webster Whigs, or it might refer to members of the party of James Watson Webb.
4. This refers to the hard-money views of Thomas H. Benton.
5. Edmund Dillahunt was a prominent lawyer and judge of Maury County.

FROM JACOB L. MARTIN

Dear Sir. Washington 16th May 1838

I hope you will excuse me for not coming to an earlier determination upon the proposition which you were kind enough to make me. The fact is that I have been kept by it, in a state of the most anxious doubt arising chiefly from my desire to reconcile myself to your flattering proposal. But there is one circumstance most nearly connected with my happiness, which compels me, however loth, to decline. I fear, I should not be happy, if I left this part of the country, at this time. Rest assured Sir, that my delay in deciding upon this matter, did not proceed from indifference or weakness of purpose, but rather from an effort to persuade myself to accept of your kind offer, & that I shall ever retain a grateful remembrance of the interest which you have manifested in my behalf.

J. L. MARTIN

Addressed to Washington.

1. Polk had invited Martin to become editor of the Nashville Union. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, May 8, 1838.

FROM CAVE J. COUTS

Dear Sir, Alexandria D C. May 17th 1838

As I have been recommended by Mr Hallowell and some of the boys who have been at West Point, to supply my self with several little things such as shirts, socks, handkerchiefs, Towells, and a leather Trunk as my appointment directs, before entering the Academy, as I can get them here just as good and twice as cheap, I thought I would write and know from you which was best. I would have plenty time to get them made next week.
I received a letter from Uncle Cave this morning. No news more than what was in his letter to you a few days since.¹ I shall be up on Monday the 2nd of June.

Cave J. Couts

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Cave Johnson to Polk, April 29, 1838.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir Murfreesboro. May 18th [1838]¹

I have been waiting since I returned home to get an answer to my last letter to you in which I asked to be informed, where you wished to use the money I owe you.² I have about $600 ready for you and expect the balance, every day. I have such assurances, that I have no doubt, that I shall have it by the 1st. June. However to be certain, you can advise me what to do with the $600 and also with the other $600 provided I get it.

We have no news of a political character. The Directors of the State Bank have located the three branches of Middle Ten, in your and Cave Johnsons Districts. I understand [Theodorick F.] Bradford promised to have you beat at the next election if they would give him a Branch at Shelbyville. We now have eleven Banks in six adjoining counties, beginning with Bedford and ending at Davidson. I understand there is great dissatisfaction throughout the state, and loud complaints of Nashville influence.

Tell Sarah that Mary left home on the day I reached here, in company with Judge Anderson and daughter on a visit to Giles county, and will probably visit her grandmother in Maury before she returns.³ We have not heard from her since she left. We are all in good health. You will oblige me by an early answer. Be so good as to let us know the probable time of the adjournment of Congress.

John W. Childress

Addressed to Washington.
1. The year has been supplied on the basis of the content of the letter.
2. See Childress to Polk, April 9, 1838.
3. Mary was the daughter of John W. Childress's deceased brother, Anderson Childress, and his wife, Mary W. Sansom Childress. The grandmother was Elizabeth D. Sansom, wife of William Sansom. The judge was William E. Anderson; the name of his daughter has not been learned.
May 19 1838

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Washington City May 18th 1838

Dr. Martin after delaying an answer for more than a week, has declined accepting the offer to take charge of the Union. Wilson the former Editor of the Baltimore Republican, is now in New York, and has been written to, on the subject. He is an able man, conducted the Republican with ability and taste, and we have strong hopes, that he may accept Mr Smith's offer. We will know in a few days, when I will write to you. Should he decline, we have still another person in view, and will not cease our exertions, until a suitable person is procured.

We have had you see, very close voting in the House on the Treasury note-bill. It may be regarded as a fair test of the strength of parties on the Independent Treasury Bill. We had two more absent on the vote of yesterday than the opposition had. The late Election in Mississippi will it is feared decide the fate of the measure. If Claiborne is elected of which we are yet uncertain, we may carry the Bill; otherwise I fear the chances are against us.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. Marked "Private," this letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. See Polk to Donelson, May 8, 1838, and Jacob L. Martin to Polk, May 16, 1838.
2. Wilson has not been further identified.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Nashville May 19, 1838

I regret that I am so often under the necessity of requesting your attention to my interests at Washington, knowing how arduously you are employed in the duties of your station.

In the winding up of my mail business, and sale of property in Miss. I received from M A Price & Co a draft on the P. O Dept. for ballance due them to 1st of Jany. last, which Price guaranteed to me to be good for $4000. I took it for that amount which Price & White were bound to pay me at Washington or otherwise satisfactory. I passed the draft to the Union Bank in liquidation of a debt I owed them, and at my request they forwarded it to C. A. Harris for collection, and to be applied to a debt they wished to pay the Government.
Upon presentation he found the Dept acknowledged they owed Price & Co. about $2400, and said they had forwarded drafts on post Masters in the vicinity of where the service was performed to P. & Co. for that balance. If this is to pass for payment it defeats my draft, but it can on no correct principle pass. Mr. Kendall may by an arbitrary course of conduct put us all to inconvenience, trouble & loss, but if he does, he can make no one conversant with the facts believe he has faithfully performed his duty as a public officer. The money due was for Mail service performed prior to 1st Jany, 1838. It was due by contract in all the month of Jany in collections on the route or money. It was Feb. before any blank orders were received for collection and April before any acknowledgement could be returned, and then when the ballance acknowledged to be due at least 3 months, is drawn for, Mr Kendall sends out drafts on distant Post Masters, not on the Route, and 4 or 500 miles distant from the contractors, requiring this to be taken for payment. The contracts require that payment is to be made in the month after the expiration of the quarter in drafts or orders on P M's on the Route or money, at the option of the PM. G. Can there be any thing clearer, than if the drafts are not furnished in the month, the money is due, and after 3 or 4 ms. has expired, and all collections on the routes made or applied for, with what face can the ballance be refused. Mr. [John M.] Bass informs me that the Bank wants this money to pay the Gov't interest on the State Bonds, and it seems to me there ought to be no difficulty in transferring from one Department of the Government to the other. Majr White (Price's partner) informs me that so soon as Price returns from Miss. they will return the $2400 in drafts to the Dept and insist upon payment at Washington.

I will thank you to confer with Mr. Harris & if possible have the Price & Co draft paid, and applied as the Union Bank has directed. Mr. Harris has also drafts in my favor from Stark & Gibsons, which I have informed him how I wished managed. For them I would rather have orders on Southern P M's and particularly on Nashville & Columbia, than to look to the drawers. I fear they will all break, and security is important [in] the management of the Stark & Gibson drafts. I have particularly written Mr. H. on this subject; please aid him if you can.

The Directors of the Bank of Tennessee have located the 7 branches, viz, at Rogersville, Athens, Shelbyville, Columbia, Clarksville, Somerville & Trenton, pretty fair V.B. regions. We are all much pleased, and particularly with the locations at Shelbyville & Columbia. This and the road to the Ten river [Columbia Central
Turnpike], and to the Cumberland mountain through Shelbyville, which it insures, makes our town & county. Our prospects look well in Tennessee, no matter how the Whigs brag, but just as there seems a chance at home, we are beaten and routed every where else. But few men or parties have yet fallen, who were honest and who remained firm and fearless amidst adversities and difficulties.

I now find that I must provide for Jane & Knox without relying on my Drafts on the P O Dept and shall do so, as soon as I can. I have not heard from Knox since he was in Washington in April. I wrote him by express mail on the 23rd of April to join Jane & spend his vacation at Washington. I am unhappy & somewhat vexed that I do not hear from him. I always intended he should spend his May vacation in Washington. I wished him to do so for pleasure & improvement. If he has received my express letter and remained at New Haven, or gone elsewhere, I shall certainly have just cause to be offended with him.

James Walker

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Walker to Polk, May 2, 1838.
2. Peter B. Starke, Henry Gibson, and A. E. Gibson were involved in the mail contract business in Mississippi. The two Gibsons were residents of Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. Starke lived in Mississippi, where he became prominent in politics. He was elected to the Mississippi legislature from Bolivar County and was later a brigadier general in the Confederate army.

To A. O. P. Nicholson

My Dear Sir

Washington City May 20th 1838

I have read with much interest, the accounts, as given in both papers, of the meeting of the Democracy of Maury, on the 7th Instant, and must congratulate you on the result. It was certainly in bad taste, if not bad manners, for our political opponents to thrust themselves in, unbidden, and attempt to frustrate and break up the meeting. If they choose to call a meeting of their own, it is their right to do so, and certainly no friend of ours, would think of interfering with them. I see you are to have an adjourned meeting for public discussion, on the 1st Monday in June. At this I am not displeased, for rely upon it we have nothing to lose, but every thing to gain by full and free discussion. One thing only I have to say to you, and that is, if the meeting does take place, I hope our debating friends, [Barkly] Martin, [Jonas E.]
Thomas, yourself and others, will meet them boldly, "carry the war into Africa," and expose their perfect identity with the Federalists, under whatever specious veil or disguises, they may attempt to conceal it. If you will permit me, I will make two or three suggestions, which may be useful to you. The first is the great fact standing out in bold relief, that the leaders of our opponents in Tennessee, under the specious name of Whigs, are in their opposition to Mr Van Buren, cooperating with, and identified with John Quincy Adams, Webster, Southard, Clay, Slade the abolitionist, and in a word with the whole body of the Federalists and abolitionists now in Congress. These are the men with whom they keep company and act in opposing the sub-treasury, and every other measure of the administration. They intend to cooperate with them in the support of Clay for the Presidency, and it is in vain that they attempt to conceal it, and thereby deceive and mislead the people. The associations and votes of the Whig portion of our delegation in Congress prove it. No Federalist in Congress, from Webster and John Quincy Adams down, is more bitter in their opposition than that portion of our delegation, have proved themselves by their speeches and votes to be. They are labouring shoulder to shoulder with the Federalists and abolitionists in the same cause. Surely our people cannot be long deceived.

In regard to the Independent Treasury scheme I cannot without going into an argument, much too extended for the limits of a letter, make to you any material suggestions. I will send you Mr [Silas] Wright's able and unanswerable Report made to the Senate some days ago, which you may find useful. The body of the opposition with Biddle at their head have taken ground with the non-resuming Banks, whilst the administration are favouring in every Constitutional manner the resuming Banks. This issue now palpable should be dwelt upon and enforced. It is a good one for us. Nothing could tend more to the restoration of a sound currency, than the Independent Treasury scheme, and this our opponents know and therefore they violently resist it. The cant and slang about one currency for the government and another for the people, is almost too absurd and ridiculous to require a serious answer, and yet it is the argument by which many well-meaning people have been misled and deceived. It amounts to this, that if a barber issues a shin-plaster and on its face declares it is worth six-pence and is "good for a shave" and some people are foolish enough to take it, why the government must do so also, for if it does not, there will be one currency for the office-holders and another for the people, the better for the former and the baser for the latter. This point I see was alluded to at your meeting, and I mention it only to
The government, according to the doctrine of the opposition, must receive the depreciated paper of non-specie-paying Banks (and that is Mr Clay's doctrine openly avowed in his speech, which you will find in the Intelligencer of the 19th February 1838), it must of course pay out what it receives. And what will the venerable pensioner, or the soldier who is called from his home to fight our battles say, if such trash is tendered to him in payment. The truth is, it is a mere cachword, to gull and deceive the people. What the opposition desire above all things, that the currency question may be kept an unsettled one, for agitation and excitement out of which they may profit politically. What care they (I mean of course their leaders), how great the confusion in currency and trade, or the sufferings of the country may be, provided they can falsely charge it to the action of the government and turn it to political account.

We have had you see close voting in the Ho. Repts. on the Treasury note Bill. This again is an issue which may be turned to good account. The facts out of which this issue is made are very simple. They are these. By the deposite act of 1836, which was the act of Congress, carried by opposition votes, and not the act of the Executive, $28,000,000 of public money was placed with the States, and is now beyond the reach of the government for public purposes. By the act of October last, time was given to the Banks and merchants to pay their debts amounting to $15,000,000 more. In addition to this the Bank of the U. States is indebted to the government near $7,000,000 more. To afford time to these Federal Whig Banks and merchants to pay their debts, and avoid distressing them, the Bill of October last to authorize the temporary issue of $10,000,000 of Treasury notes passed. They have been issued and almost as fast as issued have been returned to the Treasury in payment of duties and for lands, and have been thus redeemed and cancelled. The Bill of this session proposed to re-issue these for a short time, and until the indebted Banks and merchants could pay their debts. To this the opposition objected and insisted, that the government should make a loan, and fasten upon the country another odious public debt. They were the open advocates of a public debt. Had they succeeded, time would have been required as they well knew to negotiate the loan, and in the mean-time they calculated the government must stop for want of means, or be made dependent on their non-Specie-paying Banks, for their trash with which to defray current expenses. Had they succeeded too, they would have raised the clamour for popular effect, that the government had been so mismanaged as to be compelled to vote a public debt. All this we have
happily escaped. The Bill has passed the Senate by a vote of more than 2 to 1 and now only wants the signature of the President to become a law. Our Tennessee Whigs of course cooperated with the opposition, J. Q. Adams, Slade & all, in this warfare upon the government. I have no doubt, judging from the past, that I will be assailed through the Tennessee papers for my casting vote. I fear not, wherever the truth can go. We have resisted the creation of a public debt, whilst our opponents have by their speeches and votes been the advocates of a public debt. The Specie Circular, wise and useful in its day it is thought by many of our friends, has performed its function, and you need not be surprized if it is rescinded shortly by the votes of our party.

The vote on the Treasury Note Bill, may be regarded as a tolerably fair test of the strength of parties on the Independent Treasury Bill. The vote will be a very close one. This letter is not for the public or for publication in the newspapers, but for yourself alone.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Do write me fully the news at home. Gov. Carroll arrived here on yesterday. I have seen him but a few moments, but he is to drive with me to day. J. K. P.


1. See Samuel P. Walker to Polk, May 8, 1838, and James Walker to Polk, May 10, 1838.

2. Daniel Webster, Samuel L. Southard, Henry Clay, and William Slade. Southard, a Whig Senator from New Jersey, 1833-42, had served in the cabinets of both James Monroe and John Quincy Adams. Slade, an early Democratic newspaper editor and Representative from Vermont, 1831-43, was particularly disliked by Polk, not only because he was such an uncompromising abolitionist, but also because he had shifted to the Whig party after having been elected to Congress as an ardent Democrat.

3. See Cave Johnson to Polk, June 1, 1838, footnote 8.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

My Dear Sir Wilmington, D[elaware] 5 Mo. 21st [1838]¹

When I last wrote you I did not expect to trouble you again until my arrival in Porto Rico.² I had hoped and have endeavoured in every
May 21 1838

way in my power to avoid the extremity to which I am at length driven but all my expedients have failed, and I am compelled as a last resort to apply to you for aid "in this my time of need," although such a tax have I been upon your time and attention & that I do so with the greatest reluctance. My case is this. My funds are nearly gone, and I have been sadly disappointed in procuring an additional supply even at a heavy sacrifice, and from those upon whose friendly regards I had some claim. Dr Bretney being in Phila[elphia] a few days since, and knowing the circumstances under which I was labouring generously offered me a letter of credit authorizing me to draw upon him for two hundred doll[ar]s if my anticipated arrangements should not succeed, as there was then a strong probability they would not and he having scarcely money enough to carry him to Columbia. I have mentioned the subject to two or three individuals but find it impossible to raise money here for so long a time as six months. I have therefore concluded to forward the letter and order to you in hopes that you will be able to arrange the matter for me. Unless it can be done I know not what I shall do, as I have not the means to pay my passage out to the West Indies. In ordinary times I should find no difficulty whatever, but the spirit of accommodation here, and especially for a stranger is at an end for the present. I have very little doubt but what if my life is spared I can meet the bill before it be due myself with ease, as I think my business arrangements are such as must ultimately prove successful. I have found one acquaintance in Phila. which will be of great use to me, Mr M. L. Bevan. Mr B. is the president of the old U S Bank, a merchant of great influence and perhaps the greatest commission merchant in Phila. He desires me to correspond with him, says that he is in the habit of advancing money to the planters in the West Indies in order to obtain their consignments, and will be happy to aid me in any way that he can. Upon the whole I regard him as a valuable acquaintance especially as he is known to be a most excellent and benevolent man. I will not my Dr sir detain you longer than to say that my only dependence is upon the success of this arrangement, and that if you can possibly advance the money for me, you will add still more to the debt of obligation already due from . . .

John O. Bradford

P.S. I received a letter yesterday from the Secretary of the Navy extending me a passage to Pensacola in the Erie. This I cannot accept as it would be much more difficult to get from Pens[a]cola to Porto Rico, than from this point. I hope sir that you will let me hear from you as soon as possible as there is nothing detains me now but the want of money.
Addressed to Washington.
1. The year was not recorded but was 1838, as suggested by the Library of Congress.
2. See Bradford to Polk, May 15, 1838.
3. See Bradford to Polk, May 25, 1838.
4. In the 1836 reorganization of the Bank of the United States, bank president Nicholas Biddle became head of the newly formed Bank of the United States of Pennsylvania; in turn, Matthew L. Bevan was named president of the defunct corporation, which was held in trust by its successor institution.
5. Mahlon Dickerson was still Secretary of the Navy, but his term ended on June 25, 1838.
6. The *Erie*, a commissioned naval vessel under Commander Joseph Smoot, was stationed in the West Indies.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON

My dear Sir,

Hermitage May 21st 1838

At the special request of the Revd Mr. Muller I enclose you his letter. The great fire at Charleston it appears has involved him & family in ruin with hundred others.¹ If his claim is just, it is a duty that it ought now to be granted, to relieve him & family from distress. That it may be made known to his friends named in his letter, I enclose it.

What is to be the fate of the Divorce bill. The Whiggs claim Mississippi, and I have no doubt but Prentis² is elected. I still have some hopes that Claibourn³ is also, but it is doubtfull. Golstons⁴ withdrawing from the canvass has lost for the present the state. Genl Davis⁵ was not generally known, and Claibourn did not as I learn visit the counties north & east. The mony power made many, republicans ragacrats, who sold their birthrights for a mess of porrage.

Pleas let us hear from you. My little family unite with me in kind regards to you & Mrs. Polk.

ANDREW JACKSON

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.
1. Albert A. Muller's letter of May 9, 1838, to Polk pressed Polk for more aid in obtaining hereditary claims for Revolutionary War services and also mentioned a fire in Charleston, South Carolina.
2. Sergeant S. Prentiss.
4. Samuel J. Gholson.
5. James Davis replaced Gholson as the Democratic candidate.
May 24, 1838

TO MAHLO DICKERSON

Dr. Sir

Washington City May 24th 1838

I take pleasure in making known to you, Mr. John F. Young of Virginia, who has been recently appointed a Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. Mr. Young is the nephew of our friend the Hon. John Y. Mason of Va. and visits Washington, for the purpose of reporting himself to your Department, as ready for service. He will hand you this note.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.

1. See Polk to Dickerson, February 22, 1838, and John Y. Mason to Polk, March 27, 1838.

TO JONATHAN WEBSTER

Dear Sir

Washington City May 24th 1838

I received many weeks ago your two letters upon the subject of a line of mail stages from McMinnville through the Counties of Coffee, Bedford &c, and Westwardly to the Mississippi River, and owe you an apology for not having given you an earlier answer. The answer was delayed, with a view of ascertaining, what would be the result of the application for the establishment of the line. This you will see, from the correspondence held by Mr Turney and myself with the Post-Master General, a copy of which was forwarded some days ago to McMinnville and Shelbyville for publication. The Post Office Department, has within the last two or three years [made] extensive improvements by the establishment of lines of stages, on routes where the mail had before been carried on horseback, and of consequence, the expenses of the Department have been increased in a corresponding degree. It has been a principle, never departed from, in the administration of the General Post Office, that its expenditures shall not exceed its income. The Post Master Genl. in his answer states, that the means of the Department, will not at this time, justify him in extending any additional facilities. I entertain the opinion however that in the course of the next year, the Department may be in a condition, to establish the line of stages, as desired by yourself & others. Every attention within my power has been given to the subject, and shall continue to be given to it. I think the line a very important one, and one that ought to be established at the earliest moment. The Department is in a condition to do it; and I have no reason to doubt the favorable dis-
position of the Department, to grant the prayer of the petition of
yourself and others interested as soon as it can be done with propriety.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Noah's Fork, Coffee County, Tennessee. On the envelope
Polk indicated that this was a substantial, but not literal, copy of the letter
sent.

1. Webster was a large landholder who wielded considerable political power
in Bedford County at one time. He served many terms in both houses of the
state legislature and was speaker of the senate, 1835–37. Webster was thought
to be ambitious to succeed Polk in Congress; however, although he supported
Polk for many years, he eventually became a Whig.

2. The letters from Webster have not been found.

3. See Polk and Hopkins L. Turney to Amos Kendall, March 29, 1838,
and Kendall's reply, May 12, 1838.

FROM JOHN O. BRADFORD

Dr Sir Wilmington D[elaware] May 25 [1838]¹

Your letter of the 22nd I have just received.² I was well aware that
your expenses have been great, and the claims upon your generosity
not a few. I therefore felt a special desire to avoid troubling you with
my pecuniary arrangements; but having been disappointed in my just
expectations I knew not what else to do. I am glad that you have it in
your power to aid me in this respect, and can assure you that this with
all other acts of disinterested kindness towards me will ever be re-
membered with the liveliest satisfaction.³

I have drawn the order as you directed and feel confident, if I do
not meet it at maturity Dr Bretney will. I will take my departure for
Porto Rico, about the middle of the week. You will therefore oblige me
by directing your letter to Philad[elphia].

Please excuse my apparent haste. Present my respects to Mrs
P. . . .

JOHN O. BRADFORD

The paper will be sent to Dr Kelsey.⁴

Addressed to Washington.

1. The Library of Congress has supplied the year correctly.

2. Polk's letter has not been found.

3. On the envelope Polk noted that he had received the order on Dr.
Bretney for $200 and had sent $200 to Bradford at Philadelphia. See Bradford
to Polk, May 15 and May 21, 1838.
4. Dr. Henry B. Kelsey was a postmaster at Mooresville from 1836 until March 30, 1838. Presumably, he was still in Mooresville, but within a few months he moved to Texas. It is not clear to which paper Bradford was referring.

FROM A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Dear Sir

Columbia May 25, 1838

Yours of the 16th inst. came to hand yesterday,¹ and I seize the first leisure to reply. I have had much anxiety to hear from you and learn your opinion as to the course of our friends on the Independent Treasury bill, but I was much disappointed in finding no allusion to the subject in your letter. I suppose that all hope of its passage through your House must be abandoned, or it would have been called up before this. I should be much pleased to have your views on the questions connected with this matter.

You have no doubt seen the result of our meeting before this. The Democrat contained a true account as far as it went, but it did not represent the conduct of a few Whigs in as reprehensible a light as the truth would have justified. There was an evident preconcerted arrangement to prevent our acting, by involving us in a protracted and angry debate. They had their forces gathered in and at the first onset put up [George G.] Skipwith to commence the embarrassment. The result however was any thing but gratifying or creditable to the Whigs. It had the manifest effect of warming up and cementing together our ranks, and it has produced highly beneficial consequences through the country. Our friends every where regard the conduct of the Whigs as a wanton, unjustifiable attempt to interfere with and interrupt the course of the democratic citizens. From the manifestation on the day of the meeting, and the tone now pervading the country, I am fully satisfied that the meeting will prove of much benefit.

The result of the meeting satisfies me of another fact which I have had more interest about. I allude to the state of parties in this county. I am now satisfied that there is no falling off in our ranks, but on the contrary, with Mr. Clay as the candidate, I believe we will improve considerably on our former vote. The red hot Bank partizans are ready generally to declare for Clay, but the moderate White Whigs are standing aloof, and will join his standard (if at all) with great reluctance. I fully agree with you as to the importance of having Mr. Clay distinctly before the people as their candidate, and I have no doubt, but that the Convention was postponed with an eye to the apprehended consequences of bringing him forward before the next elections. I
believe however that nothing of consequence will be gained in Ten­nesssee by this postponement. It is already well understood that Mr. Clay will be the candidate, and the people are looking at the contest between him and Mr. V.B. We are anxious for your return being desirous to hear a full expose of the actings and doings at Washing­ton. You will see that a kind of pitched battle has been made up be­tween Cabal and Myself for the 1st Monday of June. The thing has been got up rather strangely, but I shall be present, and if there is a discussion I shall not hesitate to take part. As to my course in being a candidate I am certainly now resolved, but I have made no rash decla­ration, nor shall I do so, but still I do not believe I can be induced to be a candidate. I shall expect an early answer.

A. O. P. NICHOLSON

Addressed to Washington.
1. Polk's letter of May 16, 1838, has not been found. Polk did, however, write again to Nicholson on May 20.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother

Nashville Tenn May 25th 1838

Doctor Gentry¹ of Williamson Cty, who will hand you this, ac­companied by his Lady and my Wife's Sister Miss Dickinson,² intends visiting Washington City during a visit to the Northern Cities. Any kindness which will enable them to make their visit a pleasant one, will be gratefully received, and confer a favour on myself.

WILLIAM H. POLK

I have not been able to visit Mississippi this Spring. I will leave here for Home to-morrow, where I will stay a few days and then to the [Western] District & Mississippi. As soon as I arrive at the plantation you shall hear from me. Your kin are generally all well with the ex­ception of Sister Ophelia, who cannot, Dr. Hays thinks, live through the summer. Her disease is confirmed consumption. She is aware of her situation which has made a decided change in her course of conduct.

WILL H. POLK

Tell Sam [Polk] to visit me.

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.
1. Dr. Reuben Gentry lived near College Grove in the southeastern part of Williamson County.
2. William H. Polk had married Belinda Dickinson, daughter of Dr. Wil-
May 26 1838

liam G. Dickinson. The first name of the sister mentioned here has not been ascertained.

FROM EDWIN CROSWELL¹

My Dear Sir


I regret that circumstances prevented the renewal of our conversation, & that my departure from the city deprived me of the pleasure of a farther personal acquaintance.

Your suggestion was, I think, in relation to the democratic paper in Nashville, & to editorial aid in its behalf, & I seize the first opportunity since my return to say to you that it will afford me pleasure to lend our friends in Tenn. any assistance in this respect in my power. If I am right in the conjecture as to the place, & indeed if I am not, please inform me of the condition of the press, & the terms on which an individual will be expected to go into it.

The battle will be obstinately contested in Tenn. as in this state, and at a period when federal hope & exertion are moving all the powers of evil against the administration, it claims everywhere the most vigorous & cordial efforts of its friends.

E. Croswell

Addressed to Washington.

1. Prominent in journalism and politics, Croswell was a spokesman for the Albany Regency and was editor of the Albany Argus, 1823–54.

FROM ADAM HUNTSMAN

Dear Sir

Jackson Tennessee May 26th 1838

Last spring when the Editor¹ of the Madisonian brought out his prospectus promising a temperate support of the Administration, I subscribed for it as my preference was rather in favour of the State Banks. He has apostatised so completely that I have thought proper to discontinue his paper after giving him a piece of my mind. I enclose you a letter for that purpose. Please put $5 in it and have it conveyed to him after sealing it. There is no currency here that will suit and it shall be refunded upon your return. As to politicks we are much split up. Ten of the Madison lawyers out of fifteen will go for V B against Clay Webster or Harrison. White received 2600 of a majority over V B in this District. Clay cannot get the fourth of that over V. I have been writing some numbers in our paper² under the signature of A sub-
They have been copied into the democratic papers extensively. I enclose you one. Make Blair correct the errors of the type & publish it in the Globe & mark it for the Enquirer. I shall write another. These numbers has some good effect here.

By all means settle your money question this session. It is the greatest Stumbling Block in the way of the administration or its future success. If you cannot succeed in your sub-treasury adopt the State Bank law of 1836 and let it be proclaimed and then the conservatives are placed in such a situation they are obliged to go for you however bitter the Pill may be.

I shall continue to write some occasional Nos. Until the next election. To do this more effectually I will thank you for any information, documents, &c that may aid me in that object. Tell Brother Van that I shall write a Book of Chronicles next spring in which he will be largely spoken of.

A. Huntsman

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Williams, editor, "Letters of Adam Huntsman," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, VI, 341–342.

1. Thomas Allen was the editor of the *Madisonian*.
2. This probably refers to the Jackson *District Telegraph and State Sentinel*.
3. Huntsman probably was referring to the Richmond *Enquirer*.
4. Apparently the reference is to the major federal legislation of June 23, 1836, whereby the Secretary of the Treasury was to select the depositories for the federal monies. That legislation was still in effect, but Huntsman evidently wanted to extend it to apply more pressure on state banks to co-operate with the administration.

TO ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

My Dear Sir

Washington City May 29th 1838

All our efforts to procure an Editor for the Union, have been thus far unsuccessful. Although Mr Smith's proposition is a liberal one, it is exceedingly difficult to find a person of talents and suitable qualifications for such a station. We have not however despair ed of finding a suitable person, and will continue our inquiries. Wilson the late Editor of the Baltimore Republican has not been heard from. If he cannot be had, some other must be. I am grieved to see the inefficiency of the Union, under the management of its present Editor. It exhibits no tact, talent or political information, and is but little better than a blank sheet. This must not be. At this important crisis, the truth as it is
must be conveyed to the great body of the people. This is all that is necessary to insure our success in Tennessee. Without an able and efficient Editor of the head of the Union, we will go into the next contest under great disadvantages. I am aware of your situation at home. You have no man of talents, whose services can be commanded. You may rely upon it, that someone shall be procured soon. In the mean-time, and until he can take charge of the paper, I hope yourself and others will contribute to the paper, so as in some degree to counteract the mischief, which the opposition papers are doing. I see the Knoxville Register has the Clay flag, and the Banner endorses it. This is as it should be. What we want is, to have our opponents to hoist their true flag, throw off the mask under which their real designs have been concealed from the public, and fight in the open field.

The late communication from the Secretary of War to John Ross & others, in relation to the execution of the Cherokee Treaty, produced much sensation for a time, and it was apprehended would seriously injure our cause in the States interested. It was done without proper advisement or consultation with the delegations of the States interested, all of whom except Governor Lumpkin were wholly ignorant of it, until it was officially communicated to Congress. It produced great excitement and much dissatisfaction among our Southern friends, and was cause of exultation with our opponents. It will however I hope pass off, without doing much harm. Notwithstanding the assertions of the Secretary of War, which I doubt not originated in good motives, and in a sincere desire to avoid a Cherokee war (of which however there was no danger) the administration it is now understood, will go on promptly to execute the Treaty.

The Independent Treasury Bill will be brought up in the House next week. We will press it with all our strength. According to the present estimate of the strength of parties, there will not be 3 votes difference, and it is exceedingly doubtful on which side the majority will incline. Our friends are in good spirits, though some damper has been thrown over them by the Cherokee affair, and I fear there is not the same harmony of feeling and energy of action among them, that before prevailed. Make my kind respects to the General, and write me soon.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Nashville. Marked "Private," this letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. See the Polk-Donelson correspondence of March 8, March 26, April 14, April 22, May 8, and May 18, 1838.
2. The Treaty of New Echota, proclaimed on May 23, 1836, specified that all the Cherokee should be removed beyond the Mississippi within two years of that date. It was accepted by one faction of the Cherokee, but another faction, perhaps a majority, led by John Ross, continued their efforts to prevent its execution. Meanwhile, the states in which the Cherokee tarried were adamant in their position that, if the United States did not remove the Indians, the states would do so. Caught in the middle of the controversy, Secretary of War Poinsett had intimated that the Cherokee might be granted a two-year delay in the removal. His letter to the Cherokee Delegation was dated May 18, 1838.

3. Wilson Lumpkin had been governor of Georgia, 1831-1835, but was a United States senator from that state in 1838.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Columbia, May 29 1838

Dear Sir,

I am not apprised of the importance of Knox's remaining after his examination merely to get possession of his degree, but as it may be more important than I am aware of, I have written to him, leaving that matter entirely to his discretion and wishes. I had some hopes that the drafts I forwarded Mr. C A Harris drawn by the Gibsons1 would have been realized in time for Jane's & Knox's expenses. There is however so much uncertainty about this that I think it necessary to make other arrangements. The road Co.2 require my services in the Western District where it is thought we can purchase from 1 to 200 negroes upon terms more advantageous than the Eastern arrangement which we contemplated. I shall with Maria3 start there tomorrow, and be gone some 4 or 5 weeks. I have made arrangements with Samuel which I think I can rely on to remit you from 6 to $800. Exchange is very difficult to get, and the only chance he may have to make the remittance may be in a 12 m post note of the Planters or Union Bank, payable at Philadelphia. If this is the kind of remittance you receive, you must sell it in the market for what it will bring; the discount will probably be from 8 to 10 pr. cent. Of the remittance Sam. will make to you, retain about $400 for Jane's expenses and send the ballance to Knox. Whatever more is necessary for Knox, if more is necessary to pay off his debts and bring him home, I will arrange for Sam to send him or you for him, if he concludes to come home with you. If he stays until August I will be at home time enough to attend to his matter myself. I still hope Mr. Harris may be able to pay you some money for me in the latter part of June. If so, use what is necessary for my children & bring the ballance home. I send you an order on Saltmarsh
May 31 1838

& Forbes for $1700. They are both under promise to pay it, and have treated me very badly in not doing so 3 months ago. They are both I understand at Washington, are mail contractors, and will most probably be found at Brown's. If you possibly can, screw this money or a part of it, out of them, and if necessary allow them some exchange for eastern funds.

You see the Federal papers are still abusive of you, and the [Nashville] Whig has made a low personal attack on me. These things, I think, can do no harm.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.
2. Columbia Central Turnpike Company.
3. His wife, Jane Maria.
4. The partnership of Saltmarsh & Forbes is unidentified, but it is probably one of the many combinations under which the Saltmarshes operated numerous mail lines.

TO ANDREW STEVENSON

Dear Sir

I learn from a friend that Mr John Roberts and Mr Asa Jones, two highly respectable citizens of the State of North Carolina will visit Europe in the course of the next month, and will probably spend some time at London. Although I have not the pleasure of their personal acquaintance, I take the liberty of commending them to your favourable notice and do not doubt, that it will be gratifying to you, to have the opportunity of extending to them, any civilities in your power, during their stay at London.

JAMES K. POLK

No envelope has been found; presumably this letter was delivered by hand to the State Department and forwarded to London in a diplomatic pouch. This letter is in the Papers of Franklin Pierce, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. On May 19, 1838, William H. Haywood Jr. wrote to Polk introducing the bearer of the letter, John Roberts, who, with his uncle, was en route to Europe. Haywood requests for his friends letters of introduction to persons in countries to be visited.
FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

Clarksville 1 June 1838

I have intended to write you for some weeks past but have omitted to do so hoping that something would occur which might interest you. Here for weeks at a time we do not hear the subject of politics mentioned and was it not for the mails that reach us tri weekly we should not know or care I believe whether your honorable body existed or not. Now & then I hear some friend taunting the Whigs with "where is your Bank or your U.S. money now." Our people around me are a busy trading set of chaps that care more for banks & bank directorships than they care for their Country or their souls. We have had some feeling among us of late in relation to our new Bank. Our Whigs here were very active in getting a Branch. Most of them wanted the cash and a few had other feelings & wishes. The Directors became very important, and they formed a list of young active [enterprising?] men in business & politics without capital or character to justify their appointment. They placed myself & two other friends on the board. I thought the directory villainous & made strong representations to the Board at Nashville & so far succeeded as to get the most obnoxious off and honest substantial men in their places, but Whigs. Tho we have but two democrats on the board, there is enough of upright honest men to keep the balance in check, save the money & prevent its perversion to political uses, which I consider important here and I have no doubt contrary to the wishes & intentions of the Board at Nashville. The location of the Bank was evidently intended to regulate your district & mine but if I am not egregiously mistaken they will miss their object and it is very likely will answer our cause a good purpose for the present. As far as I can learn there is great dissatisfaction prevailing in the district & in the mountains. They are probably located with the view of joint political action with the other Banks throughout the State.

We have been & are now using every effort to get up a press here but I doubt whether we shall succeed. Gloomy prospects abroad deter some whilst a few of us are rendered more active. We have just read from Nashville 400 Benton Speeches in reply to Clay which I shall take great pains in distributing & making useful. 10,000 have been printed at Nashville & I presume will be well distributed throughout the State. We need greatly an active committee at Nashville, who will raise money there & have their sub-committees in every county who will raise funds in each county and supply each county. Our opponents have greatly the advantage over us. Foster & old Hintchey have
nothing else earthly to do, at least it so seems to me from all that I can see or hear. There is I suppose a good excuse at Nashville. They have contributed until their pockets are empty or their patience exhausted. I saw [Andrew Jackson] Donelson a few moments who is in as good spirits as usual and I think is disposed to get rid of Carrol as our candidate for Govr. who gives us no aid in a pecuniary point of view. Fletcher is with us & half promised me another horse race. Our new Editor is worse than the others. Cant you get some man who has some sense & sprightliness?

I have been amused with our new Senator on my two last visits to Nashville. He has been unusually & especially attentive to me and labored as he thought most cunningly to convince me that I was a much greater man than either you or Grundy & that my modesty kept me in the back-ground, whilst your impudence & subserviency to the old Chief made you his favorite & left me where my modesty placed me. I am a good deal amused at such things and the more "soft sawder," as Sam Slick says, he used the more bitter & severe I was in my replys. It seems to me that J[mil] M. Smith is half his time if not all drunk & is of course but little use to the establishment. This is a mere surmise from appearances. We shall have to get rid of old Dick [Johnson] in this State even if we have to form a seperate ticket for the Vice Presidency. I hope however our friends will be able to get rid of him quietly. Is it likely that an effort will be made to get rid of him at our National Convention? And can it be done without driving him into the opposition? We ought in our State by all means to have the candidate. It seems to me, that we shall have here a severe battle and that we have no hopes of Kentucky. John McLean could do well if he was not a Supreme Judge, which is almost an insuperable objection. In all the West, I think no position so favorable for the Candidate as Tennessee & no places where so much good may be done by it. All things will be attended to I suppose in proper time.

Senator [Silas] Wrights Report on Clays Resolution is the ablest public document I have read for many a year and it seems to me places Clay in a verry unenviable situation. He is the clearest headed man in the Senate; even our Whigs speak of him in the most favorable terms. I cannot believe that Clay will go down with the people of this State. I suppose the ticket will be Clay & Talmadge. They can hardly take Preston.

I am getting on as usual, attending the courts & when at home spending all my time with my wife. We still occasionally talk of Mississippi in the faul [fall]. I am now talking of a partnership with [George C.] Boyd, extending our practice & making a fortune in my
Correspondence of James K. Polk

old age. Whatever course I may adopt I shall never be again a candidate for public favor tho I shall perhaps render my friends quite as much service as if I was myself before the people.

I wrote Mr. Grundy early in April a list of subscribers (18) for the Extra Globe, & I rec'd from him lately Blairs rect. but not a paper has come on. Do mention the subject to him. I enclose a list of the names so that if mislaid, the papers may now be ordered.10 My respects to Mrs P.

C. JOHNSON

Addressed to Washington and marked "Private."

1. The reference to the participation of Cave Johnson and his friends remains obscure. When Nashville newspapers published lists of directors of the principal bank at Nashville, as well as the seven branch banks, his name did not appear.

2. There was dissatisfaction at having only two branch banks in West Tennessee and two in East Tennessee, while Middle Tennessee had three. There was serious objection also to having a branch at Trenton and considerable displeasure that the branch placed at Shelbyville had not been located at McMinnville.


4. On the eve of the presidential election of 1824, Thomas H. Fletcher, a prominent Nashville lawyer, wrote The Political Horse Race, a cleverly humorous portrayal of the presidential candidates. This witty piece went through several printings.

5. Joshua Cunningham, editor of the Nashville Union.

6. This refers to Ephraim H. Foster, who had been elected United States senator to succeed Felix Grundy, although Grundy's term had many months yet to run. When Grundy resigned a few weeks after this letter was written, Foster was appointed to finish out that term also.

7. Sam Slick was a fictitious itinerant clockmaker created by Canadian humorist Thomas C. Haliburton and continued by Samuel A. Hammett in his humorous tales of the southwest. "Soft sawder" was an expression meaning flattery that was used in the homely speech of Sam Slick.

8. Clay's resolution of April 30, 1838, forbade discrimination in the medium of payment of the public revenue, requiring that notes of all sound banks shall be received in payments due the federal government. Wright succeeded in getting the resolution referred to his committee on finances, and on May 16 he made an unfavorable report to the Senate. That is the report referred to here.

9. Nathaniel Tallmadge of New York and William C. Preston of South Carolina were two senators frequently mentioned as vice-presidential possibilities for the Whig ticket.

10. The list contained sixteen names of persons from Clarksville, one from another part of Montgomery County, and one from Natchez, Mississippi.
Below this list Johnson added: "Not one paper has been read. The whole of the papers should be sent if practicable. If not from the commencement let them go on the balance of the time."

FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT
Jackson, June 2, 1838

Talbot explains that neither he nor West H. Humphreys desires appointment as attorney general for the projected federal district in West Tennessee. He recommends that Polk back Henry W. McCorry Sr. for that post. Talbot also insists that if Polk passes through that region it is urgent that he call on him.

Addressed to Washington.

1. For further details of developments regarding this appointment, see West H. Humphreys to Polk, March 4 and April 23, 1838. McCorry received the appointment.

FROM HOPKINS L. TURNEY

Sir

House of Representatives June the 2nd 1838

I must request of you to state whether the Speech I delivered in the house of Representatives when in committee of the whole on the Bill to suppress Indian hostilities on the 31st of May & 1st of this month, was concocted or prepaird by you or by your procurement counsel or advice, and whether you knew the course of argument I would persue, or what I intended to say on that occasion, as has been charged in debate on the floor of the house in reply to my Speech.

H. L. Turney

Addressed to Washington.

1. In this speech, Turney was highly critical of John Bell's course of action, pointed out inconsistencies, and accused him of having become an apostate. Bell accused Turney of being a mouthpiece and a tool of Polk and Grundy who, he charged, had provided Turney with all his materials. In the heat of the exchange, Bell struck at Turney with his fist but missed. Both were restrained and were forced to apologize to the House.

TO HOPKINS L. TURNEY

Washington City, June 2, 1838

In answer to your letter of this date, I state, that your speech made in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the Indian
Correspondence of James K. Polk

appropriation bill, was not “concocted or prepared” by me, and was made by you without my procurement, counsel, or advice.1 I did not know that you intended to speak on that occasion, until the day you obtained the floor, and after you had made an unsuccessful attempt to do so, and much less did I know what you intended to say. If by the charge of which you refer, I was meant to be embraced, as one of those at whose instance you acted, I have to say that the charge is without foundation in fact. This I would have promptly said in Committee of the Whole, had it not been manifestly improper for the Speaker of the House to engage in debates of a partizan or personal character, which might hazard the violation of the order and decorum of the House, which he of all others is bound to preserve and maintain. I cannot so far forget my duty to the public and to the House itself, while acting as its presiding officer, as to permit myself voluntarily to be engaged in personal altercation on the floor with any of its members.

JAMES K. POLK

Presumably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found. This letter appeared in the Nashville Union of June 25, 1838, and was printed in the appendix of the Congressional Globe, 25th Congress, 2nd session, p. 360.

1. In the same issue of the Union there appeared a similar letter of denial from Felix Grundy.

FROM LUCIUS J. POLK

My Dear Sir. Hamilton Place,1 June 5th 1838

I received a letter from D. Green2 by the mail of last night dunning me for a balance of $18 which he says I owe him on act. of the U S. Telegraph. I called at the Office of the Telegraph when in Washington either 1832 or 33 and settled the balance against me on their books, which I supposed liquidated my whole account (with the sum previously paid by you). I have referred to my package of Receipts & cant find a single one. I must beg the favour of you to call and pay the $18 for me and draw on me here for the amount. His letter appeals to my honor, honesty &c & as a gentleman and I merely make this explanation to show him that I have not paid him because I had a reason for not doing so, viz supposing I owed him nothing. Cahal announced on Monday that he had retired from public life to devote himself to his profession. Skipwith & Greenfield I understand had a war of words on the Sub. Tr. matter.3 “Much ado about nothing.” Skipwith
it is supposed will be a candidate for something. With my best respects to Cousin Sarah & Jane. . . .

L. J. Polk

Addressed to Washington. This letter was posted at Mt. Pleasant.
1. Hamilton Place was the home of Lucius J. Polk. It was on the Mt. Pleasant road near Columbia.
2. Duff Green had been publishing the United States Telegraph in Washington since 1825. Green was a strong supporter of Andrew Jackson until Jackson broke with Calhoun.

FROM CARUTHERS, HARRIS & COMPANY

Dear Sir

N Orleans June 8th 1838

We hand you herewith check on the Bank U S. for $150 for acct Dr. S[ilas] M. Caldwell who has doubtless instructed you on the subject. We did hope to have been able from our own means to have sent you that $500 you requested some time ago, inasmuch as the proceeds of your crop has been fully anticipated in Tennessee by your brother;¹ but we are sorry to say that such is the state of things here, that it is with the utmost difficulty we can realize from collections a sufficiency to meet our imperative & indispensable engagements; and now when the resources of the present season are nearly exhausted it is impossible to comply with your request without a misapplication of funds belonging to others. We have adjusted the loss of the 42 bales cotton with the underwriters on the best terms we could and will send all the accounts to Tennessee.²

CARUTHERS, HARRIS & Co.

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Bassett, Plantation Overseer, 226.
1. William H. Polk.
2. See Caruthers, Harris & Company to Polk, March 17, 1838.

FROM JOSEPH C. HERNDON

Columbia. June 11, 1838

Herndon reports that Andrew C. Hays is seriously ill with the disease with which he has previously been afflicted. Believing that Hays will not long sur-
vive, Herndon declares himself a candidate to succeed Hays as postmaster at Columbia.

Addressed to Washington.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

My Dear Sir

Washington City June 11th 1838

Your letter of the 21st ultimo, was received some days ago. I have given all necessary attention to Dr Muller's claim. His petition and documents were referred to the committee on Revolutionary claims. The committee I understand have been inclined to report against it, on the ground that Majr. Muller the ancestor, did not belong to the Continental line, and was not therefore embraced under the resolutions of the old Congress, among those who were entitled to commutation pay. Congress has not heretofore granted commutation, to any but the officers of the Continental line. Learning that the committee were about to Report against the petition on this ground, and believing that Dr. Muller's claim falls within the equity of the former action of Congress on the subject, I requested a member of the Committee to suspend the Report, & re-examine the case. I fear however they will ultimately report against it.

You ask "what is to be the fate of the Divorce Bill." The vote in the House will be exceedingly close and the result doubtful. The opposition have become alarmed, within a few days, and have been busy calculating their strength. I send you the Madisonian of to day, that you may see the calculation of the conservative organ. It is not far from the truth; his remarks, commentaries and conjectures are untrue. Every thing may depend upon a full attendance of members on the vote. If we have more absent than they, we will loose the Bill. If they have more absent than we, we may carry it, possibly, and indeed probably as many think, by my casting vote. This is the present calculation on a direct vote. We shall however, have great difficulty in procuring a direct vote. The opposition will it is understood use every effort to prevent the Bill from being taken up, and if taken up, will endeavour to amend it, by striking out the specie clause so as to make it unacceptable, to some of its supporters (the friends of Mr Calhoun) from the South. We intend to urge Cambreleng's Bill, in preference to that of the Senate, as the strongest measure. Our real difficulty is this: 3 or 4 of our friends will not vote for the Bill, with the specie provision in it; whilst on the other hand 9 or 10 gentlemen will not vote for it, with the specie provision stricken out. You will see there-
fore that the Bill is strongest with the specie clause, than without it. If unfortunately it should be stricken out by the votes of 3 or 4 of our party, the Bill must be lost by 10 or 12 votes. We are using every effort to reconcile these differences and I hope we may succeed, though I fear we shall not.

As soon as the pre-emption Bill, which is now under consideration in the House is disposed of, which will be to-day or tomorrow,\(^3\) it is our purpose to get up the Independent Treasury Bill, and go into the fight. There never was a question upon which more important consequences depended. We are aware of this, and will leave no honorable means untried to insure success.

From what I see in the Tennessee papers, the New State Bank is about to be converted into a political engine. The Whig Directory I think have over-acted their part. My District I see has been favoured with two of the Branches & Cave Johnson's with the third in Middle Tennessee. The Federalists have no common-sense, and never could bear prosperity. "Whom God wills to destroy he first makes mad." I hope these efforts to use the money of the State for party political purposes, will arouse the people to a sense of their rights. The two Branch Boards at Shelbyville and Columbia, are made up of my bitterest political opponents, the one at Shelbyville in the proportion of 10 Whigs to 2 Democrats; and at Columbia of 9 Whigs to 3 Democrats.\(^4\) McClellan tells me that the same is the fact at the Branch at Rogersville 10 Whigs and 2 Democratic Directors. I suppose it is so at all the other Branches. They ought to be promptly and boldly exposed, through the Democratic papers. If I live to get home I will attend to it in my region. Majr. Donelson, I hope will attend to this, through the Union. I am grieved to see the miserable manner in which the Union is conducted. It is little better than a blank sheet. Smith wrote to me to procure an Editor for him, but after the most diligent inquiry, I have been unable to find a suitable person, who is willing to take charge of the establishment.

James K. Polk

Addressed to Nashville. This letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.
1. Thomas Allen was the editor of the *Madisonian*.
2. Churchill C. Cambreleng had introduced the Independent Treasury Bill in the House on March 6.
3. The Senate's pre-emption legislation was discussed and amended until June 14, when it was referred back to the Senate. On June 20 the bill passed the House, and two days later was signed into law. This law revived, con-
Correspondence of James K. Polk

continued for two years, and extended in scope the pre-emption law of May 29, 1830. Also see Levin H. Coe to Polk, March 25, 1838.

4. A complete list of the directors at the main bank and at all seven branches was published in the Nashville Union on May 28, 1838.

FROM WILLIAM E. BUTLER

D. Sir, Jackson June 12th 38

From a letter recd. to day from Jno. W. Crockett Esqr. to Judge [Morgan W.] Brown of this place it is more than probable, that the Law will pass locating an U.S. Circuit Court at this place. In that court I wish to call your attention to the recommendation of Col. R[obert] J. Chester, forwarded some time since, for the appointment of Marshall.¹ Be so good as to give this matter some attention when the nominations are made to the Senate.

I hope Congress will soon adjourn. There is work to be done in Tennessee before the next Election. Cannon must be beat for Governor & by a Whig, who is not a Clay man, a man that has the means & firmness to take the stump and travell throughout the state, spend this summer in the mountains & in E. Tennessee, who will go the whole against Mr. Bell & his people & expose their Federal principals to public gaze. I mention no name as yet, but you can guess. This matter must be thought of when you come home. The Clay-Bell-ites are writing to him constantly that he must go for Clay. Wilson Cty. contains a man that writes to him, to bring him into the support of Clay. This is private.

Let me hear from you. Kindest regards to Mrs. Polk.

WM. E. BUTLER

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Andrew Jackson to Polk, February 2, 1838.

FROM PHILO WHITE

My dear Sir: Milwaukee, Wis. Ter.,¹ 13 June 1838

Your favor of 29th ult. reached me last mail.² I certainly ought to feel honored by the very flattering opinion you entertain of my capacity to conduct, with efficiency, the “organ of the Democracy of Tennessee.” Perhaps you are aware, that whatever of success may have attended my Editorial labors, it is more attributable to tact than talent. My knowledge of men and politics in No. Ca. was very con-
siderable, the result of some seventeen years experience; I was con­sequently enabled, being rather a close observer of “signs,” &c. to do much towards controlling events in that state. But I might find myself entirely “at fault,” in other parts of the Union. I make no pretensions to good writing, but have gained some little credit for making “good shots” with small arms, in a political contest.

But even if my experience and tact should enable me to equal the wants and expectations of the party in Tennessee, I am persuaded my physical energies would fail me in the task. I am dyspeptic, and need much bodily exercise, with a relaxation of the mind. Hence, I should do injustice to myself, and fail of doing justice to the Democracy of Tennessee, were I to undertake the Editorial charge of the “Union.” My friend Dr. [William] Montgomery can bear me witness, that he found my corporeal man little else than the outlines of what is should be; and I am still feeble and nervous.

Feeling an anxious desire to see Tennessee with her Democracy again in the ascendant I sincerely hope Mr. Smith will succeed in engaging an efficient Editor for the “Union” who will render it worthy to be the Organ of the patriotism and chivalry of that gallant State.

Be pleased to tender my cordial regards to my friend and old Representative, Dr. Montgomery, and to other friends. And for yourself, allow me to offer you my grateful thanks, for your distinguished services to the Nation and the Democracy of our common country.

PHILO WHITE

Addressed to Washington.

1. In 1836 White purchased property in Milwaukee, and in 1837 he as­sisted in the founding of the Milwaukee Sentinel.

2. This letter has not been found. See White to Polk, April 20, 1838.

FROM ALFRED BALCH

15th June 38

Carroll will not do. I said this before he offered the last time. He has lost his voice and cannot stump it. He cannot plead pureity now as formerly for he has made a great deal of property in Chickasaw country. I had no objection to his making the property but I lamented that he could touch an inch of land whilst acting upon the claims of the Indians. Carroll will be detained in the Creek country selling the lands which he owns & will restore to the Indians. There is a necessity for his going there now & cannot close in that quarter before March 1839. Carroll can not be our candidate.
If you are in the field it must be with a view of victory. The means must be considered well and energetically applied.

1st. We must have a better press than we have in Nashville. Some active young men must be induced to write for it whose pieces must be copied into the smaller presses.

2d. Some spirited young men must be secured in every small town in the state who have intelligence and who can be secured as friends. To these next winter you should address speeches, documents &c.

3. The farming interest must be gained by personal acquaintance, by documents, speeches &c, and by making them understand the true questions at issue.

4th. You must procure a list of persons who should be addressed & include Whigs amongst them in every Congressional district in the state. McClelland, Turney & Cave Johnson can give you great assistance. In Williams & Crockett's Districts you must rely upon your friends there. Cave Johnson must come out again and in that District your interests must be identical. There must be candidates for the Legislature in every county if possible, on our side.

5. The older and more substantial men throughout the state, who have been openly on our side must rise up and stretch themselves and take high ground.

6th. You should procure a considerable no. of Benton's speech, get somebody to direct them and you frank them to the people beginning with McClellands & Carters Districts & running on to the Mississippi.

7th. You should return this summer through East Tennessee deliberately till you approach home and spending a day or two in Knoxville in the stronghold of the enemy. This is necessary in order to ascertain the real strength against us there and the best mode to impair it. There are a great many of Whites party who do not like Cannon. The conflict will be a bloody one. And it cannot be fought out successfully but by great efforts. We have however an honest cause and the people always take that side whenever they become convinced.

I am perfectly satisfied by Whites speech that he is going up to the throat for Clay & the Bank. This speech has been cunningly made up. Its object is to fix on Grundy & the rest of us the false imputation that we were & still are Bank men, that being the question on which it is intended to rally White followers in favour of Clay. If you take the field you must go to work systematically now, at the earliest moment, and drive your entering wedges. The opposition are now & have been all winter at work night & day.
In my opinion you can arrange matters so as to get a very heavy vote west of the Tennessee river.

B.

Addressed to Washington but not sent through the mails.

1. Alfred Balch was an astute political wire-puller who stayed in the background. He initialed the letter and Polk noted on the envelope the author's identity.

2. No point of origin was given, and there was no polite opening of the letter. It appears almost as though Balch had been asked to make notes and that this was not actually intended as a letter.

FROM ALBERT T. McNEAL

Cousin James  
Coffeerville [Mississippi] June 15th 1838

Your favour of the 21st ult. reached me a few days since. I visited the plantation the day after it was received and rode over the farm. In consequence of our unusually cold spring, it is generally thought, the cotton crop in Mississippi will not be so good as it was last year, but it is difficult at present to say how that will be, much depending upon the fall season. The corn crop however will be better. Bratton has in cultivation one hundred and sixty or sixty five acres in cotton and one hundred acres in corn. He will evidently make a better crop of corn than he did last year, and I think the prospect fair for a good crop of cotton. The stand is equally as good as it was last year, but the cotton not so large and flourishing as it was this time last June. Bratton says he will make Eighty five or ninety Bales of cotton. He is somewhat in the grass, but promises with fair weather, which we now have to be "in two weeks. He seems to have the negroes completely under his control now and I was glad to hear him praising them for their good conduct. They were no doubt spoiled by the inefficient and trifling overseer who preceeded him. There has been some sickness among them this spring (principally a kind of dysentery) and consequent loss of time. The girls Nancy and Elizabeth have not yet sufficiently recovered to be able to work. Bratton says he has a hundred Barrels of corn that he can spare for sale, that the hogs on the plantation will furnish from three to four thousand weight of pork next fall. This, I think, better than buying. It would certainly be well for William [H. Polk] to visit YalaBusha at least twice a year, say in the spring & fall. Any advice or aid in my power will be most freely given to the overseer. You will do me a favour by having the Democratic Review forwarded to me at this office with the numbers back if they can be
procured as I am very anxious to have the whole of them and I will forward the money to the publishers the first Ala. Bill I can get. My partner John S. Topp Esqr. sends his respects to you. Remember me to Cousin Sarah.

A. T. McNeal

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Bassett, Plantation Overseer, 111–112. McNeal's name was frequently misconstrued. Bassett, for instance refers to him as Albert F. McNeal. See McNeal to Polk, August 1, 1838.

1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. A man named Mayo, about whom little has been learned, was overseer from January 1836 to January 1837.
3. These were slave women.
4. Yalobusha is the Mississippi County in which Polk's plantation was located. Coffeeville was its county seat.
5. Topp, an older brother of Robertson Topp, had practiced law at Lebanon. Robertson Topp had studied law under his brother and then practiced law for a while in Columbia.

FROM EDWIN CROSWell


I owe you an apology for having delayed an answer to yr. inquiry in relation to Mr [Samuel B] Beach. My knowledge of him, for the latter period of his life is limited; & such as it is, w'd not justify me in recommending him. Col. Prentiss is probably well informed as to his character & qualifications; & if he speaks from personal knowledge, I sh'd rely upon his judgment. I have postponed a reply, in the hope of being able to name, definitely, some other person. But as yet I do not think of any one who is not otherwise engaged. There are two Citizens of this State, who are well adapted to the duty & the position—H. W. Van Dyck, Esqr. editor of the Ind. Republican, & a State Senator, & Henry O'Rielly, Esqr. postmaster at Rochester, and late editor of the Roch. Daily Adv. They are both clever men & capable writers, with much energy of character, & deservedly respected. But the former c'd. not be spared, at this time, from the Senate, & the latter c'd not, with propriety, resign his place. I appreciate, however, the importance of giving tone & vigor to the "Union" & shall take every pain to comply with yr. wishes.

Edw. Croswell
Addressed to Washington.

1. Although Polk had conversed with Crosswell in Washington in May, his inquiry about Beach was probably by mail; no such letter, however, has been found. See Crosswell to Polk, May 26, 1838. Also see Crosswell to Polk, June 24 and July 6, 1838.

2. For earlier correspondence about Beach, see the letter and postscript from John H. Prentiss to Polk, both dated November 2, 1837.

3. Van Dyck has not been further identified. Henry O'Reilly began a long association with the Rochester Daily Advertiser in 1826, the year the paper originated. It was published until 1856.

FROM JOHN B. HAYS

Columbia June 17th 1838

Dear Sir

I rec'd yours of the 7th on yesterday.¹ I have written to day by express mail, again requesting him to have the payment made in Washington on the 9th of July.² I have stated to him in my letters, my very great anxiety, to have the amount, at the proper time. The boats lodged near the mouth of this river for two or three weeks. But the Boatmen say that the cotton will be in N. Orleans between the 20 & 25 of this month unless the winds are against them, but at any rate by the 1st July. I wrote to Caruthers in my first letter stating the probable time of arrival, also requesting him to anticipate if he could possibly make any arrangement, so that there should be no disappointment. The matter is left to his management. But if I cannot hear, in time, from him (you see that the time is short) I wish that you could get a few days indulgence on it & apprise me of it by express mail. Or if I do not hear from Caruthers & yourself in proper time, I will send on a note for renewal for a few days.³

Even if the Eastern funds could be procured I would dislike to be at the very great expence of procuring them, when I know that the proceeds of the cotton, that was procured for that purpose would reach the Bank about the same time. I do not think that the Bank would think hard of it, as I have exerted myself in every way that was reasonable & but for the delay in getting the cotton to market, which could not be prevented, they would have had their money before this.

I informed your mother on today concerning Samuel's situation.⁴ She bears it very badly & wishes you to write directly very minutely all about him. She talks of going on to see him, fearing that she may never see him again &c. I will endeavor to console her as much as possible untill I hear from you, by express mail. I will prevent any
Correspondence of James K. Polk

movement untill then. If Samuel is able to write, you had better advise
him to do so.

Ophelia⁵ is getting a little better.

John B. Hays

Addressed to Washington.
1. This letter has not been found.
2. Hays had written to Madison Caruthers of Caruthers, Harris & Com-
pany. Also see Hays to Polk, April 24, 1838.
3. On June 25, 1838, Hays wrote Polk again and said that he had not yet
received word from Caruthers regarding the sale of his cotton. For the con-
clusion of this troublesome transaction, see Caruthers, Harris & Company to
Polk, July 2, 1838.
4. While in Washington studying for his examinations at Yale, Samuel W.
Polk became ill. His illness had been diagnosed as tuberculosis.
5. Dr. Hays's wife, also, was suffering from tuberculosis.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother Columbia June 17th 1838

Dr Hays received your letter by yesterday's mail informing him of
Samuel's attack of Hemorage.¹ Mother is unusually distressed and re-
quested me to write you by Express and desires that you would imme-
diately give her information of Sam's health from time to time until
you leave him. I think myself it would comfort her, and tend in a great
measure to dissipate the grief an anxiety, under which she is labouring
if you would gratify her request. She is under the impression that he
is much worse than the information in your letter would justify. Saml.
Walker opened a letter from Jane [Clarissa Walker] to her Mother
(who is absent in the [Western] District) in which she spoke of some
one of her relations meeting him at the Red Springs² so as to be with
him if he should have a return of the Hemorage. I have not heard
sister Walker speak any thing about visiting any watering place, since
the Summer set in, and think that she must have abandoned all idea, if
she ever seriously thought of it, of visiting the Springs, from the fact
of her visiting the District. I can if there is a shadow of necessity for
it, meet him at the Springs and remain with him as long as it shall be
deemed necessary by his medical advisers. Do not think that it is a
whim or a desire of mine, based upon a momentary excitement. I make
the proposition because my feelings dictate it, and think that it would
be an act of duty. It may be necessary, setting aside Sam's situation,
for me to visit some springs, on account Bess's³ health, and those
springs would be better for her probably than any others. Do not fail to write me by express mail, immediately on receipt of this.

WILLIAM H. POLK

The discussion of the Sub-Treasury by Nicholson, Cahal & others blew off without much of a storm.4 Cahal & Nicholson were engaged in the courthouse, neither of whom made speec[h]es. There was great disappoint[ment] among the people generally. Dr Greenfield and George Skipwith made speeches, but it seemed like an old field s[c]hool dialogue. All passed off without any excitement. The only effect of the meeting, was to raise the people from the self destroying security and lethargy into which they have relapsed. Give my love to Sister, Sam & Jane. All well.

W. H. POLK

Presumably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found.
1. See John B. Hays to Polk, June 17, 1838.
2. One of the most famous antebellum spas was Red Sulphur Springs in Virginia. Its waters were advertised as being beneficial for consumption, among other ailments.
3. Apparently William H. Polk referred to his wife, Belinda, as Bess.

TO FRANKLIN PIERCE1

My Dear Sir Washington City June 21st, 1838

In reference to our conversation this morning, I beg to state more particularly the condition and prospects of the “Nashville Union.” The paper is published Tri-weekly and Weekly. From its location at Nashville, it must necessarily be the chief organ of the Democratic party in the State. Nashville is the seat of the State government, is a flourishing and growing City, and contains at present a population of from 8 to 10 thousand. It is in the center of the State, numbering at present near a million of inhabitants. A talented and efficient editor is all that is needed to make the Union what the Albany Argus is, in New York and what the Richmond Enquirer has long been in the “Old Dominion”.2 The present editor3 possesses neither talents nor industry, and the paper as it has been conducted for a few months past, is but little better than a blank sheet, except as it relates to the articles extracted from other journals. Notwithstanding this, such is the zeal and growing strength of our party in the State, that its circulation is rapidly increasing, and its patronage extending. A talented editor,
would at once be looked to, to give tone to the party in the State, and
could not fail to increase both the circulation and patronage of the
paper, as well in Tennessee, as in the States south and southwest of
us. Of this Mr. Joel M. Smith who is the sole proprietor is fully aware;
and authorizes me to say that he will pay a salary of $1500 for the
services of a suitable editor, who will go out immediately and take
charge of the establishment. Should a suitable editor be procured, who
would prefer to become interested in the establishment, he would be
willing to make him so, upon very favourable and advantageous terms.
This of course would be an after-arrangement, to be made if desired,
after the editor had an opportunity of judging of the prospects of the
paper, and the proprietor had an opportunity of judging of the manner
in which the editor would conduct it. In the mean-time and for the
first year Mr Smith would pay him a salary of $1500 unless another
arrangement between them should be sooner made. Mr Smith is an
honest and honorable man, and is one of the safest men I know in the
management of his pecuniary affairs. His establishment is out of debt
& though the Editorial Department of the paper is conducted with no
ability, is yielding him a handsome profit. Mr Smith, though a sen­sible
man, does not himself pretend to write for the paper, but devotes
his attention to the pecuniary concerns of the office.

I know of no situation in which a man of talents could in so short
a time, make so much character for himself, and at the same time,
especially if he became interested in the paper, secure so handsome a
reward, pecuniarily for his labours. From what I learn of your friend,
I have no doubt he is such a man as would suit Mr Smith, and have as
little doubt from his reputation as a writer, that he would very soon
make himself one of the most conspicuous, as well as useful, men in
the South West. You can communicate to him these prospects, and
also the proposition which Mr Smith makes. Should he accept the
offer, (as I flatter myself he may) it would be desired by Mr Smith,
that he should go out and take charge of the establishment imme­diately. Should he go I have no doubt of the continued ascendency of
Democratic principles in the State. An able and efficient central organ
is all we want to insure success in the contest which is before us.

JAMES K. POLK

Marked "Private," this letter presumably was addressed to Washington;
no envelope has been found. This letter is in the Blair & Rives Papers,
Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.
1. Later President of the United States, Pierce at this time was a United
States senator from New Hampshire.
2. The Albany Argus and the Richmond Enquirer were, as suggested, two
of the most influential Democratic newspapers in the United States. At this
time, and for many years before and after, Edwin Croswell edited the former,
and Thomas Ritchie the latter.

3. Joshua Cunningham.

4. Ralph Metcalf, a lawyer and former secretary of state in New
Hampshire, was the potential editor. See Isaac Hill to Polk, July 5, 1838;
Henry Hubbard to Polk, July 12, 1838; Metcalf to Polk, July 14, 1838; and
John J. Gilchrist to Polk, July 27, 1838.

FROM LEVIN H. COE TO JAMES K. POLK &
FELIX GRUNDY

Dr Sirs

Somerville June 22nd 1838

Last fall as you are aware my Father made application for the
office of Marshall of Missi. when it was supposed Dr. Gwinn would
resign.¹

By the last Holly Springs mail he advises me that he has written
to you requesting you to present his name to the President as Marshall
of North Missi. He cares nothing for the office & if he should get it I
will perform the [duties?].

The office would suit me very well but if you find that pressing my
Fathers name is like to place the President in an awkward situation as
regards other applicants please to withdraw it. At a time like this
when every arm is needed to buoy up the tempest tossed ship of
Democracy I would not have the benefit of an office if receiving it
caused the loss of a single friend to the common cause.

Through Maj [John H.] Bills I learn that the Sub treasury bill will
pass at this session. It must pass now or never & I sincerely hope you
may press it through. I have no fears of the result of the struggle upon
that question in my District. My health suffered so severely in the last
canvass that I do not expect to be a candidate again if Genl. R[ufus] Neely
will run. His election would be certain. If he does not I
will have to take the field. I should loose no democrats & can carry some
White Whigs who dont fully endorse all Mr Bell said at Boston.²

From the newspaper account I think it probable Mr Turney gave
a true & full account of Mr Bells false dealing for the last three years.³
If he has done him justice I will reprint & circulate the speech freely
here. Such a thing will do much good.

L. H. COE

Addressed to Washington.

1. William M. Gwin's failure to resign as expected left many prospective
marshals disappointed. Many of the same persons who sought to succeed him
were also applicants for the vacancy created when Mississippi was later divided into two districts.

2. John Bell's political tour of New England late in 1837 had caused many Democrats to redouble their efforts to damage him politically. See Polk's correspondence with Charles G. Greene and Andrew Jackson Donelson in December 1837 and January 1838.

3. In the House of Representatives on May 31 and June 1, 1838, Hopkins L. Turney made a strong speech attacking Bell. See Turney to Polk and Polk to Turney, both on June 2, 1838.

FROM SUSAN McWHORTER

Dear Sir

Augusta [Georgia] June 22d 1838

Genl. [Thomas] Glascock handed me the evidence of your kind remembrance but absence since prevented my acknowledging the favor by the Genl. on his return to Washington. The portrait I think a very good one; though, if I were not afraid of exciting some jealousy in my friend by your side, I would say, I much prefered the Original to the Copy. I am pleased to think my friends at Washington have not forgotten me and particularly, that I should be so honored in a quarter, that I esteem so highly. I have reason to think, that I was very happy in the formation of my acquaintances and friends much of which I know, I owe, among others, to Mr. & Mrs P. and embrace this occasion to express my gratitude to them. I did not expect, when I left you, that Congress would have remained in session to the middle of Summer. You must be nearly worn out with your heavy duties. How does Mrs Polk? I hope she has taken it "Cool & easy" as I did when I was in Washington. If she has not, I fear she must be in some need of the healthful & invigorating atmosphere of the West. My father says I returned the same quiet, sedate, taciturn sort of girl that I was before I visited the Metropolis of the Union. He thinks I might have learned to talk a little from the example set me in Congress.

You know I am not politician enough to write you any thing in that way; but if Mr. Van Buren, or who ever was at the bottom of that movement had brought the whole tribe of Cherokees down upon us with rifles and tomahawks in their hands, we Georgians could not have exhibited a greater battle array, than we have contrived to get up against his late message, on the subject of the treaty. Nothing can touch a Georgian on so tender a point. Both parties are alike & each one afraid the other will get ahead of it, in violent opposition to anything that tends to keep the Indians within our territory a moment longer. At least that is what I have often heard my father say. By
the bye, if you have noticed Georgia movements, you will perceive that he has been induced to become a public man again, being offered by the Union Party as a Candidate for Congress. He does not himself seem to calculate much on success, believing the ticket elected will be one composed of both parties & he is most obnoxious to the Nullifiers, who will do their best to defeat him, if no other on the ticket. He is also personally known to very few persons in the State. He says I must go with him this Summer up the Country to electioneer for him. I think I can beat him among the old gentlemen at least, who are fonder of flattery than the young ones. Flattery, I believe, is the sole secret of successful electioneering. Flatter people and you make them pleased with themselves and of course with the flatterer. But you have been politician long enough to determine that matter for yourself.

If my father is successful in the election, you will see me again I hope in Washington with him. If he is not, I may pay you a visit next winter, when I intend to be more of a politician than I was the last. Then I only meddled in favor of Mr. Prentiss. By the bye, let me congratulate you on his return. I'll try and make him a better Van Buren man than he has been. But if Mr. V. Buren does not get well out of that Cherokee scrape, he may not look to us for help in time of need. You see I must be a Georgian in that respect. God send him a safe deliverance!

My time was so agreeably spent in Washington that [I am] almost afraid to return, lest I should find it [changed] in some respect for the worse. Next winter should find nearly all my present acquaintances still there; but another election may leave many of them at home and make the succeeding session one rather of sad remembrance among strangers. I was happy to find friends in both parties. I might not, on returning find the same correct feeling existing. I say correct, for I think it abominable that difference of political opinion should tincture with distrust and aversion the freedom of social intercourse. Give my best respects & grateful remembrance to Mrs. P. . . .

SUSAN McWHORTER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Susan McWhorter of Augusta, Georgia, was a daughter of J. G. McWhorter, a prominent Democrat. The background of her visit to Washington has not been learned, but it is clear from her letter that she had been befriended by the Polks.

2. This probably refers to the engraving of Polk by Charles Fenderich that appeared in the Democratic Review in April 1838.

3. For events in Washington centering around removal of the Cherokee, see Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, May 29, 1838, especially footnote 2.
4. There were three men named Prentiss in Congress at this time, but this probably refers to Sergeant S. Prentiss of Mississippi, who had just been elected in a special election.

5. The editors have supplied three words in this sentence where a part of the manuscript was torn away.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia June 22d 1838

Upon my return from the [Western] District, I found your letter to Sam'l and Knox's enclosure,¹ from which I find that the arrangements I had made for Knox & Jane will be insufficient. I have in Mr. C A Harris's hands the drafts of H[enry] & A.E. Gibson for $962 50/100. The service has been faithfully performed and the money is actually due for the yr. ending 1st of April last. Owing to some error in executing the contract a delay has been produced, but corrected, and I presume before this reaches you, the money will be collected. It may however be taken by Mr H. at my request in Southern checks. I have heretofore directed Mr Harris, if this money was collected before the adjournment of Congress to pay it over to you and have to-day written him a letter upon which I am sure he will pay over to you $300 whether he has collected the Gibson drafts or not. I would not risque this mode of providing for Jane & Knox, if I were not very confident that the Gibson drafts will be collected in time, and sure if this by possibility fails, that Mr. Harris will advance $300 for me. Please call on him on receipt of this letter, and if Gibson's acknowledgement is returned try and get the $962 50/100 in funds that will answer your purposes. If no collection can be made then I have no doubt Mr. H. will raise the $300 for me agreeably to my request. I have written to Knox heretofore leaving it to his discretion whether to come home with you in July or to wait until August. The information I since have induces me to expect he will come with you and such is my wish. I can see no use or sense in his waiting 5 or 6 weeks merely for his degree, and from his last letter I think he can get his diploma under the circumstances without waiting until August.

The political aspect looks to me more favorable than for some time, and particularly at home. The Whigs having the panic, seized upon the State Bank with the manifest design of making it a party machine. I think they will soon find that they have "caught a Tarter." The grosser the partizan character of their acts the better for us. Their movements are not only outrageous and insulting to the moral sense of the community, but excessively weak and short sighted. The
excitement is great, but not at its height. When the people come to see the partizan character of the different boards of Directors, there will be a new blaze. Poor [Newton] Cannon, there is no hole for him to creep out at. If he calls the Legislature to correct the blunders of his own directory, it will be a palpable acknowledgement of his own incompetency to exercise the appointing power, blasting his bosom friends. If he fails to call the Legislature it will be looked upon as a defiance of popular opinion, and in either event his excellency, and I hope the Whig cause [. . . ]. The Bank is a Whig machine and it is our business to prove it so, and so we will. The Bank and internal improvement features in it was right and for public good. The party character it took on the last reading of the Supplemental Bill, is what is to use it up and the party that were base enough to pervert a measure, began and measuredly carried through in good faith for the general welfare.

I would not change the present state of things if I could. The Whigs want Rope and much good will come out of a miserably administered affair. I have received various letters for you, all of which shall have my attention at the proper time.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.
1. Polk's letter to Samuel P. Walker with J. Knox Walker's enclosure has not been found.
2. At this point, a flaw in the manuscript renders perhaps two words illegible.
3. Passed by the Tennessee legislature on January 26 as an addition to the Bank Bill of January 19, 1838, the Supplemental Bill specified the relationship of the branch banks to the principal bank, which it located at Nashville.

FROM SILAS M. CALDWELL

Dr. Sir

Haywood [County] June 24th 1838

I have just received a letter from you dated May 29, in which you censure me severely and I think very unjustly for not writing to you respecting the money you requested me to have remitted to you. I expect by this time you have been satisfied on that subject that I deserve no censure. As soon as I got your letter requesting me to have remitted to you $175, I answered you that I had not means in the hands of Caruthers, that I had let Walker & Haley have the means I have in Caruthers hands, but that I got Haley to let me direct
Correspondence of James K. Polk

Caruthers to remit to you $150, which amt. he had not paid me. I made the arrangement with Haley to accommodate you before I had received your letter requesting me to send you the $175. I had stated in a letter to you requesting you to pay $32 for me at New Haven, knowing it was the most convenient opportunity I should have of paying it. You say in your letter to me that you put yourself to some inconvenience to accommodate Samuel that I was obliged to you for, but on the other hand, I have put myself, at different times to accommodate you, to some inconvenience. On that subject I think you have got the advantage. As to paying the $32. for me at New Haven you can do as you think proper. If you had, when we settled, told me you wanted the $175 I should have paid you. I am willing at any time to do so. I have discharged my duty as far as I could.

On receiving your letter I wrote to Caruthers requesting him to remit the money to you at Washington immediately and further to induce him to do so I wrote to him I had one third of my crop still at home, which in consequence of the great fall in the Article I have still on hand.

S. M. Caldwell

Addressed to Washington and forwarded to Philadelphia.
1. This letter has not been found.
2. This refers to Madison Caruthers of Caruthers, Harris & Company of New Orleans.
3. James H. Walker, James Walker's second son, was in business with Isaac H. Haley. See Caruthers, Harris & Company to Polk, June 8, 1838.
4. Samuel P. Caldwell, Dr. Caldwell's son, had been a student at Yale for a short time.

FROM ROBERT J. CHESTER

My Dear Genl

Jackson, Ten 24th June 1838

The Bill fixing a Court of the U.S. at this place, has passed your house. My friends have heretofore placed my name before the President as an applicant for the appointment of Marshall and you have been requested to use your influence for me, &c.

We are anxious about the appointment of the Attorney for the Circuit. There are now several applicants. We want Colo Henry W. McCorry of this place to be appointed. Colo McCorry has the recommendation of almost the entire Barr of the District. He is the son of Thos. McCorry, formerly of East Tennessee. He combines in
himself, it is believed, all the requisites for the office. We desire your influence to be exerted in his behalf.

The Nashville office holders are now trying to be contin'd [as] the officers of the Court here and to have the business done here by depys. We want the entire Court & no dep[uties].

ROBT. J. CHESTER

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Joseph H. Talbot to Polk, June 2, 1838.

FROM EDWIN CROSWELL

My dear Sir        Albany [New York] June 24 '38

There is an intelligent & well qualified political friend of ours in this City, who may be induced to undertake the Editorial charge of the Union. He is not yet prepared to say that he can entertain the suggestion, but will answer my inquiry to that extent before many days. Meanwhile, may I ask you to state to me, in behalf of our friends in Tenn., what terms may be suggested to him? He will probably require a definite salary for the first year, with the privilege of taking an interest in the establishment afterwards, if the parties shall be mutually satisfied with each other.

E. CROSWELL

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Edwin Croswell to Polk, July 6, 1838.

TO WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear William        Washington City June 25th 1838

I received yours of the 17th today. Mother is unnecessarily alarmed concerning brother Samuel’s situation. I wrote the truth to Dr. Hays. He was no worse than I represented him to be. He is now much better. He sits up all day, walks about the House, is recovering his strength, and will be able to travel home with us at the adjournment of Congress. He has had no return of his Hemorrhage for four weeks. Congress will adjourn on the 9th of July. I have abandoned my Northern tour, and will travel directly home with him. Tell Mother she need give herself no further uneasiness about him, for I assure her he is in no danger.

Dr. Gentry, his wife and Miss Dickinson have been here for three
days.² Jane will accompany them to Philadelphia tomorrow, where she will join Mrs. Col. Polk of Raleigh, and remain under her care until the adjournment of Congress, when we will meet her and Knox at Phila.³ and all travel home together, by the way of the Pennsylvania Canal to Pittsburg. This will be an easy mode of travelling for Samuel. We will be in a Canal or Steam Boat the whole distance to Louisville, where if necessary we will hire [a coach?], or a hack and travel at our leisure to Nashville. We have given up the idea at one time entertained of taking Samuel to the Virginia Springs.

I received a letter from Mr. Caruthers of New Orleans on yesterday,⁴ (to whom I had written to make me a remittance of $500 which I needed) in which he informed me that you had anticipated and drawn upon him, for the whole amount of our last year’s crop. In consequence of this disappointment I have had to borrow here, and will need my portion of the crop, to the amount of at least $500, as soon as I get home to replace what I will have to borrow. I had made my calculations certainly on the crop, and drew on Caruthers with confidence that I had at least double the sum called for in his hands, and was surprised when he wrote me that you had drawn for the whole crop, your part and mine also. I suppose however that you had no knowledge that I would need it, before my return home.

JAMES K. POLK

[I] have heard nothing from plantation since you were there last fall, and fear I shall have a bad account of our interests there, when I do hear.

J. K. P.

Addressed to Columbia. This letter is in the hands of Mrs. Oscar R. Daume, Nashville, Tennessee.

1. Polk’s letter to John B. Hays has not been found. See John B. Hays to Polk, June 17, 1838, and William H. Polk to Polk, same date.
2. See William H. Polk to James K. Polk, May 25, 1838.
3. Sarah Hawkins Polk, widow of Col. William Polk, was the mother of Lucius J. and Leonidas Polk. The Jane and Knox mentioned were the daughter and son of James Walker of Columbia.
4. See Caruthers, Harris & Company to Polk, June 8, 1838.

FROM ALFRED FLOURNOY

My Dear Friend Caddo Parish¹ La. 28th June 1838

Your kind favour of the 30th April² reached me about two weeks past. I would have written to you forthwith but I supposed Congress
would adjourn before a letter would reach you at Washington, and
direct now to Columbia. I return you my thanks for the kind interest
you took in my behalf. I recvd a letter from my old friend Mr.
Mouton, who informed me you had urged my claims for the land
office, but that the office could not be located in my Parish but at
Natchatoches. This is not as it should be. It is true that Natchatoches
would be most central for the land district as contemplated, but that
and the other Parishes laying south of it are old Parishes and the
lands have been subject to entry for the last 25 years. The only lands
of any value in this part of the State lay in this and Claibourne Parish,
and the office ought in justice to have been located here. The district
has been formed to suit the speculators about Natchatoches. I did
not care much about the office. I only wanted it, as I thought it might
be the means of securing my improvement on better terms. You will
understand from my saying, improvement that I am a squatter. It is
even so. We are all on the same footing here. We live in hope that
Congress will pass some law giving us the privilege of entering our
lands at Government price. I have not yet heard what has been done
on the subject. We who live here are better entitled to occupant rights
than any citizens in the Union. We are on the very borders, and on
the most vulnerable point. By permitting us to secure our lands at a
fair price the country would be filled up forthwith with the best of
citizens, which would give strength and stability to this frontier. I
have a great deal to say to you on this subject if I should have the
pleasure of seeing you before your return to Washington.

You mention in your letter, that as politics has been your chief
pursuit you must look to a plantation somewhere in the south for an
income. North Miss. will not do much better than Tennessee for cotton.
This, I assure you is the best cotton region I ever saw. I have a small
patch growing. You never saw anything like it. I got here too late
this season for a cotton crop, having arrived on the bank of the river
the 13th March. I planted corn. It looks finely. You might do as many
others have, send your hands and make you an improvement. In my
immediate neighbourhood the lands are all occupied, tho there is yet
plenty vacant as good as any in the country. Improvements sell high.
You may think it strange when I say to you they sell from $500 to
$2000. One man has sold for $4000, another at $6000, with nothing
more than cleared land and a few cabins. The River lands are said to
be sickly every where here. The uplands I believe to be altogether
healthy. They are generally of the very finest quality, producing a
bale to the acre—producing more than can be saved by the same hands
that cultivated it.
To give you some idea of the health of the country, my own family numbers upwards of 50. There are several large families in my immediate vicinity, and not yet the first case of sickness requiring medical aid. So far it is the healthiest country I was ever in. I have every confidence in the remainder of the season. You ask my opinion with regard to the propriety of an investment here in land, and that you want two sections. You will perceive it is all Uncle Sams. You have a better idea than me what he will do with it. If he will grant us occupant rights we are made men. If he would let us have a land office at Shreveport, we might hold our own. If we are sent to Natchatoches to bid, the Devil might be to play. We are like [ . . . ] Cocks, we can fight best in our own range. If we had it here we would keep the speculators at bay. By universal consent here every man is entitled to a section without being incroached upon. If his force requires more he may claim two or more. I have taken the liberty of spreading my wings over three, tho there is only two of them good. There is as much respect paid to lines here as tho the lands were already patented. It is true, a settlement here would be a long way from home for you, but the navigation is good. And I believe I can say that you will have at least one friend here who would take as much pleasure in forwarding your interests as you may have any where. If you was to sell your Mississippi plantation, lay out the proceeds in negroes. If after mature deliberation you should think of sending hands here, advise me in time and I will have a place secured for you. It may be necessary to secure a good place to give some $4 or 500 dollars for some man to relinquish his right. If you have any idea of doing so you must let me have an opportunity of giving you some council about the manner of getting here and what you will require when here. If your hands could get here by the 1st January they might with a good overseer plant you nearly a full crop of corn and cotton the first season. The land is easily brought into cultivation, especially with a strong horse team. I have filled up my paper and cannot mention many matters I would call your attention to. We have yet no post office nearer than Natchatoches, 90 miles from me. You will please direct there. I have left Mrs F and family in Tennessee this summer. I shall not return until fall. Remember me kindly to Mrs. P and believe me to be your sincere friend.

ALFRED FLOURNOY

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Caddo Parish is in the extreme northwest corner of Louisiana. The river spoken of in the letter is the Red River.
2. This letter has not been found.
3. A flaw in the manuscript has rendered one or two words illegible.
FROM STEPHEN C. PAVATT

Huntingdon, June 29, 1838

Although his acquaintance with Polk is slight, Pavatt takes the liberty to address him concerning the new federal district about to be formed in West Tennessee. He wishes to become attorney general for that district and has sent testimonials to Grundy. He requests Polk to examine these papers and, if then inclined, to support him for that appointment.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Pavatt served in the lower house of the General Assembly, 1833–1837, and later in the state senate, 1851–1853; he had practiced law in Waverly, Humphreys County, before moving to Huntingdon in Carroll County.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Columbia June 29, 1838

Dear Sir,

On my return from Nashville on yesterday I saw yours to Sam'1, in which you advise him to make another remittance of $400. Upon my return from the District I addressed Mr. C A. Harris requesting him if he had collected [Henry] Gibson's drafts amounting to near $1000 to pay the same over to you, or if he should not have collected the drafts contrary to all reasonable expectation, by all means to raise on my a/c $300. and hand it to you.2 This I am sure he will do, and if another $100 is necessary for Jane & Knox, he will at your request furnish it for me. I know it does not suit you to advance for me, and in making the arrangement for $300, I took your estimates of $700 for Knox and $450 for Jane. Knox wrote in a postscript to Jane's letter which I received at Bolivar that about $325 and expense money for coming home, was the amount of his necessities. I fear that they both spend money rather freely for times as pressing as we now have. Jane's trip will cost near $1000. I had no idea it would have cost more than half that sum. And I fear besides the inconvenience of raising the money, that she may be learning habits of extravagance and taking up notions, that my fortune will not justify. But it is useless to moralize on this subject. I must get them home, and force them to look at sober realities.

The course which the Whig party have pursued as to the state Bank is working well for their opponents. It has been made a party machine, so palpably that the dullest mind perceives it. The Whig leaders are, and will be held responsible for the locations & all other blunders of the Gov. & party.
Since the first days of White Whiggery, we have never had so fine an opportunity, to overthrow that faction. And I think the opportunity will be used.

James Walker

Addressed to Washington.
1. Polk's letter to Samuel P. Walker has not been found.
2. See James Walker to Polk, June 22, 1838.

FROM ADAM HUNTSMAN

Dear Sir

Jackson 30th of June 1838

Yours of the 16th has been duly recd. and altho I have a d____n sight of things to write yet as you say that you will adjourn on the 9th or 16th I take it for granted you go for the money & come off the 16th.

My object is to say that Talbot does not wish the appointment of atto &c and Henry W. McCory, one of our folks, will take it. He is worthy & well qualified & must have it and Moses F. Wood must be appointed Postmaster. I intend to write in the papers here & cor­respond largely untill the next presidential election & must have confidential news. See to it before you leave Washington. I shall write you upon your return to Columbia.

A. Huntsman

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Williams, editor, "Letters of Adam Huntsman," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, VI, 342.
1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. See West H. Humphreys to Polk, March 4 and April 23, 1838; Joseph H. Talbot to Polk, June 2, 1838; and Robert J. Chester to Polk, June 24, 1838.
3. See Moses Wood to Polk, July 4, 1838.
4. In the edition of the letter mentioned above, the word news was read men.

FROM RANSOM H. GILLET

My Dear Sir,

Ogdensburgh [New York] July 1st, 1838

Since my last interview with you I have attentively watched the political horizon & endeavoured to discover all the clouds & satisfy myself what weather we may expect. I give you fairly, but confidentially, my views, as far as I settled upon them in my own mind. First
of all I have no doubt of our ability to reelect Mr. V. B. with an aggregate vote of the people larger than that received in 1836. But I doubt our success in electing as many members to Congress in the North as in that year, but hope to supply the loss at the South & West. Bank influences in some of our populous towns, & the "Patriot cause," on the frontiers, is likely to diminish the number of members from this state. My old District is the only safe frontier one, in this state, though we may carry as many as usual. It may be questioned then whether we shall have a majority of thorough & true men in the next House. Take all who will pretend to be with us, & we shall probably have more than our enemies. But I have learned that we always have some who do not go all the way with us. They help us elect a speaker & Clerk, to prove they are with us, & then turn & fight us to prove their highminded independence. While you are in Congress we have a candidate for Speaker to oppose whom would destroy the pretense of the halfway men, & leave them without the excuse they now have in the case of the Globe. Then what might we not expect in case of your retirement? I fear it would be a split like 1834, which would be disastrous to us all. Hence you see, I have brought myself to the conclusion that we cannot do without you in congress, at least for one more term. Your presence will secure to us the control of the House & without this we shall be inundated with projects as ruinous as those which were concocted by the enemy during Mr. Adams administration to be [toped?] out with a United States Bank with power sufficient to control the industry & politics of the Country. I will not amplify on these suggestions, as your ready mind will carry out all the train of ideas that are so naturally connected with these remarks.

Who is to be V.P. will soon be talked of. It is supposed the present incumbent will not expect it, but I do not know the authority for the supposition. Mr. Poinsett would do honor to the station & would, I presume, add strength to the ticket. But if Mr. Grundy should be the man, he ought to have all the strength from Tenn. in the H. that can be brought there. If a change takes place, I take it for granted, it will not be the policy to go out of the South for the man. Upon the strength of our local candidates depends much of the success of our Governor. Enthusiasm for them will bring out our voters. We can elect him by a respectable maj if all our friends turn out. The vote of 1836 is no criterion, for the present times, as on that occasion we had all the votes given which were not for Harrison. Now our opponents have all that are not for us. We are pretty certain of a maj in the state Legislature, & if the city of N.Y is for us it will be a large one. This will secure us a senator.
Your lively interest in my fate, will lead you to expect a word about my own prospects. Our system of bringing out candidates places this in the hands of others. It is said, by those who wish to represent this Dist., that I have had more than my share of public favour, & hence, in this manner of stating the account, I may not be taken up. It will be some three months before this matter will be decided. The chances are about as when I saw you. Senator W.,* should he act at all, may preponderate the scale as he choses, on a question of the kind. But I forbear to act at all, on the question, & make no personal solicitation. If nominated, I shall be elected I think by a fair majority.

I shall be happy to hear from you on the subjects that I have ad- verted to, & particularly to what relates to yourself. Make my respects to Mrs. Polk, & to Miss Walker, if with you.

R. H. Gillet

Addressed to Washington.
1. This probably refers to the candidacy of William H. Harrison who, like Jackson, had been a military man and an Indian fighter, which tended to make him popular on the frontier.
2. The Washington Globe had lost the House printing to the Madisonian, which at that time claimed to be a Democratic paper. Francis P. Blair and the Globe were still disliked by those of the Democrats called "halfway" men by Gillet.
3. This was the election in which Polk received more Democratic votes than John Bell, but the latter was elected when a significant number of Whigs voted for him. At that time Bell still was considered a Democrat.
4. Silas Wright.

FROM CARUTHERS, HARRIS & COMPANY

Dear Sir

N Orleans July 2d 1838

We have received your favour and hand you herewith your account current and a check for fifteen hundred & eighty five dollars intended for the payment of Dr. Hays note,¹ of same am't in the Bank of the Metropolis, which you will please attend to.² Hoping it may arrive in time, we remain.

Caruthers, Harris & co

Addressed to Washington.
1. See John B. Hays to Polk, April 24 and June 17, 1838.
2. Polk's endorsement indicates that he paid Hays's note on July 9, 1838.
TO JOEL R. POINSETT FROM JAMES K. POLK, ET AL.

Sir Washington City July 2nd 1838

In the event the Bill now before Congress, to increase the present military establishment of the U. States, should become a law, the undersigned, take pleasure in recommending to your favourable consideration, Capt. Darton A. Wilds, of Tennessee, as a person eminently qualified, for a Captaincy in the New Regiment, provided for by the Bill. Capt. Wilds, commanded a company of Tennessee Volunteers, under the immediate command of Majr. Lauderdale, in the late campaign in Florida. Capt. W. refers to Genl. Jesup, Genl. Hernandez, and Majr. Brant, who will be able to testify in regard to his officer-like conduct, whilst in Florida, and to his fitness for the command of a company in the regular army, a situation, which in his behalf, we solicit for him.

JAMES K. POLK
H. L. TURNER
A. McCLELLAN
A. G. HARRISON

Presumably addressed to Washington. This letter is in the hands of Mr. James S. Corbitt of Martin, Tennessee.

1. On July 5, 1838, Congress authorized an increase in the military establishment. Captain Wilds, who in 1837 had served in Major William Lauderdale's battalion of mounted volunteers, did not get a captaincy in the new infantry regiment.

2. Thomas S. Jesup, an officer in the War of 1812, became quartermaster general, with the rank of brigadier general, in 1818; attained the rank of major general in 1828; and assumed command of the Florida campaign in 1837. Joseph M. Hernandez, a native of St. Augustine, Florida, owned a plantation in East Florida and served as territorial delegate to Congress, 1822-1823. He became brigadier general of Florida militia in 1823 and went into federal service with that rank in 1835. Joshua B. Brant, a noncommissioned officer in the War of 1812, rose within the ranks of the officer corps and attained the rank of major in 1832.

FROM JOEL M. SMITH

Nashville. July 2, 1838

With an apology for troubling him with trivial matters, Smith encloses to Polk the accounts of people in Washington who owe for subscriptions to the Nashville Union. Although some of the accounts were transferred to him by
the former proprietor and may not be entirely correct, he asks Polk to turn them over to someone who will attempt to collect what is due on them.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM MAJOR ANDREW PRICE

Dr Sir  
Lebanon 4th July 1838

I have been anxiously waiting to hear the result of the power of Attor. that I gave you, made to Andrew Stephenson [Stevenson] now in England, to collect a legacy left my wife by Doct. Barry Decd. of London.\(^1\) If you have not recvd an answer from Mr. Stephenson I must ask the favor of you to write him on the subject and enquire if the power of Attor. is in due form and request of him an answer. I have known Mr. Stephenson from my boyhood, but I expect he has forgotten me.

Mr. Kendall has made the transfer of the Stage line that you requested him to make, from Toliver Neville, for which I feel grateful for your attention to that matter and hope that it will be in my power to serve you at some future time.

M. A. PRICE

Write me soon.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See John I. Pocock to Polk, February 4, 1837; Polk to William Trousdale, April 19, 1837; and William Trousdale to Polk, April 27, 1837.

FROM MOSES WOOD

Jackson. July 4, 1838

After apologizing for addressing Polk rather than the Whig Congressman from his district, Wood says that he is a candidate for postmaster at Jackson and needs Polk's support.\(^1\)

Addressed to Washington and forwarded to Columbia. It was postmarked at Washington on July 16.

1. Wood was appointed postmaster at Jackson within a month of the time he wrote this letter. See Adam Huntsman to Polk, June 30, 1838.

FROM ISAAC HILL

My dear Sir,  
Concord, N.H. July 5, 1838

I write you at the instance of our mutual friend Hubbard\(^2\) in relation to an application he desired me to make to engage a gentle-
man for the editorial department of the Nashville Union. Mr. Metcalf, late Secretary of State, has made arrangements to commence the practice of law in one of our counties. He took this day to consider of the proposition of Mr Hubbard, and has at length concluded that he cannot change his recent new arrangement, and of course declines acceding to the proposition to go to Nashville.

With congratulations for escaping from an unpleasant position, made so by a course of audacity unparalleled in the history of parties, and with respects to your good lady.

ISAAC HILL

Addressed to Washington.

1. Long a force in New Hampshire politics, Henry Hubbard served in Congress, 1829–41, and then was governor of his state, 1841–42.

2. Ralph Metcalf was one of several persons in the East considered for the post as editor of the Nashville Union. On July 14, 1838, he wrote to Polk giving his reasons for refusing the editorship.


FROM EDWIN CROSWELL


Since the rect of yr. favor of the 2nd inst. I have presented the matter of the Nashville press to the gentleman in question, with such considerations as it appeared to me ought to influence him to a favorable determination. But I regret that, upon mature reflection, he declines the proposition. He does so on two grounds, the distance of removal for his numerous family, & diffidence as to his ability to meet the expectations of his friends & the requirements of the position. The latter, I feel persuaded, is the natural apprehension of real capacity, & possibly may have been obviated, if the former had not present[ed] an obstacle that, in the present state of his health (not fully recovered from an attack of inflammatory rheumatism) seems to be insurmountable. I regret that he takes this view of the matter, particularly as at this moment I can think of no one, not already under engagements, that I can venture to recommend to yr. acceptance.

The person to whom I allude is Col. J. O. Cole, of this City, formerly connected with the public press, but for several years of the City Magistracy.

Should you be disappointed in the matter you last refer to, I shall not hesitate to give you the name of any suitable person that may occur to me.
Do me the favor to repeat the tenor of this letter to Gen. [Robert] Armstrong, with my best respects.

E. CROSWELL

Addressed to Washington.
1. This letter has not been found.
2. Not further identified. But see Croswell to Polk, June 24, 1838.

FROM JABEZ JACKSON

Saratoga Springs, New York. July 6, 1838

Explaining that he left Washington on the eve of the vote on the Sub-treasury only because his health was failing rapidly, Jackson asks that the pay due him be sent to him as early as possible.¹

Addressed to Washington.
1. See Jackson to Polk, July 14, 1838, as well as his letters to Polk during January 1839.

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN

Washington City July 7th 1838

I have been intimately acquainted with Col. Richard C. Allen¹ of Florida, from his youth to the present time, and take sincere pleasure in recommending him to the President, as a high-minded, honorable, and most estimable man, and one well qualified for the office of Judge of the new Judicial Circuit in Florida, which has been recently created by Congress.² Col. A. is a man of talents, and maintains a high reputation in his profession. He has resided for many years in Florida and I know of no man, either within or without the Territory, who has in my judgment higher claims than he possesses, for appointment to the Judicial station, which his friends solicit in his behalf. It will afford me sincere gratification, if the President shall think proper to appoint him.³

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found. This letter is in Letters of Application and Recommendation, 1837–45, Department of State (RG 59), National Archives.
1. A surveyor and land speculator in the Florida Territory, Allen became a wealthy and influential man.
2. The creation of this office was finally completed on the day that Polk wrote this letter.

3. Allen was appointed immediately after Polk wrote this letter of recommendation.

FROM JAMES M. HOWRY

Centerville. July 10, 1838

Howry regrets that he will have to return to Mississippi before Polk arrives from Washington. He says he is highly pleased with the Democratic Review and sends five dollars for his subscription. He thinks that the Whigs can be beaten in Mississippi but believes that Vice-President Richard M. Johnson is a handicap to the Democratic cause.

Addressed to Columbia and delivered by the hand of Jonas E. Thomas.

FROM E. B. ROBINSON

Sir
Washington, July 10, 1838

I have given the subject of establishing a press at Knoxville due consideration, and I would feel gratified if it were in my power to accept of the offer; but circumstances of a character which I cannot control, compel me to decline. I am under an engagement which I cannot voluntary break without great detriment to myself in a personal and pecuniary point of view. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to see Tennessee resume her former devoted station with the Republican party, because her honest yeomanry have been deceived by false appeals to State pride. I have no doubt but that I could render essential service in that part of Tennessee, and I am in hopes you will be enabled to procure some person whose pecuniary affairs will allow him free scope, that he may take the "Bull by the horns." I would have called in person, but I am so closely confined at the offices of Niles Register that it was impossible. Should you be passing I should be glad to see you.

E. B. Robinson

Addressed to Washington.

1. A veteran of the wars with the Creek and Seminole Indians, Robinson lived in Washington where, apparently, he worked for Niles' National Register and participated in local Democratic party politics.

2. See Daniel Kenney to Polk and Felix Grundy, January 29, 1838; and Kenney to Polk, April 13, 1838. The terms of Polk's offer to Robinson have not been learned.
3. *Niles' Weekly Register*, a Baltimore paper, was founded by Hezekiah Niles in 1811 and was edited and published by him until 1836. His son, William Ogden Niles, was editor and proprietor in 1838, and the paper was then named *Niles' National Register*.

**FROM HENRY HUBBARD**

My dear Sir

Boston July 12th 1838

I have not seen Mr Metcalf but I understand that he has made up his mind that he can not undertake the charge of the paper at Nashville. It was said to me at my boarding house this day that Metcalf has opened an office in a town in my county and engaged in the practice of the law and that he has probably left Concord, which accounts for his not meeting me as I anticipated. I will reach Charlestown on Saturday evening and if Metcalf has commenced the practice of the law in my county I will see him face to face forthwith and serve you to the extent of my power. The result of my negotiations I will communicate in a letter to you at Nashville as it will be impossible for a letter to reach you at Philadelphiawritten at Charlestown after Saturday next.

Make my kind regards to Mrs Polk . . .

HENRY HUBBARD

Addressed to Philadelphia.

1. Located in Sullivan County, New Hampshire, Charlestown was Hubbard's hometown.

2. No further communication from Hubbard in 1838 has been found. See, however, Ralph Metcalf to Polk, July 14, 1838; and John J. Gilchrist to Polk, July 27, 1838.

**TO HENRY HORN, ET AL.**

Gentlemen; Philadelphia July 14th 1838

I have received your letter of this date, inviting me, to attend a “meeting of the Democratic Citizens of the City and County of Philadelphia at such time as may comport with my convenience.” I regret that the limited time, which I can remain in your City, will deprive me of the pleasure, which I would otherwise take in meeting that portion of my fellow-citizens, whom you represent, citizens, who though residing in the strong hold of the power of their political opponents, have under the most trying circumstances, firmly maintained the great principles of Democracy which we profess.
Pennsylvania, justly regarded as the "Key-stone" of the political arch, has more than once saved the Democracy of the Union from overthrow, and is destined, I doubt not, in the great contest of principle which is before us, proudly to maintain her position at the head of the Democratic States. Under her lead, the Democracy can have nothing to fear. In the political contest in which we are engaged, the country is thrown back more distinctly upon the ground occupied by the Federal and Republican parties, forty years ago, than it has been at any time, since that period. Party names may have changed but the principles which guide us are essentially the same. Our political opponents have drawn to their aid, in the pending contest, the power of associated wealth, in the form of privileged banking corporations, and have made them the instruments, as they are the natural allies of that party in the country, who have at all times distrusted the power and capacity of the people for self-Government. These corporations are now with few exceptions, notoriously, in close political alliance with the "prostrate Federal party," in a struggle to resuscitate and again fasten upon the country, the exploded doctrines of that party. A self-constituted and dangerous political power, unknown to the Constitution and laws, not chosen by the people and not responsible to them, has arisen in the country & in the hands of the party opposed to the Democracy claims the right not only to violate all law, and disregard all its engagements, but arrogantly aspires to control the action of the Government, and to dictate the public policy. The country has to choose between the Government of this self-constituted, dangerous, and irresponsible power, and the regular Government, of the constituted authorities, chosen by the people and responsible to them. In such a contest the course of the Democracy is a plain one. It is a bold, fearless, and unyielding adherence to principle. There can be no middle or "conservative" ground. There can be no compromise where principles are involved. Regretting that I cannot meet my "Republican friends" "in a body," during my short visit to your City, I have to thank you for the kind terms in which you have been pleased to refer to my public course and services.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Philadelphia. This letter is marked "Copy," but it is obviously a draft of the letter actually sent. It is in Polk's handwriting and bears his signature.

1. Polk seems to have made an error when he addressed the letter to Horn. The letter of invitation was written by William V. Pettit and signed by him. Henry Horn, however, signed his name to the left of Pettit's signature, and
Polk, probably in haste, addressed the letter to him and placed Pettit's name second in his reply.

FROM JABEZ JACKSON


Your letter of the 10th Inst acquainting me with the rejection by the Committee of accounts of my claim for compensation for the last two weeks of the recent session, reached me yesterday; and I must be permitted to express the unaffected wonder with which I have been struck with the infraction of your words of promise to me; which infraction led to that rejection. Had you or Mr Dorsey not given me specific pledges that the money would be sent to me here, but had had the frankness to tell me that the claim would be turned over to the Committee, I might, and would, have gone immediately to the Chairman Mr [Joseph] Johnson, and stating to him my broken down health, which a glance of half an eye upon me would have corroborated, he would, doubtless, have given the order for settlement. Before I went into your room on the morning of the 23d June (the day of my taking leave of the House) I went into Mr Dorsey's apartment, and telling him that I was compelled by illness to leave the City, asked him to do what you and he had both done the preceding year when I was sick in Phila, that is, send my balance of pay after me. He said that he would do so if the Speaker said so. I told him very well, I would go and see the Speaker. I saw you, and (as you without doubt must recollect) you told me in answer to my question to you whether I could get the money sent to me to Saratoga Springs where I remarked to you that I was going, “Certainly. You are sick, and there can be no difficulty. The money to the end of the Session will be sent to you to Saratoga.” These I believe to have been your words. I returned to Mr Dorsey, and communicating to him your answer, he said “very good, I will get a draft for you when the time comes and send it to you”; and he then made me sign the blank check which you have returned to me cancelled.

Now, the above narrative has only, I imagine, to be read, and then the sequel to be heard by any disinterested person, and the same sensation to be excited as in me who can doubt? I have remarked above that you and he (Dorsey) of yourselves pursued a different course towards me last year. You sent to me to Phila. twice, arrearages of pay during the months of January and February and up to the 3d of March without reference to the Committee of Accounts. Your ob-
servation then in your letter of the 10th is not just that the reference to the Committee in similar cases was "the usual course." I should be glad to know upon what principle it was viewed (relatively to my case) that, without scruple, or being turned over to the Committee, the claim of my Colleague who was absent during the Session between 4 & 5 months, on pleasure, or private business, was settled? I allude to Mr Towns. Upon what principle Glascock, and Owens, and Dawson, and Cleveland, and Grantland, were settled with, all of whom were absent for weeks in succession on private motives; and I who had remained fixedly in the City from the 2d December to 24 June and all the time in feeble health, and at length broken down, was not settled with? He must be a Sophist, truly, who can show the why and wherefore so plainly as to satisfy justice.

Mr Dorsey himself was absent every now and then in Maryland and elsewhere; so Col [John W.] Hunter has told me. I dare to say that the $5 a day which are about his pay, were not, during the absent time, taken off.

As regards the rejection of my claim the committee acted very properly. Without any statement from you or Mr Dorsey that I was away under illness, and having only an informal note from me in which there was not only no proof, but in fact no distinct specification of my illness, they would have been faithless to their publick duty to have allowed the account.

I will not, I assure you, Sir, do you so much wrong as to permit the suspicion to be harboured in my breast for a second, that certain publications relative to my intended vote against the Sub Treasury have operated disadvantageously to me in your own bosom. I repel such an idea. I will here, however, take leave to say that supported as you have twice been by me for the honorable post which you have for the three last years filled, and supported as Mr Van Buren has been by me, I will never consent to sacrifice my opinions for the sake of political attachments. I did not leave Washington in order to evade the vote on the Sub Treasury, for God knows that that illness brought me away. But, as I observed to you, not liking, at any time, to vote against my quondam friends, I viewed my being enabled to avoid this issue as an alleviation of the necessity of my leaving my publick duties. I say so still, but I will further say that I would have voted against the Sub T. and against all its correlatives, with pleasure, had I remained. I have viewed that scheme as a humbug ever since it was first shadowed forth in the Globe, say before the message of the Extra Session. I wrote to you in July stating my opinion of the effect of the derangement of the Currency on the people in the west, and
predicted to you with accuracy the result of the approaching elections. I wrote to Mr [Thomas] Ritchie of the [Richmond] Enquirer from Charlottesville in August denouncing the whole scheme. And I can now tell you that I voted against laying the bill on the table in October solely because I believed *from Mr Owens* (who had been during the recess to Georgia and I had not) that the measure was popular there. I was, I now think, misinformed, and the elections in the next October for Congress will, I have not a shadow of doubt, demonstrate that the position which Mr Grantland and I take upon the curr[ent] questions are the approved ones in our State. I now tell you, Sir, that she will return a full delegation of Whig members to the next Congress, and I tell you about this State (having been now here 3 weeks or nearly) that Marcy will be defeated by *at least* 10,000 votes, and that New York will send 20 or 25 Whigs to the ensuing Congress. DeGraff, Vail, and Gallup, will be beaten, to use the common phrase, *out of sight.* Did you observe the course of [Thomas L.] Hamer of Ohio this last Session, particularly towards the close on the Bank subjects? He is (*as he has told me*) a thoroughly disgusted man with the Administration. He does not now open his mouth, did not all the Session in its favour; and withdraws from publick life. Mr Van Buren will first ruin his friends in Congress, then ruin *you* in your contest with Bell in 1839, for he (Bell) will beat you as far or farther than you beat him in 1835; and then he (Van B.) will ruin himself in 1840. All this tissue of woes comes from his refusal to repeal the Specie Circular written 2 or 3 months of the expiration of Genl Jackson's administration, from his adherence in the face of the will of Congress and the People to his views on the Currency, and again (and not inconsiderably) to the employment of Blair as his official newspaper organ. The refusal to repeal the Specie Circular immediately in the very teeth of the nearly unanimous opinion of both Houses of Congress, was, to use Talleyrand's words in application to Bonaparte's entry into Spain, "*the beginning of the end.*"

Before I close this letter, already too much protracted, I beg leave to solicit you to make a note of a request which I prefer to you not to place me again on the Committee on the Publick Buildings & Grounds. After the decision of the House contrary to the unanimous recommendation of the Joint Committee of the two Houses,7 I informed each member of that Committee that I would not again attend its meetings; and I did not. Having been a reader of books from the time of my boyhood, and having devoted theoretically and practically a good deal of time to the study of architecture (I mean through books, and personal survey in ½ a dozen different Countries in Europe of the finest buildings extant) I cannot consent to have my labours
overthrown by the ignorance of a majority of our House. I assert the fact from a sedulous knowledge of every man in the lean majority against the report of our Committee, that, among them all, not a single name can be found whose possessor had a classical education, and has since been devoted, or has since even generally given himself to liberal studies. I assert the fact, and on the other hand I assert another fact, that every man so qualified by academical knowledge & private study in the H of R voted with our Committee. Look at the list, Evans, Adams, Cushing, Fletcher, Phillips, Lincoln, Tillinghast, Hoffman, Sibley, Sergeant, Kennedy, Mercer, Legare, Prentiss. The last may be an exception as respects liberal studies latterly, but without these, he is a man of talent and college discipline. Let the catalogue of books which the Librarian of Congress keeps, tell who is, and who is not, of those who pursue liberal studies. And the report of such a Committee of Congress is to be overthrown by such boobies as Yell, and Boon (Boon, for several weeks before I left Washington, had been engaged in reading "The adventures of the Kit-Cat Club!"), and Keim, one if not two of whom pronounced the very word architecte architectur; that is, as tho' this word were spelled artshatectur, thus showing that they would not even spell or pronounce the word!! I will not consent to such self-degradation as to place myself in the way of being confronted and rebutted by such ignorance; and so I have told (as already intimated) Mr Rives, Mr Bayard, Mr Lincoln and the rest. I will not attend the Committee: and I do not think that the Senate's Committee will ever again attend. It is quite possible that the members of the House may think of me as I think of them. I refer to the majority against the report of the joint Committee. So well, so good, then we are quits, as the boys say. It has been my disadvantage, perhaps, to have had, besides the free use of books for the last 30 years, the signal opportunity of having been in company with, or heard speak, nearly every distinguished man in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and the U. States; distinguished not only in the Legislative Halls, but in the Pulpit, and at the Bar, and I may be well excused, I think, for not only myself not speaking in publick, but for absolutely not listening (as is the fact) to more in our House, than some half a dozen members. I determined not to speak in the House when I first entered it. My habits were not in keeping with such a course, and I resolved not to speak. I shall go to Europe immediately after March; and pass three years there in accordance with those habits, and shall leave behind me pretty much such a legacy as White of Florida left when he went to Europe in March 1837; a legacy of opinion about our House.

JABEZ JACKSON
I hope you will not consider me as denying the right political of the House to supervise, and annul, the reports of any Committee made by it; of course not, but I deny the right intellectual of the House to sit in judgment even upon (much less to abrogate) a report from a Committee upon a technical subject, such as architecture. There is but one man in fact, in the Cabinet (including the President) who knows the A. B. C. of architecture. I mean Mr Poinsett, who is, in every sense of the phrase, an accomplished Gentleman. Mr Forsyth, I know, couldn't tell of what order the columns in our House are. In the House of Commons, members are put on Committees with reference to their knowledge on particular subjects. If these subjects be technical, the House adopts the Committee's report.

Addressed to Washington and forwarded to Columbia. Jackson wrote on the envelope, "If the Speaker is not in Washington, the P.M. will please to forward this to his address which Mr. McCormick will know."

1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. See Jackson to Polk, July 6, 1838. In January 1839, Jackson again asked assistance in getting his pay, said that he had no desire for personal estrangement from Polk, and professed not to understand why Polk took exception to his remarks made in his letter of July 14, 1838. He further explained that he had written that letter while ill and that he had retained no copy.
3. Roderick Dorsey was Sergeant-at-Arms in the United States House of Representatives, probably serving from 1837-39. He earned $1500 annually.
4. A representative in Congress from Virginia, Joseph Johnson served from 1823-27, 1835-37, and 1845-47. Later he served as governor of Virginia.
5. George W. B. Towns, Thomas Glascock, George W. Owens, William C. Dawson, Jesse F. Cleveland, and Seaton Grantland were members of the Georgia delegation in the House of Representatives.
6. Jackson's predictions were accurate. Governor William L. Marcy was defeated by just over 10,000 votes. Of the three New York congressmen, Henry Vail and Albert Gallup were defeated, and John I. DeGraff declined to run.
7. The Treasury Building had burned in 1833, and the question soon arose as to whether a new and larger building should be built on the same site. Meanwhile, the Post Office Building burned in 1836, and another element entered the debate. The new Treasury Building would be so large that, if built on the old site, it would interrupt the sweep of Pennsylvania Avenue as L'Enfant had planned it. It was proposed that work on this building be stopped, and the new Post Office Building be placed on that site. Architect Robert Mills, who had planned the Treasury Building, said that it would be too expensive to tear down what had been done on the Treasury Building. The committee of which Jackson speaks here recommended that the Treasury
Building be moved to another site regardless of the expense. The unanimous recommendation of the committee was tabled by the House on July 11, 1838.

8. Almost all of these men were confirmed Whigs, and all but four of the fourteen were from northern states.

9. John S. Meehan of New York was Librarian of Congress at this time.

10. The "boobies," according to Jackson, were Archibald Yell of Arkansas, Ratliff Boon of Indiana, and George M. Keim of Pennsylvania. The Kit-Cat Club was founded in the early part of the eighteenth century by Addison, Steele, Congreve, and others. It met in the home of Christopher Katt, a pastry cook, whose mutton pies were called Kit-cats, hence the name of the club.

11. William C. Rives of Virginia and Richard H. Bayard of Delaware were United States senators on the Joint Committee, while Levi Lincoln of Massachusetts was chairman of the House Committee.

12. Joseph M. White, a lawyer and a Democrat, was a delegate from the Florida Territory from 1825 until 1837. The reference to his opinion of the House is obscure.

FROM RALPH METCALF
Concord, New Hampshire. July 14, 1838

Metcalf says that he is grateful to his friends for recommending him for the editorship of the Nashville Union, but adds that private considerations prevent him from acceding to their proposal.¹

Addressed to Philadelphia and forwarded to Nashville.

¹ See Polk to Franklin Pierce, June 21, 1838; Isaac Hill to Polk, July 5, 1838; Henry Hubbard to Polk, July 12, 1838; and John J. Gilchrist to Polk, July 27, 1838.

TO JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Canal Boat near Pittsburg, Pa.,
July 20th 1838

After spending a few days at Philadelphia, we are this far on our way home. Sarah promised to write to our relations at Murfreesborough, at what time we would probably be at Nashville. We will reach Pittsburg this evening, will go on in the first Boat, to Maysville, where we will get out, go to Harrodsburg, stop a stage (two days) and then home. This if we meet with no extraordinary delays will bring us to Nashville about the 28th or 29th when if perfectly convenient to you, I should be pleased to meet you. Sarah is anxious to see her friends at Murfreesborough, but after so long an absence from home, may not find it convenient to pay them a visit for a few weeks, and
unites with me in the desire that they will pay us a visit shortly after our return home. I have many things to communicate to you, which I must defer for a personal interview. Meet us if you can conveniently do so, at Nashville.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Murfreesboro. Formerly in possession of Jesse Beesley of Murfreesboro, this letter is now in the James K. Polk Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

FROM HENRY TOLAND

Dear Sir, Philada. July 20 1838

It affords me great pleasure to say to you, that I forward by this mail, a copy of Mr Careys Olive Branch.¹ When I had the pleasure to meet you in Chesnut Street, with our friend Mr [Henry] Horn, I thought nothing would be more easy than to procure a copy of this famous pamphlet. I found however, on enquiry, that it was not for sale, was out of print &c, and that old Mr Carey valued the 10 copies he has, more than he does fine gold, and I was advised that it was useless to apply to him for one. But ours is a large city, and I procured a copy without difficulty. It will at all times afford me sincere pleasure to be useful to you here, in any way in my power, and begging you to present my best respects to Mrs Polk. . . .

H. TOLAND

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Mathew Carey’s Olive Branch, published in 1814, was a plea for reconciliation between political factions in America following the War of 1812. Carey was a well-known publisher and economist in Philadelphia in the early nineteenth century.

FROM WILLIAM SCOTT HAYNES

Dr Sir. Murfreesboro Ten July 26th 1838

Your very kind favour to me of June last,¹ has remained unanswered thus long, in consequence of my absence from home, on a trip to Virginia, from whence I returned on Friday week last. Immediately upon reading your note, and finding that you intended honoring us with a visit, I bestired myself to get up a public dinner, to be offered you, as a testimonial of the public confidence in your
past course, and their continued and abiding confidence in your Republican principles. I have succeeded even beyond my most sanguine expectations, and ere this reaches you, you will have received the invitation of the committee,² appointed to address you on the subject. You must by no means decline the honor which we wish to confer upon you, as it is essentially necessary to us, as a party, that our Strong men, those in whom the people have confidence, and who have been long in public life, should meet, intermingle with, and address them on public affairs. This done, and done as I know you can do it, all will yet be well. It is only necessary for the people to be correctly informed, in order for them to go right; and had other friends to the Republican cause, in this State, taken the early and decided stand which characterised the course of yourself and your friends, preceding the last Presidential canvass, Tennessee, Republican Tennessee, would not now be found as ground for dispute with the Federalists. The course of the opposition is founded in deception, and it [is] only necessary for the people to understand this fact, for them to discard their deceivers from their further countenance.

The Honl. H. L. Turney passed through this place a few days since, and informed me that he would certainly attend our dinner. We shall invite the most distinguished members of our party, in the State, to partake with you and us at the festive board, together with Judge [William] Smith of Ala, and perhaps some others. If there is any individual or individuals whom you might wish invited, you have only to signify their names to me privately and confidentially, in order for your wishes to be complied with. The dinner is to be a free one, and all who think proper to do so will be invited to attend.

The time has nearly arrived when our Party should know their probable Candidate for Governor. What say you to becoming a candidate for that office? Nothing would give me more pleasure than to see your name announced as the candidate of the Party; and from the correspondence which I have held with friends, and the conversation of individuals of the party here, I have no doubt but it would be the harbinger of success to our cause. More of this when we meet. In the mean time reflect on the subject; and if consistent with your wishes, such steps shall be taken as to bring your name, at one and the same time in each portion of the State, before the people. The press of the State, attached to our party, are all ready and anxious to sustain your name for the office. The main object with us is, to shew abroad that you have strength sufficient to defeat the machinations of the Federal party in Tennessee, and to wean her so far from her present idoils, as to carry her back again into the Republican fold.
Should we succeed in this, we think that it would justify our insisting on the placing your name, on the Republican Ticket, as our candidate for the Vice Presidency. Of these things you are better informed than we can possibly be, and rest you assured, that no move shall be made by me, which can by any possibility compromit your claims upon the party.

The questions which you would have to carry, in a canvass of this kind, you fully understand. How far they would affect you, you can very readily ascertain, by a correspondence with our leading friends in the different counties of the State.

If there is any possible chance, of the opposition getting the upper hand in the ensuing Congress, perhaps this course might be the most prudent one; as your friends would as soon be annihilated at once, as to see that most infamous of all infamous puppies "John Bell," triumph over you in a contest for the Speakers chair. Should the opposition succeed in their views, this must and will be the result, as you are now the most dreaded and consequently the most hated by them. The mark is rather too conspicuous not to receive a blast at their hands.

I have drawn out my foolish epistle, to a much greater length, than our relative situations would seem to justify. But presuming upon the kindness of your heart, and the motives which have actuated me, I confidently calculate on being justified within your mind.

WM. SCOTT HAYNES

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. A committee headed by Moses Ridley sent an invitation to Polk on July 21, 1838. See Polk to Moses Ridley, et al., August 5, 1838.

FROM WILLIAM V. PETTIT

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. July 26, 1838

Pettit encloses a pamphlet containing a speech he had intended to make at a recent meeting in Harrisburg. He says that he was outmaneuvered and prevented from making his address by a group who thought he might be too strong in his support of the Subtreasury. He claims that his speech was not radical, however, and thinks that Polk might find it interesting in spite of the fact that it relates almost exclusively to local affairs.

Addressed to Columbia.
FROM JOHN J. GILCHRIST

Sir. Charlestown N H. July 27th [1838]

Your letter of the 20th instant, addressed to the Hon. H Hubbard, has been handed me by Mrs Hubbard, with a request that I would inform you of his absence. Mr Hubbard left Charlestown on the 23d inst for Wisconsin, and intends to return about the 1st of Septr.

I will take the liberty to answer an enquiry in your letter about Mr [Ralph] Metcalf. Mr [Silas] Wright of the U.S. Senate was in this place a few days since and stated from information which he obtained at Concord, that Mr Metcalf had determined not to go to Nashville, but had accepted a proposition from Mr Blair of the Globe to go to Washington as Asst Editor of that paper. Since the departure of Mr Hubbard, a letter has been received here from the Hon Mr [Franklin] Pierce of the Senate, stating that Mr Burke of Newport had requested his advice as to the expediency of his accepting the proposition from Nashville, and that Mr Pierce had advised him to accept it.

J. J. GILCHRIST

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A Harvard graduate, Gilchrist was a lawyer and was in practice with his father-in-law, Henry Hubbard. Later he served on the supreme court of New Hampshire.
2. The year was correctly suggested by the Library of Congress.
3. This letter has not been found.
4. Edmund Burke was a native of Vermont, where he practiced law before moving to New Hampshire. After editing the Claremont New Hampshire Argus for several years, he became editor of the Newport Spectator. He became a member of Congress in 1839 and later served as Commissioner of Patents. Newport lies about thirty-five miles northwest of Concord.

FROM ADAM HUNTSMAN

D Sir Jackson July 30th [1838]

Knowing you are at home or ought to be there I write a few. I think V Buren has placed his future election upon a dangerous issue (the subtreasury). I expect he will be beat upon it. Yea or nay I shall certainly do what I can against Mr. Clay. I cannot consent to be transferd by Mr Bell to the Federalist yet I am happy to say that a great many of Judge Whites friends and supporters will not swallow the dose hear. As the Election seems likely to settle down between
Clay and V Buren I think it more important to have strong, well informed & talented men (who will take the stumps) for candidates for Electors than for Congress. They could meet the single question of Federalism or Republicanism full in the face without being fettered by sectional or neighbourhood feuds, as one for Congress always has to encounter. The strongest men on our side should be got to run for the Legislature. Carroll for Governor if he will stand the pull. You know the fitness & qualification of all the persons in your regions & you must have this thing attended to by yourself or others.

I have been writing and talking about this matter & intend to continue until August 1839. If I loose I will have fun sufficient to pay me for the defeat.

A. Huntsman

Addressed to Columbia, although no envelope has been found. This letter has been published in Williams, editor, "Letters of Adam Huntsman," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, VI, 344.

1. The year has been supplied from the content of the letter.

FROM HOPKINS L. TURNEY

Dear Sir

Winchester [Tennessee] July 30th 1838

I arrived at home on the 22nd after a long tiresome & accidental trip, sinking a steamboat, upsetting a stage &c.

My family are all well. My wife has entirely recovered from all I can learn. My difficulty with Bell has made me a captain in my district, though I do not know whether I shall be a candidate for re-election. Little Van will beat Long Hall, much further than he did White. He will retain his old friends and divide the White men with Clay. Upon the whole he will double distance him in the Mountain district.

I will not have it in my power to meet you in Nashville as my Circuit court will then be in session, though set the stakes, and advise me of the arrangements, and I will execute them to the best of my skill, & judgement. If it can be made to suit all of our friends and more especially, if your district will be safe, I would be much pleased to see you before the people of the State in opposition to Cannon. He can get no votes in the Mountain district.

Let me hear from you.

Present my respects to Mrs Polk, and accept my best wishes.

Hop. L. Turney
The Nashville People done nothing for friend Ford. His paper² will be lost unless some aid is afforded. Can nothing be done for him. I am unable and besides I sustained a loss of $1350 a few weeks since, and can do nothing for him. Write again to them & let me know &c.

H. L. T.

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Long Hall obviously refers to Henry Clay. Perhaps the writer intended Long Hal.
2. John W. Ford had been editing the McMinnville Central Gazette for several years. Regarding Ford's financial needs, see Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, May 8, 1838.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Sir Bolivar T. Augt. 1, 1838

I have just returned from Jackson where I have had a full and unreserved conversation with Maj Martin, Maj Chalmers, Col Street & Col Talbot,¹ the three first, as you know, original "States Right" men.

I find them & the press at that place decidedly and openly with us, opposed to Mr. Clay heart & soul. Maj Martin says he has been in political correspondence with our old friend Genl. [Robert L.] Caruthers, which is now suddenly broken off by a proposition of his to have a Convention to agree upon principles and compare those of the aspiring candidates for the Presidency and as a consequence decide in favour of him whose opinions approximate the nearest to what they might agree was the sentiments of Tennessee. This letter is unanswered & the correspondence has ceased. Martin & all his party are uproarious against Mr. Clay & now for Van Buren. They esteem it verry essential that the best organization should be easily made, and suggest,

1st. That the Union should be put under the control of an efficient editor. Mr. Nicholson being an able writer & talented in addition to his high standing with all parties, is looked to as perhaps the only man who could give it that standing a central press should have & for that purpose it is preferred that a salary of at least Three thousand dollars be guarantyed to him.

2nd. That a talented candidate, one who will make the question & be able to canvas it before the People, be brought out for Governor, also for Congress in each district & for the general assembly in each
Correspondence of James K. Polk

County. For the first office, I find from Martins friends he is ready & I think anxious to take the field. And my own opinion is a more powerfull man will be hard to find. Talbot, and indeed all of them unite in requesting from you in person an early visit to Jackson. They seem to think it indispensible & request particularly that I should urge the necessity of it to you. The democrats of this state will find our new friends powerfull allies in the struggle which is to come. Martin expresses much concern to know the course expected to be pursued by Messrs. Booker, Gordon, Love2 & others of Maury. He thinks also that Genl. Carroll should oppose John Bell in the Davidson Dist. Let me hear from you.

JNO. H. BILLS

PS. Being no politician myself, I have hurried the foregoing thought together, of course, only for your own eye, unless you might see proper to show them to our mutual friend James Walker Esqr. or others upon the like terms of personal as well as political friendship with us. B.

Addressed to Columbia and marked “Private.”

1. Andrew L. Martin, Joseph W. Chalmers, and Joseph H. Talbot were lawyers practicing at Jackson, Tennessee. David A. Street was editor of the Jackson District Telegraph and State Sentinel. The attitude of these men is another evidence that former supporters of Hugh L. White would not accept Henry Clay as their presidential candidate. Subsequently Martin and Chalmers moved to Holly Springs, Mississippi. The latter became a United States senator from Mississippi.

2. Peter R. Booker, Powhatan Gordon, and John D. Love were thought by Martin to be former White supporters who might now refuse to support Clay.

FROM ALBERT T. McNEAL1

Cousin James

Coffeeville Mississipp[i]

August 1st2 1838

Your favour of the 10th ult. has been received.5 Also two numbers of the Democratic Review. For your attention in forwarding them I thank you.4 I saw [George W.] Bratton a few days since. He asserts all well at the plantation. At least about.5 When I wrote last the prospect was certainly good for a very fine crop of corn. Now, I am sorry to inform you, Bratton says he will not make more than half a crop and such will be the case with the planters generally owing to the drought during last month and the latter part of June. The cotton crop, which requires but little rain, has also suffered for the want of it. Of
course Bratton will sell no corn. Have you made any arrangements for Bagging & Rope? If you have not and can do so soon it would be well to have it forwarded to Memphis and advise us of its arrival when Bratton can send a waggon and have it hauld here. In this way it may I think be procured much cheaper than to purchase here, the freight on it up the river being very heavy. A supply of winter clothing for the negroes might be brought in the same waggon. I know but little of the prices at Memphis, but there are but few goods in this country and the price exorbitant, for instance Boots $15, Silk Hats $10. From this you may form some idea of the price of other articles. I merely make a suggestion. It may hereafter be acted upon by purchases at Louisville or Nashville. You say you will visit this country in October next. I shall be much pleased to see you here. If, however, William [H. Polk] should not come sooner I would be glad you would forward some money by the first opportunity. Some creditors have been dunning and it is out of my power to advance or I would willingly do so. My friend Mr. Jones6 paid a note of a hundred Dollars yesterday, given in Dec. last, for a yoke of Oxen and an a/c of some seventy Dollars for salt Bagging & Rope. He paid in Brandon money and I have promised that it shall be returned in the notes of the River Banks.7 The credit of the Brandon Bank is at a very low ebb, and its notes are refused in payment of debts by some of our citizens. I know not what to think of this Bank. Many have faith in its ability to redeem but have no confidence in the integrity of the Directors and believe they will never attempt to redeem. In haste.

A. T. McNeal

P.S.
Give my respects to Cousin Sarah Aunt Jane and Cousin Maria.8 McNeal

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Perhaps because the writer customarily referred to himself as A. T. McNeal and did not write the T distinctly, Polk erroneously recorded the name Alfred P. McNeal on the envelope.
2. This letter was postmarked July 31, 1838.
3. This letter has not been found.
4. See McNeal to Polk, June 15, 1838.
5. The word about is here used in the sense of nearly, or approximately.
6. This perhaps refers to Claudius C. Jones.
7. The Mississippi and Alabama Railroad and Banking Company, chartered in 1836, established its bank at Brandon in Rankin County. This bank extended credit recklessly. In 1839, during a wave of public indignation
against the bank, its president committed suicide. The River Banks were those located in Natchez and Vicksburg.

8. These three were Polk's wife, mother, and sister.

FROM JOHN J. GILCHRIST

Sir. Charlestown N.H. 4 August 1838

In the continued absence of Mr [Henry] Hubbard, I take the liberty to acquaint you with the substance of a letter received here in his absence, addressed to him by Edmund Burke Esq of Newport, in relation to the Nashville Union. Mr. Burke accepts the proposal to edit that paper on the following conditions, which I extract from his letter.

"1. They must pay my expenses to Nashville, that is, the necessary and reasonable expenses of my journey.

"2. They must give me a Salary of $1500 per annum payable quarterly for the term of five years, and allow me the privilege of becoming jointly interested in one half of the establishment at the end of the first year or sooner, if I choose, provided the manner in which I shall conduct the paper, be satisfactory to the present proprietors, or to those who may then be interested in the paper as proprietors. The value of the establishment to be ascertained by the appraisal of competent and disinterested printers, in case myself and the owner or owners cannot agree.

"3. In the event of my not giving satisfaction on a trial of one year, in addition to the salary of that year, I must be paid two years salary, or $3000, and my expenses back to New England to quit the paper.

"4th. I must be permitted to have unlimited control over the Editorial Department of the paper, without dictation or restraint from any quarter. Being responsible for the contents of a paper, this is but the right of the Editor.

"The whole conditions must be guaranteed by Mr Polk, or some other responsible person before I leave New England.

"I should like in addition to have the privilege of taking along with me, the young man who has been with me, most of the time since I have been connected with the press, as proof reader and compositor in the establishment. He is very competent & can be obtained at a fair price. I want him with me, because he is well acquainted with setting my manuscript, and in the commencement would save me much trouble. This however, I would not insist on.

"It may seem to Mr Polk that the terms I propose are altogether
advantageous to myself. I am aware that they are quite favorable, but situated as I now am, he could not expect I would waive what may be considered a certainty, for a place and a salary which may not be permanent, without some compensation in the event of disappointment. I ought not to talk of going to Tennessee or any where else, on trial as an Editor. I have already been on trial a sufficient length of time, to enable my friends to judge of my fitness and qualifications for a place requiring a sound judgment, and a high degree of editorial talent. I distrust my ability and competency for the place which the Tennessee people have tendered, and it is but just that Mr Polk should be informed, that I have not the advantage of what may be termed a classical or liberal education, which he may deem one of the requisites for the place. You may make the contents of this letter known to Mr Polk, and if he has not already engaged an editor, he can inform me as soon as may be, whether or not he will accept my propositions. If they should be accepted I will leave immediately for Tennessee after learning this fact."

J. J. GILCHRIST

Addressed to Columbia.
1. See Gilchrist to Polk, July 27, 1838; and Burke to Polk, August 7, 1838. 2. Unidentified.

TO MOSES RIDLEY, ET AL.¹

Gentlemen  Columbia August 5th 1838

I take the earliest opportunity which has been afforded me since my arrival at home, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st ultimo, inviting me on behalf of "a meeting of a portion of the democracy of Rutherford County" to partake with them, of "a public dinner," proposed to be given "at Murfreesborough at such time in the month of August, as will suit my convenience."² Your letter was not received until I reached Nashville three days ago, on my journey from Washington, and I beg you to accept this as my apology for not making an earlier answer.

Concurring with you in the opinions expressed in your letter, and thanking you for the terms of approbation in which you have been pleased to speak of the "stand I have made in Congress" in resisting the "dangerous machinations," of a "monied aristocracy," which "has arrayed itself against our hallowed institutions," I beg to assure you
that it will afford me sincere pleasure to meet my Republican friends in Rutherford, on any day in the present month, after Monday the 13th Instant, which they may be pleased to designate.  

Be pleased Gentlemen, to accept for yourselves and those whom you represent, my acknowledgements, for the unexpected honor done me, by this mark of your regard.  

James K. Polk

Addressed to Murfreesboro. This letter is marked “Copy,” but it is obviously a draft, in Polk’s handwriting and signed by him, of the letter actually sent.

1. Among the sixteen names other than Ridley's were David B. Molloy, Granville S. Crockett, Robert L. Weakley, Henderson Yoakum, Edwin A. Keeble, John D. Fletcher, Leonard H. Sims, John Nelson, and S. R. Rucker.

2. See William Scott Haynes to Polk, July 26, 1838.

3. On August 9, 1838, Ridley notified Polk that the dinner had been set for August 30.

FROM EDMUND BURKE


Recently I have had considerable correspondence with Messrs Hubbard & Pierce of this State, respecting an offer, which I understand to have been made through you, of the Editorial charge of the Nashville Union. The representation which those gentlemen have made, of the prospects which the offer holds out to a young man, capable of filling the place with ability and credit to himself, have induced me to submit several distinct propositions, embracing the terms on which I would accept the Editorship of the Union. As the decision, as well in respects to its immediate as its remote consequences, is of the utmost moment to myself, I deem it a duty, which I owe to myself to ascertain, precisely, the prospects which the place holds out and until I obtain the information necessary to enable me to form a correct opinion, my proposition must not be considered as binding upon me, even honorarily. Your candor, I doubt not, will enable you to appreciate the views which influence me, when you are apprised of the circumstances in which I am placed.

My future prospects, both as it regards money and preferment, are very flattering in this State. My election to the next Congress, is as certain as any political event, yet to happen, can be. In addition to this I am here surrounded by warm personal and political friends, who will, as long as I deserve their confidence, do every thing which is
proper and reasonable for my advancement. Besides, if I go to Tennessee, I shall go contrary to the wishes of all my relatives, including a father, mother and two sisters, who are entirely dependent upon myself and another brother, and who, of course, feel the utmost solicitude in relation to my future course and destiny. I am also, if I go to Nashville, dooming myself to the most slavelike toil, and probably, to personal danger. Now, Sir, before I should come to the conclusion to forego the prospects held out to me in New England, and encounter the labors and dangers which must inevitably fall to my lot in Tennessee, I ought to assure myself of the certainty of an adequate remuneration. With this view, I should be glad of some further information in relation to the condition of the Nashville Union, the expense of living in Nashville, &c.

1st. I would like to know the number of subscribers to the Union (distinguishing between the tri-weekly and weekly) at the present time, and the amount charged during the last year for advertising & job work? Also the terms for the tri-weekly & weekly?

2d. The size and price of the paper on which it is printed, and the expenses of publishing, including composition, and every other expense appertaining to the business?

3d. The condition of the office, i.e., the quantity of types, the heads used in the paper, and whether new or old?

4th. How many papers are now published in Nashville, their political complexion, and number of subscribers, if known?

5th. The expense of boarding at the most respectable Hotel and in private families?

Mr Smith, the present proprietor of the Union, will of course be best able to answer the questions above stated. If you will take the trouble to refer them to him, it will facilitate the completion of our negociation. On the receipt of his answers, I can make up an opinion forthwith,¹ and will prepare immediately to go to Tennessee, if the prospects are adequate to the sacrifice I make here, and the toils and perils I must encounter there.

When it is considered that I leave home, kindred, and well tried personal and political friends, for a residence in a land of strangers, to whose manners and habits of life I am unaccustomed; abandon prospects which rarely fall to the lot of one of my years in New England and go, too, against the advice and wishes of most all who feel interested in my welfare; it cannot be deemed unreasonable, if I insist as a sine qua non that my future prospects, at least in a pecuniary point of view, be reduced to an absolute certainty, provided I perform my part.
Perhaps it is my duty to apprise you, that I have not had the advantages of a classical or liberal education, as it is termed. My opportunity for acquiring an education, have been very limited. All the instruction I have received from others, has been given by the teachers of our common English Schools. I am aware that, on the minds of many, this would have considerable weight.

If the Editorial Chair of the Union is not already filled, you can furnish me the information solicited, and my final conclusion will be made immediately.

Edmund Burke

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Burke to Polk, September 29, 1838, and John J. Gilchrist to Polk, August 4, 1838.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

My Dear Sir

Columbia August 7th 1838

When I reached Nashville on Thursday evening last, much fatigued and broken down by my journey, I fully intended to rest a day or two and visit you, before I returned home; but met an invitation to a public dinner to be given at Lewisburg on Saturday, and was hurried home to attend it. At Lewisburg I met about 1000 people, made them a speech &c. I found the finest spirit prevailing, and a zealous and almost unanimous determination to sustain the administration & re-election of Mr Van-Buren. I found a large majority of those who had voted for White resolved not to support Clay. Watterson of Bedford1 was there and assigned his reasons (though he had been a supporter of Judge White) why he could not vote for Clay, and must support Van-Buren. There cannot be a doubt of the course of the State, if the proper cautions are used to inform the public mind. For myself I go into the contest with renewed spirit, and confidence. A public dinner is to be given in Rutherford shortly to which I am invited, and have accepted. The day is yet to be fixed by the committee. I am expected to visit and address my constituents at Shelbyville on Monday next, and will visit you as soon after that time, as I can have the leisure to do so. I wish much to see you, and will certainly avail myself of the earliest opportunity to do so.

James K. Polk

Addressed to the Hermitage. This letter is in the Andrew Jackson Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.
1. Harvey M. Watterson, an able and ambitious young man, had already announced his decision to support Van Buren.

FROM JAMES PAGE

My Dear Sir

Your favour from on board the Canal Boat reached me in due season.¹

My interview with Col. Jarvis² was exceedingly brief. I confined myself to the simple statement that an editor was desired at Nashville whose compensation would be so much, secured, and the prospect of an interest in the concern after a time. His answer was prompt, that he must decline, but he added that he would write to a friend in Massachusetts,³ propose the matter to him, and let me know the result. This he neglected to do, as he apprised me a day or two since in reply to a note I wrote him on the subject, in consequence of indisposition, but again promised to the like effect. He has not yet called on me. Why he should have mentioned to you that I called on him I am at a loss to conceive, for not a syllable fell from my lips that could have justified or led to an inference on his part that you knew anything of the matter. His introduction of the subject therefore must have been accidental or he gathered enough from the gentleman who came in while we were in conversation (and who undertook to make some inquiry) to cause him to suppose that you might be addressed about it.

I really regret that so far I have been unable to trace a person that would answer. Should a favorable reply be received from Col. Jarvis' friend I will write promptly to Mr. Smith at Nashville. Any arrangement I shall make, will look to the contingencies you mention, and of course be gratified.

You will perceive that we are “up and doing.” The prospects in this State are flattering. I have no doubt of Porter's election by a strong majority.⁴ My letters from the interior speak confidently, and at our ward meetings in the county on Monday last the turn out was tremendous. The people are awake to the importance of the crisis. They want but “truth and light.” By these Democracy is ever triumphant while Federalism thrives beneath falsehood and in the dark. The Ball is rolling. Banks must be separated from the government, Gold and Silver alone recognized as the Constitutional Currency & Corporation cupidity and Insolence brought down and curbed by the power of the people. I shall be pleased to hear from you and will occasionally let you know how we get along.

JAMES PAGE
TO MARTIN VAN BUREN

Sir

Columbia Tennessee August 8th 1838

Since my return home I have received the two letters which are herewith enclosed,\(^1\) the one from Genl. Nathaniel Smith, Superintendent of Cherokee emigration, and the other from Col. Williamson Smith, who has a contract with the Government, through the Department of War, to convey the Indians to their new homes by water. I have not seen Genl. Smith, but presume his object in addressing me, was that the statements contained in his letter, might be made known to the proper authorities at Washington. I know this was the object of Col. W. Smith and therefore I enclose both letters, that what they say, may be communicated to the Government in their own terms; and have only to add that from a long personal acquaintance with both the gentlemen, I would place the most implicit confidence in the truth of their statements. I will further say, that it is extremely desirable, that the emigration of the Cherokees, (who I understand are now assembled in great numbers & supported at great expense to the Government) should not be unnecessarily suspended or delayed. Whilst they remain where they are, they must be the cause of continual excitement, among the border inhabitants, and the sooner they can be removed, the better for them and the Government. Should John Ross be intrusted with the conduct of their emigration, it will naturally produce divisions and dissatisfaction in the tribe, itself, and if they be conducted by land will according to the statements of the Messrs Smiths, cost the Government double the sum it would, (as well as delay them much longer on the route), if the emigration continues by water in the way it has been commenced.

On receiving the letters of the Messrs Smiths, I have thought it to be proper to make this communication to you. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Washington. This letter is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. A copy, signed by Polk but written by an unknown person, is in the Polk Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. The enclosures have not been found.
FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Coln

Murfreesboro August 9th 1838

I saw some of the Committee of arrangements to day & they in-formed me that they had determined to have yr. Dinner on the 30th Inst. which will be next to the last day of the month. They would have had it sooner, but as they propose to have a pretty grand affair of it they were afraid that they could not make the necessary prepa-ration sooner.

The Committee have invited a good number of distinguished in-dividuals. All the Democratic members of Congress from this State: Carroll, [George W.] Campbell, Weakley, Judge [William] Smith, Gov Clay, & [William R.] King of Alabama, and the Old Chief Andrew Jackson. It has been questionable with some of our friends whether the Old General ought to attend. Some suppose that it would help the cause but others fear that his visit might result unfavorably. Coln Robt Burton requested me to advise with you on the subject. Any advice which you may give will be discreetly concealed. Burton will prevent him from coming if it should be thought inadvisable. They could not get around inviting him. There are a great many White men in this county that will not go for Clay; and this is an important time to make an exertion for their recovery to the Republi-can fold. The Leaders of the opposition are unwilling to come out for Clay because they are yet doubtful of his strength in this district. Some have said that they will not vote for either Clay or Van Buren. Some of Bells friends here talk of giving him a grand dinner soon after our republican dinner. I expect it would be well for us if they did. In that event it would be [ . . . ] the people that they would not be non commital any longer on the subject of the Presidency and we would soon see a line of communication formed between the parties that would not be esteemed very favorable by the enemies of the administration.

I think it very probable that we will have a good number of Whig Candidates in this district for Congress as well as for the State Legislature. We want them to bring out as many as they can before we bring out any. They will be sure to quarrel among themselves & then we can profit by our interposition. We would be glad if Watterson & Kincaid would come over to the Dinner without the formality of a special invitation.

Tell the Girls that we are all well. We have been looking for a letter from Elizabeth. Tell the Girls that their Cousin Ann [ . . . ] had a fine Daughter on the 7th Instant; name not transpired: Black head, face & eyes like Susan.
Our respects to Sarah. We think it proper for Sarah to come up with you. We will endeavor to give her a hearty welcome.

W. R. Rucker

NB We hope Coln [John H.] Dew & some others of your republican friends from Old Maury will come over with you. For one I would be very much pleased to see my old Friend Dr. Hays. Please to give him my best respects.

WRR

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Polk to Moses Ridley, et al., August 5, 1838; and William Scott Haynes to Polk, July 26, 1838.

2. In a letter dated August 20, 1838, Jackson told Moses Ridley and his committee that advanced age and poor health would prevent his attending. It has not been learned whether or not Burton advised Jackson not to attend.

3. At this point a smear has made illegible one or two words.

4. The significance of the defection from the White Whig ranks by Harvey M. Watterson and Dr. Joseph Kincaid seems to have been rather widely understood.

5. William R. Rucker’s teenage daughters, Elizabeth and Johanna, visited the Polks in Columbia quite frequently.

6. The last name is illegible.

FROM CHARLES G. OLMSTED

Franklin. August 12, 1838

Olmsted writes that the Franklin Recorder is soon to be sold to a man who will both publish and edit it. This will leave the current editor, Henry Van Pelt, without a job. He thinks that Van Pelt’s paper has been quite good and asks Polk to help Van Pelt find a job with a better paper with a larger circulation.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This letter was written in Olmsted’s handwriting and uses the first person throughout. Below Olmsted’s signature is that of R. P. Currin, but it is believed that this was an afterthought endorsement. In 1833 Olmsted had run unsuccessfully for a seat in Congress. A lawyer, he soon moved to Columbus, Mississippi, and set up practice.

2. Henry Van Pelt began his editorial career at Franklin in 1821. Later he was associated with the Nashville Clarion. It was with the Memphis Appeal, however, that he became widely known. In 1849, two years before his death, the Appeal became a daily.
FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT

Dear Sir  

Jackson Augt. 14th 1838

I learn by the Nashville papers of your arrival at home. I wrote you at Washington that you must come down here, directly after your arrival at home.¹ I must repeat that request. I wish to introduce you to some choice fellows here. Things are beginning to present an entire different aspect than they did two years ago. The White Jackson² men begin now to see they have been grossly humbugged, and will work harder to undo the mischief they have done, than they did to do it. Come as early as practicable; write me when you shall be here. Maj Bills promised to come when you did; he was here the other week. We must have a party organization throughout the State; put up our best men for the Legislature and congress who are capable of discussing the true questions at issue. We have commenced fixing our men in the counties around. We have got our newspaper right.³ The Clay men are already too chop fallen; we must lose no time in improving our advantage. We must follow the example of old Bedford throughout the State. The democratic address is a fine document and should be sent to every corner of the State. You see I cannot write half I want to tell you. Besides I want to get a little private intelligence from you. You must come & come quickly. I will take no excuses. If Mrs. Polk objects bring her along. Present my best respects to Mrs. P.

Jos. H. Talbot

NB. Majr Martin and all the nullies,⁴ are with us here, the most rampant set of fellows you ever saw. If we arrange things right we will have a merry time of it, at our next elections.

J. H. T.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. See Talbot to Polk, June 2, 1838.
2. This probably refers to former White supporters residing in Jackson, Tennessee.
3. This reference is obscure. During a period of political realignment, Jackson newspapers were constantly changing their names as well as their political allegiances. One conjecture is that this refers to the District Telegraph and State Sentinel, edited by David A. Street since March 1838. This was neither a clear-cut Democratic paper nor an outright Whig sheet. Talbot could have been persuaded that Street's political policy was shifting toward support of Democratic principles.
4. The Nullifiers as a group had been reluctant to vote for Van Buren,
and most of those in Tennessee ended up by voting for White in 1836. See John H. Bills to Polk, August 1, 1838.

FROM ALBERT G. HARRISON

Fulton, Missouri. August 15, 1838

Harrison reports that the Democrats have won the election in his state. He and his Democratic colleague, John Miller,\(^1\) are re-elected to the House, while Benton has a comfortable margin in the state legislature.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Miller served as governor of Missouri, 1825–32, and was then elected to Congress for three terms, 1837–43.

TO EDMUND BURKE

Dear Sir

Nashville, Tennessee. August 18th, 1838

I have received from Mr. J. J. Gilchrist of Charlestown, N. H., a letter of the 5th Instant, containing an extract of a letter addressed by you to Mr Senator Hubbard of that place, in which you state the terms upon which you are willing to take charge of the Editorial Department of the Nashville Union. I have communicated Mr Gilchrist's letter, with the extract from yours, to Mr Joel M. Smith the proprietor, and herewith enclose to you Mr Smith's answer.\(^2\) I have conferred also with Mr Grundy, who sets out to Washington in a day or two, on the subject, and who is authorized by Mr Smith, to adjust the details of the arrangement with you on your way here, and for that purpose he requests that you will take Washington in your route. On your arrival here, the guaranty required, that Mr Smith will faithfully execute the contract, shall be given by myself and others. We wish you to call on Mr Grundy at Washington, and shall expect you here as early as your convenience will permit.\(^2\)

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Newport, New Hampshire. This letter is in the Blair and Rives Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. This enclosure has not been found.
2. See Burke to Polk, September 29, 1838.

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN

Sir

Columbia, Tennessee. August 21, 1838

I send you herewith a letter addressed to me by John F. Gillespy Esq upon the subject of the measures now in course of execution for
the removal of the Cherokees to their new home West of the Mississippi. Mr Gillespy has been a member of our State Senate, is a man of intelligence and one in whose statements, the most implicit reliance may be placed. He resides in that part of Tennessee bordering on the Cherokee country, and is doubtless, well informed upon the subject about which he writes. Being moreover a disinterested person he can have no motive for making the statements which he does, but the advancement of the interests of the Cherokee's, as well as of the Government. He has always been and still is a zealous advocate of the policy of the Government in removing the Indians West, and I think you will agree with me that statements of fact, as well as opinions coming from such a man are worthy of much consideration. In addition to the great dissatisfactions which he says prevails in consequence of the arrangements made by Genl Scott with John Ross there is one fact which it would seem ought to be sufficient to prevent it from being carried into effect. It is that the removal of each Indian under the arrangement made with Ross will cost the Government $67.90 whereas the removal can be as well effected by the former arrangement for half or little more than half that sum. I am aware that the Government has had many difficulties to encounter in executing the Cherokee Treaty and I would be the last to interpose others, but I think it due to the Government, that they should be possessed of the information contained in the enclosed letter of Mr Gillespy.

I have received a letter also upon the same subject from Genl [Nathaniel] Smith the superintendent of Cherokee Emigration, addressed to Mr Grundy and myself jointly, fully sustaining all the facts and opinions given by Mr Gillespy, and adding some additional statements. This letter I will forward to Mr Grundy who will no doubt confer with yourself and the Secretary of War on the subject. I cannot myself doubt from all the information I have upon the subject that the first arrangement made for the removal of the Indians is the cheapest as well as best path for the Indians and the Government.

James K. Polk

Addressed to Washington. Marked "Copy," this letter is written in an unknown hand, but was signed by Polk.

1. This letter has not been found.

2. A professional military man whose career spanned more than a half-century, Winfield Scott was at this time acting as a soldier-diplomat in the Cherokee removal.

3. This letter has not been found. See also Polk to Martin Van Buren, August 8, 1838.
TO EDMUND BURKE

Dear Sir

Columbia, Tennessee, August 22nd, 1838

I have received your letter of the 7th Instant, and have transmitted it to the proprietor of the Union, who resides forty miles off, for the purpose of obtaining a more accurate statement upon the points upon which you seek information than I can give. I will doubtless receive the statement from Mr Smith in the course of two or three days, and will forward it to you. My opinion is, that you would be pleased with a residence at Nashville, and that with such talents and energy as you would bring into the establishment, the Union would very soon become very profitable to its owners. You need not have the slightest apprehension of personal violence, in consequence of your Editorial course. Such occurrences have been very rare in our community for many years past. Indeed public opinion would not tolerate any political party that would resort to it. You will find Nashville a pleasant city, with an intelligent and orderly population.

Happening in Nashville on the 18th I wrote you, enclosing a letter from Mr Smith the proprietor of the Union, accepting your proposition, to take charge of the Editorial Department of the paper, as contained in a letter from you to Mr Senator Hubbard, which had been forwarded to me in Mr Hubbard’s absence by Mr J. J. Gilchrist of Charlestown N. H.¹ My letter covering Mr Smith’s was enclosed to Mr Gilchrist, with a request that he would convey it to you without delay. When I saw Mr Smith he considered the engagement as made, by his acceptance of your proposition, but would no doubt not desire so to regard it, unless it continued to meet your approbation.² In his letter to you, he requested you to take Washington in your way to Tennessee, and see Mr Atto. Genl. Grundy³ on the subject, who was authorized to conclude the arrangement with you, in regard to details, in a manner which I have no doubt will be entirely satisfactory to you. I hope you will call on Mr Grundy on your way, who will be able to give you more satisfactory information, in regard to many things connected with the Union Establishment, as well as to the present aspect of political affairs in the State, than can well be communicated in a correspondence. Mr Grundy set out for Washington on the 19th and will be there before this reaches you.

James K. Polk

P. S.

I received two days ago, a letter from Mr Senator Pierce, enclosing one from you to himself, and answered him, by informing him, of Mr Smith’s acceptance of your proposition made through
Mr Hubbard or rather Mr Gilchrist, who enclosed it to me, in Mr H's absence. May I ask the favour of you to inform me at what time you will probably be at Nashville? I will see you there shortly after your arrival.

Addressed to Newport, New Hampshire. This letter is in the Blair & Rives Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.
1. See Gilchrist to Polk, July 27, August 4, and August 30, 1838.
2. See Burke to Polk, September 29, 1838.
3. Felix Grundy resigned from the Senate and on July 5, 1838, was appointed Attorney General by President Van Buren, effective on September 1, 1838.
4. Neither of the letters exchanged between Pierce and Polk has been found.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Bolivar Ten Augt. 25, 1838

Your valued favour of ——— Inst\(^1\) was rec'd. by due course of mail and I feel much gratification at the confidence with which you meet the storm, the tide of which is evidently turning as well in Tennessee as elsewhere. My own opinion is Clay cannot get a Southern State. The people are beginning to feel and know the true issue. They must vote for Mr. Van Buren whose measures are all Southern or Mr. Clay of high Tariff, Bank, Internal Improvement & Abolition memory.

The people in the county cannot stand this; they will not stand it. I sent you the [Memphis] Enquirer containing [F. S.] Lathams attack on the "Polk Kin" in Hardeman.\(^2\) He is a wreckless scoundrel & worthy of a halter. No reply is necessary save the single notion of it in the succeeding [Memphis] Gazette. I know my disposition is pacific; I do not wish to become a heated partizan, but such a vindictive article must arouse the most lethargic to action. The Feds of this county shall feel that they have "barked up the wrong tree" in Hardeman. Our people being sound will be kept so.

I have had no further communication with our friends in Madison. All of us (and them too as I think) would be glad to see you in the field for Governor, provided we are not requiring too much. Of this you are the best judge. Our energies should all be called forth & perhaps it [wood?] hurt to invest all our capital. You could come out of Maury, Glies [Giles], Lincoln, Franklin, Warren, Bedford, Marshall, Hickman & Lawrence with majorities hard to overtake. I well recollect
our conversation in Washington and have constantly had in view your suggestions & would only consent to fight the enemy with lighter calibre as matter of policy further ahead, avoiding encouragement or commitment to our friends over the way. Why do not the Whig papers attack the Democratic Manifesto issues at Washington? So far as I have observed they keep a death like silence. Can they not be provoked to issue their creed? I should like exceedingly to see it; the names of Preston & Slade would look well coupled to the same printed faith.

I think the "Union" is doing better. Perhaps Cunningham may yet do. Advise Smith whether he gets another Editor or not, to improve the appearance of his paper. A cleaner sheet, whiter & some improvement in the typography & arrangement, would aid its respectability. This could be done by changing his paper maker and a little care to the office without increasing his expenses.

Hoping you may find it convenient to visit this section of country soon, & especially Jackson. . . .

JNO. H. BILLS

PS After reading your letter I burned it, that it might not like McKisicks, fall into the hands of our foes.

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

1. According to his postscript, Bills burned this letter; subsequently he did not recall its date.

2. This appears to be the same article that Bills had sent Polk in his letter of August 30, 1837. No copy of the article has been found.

3. This was a declaration drawn up by a Democratic caucus in Washington and approved on July 6, 1838. It was signed by committees from both houses of Congress and covered most of the outstanding issues of the day.

4. William C. Preston of South Carolina and William Slade of Vermont were both Whigs, but their views on most public issues were in opposition to each other. Slade was an outspoken abolitionist, while Preston was a nullifier who was equally outspoken in defense of southern institutions.

5. This refers to a letter written by Polk that later fell into the hands of his opponents, who printed it and used it to their political advantage. The letter was written to James McKisick, November 4, 1835.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

My dear Sir, Murfreesboro, Tenn. Sept. 1, 1838

There is a matter which I have much at heart, and which is highly interesting to our friends here, which I omitted to mention to you this morning, because I had not consulted a party who was interested. Mr.
David Wendell the old Postmaster here, since the death of his wife,\(^1\) it is understood, is about to retire from business, and spend the most of his time hereafter with his daughter, Mrs. Yandel\(^2\) at Louisville, (Ky), and that of course he will resign his office. He is a Whig of the worst sort, and will, no doubt, endeavor to nominate his successor, or permit the Whigs to do it by secret petition. Mr. Wendel has been a good officer, but at the same time, a dead weight upon our friends here. His successor must be a true man. Two such are here, as good and as capable as officers as himself, Maj. Moses G. Reeves and Maj. David B. Molloy. Molloy, you know, is to be run by our friends for the Assembly. Reeves, therefore, must be the man.\(^3\) He has long been county Register, and a most faithful and diligent public officer. He has been Register for many years, first under an appointment from the county court under the Old constitution, and since, by election of the people. He is popular and influential, justly enjoying the confidence of the whole community. In confidence, you must, if you can, write to Mr. Grundy or Mr. Kendall or both, that if the resignation of Wendel comes in, Reeves must be appointed. His habits of business, his moral character, and his systematic industry and punctuality give him the highest claims to this or any other appointment he might apply for. He is a permanent citizen, having lived in this town and county for thirty years, where by care, diligence and economy he has rendered himself, not rich, but independent, owing no man a dollar.

The matter is, at present, entirely private and confidential here, that he either wishes for or would accept the office. A knowledge of the fact might prevent a resignation. Wendel's son David, a Whig, has married a Keeble,\(^4\) and in that way, possibly may be attempted to be smuggled into the succession.

I added some remarks to the proceedings we inspected and sent to the printer this morning, and have made the Editor put up your name and Maj. Childresses,\(^5\) at the head of his paper as you will see.

I have written to Mr. Grundy about the foregoing office. Do so likewise.

Knowing that you are right, "Go ahead,"\(^6\) in full confidence that your friends will allow no opportunity of helping the common cause to pass unimproved.

SAML. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Private."

1. David Wendel had been a merchant in Murfreesboro since 1817 and had been postmaster for many years. His wife, the former Sarah H. Neilson, died in August 1838. The spelling of this name varies so frequently that it has
not been possible to determine which is correct. The Wendel spelling seems
to have prevailed at first, but later the Wendell spelling became more common.

2. Susan Juliet Wendel had married Dr. Lunsford P. Yandell of Rutherford County, a physician who distinguished himself in medical education in Kentucky.

3. In spite of Laughlin’s views, it was Molloy who got the appointment as postmaster.

4. David D. Wendel married Susan Keeble on December 20, 1837.

5. This is an obvious reference to Col. William G. Childress of Williamson County, who was a candidate for a seat in Congress. John W. Childress was usually called Major Childress, but he was not a candidate at this time.

6. Polk had announced his candidacy for the governorship before two thousand people at a public dinner given in his honor at Murfreesboro on August 30, 1838.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

My dear Sir,

You have no doubt heard before this time, that I am a candidate for Governor of Tennessee, at the next election. There can be no doubt, that now is the time for efficient action in the State. Our candidates for Congress and Legislature, should be brought out in every district and County in the State, at the earliest possible period. Mr. [A. O. P.] Nicholson in this district and Wm. G. Childress in the Williamson and Rutherford District have already announced themselves as candidates for Congress. A. V. Brown of Giles only waits to ascertain that our good friend Col. Kincarman, of Lincoln, will be off the field, to announce himself in that District. This will be ascertained at the public dinner at Fayetteville on the 7th if not sooner. Our friend Cave Johnson, will I hope not hesitate to take the field at once in his district.

What is to be done in the Davidson District? It is very important not only to that District, but to the whole State, that that election should not be suffered to go by default. If [Robert M.] Burton will consent to run he ought to be brought out at once. There is no time for delay. The Candidate whoever he is, should be announced immediately.

I saw General P. Cheatham at the Rutherford dinner, and although he would do so, reluctantly, and has no desire to run, still if no other person will take the field, I am satisfied he would. What is wanting at this moment is prompt action. Let the candidate be agreed upon and announced forthwith. [David] Craighead, [Thomas H.] Fletcher, Burton, and Cheatham, have been spoken of. Either would debate the questions which now agitate the public mind with ability and effect, and rely upon it, Mr Clay is too heavy a weight to be carried by Mr.
Bell if opposed by any man who can meet him in debate. I hold it to [be] impossible for him to sustain Clay or himself, if opposed by any man who possesses power in debate.

Judging from all I saw and heard, there is a complete political revolution in Rutherford, and so it will be all over the State, if the proper exertions are used. Even in Williamson (which is one of our worst counties) our friends are roused, and begin to speak with confidence of carrying the County. In both Rutherford and Williamson our friends are in motion and will in a few days have their candidates for the Legislature out.

I do not wish my dear Sir, to involve you in the political strife of the times, and would not have you on my account to take any active part, it would be used improperly by our opponents. All I wish to suggest to you is, that as you are on terms of confidential intimacy with Burton, that you send for him without delay, and induce him at once to take the field. This I suggest, upon the supposition that our friends have not and I fear will not soon bring out any candidate. You may assure Burton, that he may rely on my active cooperation.

As I am now a candidate for Governor I have a right to go to any part of the State and am ready to go to any part of it, where it is thought I can be useful.

James K. Polk

Addressed to the Hermitage. This is a typescript, origin unknown, in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Date transcribed as September 22, 1838. Polk's reference to the forthcoming "public dinner at Fayetteville on the 7th" indicates that the letter was written during the first week of September. The Fayetteville dinner was held on September 7.

2. The name has been erroneously transcribed and should be Kincannon instead of Kincarman.

3. This is another obvious error in transcription, the word Leonard having been read as General. Polk's habit of spreading his final d so that it resembles al is convincing. Furthermore, the only General Cheatham in the region was not a Democrat, while Leonard P. Cheatham was.

FROM JAMES P. GRUNDY

Nashville. September 3, 1838

Grundy says that he has been authorized by Robert Armstrong and others to inform Polk that a dinner in his honor will be held at Haysboro,1 on September 14 and hopes that it will be convenient for Polk to attend.2
Unaddressed, this letter was enclosed in that of Robert Armstrong to Polk, September 4, 1838.

1. Haysboro was located near the Cumberland River and lay northeast of Nashville, on the road to Gallatin.

2. Because of prior arrangement, Polk could not accept the Haysboro invitation. The affair was then postponed until November 6, 1838.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Dear Sir [Nashville] September 4 [1838]

You must not fail to be with us by Friday week, 14th Inst. I could make no terms with our Republican friends for putting it off. I sent for Mr [Leonard P.] Cheatham and he advised that it should be delayed until you return from the District, but it would not do. You will have to meet them. All looks well. The news from the District is cheering, and Bell, Foster & Co. are alarmed and shew it. I have no fears. Arrange for the candidates in the different counties. I have good news from Jackson County & Smith & will charge through there.

R. ARMSTRONG

(Write every few days.)

Addressed to Columbia and delivered by hand.

1. The year was supplied on the basis of Polk’s endorsement.

2. See James P. Grundy to Polk, September 3, 1838. Grundy’s letter was endorsed with this one.

FROM GEORGE W. BRATTON

State of Mississippi Yallowbushey County

Sept the 7th 1838

After my best respect to yo I now will let yo now that we ar all well at this time. Your crop is indiferant. I shal not mak more than a half a crop. I will not make more than a half a crop of cotton but a plenty of corn. I hav not had any rane since the 20 of May untill the 19 of Augues and I hav not had any sinse and the boles ar fauling of faster than tha cum on. The cotton crops in this nauberhood ar now dead. I am now picken out coton. Barbery picks out on hundred and seventy five. The resn I did not wright MeN eal said that he wood wright evry 20 days. I have the rise of one hundred head of hogs and will be able to kill three thousand one hundred pounds of pork. I ad no more at presat.

GEO. Bratton
Addressed to Columbia. This letter has been published in Bassett, *Plantation Overseer*, 113. Since the writer used neither capitals nor punctuation marks, an unusual liberty in those areas was taken with the manuscript in order to make it more readable.

1. This slave woman was an expert picker, if she could pick 175 pounds from a poor crop.

2. Albert T. McNeal, Polk's cousin, was living nearby at this time. See McNeal to Polk, August 1, 1838.

FROM JOEL M. SMITH

Sir.

Union Office, Nashville September 7th 1838

In complyance with the wishes of E. Burke Esqr., communicated to me in your letter of the 22nd Ult., I now proceed to give the information desired, in reference to this office as near as practicable. There are at this time

1600 weekly subscribers at $3., advance price, $4800
487 Tri weekly at 5. " " 2435
Advertising and job work during the year 5750

$12,985.00

Expenses same time as near as can be assertained
173 Reams Double Medium at $6.50 $1124
158 " Sup Royal 4.25 672
Add, for extras, exchanges & etc 204
Composition at 35$ pr week 17202
Treasurers wages pr year 800
Press work " " 624
25 Kegs Ink at $10 250
Clerk hire 700
House rent 300
Board and Clothing 3 boys 450
For all other expences say 500

7,344.00

$5,641.00

Amt and quality of Type in the office
1 Font long primer 500 lbs.
1 do Burgeois [Bourgeois] 350 "
1 do Brevier 350 "
1 do small Pica 300 "
1 do do 200 "
1 do Scrip 25 "
Job Type of every description 1800 "

3,525 lbs
The above type, except the Scrip and job, may be considered as half worn. The other nearly as good as new. Double medium and 2 Sup. Royal patent Smith presses and 1 Book press; all as good as new, or nearly so. It is proper for me to remark, that in the estimate of my subscribers I have set them down at the advance price viz 3 & 5 dollars. The terms are 4 and 6 dollars if not paid in advance. I would also observe that in estimating the expences, I have put them down at the highest rates.

Taking into view all the circumstances connected with the paper almost from its commencement up to the time I became the proprietor, and the difficulties with which I have had to contend, on various accts, I think there is great reason to believe that the Union will be very profitable to its owners. When I purchased the paper, there was not more than about 1400 subscribers good and bad. Of that number I suppose I struck off near 100 and I now have near 2100 actual subscribers, independent of my exchanges.

I have made the inquiry in reference to boarding, and am informed that the price at the principal Hotells is $8 pr week, with lodging. At the most genteel private boarding Houses $20 pr week without, and $30 with lodging. Should Mr B. come to the conclusion to accept the situation, I would like to be informed immediately of the fact, and also at what time he can probably be here.

J. M. SMITH

Addressed to Columbia. This letter is in the Blair & Rives Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. Polk's letter to Smith has not been found. See Polk to Edmund Burke, August 22, 1838.
2. If the calculation is based upon 52 weeks, this figure should be $1820.

FROM HAMPTON C. WILLIAMS

Winchester. September 8, 1838

Williams reports that he has been in Tennessee for about two weeks and finds that democracy prevails there. He says that Polk's candidacy for governor has met with approbation by the yeomanry, the best supporters any man could have. He adds that he will be back in Washington in November and will see Polk there.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A native of Georgia and sometime resident of Franklin County, Tennessee, Williams was a clerk in the Fourth Auditor's office.
FROM JOHN H. BILLS

September 10 1838

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Sir

I have before me yours of the 4th Inst. It is not yet known who will be our candidate for Congress. Our kinsman Genl. [Rufus F.] Neely is spoken of pretty extensively. He is personally very popular in his Brigade, being the 4 South Western counties of the Congressional District & might be expected to rally the Democrats of the other three. The late Revd. Phineas T Scruggs is also spoken of and by many warmly solicited to come out. He is now a practicing attorney, true in the Republican faith and an eloquent and highly talented debater. My opinion is he is half inclined to run and is pleased to be talked to on the subject. In regard to discussing the question, no one could suit us better, and in this respect, I fear Genl. Neely would be deficient. Humphreys is now at Nashville. It is believed he will run for the Assembly, Coe for Senate, Crisp for the House from this county. I apprehend no kind of difficulty amongst our friends on the subject of getting out a candidate for Congress at an early day.

You ask how your communication is received. My opportunities of judging have fortunately been unusually good, having seen & conversed with many persons from different parts. It is regarded by our friends as the most fortunate move that could have been made upon the political chess board. They regard it as the salvation of the party. It infuses general confidence and they go to the conflict with confidence of success. They know the true questions will be made and have to be met by our opponents. They feel that you have "thrown yourself into the breach" and the Democracy of the country will come to the rescue. I can hear many, very many original White men already say that if it has come to that, that they are expected to support Henry Clay, "that they are done."

The wrythings of the [Nashville] Banner too plainly indicate that they see and know their fate, when the issue is made up between Mr. Van Buren & Mr Clay. See the late editorial address to the "Nashville Whig." Troubles in the camp are apparent.

You will not fail to apprise some of us when you will be here, that we may have the people assembled. Can you not make it convenient to be here the 1st Monday in October, that being Court day? Address some of us previous to your coming. Your old friend Saml. McDowell Esq. would be very active in showing your letter if intended for the public & giving general information for a gathering of the people.

You should address the people of this county at about 3 or 4 places if time will permit, and should you conclude to do so, we will have all
things in readiness. Some of our friends (Judge Turley & others) speak of giving you a feast, but I shall keep that down, if I can, as the “Kin” are too numerous here. My opinion is that it would be as well not to do so. Our other affairs went off remarkably well, but now that you are a candidate for our sufrages, it might be said the Kin (being rather the aristocracy) were trying to force things. I may be mistaken but so I regard it.

I trust you will not forget to bring Mrs Polk along. Assure her of our good health in the District and the general wish of her female relations to see her here.

George Moore I learn is verry sick of fever in Haywood. With this exception your friends are well.

JNO. H. BILLS

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Polk’s letter has not been found.
2. In 1836 the Tennessee Assembly created the fourth division of state militia; the 22nd Brigade was formed by recruits from McNairy, Hardeman, Fayette, and Shelby counties. The other three counties in the Thirteenth Congressional District were Perry, Henderson, and Tipton.
3. Scruggs, a former Methodist Episcopal clergyman, was an active member of the Fayette County bar and, subsequently, of the Shelby County association.
4. The reference is to Polk’s announcement for the governorship. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, September 1, 1838.
5. This address appeared in the September 3, 1838, issue of the Banner. The two papers, both claiming to be Whig, accused each other of not being entirely faithful to the party.
6. McDowell, formerly of Maury County, served as Hardeman County register, 1836–48, and as clerk, 1840–44.

FROM EDMUND BURKE

Dear Sir, Newport, N. H. Sept. 10th 1838

Your letters of the 18th and 22d of August, have been received; the former enclosing a letter from Mr Smith, the Proprietor of the “Union,” accepting, substantially, the terms submitted by me through Mr Hubbard, upon which I would assume the management of the Editorial Department of his paper. Having submitted definitive propositions upon which I had concluded I would enter into an arrangement with Mr Smith, you may, without knowing the reasons, be surprised
that I should afterwards request, that those propositions should not be considered binding. The explanation you will find in the following considerations: When I concluded to accept the office of the Editorial Department of the "Union," I had made up my mind to become permanently a resident of Tennessee, and spend the remainder of my life in that state. I had been assured both by Messrs Hubbard & Pierce, that the establishment was in a flourishing condition, and my opinion was confirmed by the fact, that the Proprietor was willing to make such a liberal offer for Editorial assistance, as the one submitted to me. But, after enclosing my proposition to Messrs Hubbard & Pierce, I saw in the Washington Chronicle, a statement showing the amount due Gen. Greene for the Telegraph, in the several states of the Union, the aggregate sums of which amounted to more than $55,000. I was aware that it was difficult to collect the subscriptions due small country establishments, but had entertained the belief, that those due larger establishments, were more promptly paid. The Statement of Genl. Greene changed my opinion in relation to that matter. As it is my intention to be a citizen of Tennessee for the remainder of my life, if I remove thither, I wished to ascertain precisely the condition and nett income in cash of Mr Smith's establishment; which information would enable me to determine, with some degree of certainty, my future prospects, if I should leave N. H.

Mr Smith, in his letter, suggests that some "slight modification" in my terms, may be necessary in order to complete a bargain, but he does not suggest what they may be. Perhaps they may relate to the manner in which the paper shall be conducted. I reserved unlimited control of the Editorial Department, because my reputation, and perhaps my property, would be dependant upon the manner in which it was managed. I would agree to modify that branch of my proposal so much as to pledge myself, that the paper shall be democratic in principle, and in the measures it may support; that is to say, it shall support the same principles and measures which are advocated by the Democratic press of the Union.

I was much pleased with the information relating to your state, and the condition of society existing there, communicated in your last letter. I am sure the climate would better agree with my health than the climate of New England, and I do not doubt a residence in Tennessee in other respects, would be agreeable. But I fear, Sir, that the expectations which you have formed, with regard to myself, are much too high. I requested Mr Hubbard to apprise you, that my means of obtaining an education, had been very limited. I have not had the advantage of an academic education, nor but little tuition of any kind
from others. With many I am aware that this fact would have considerable weight. I know from experience that great caution, judgment, and unwearied industry and attention, are required to conduct a political press. Those who know nothing of it by experiment, can form no adequate estimate of the care and tact required in such a vocation. But the press justly has great influence, and its conductors should be well rewarded.

EDMUND BURKE

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Formerly published as a weekly, the Washington Chronicle appeared briefly as a tri-weekly from 1838 to 1839.
2. Duff Green was the influential editor of the Washington United States Telegraph.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

McMinnville, Sept 10, 1838

I have been confined very much to my house since my return from Rutherford by the dangerous indisposition of two of my little boys, from which they are now slowly recovering. I have seen, however, a number of our friends, and they are highly gratified at the result of the Rutherford Dinner; I mean by result, the fact of your having taken the field. Many republican White-men join us heartily in joy at the event. Mr. [Bromfield L.] Ridley has just returned from Overton. Everything in that quarter promises gloriously. The Nashville1 says Gov. Cannon is to be your opponent, and, no doubt, speaks by authority. This is good. You must and will beat him to death, by nearly twenty thousand votes. The Overtonians are resolved to give you a Dinner. I am going to Winchester tomorrow to consult Turney & others, upon the propriety of getting up two Democratic festivals in the Mountain District, say one in this and the other in Overton,2 to be attended by you and Turney on your way to Washington. The Overton people had taken the matter into consideration before they knew you were out as a candidate. I will write you from Winchester. We must know when you will leave for Washington, so as to be ready. McClellan and his folks, should have a meeting, or several meetings, prepared in East Tennessee, to be attended by you on your way. I hope steps will be taken to have it done if deemed proper. If I knew your arrangements, I would write to him forthwith.3
Mr. Turney writes me, that my friends, or rather the friends of our party and cause as I should say, have openly put me up as a candidate for the Senate, no opposition being expected, none from our side being intended in any quarter, and none expected from the broken down opposition. When I go to Franklin [County] tomorrow, I suppose it will be proper for me to ratify the arrangement. Whether there is opposition or not, it shall never be said that I have not run on the question in all its aspects. I had rather be beaten in that way than to get in by trimming and dodging.

I write in the midst of preparations for being off to Winchester. . . .

S. H. LAUGHLIN

Addressed to Columbia.
1. On September 7, 1838, the Nashville Whig placed Newton Cannon's name at the head of its editorial column as its candidate for governor.
2. The "Mountain District" consisted of a shoestring territory extending from the Alabama line northward to the Kentucky line. The counties contained therein were Warren (Laughlin's county), Franklin, White, and Overton.
3. The Nashville Union on November 5, 1838, announced that on Polk's return trip to Washington he would attend dinners in his honor at Haysboro, Gainesboro, Kingston, Rutledge, and Rogersville.
4. Laughlin was a member of the state senate from 1839 until 1845.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Dear Sir

Bolivar Sept 11, 1838

Since addressing you on yesterday I have seen & conversed with Maj Geo W Smith of Memphis, formerly of Lebanon and more recently a resident of Jackson, from which place he reports as the understanding there, that [Andrew L.] Martin would run against Crockett for Congress & he fully believes with success; that he awaits only an invitation from Crockett's County (Gibson) to declare himself; that Conner (a popular democrat of Brownsville) will be run for the Senate against Maj Gen [Alexander B.] Bradford, all agree he is easily beaten; [and] that [Henry W.] McCorry Dem & Lyon Whig will run for the house in Madison. Smith says the Whigs of Jackson are nearly all extinct, there only remaining active Billy [William B.] Miller, Lyon, Elrod & Bradford, all brothers in law. Your annunciation was immediately agreed to by Martin, [Joseph W.] Chalmers, [David A.] Street & others of our new allies. Some of them said they thought an
original White man changed might have done as well or better, but Martin said it had saved him much trouble and advised an acquiescence.

I go to Fayette tomorrow & will address you on my return.

JNO. H. BILLS

Addressed to Columbia.
1. Nothing has been learned of Smith prior to his move to Memphis. He served as an alderman there, 1850–52.
2. An early settler of Haywood County and a brigadier in the militia, William Conner promoted the settlement of Ashport, located on the Mississippi River in Lauderdale County, Tennessee.
3. James S. Lyon was a wealthy planter and horse breeder who represented Madison County in the General Assembly, 1839–41.
4. James Elrod operated a general store in Jackson from 1824 into the 1840s.
5. Miller and Lyon were married to sisters. Bradford was married to Miller's sister. The connection of Elrod has not been learned.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir Murfreesboro. Sept 11th [1838]¹

I expected when I left your house that some money had been remitted to me from Alabama and that I would be able to pay you before you set out for Mississippi.² I have heard lately that the money is ready but has not been paid over in consequence of the absence of the agent to whom it was to be delivered. I look for it daily and will send it to you as soon as it reaches me.

The Whigs are preparing vigorously for their dinner on the 27th and for the coming contest. It is supposed they will run [Charles] Ready for Congress, [David W.] Dickinson and [William] Ledbetter for the Assembly. Things remain quiet amongst the people. The politicians I suppose are at work. I would be pleased to hear from you in the District, of the State of affairs there. If any thing worthy of notice should transpire here I will give you information of it. Tell Sarah to write when she intends to visit us.

J. W. CHILDRESS

Addressed to Columbia.
1. The year was suggested by the Library of Congress; Polk's endorsement confirms its correctness.
2. Childress owed Polk a balance on the purchase price of the carriage Polk sold him. See Childress to Polk, January 14, April 9, and May 18, 1838.

FROM JESSE LEIGH

Dresden. September 11, 1838

Leigh forwards to Polk the prospectus for the Dresden Tennessee Patriot, whose main object will be to prevent the re-election of John W. Crockett to Congress. Leigh hopes that Polk and others outside Weakley County can help with the financial burden of publication by subscribing for a number of papers that can be sent without charge where they may do the most good.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Leigh edited the first newspaper published in Weakley County, the Dresden Tennessee Patriot. This paper survived for only a year.

FROM CLAIBORNE KYLE

Holly Springs, Mississippi. September 12, 1838

Kyle invites Polk to stop in Holly Springs when he visits his Mississippi plantation. He says that many old friends of Polk live in his vicinity and would be glad to welcome him with a dinner.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM A. M. M. UPSHAW

My Dear Sir

Memphis Sept 12th 1838

I arrived at this place a day or two since, and to my entire astonishment, see in the Gazett of this place (Memphis) that you ware a candidate for Governor. Success to you. The battle in this State has to be fought. I know of no one more able to fight it than your self. I have not kept my mouth closed since I have been here, nor shall it be so, when ever I may be in Tennessee, before the election.

It is useless for me to write to my relations in Giles for they are all right, but I will do it any how, by way, stiring them up.

You have several warm friends in Memphis, to wit Mr Gaines, Dr Hickman, Ned Hickman, Johnston and various others. I am now on my way to Pontotoc; I would be gratified to hear from you. My respects to Mrs Polk.

A. M. M. UPSHAW
Correspondence of James K. Polk

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Pendleton G. Gaines, a lawyer who edited the Memphis Gazette from 1834 until its termination in 1838, was an important Democratic strategist. He served in the state legislature from Shelby County, 1839-41. Elliott Hickman, a Jackson presidential elector in 1832, had formerly lived in Fayetteville. Ned Hickman was probably Edwin Hickman, who kept the Exchange Hotel in Memphis. A Democrat, he was six times elected mayor of that city. Johnston remains unidentified.

FROM GEORGE W. BRATTON

Sir [Coffeeville, Mississippi] September 13, 1838

I take the present time to write a few lines. After my respects to you I will inform you that myself and family is well. The negroes is all well. I understand[d] from a letter to Mr McNeil¹ that you would be down the first of October. I wish you not to fail to come on. Last Mundy Gilbert² left home and we believe is aiming to get to Dr Colwell [Caldwell]. I think you had better come by there for I have searched the neighborhood and cannot hear of him. I do not know what took him of unless it was because he had been stealing. I have not struck him one lick in a year nor yet threatened him. I would advise you to not sell him for if you do Henry Carter will be sent to follow. I write no more.

G. W. B.

Addressed to Columbia. This letter has been published in Bassett, Plantation Overseer, 113-114.

1. Albert T. McNeal.
2. Gilbert and Henry Carter, mentioned below, were slaves.

FROM SUTHERLAND S. SOUTHWORTH¹

Dighton, Massachusetts. September 13, 1838

Southworth says that on three occasions during the last two years he has been approached about becoming editor of the Nashville Union. On each occasion he indicated his willingness to take the position but no firm offer has been made. Now that Polk is a candidate for governor, Southworth is eager to go to Nashville, where he is confident that he can be of great trouble to the Whigs.

Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

1. Formerly a Rhode Island newspaper editor, Southworth served at
various times as Washington correspondent for newspapers in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, Boston, and Nashville.

FROM GREENVILLE COOK

Dr. Sir

Shelbyville Sept. 15 1838

Contrary to my expectations and understanding of the matter, upon closing the concerns of the [Western] Star office in this place, I find myself involved to a considerable extent. This was not anticipated by me at the time I made the purchase. After the most diligent exertions on my part combined with great economy, I find that the office just about cleared its teeth, without compensating me in the smallest degree for my services. For my personal services I ask nothing; but I do ask that I be exonerated from the payment of the purchase money, which is now hanging over me, especially as those who in fact purchased it through me, have now got it in possession, together with the books and papers.

I wrote sometime ago to Gilchrist to allow me for the office what it cost, and for the books what they called for. This he refused to do, which leads us into a very dirty Equity suit in which you will be unavoidably involved. Entertaining for you personally the highest esteem, and viewing your political talents and principles almost with adoration, renders it a peculiarly painful task for me to perform. To make out a bill I shall have to commence at the very inception of the matter, and connect you with it, that is, include you in the bill, and make you one of the principal actors in the scene. It will be necessary for me to take the deposition of several gentlemen for whom I entertain the kindest feelings, which might place them in awkward attitude. As one of the parties, (Gilchrist) is not an inhabitant of this state, publication will have to be made, as you know. I shall regret this, as it will afford the Whigs an opportunity to sneer at us, and you particularly, in your election.

All I ask, is, that my bonds may be cancelled that were created in the purchase of the office, and compensation for my books that were left with the office. For my books I want notes cancelled to the amount of them, as they took them to secure themselves, and never prosecuted the collection, for fear it would injure the cause. I am not disposed to loose six or seven hundred dollars for the cause, when I never expect to derive any benefit from it.

I expect to leave the country in the course of a few weeks, and would like to hear from you on the subject, as I will wait reasonable
time for your answer before I file my bill; but I must do it before
[I] leave here, or have it satisfactorily arranged.

GREENVILLE COOK

Addressed to Columbia.
1. William Gilchrist, before he moved from Shelbyville to Arkansas, had
been involved in the transfer of the Western Star to Cook. See James
McKisick to Polk, November 4, 1835, and William Gilchrist to Polk, March
30 and November 16, 1836.
2. See Polk to Samuel Mitchell, September 18, 1838. On the envelope of
this letter from Cook, Polk noted that a copy was being sent to General
Mitchell.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Coln
Murfreesboro. Septr. 16th 1838

I received yr. various letters a day or two since, & forwarded the
one you enclosed to Blair & Rives of Washington City.1 Richard Blair
of our town is satisfied with yr. explanation.2 There has been a con­
siderable fluttering amongst the Whig pigeons in this place since yr.
speech here at the Public Dinner.3 A good many leading men among
the White Party have avowed that they are for you in the next
Gubernatorial canvass, and a great many have said that they cannot
go for Mr Clay under any circumstances. What effect the approaching
Whig Celebration may have upon them it is impossible for me to
foresee.4 The multitude you know are too much inclined to run with
the popular current. The Whigs are making great preparations &
boastingly calculate on a vastly large concourse of Citizens from all
parts. But we do not believe that there will be more than attended the
Dinner with which they honored you. However we may reasonably
suppose so, if we may judge from the labored & expensive effort which
was made for Coln Bell in his own district where it was said only 390
persons attended, to receive the account of his stewardship. From every
information that I can get I am induced to believe that Vanburen has
a considerable majority in this county at this time. Though Mjr.
[John W.] Childress tells me that he thinks they will lead us in this
county, he however you know always looks on the worst side of a
picture. Our chances for success will depend very much upon the
candidates which we shall have in the field for Congress & for the
State legislature. We need men who can & will debate the Subjects of
General & State politicks: And of these I am afraid we shall be very
deficient. I do not know certainly who will be our county candidates,
but it is thought that they will be Fletcher, Smith & Syms neither of which are well versed in (at least General Politicks).\textsuperscript{5} Syms is a very good off hand debater and a good electioneer, but I am doubtful whether he can manage a \textit{Canvass throughout} skilfully. Fletcher is \textit{determined} to be a candidate whether we will or no and we must of necessity use him, because forsooth he could be elected in spite of us & might perchance join the opposition, for they are already making overtures to him. But he has more decidedly come out for us than he ever has before done. Coln. Yoakum & Mjr. Molloy have both been called out by us in the papers, but they will both decline. Coln Yoakum will publish a written declension in the next week's paper in which he will set forth with great force and ability the present attitude of the two wings of the White party in the coming presidential canvass. He shews that the consistent White Republicans ought & will generally adhere to Mr Vanburen & the White Federalists will go for Mr Clay. I will forward you the paper as soon as it is published. You will find it a very good document. He was a little angry at first about Wm. Childress' coming out for Congress, but I presume that he is now well satisfied. He wanted to run himself, but that would have been very ill advised because we fear that he has rendered himself very unpopular whilst in the army though (I think from all I hear) very undeservedly. Mjr Molloy is very popular but he says that he will not be a candidate for the Legislature on account of his determination to resume his business as a Merchant in Murfreesboro next Spring. He is now an applicant for Post Master in the room of Mr [David] Wendell who has published his determination to resign on the first of next January. He has gotten a great many signers to his petition & I have no doubt but that he ought and will get it. Mjr Reeves\textsuperscript{6} was for a few days an opponent but I am informed he has declined and he has no other competitor at present but John M Telford\textsuperscript{7} who I should like very well [if he] has some good way of making a living for his numerous & needy family. But I could not be willing that any Whig should get into that office again in Murfreesborough. It is probable he will write to you to gain your interest in that affair. We are all anxious that Molloy should get it. Though between him & Mjr. Reeves we would have to be neutral. It may be possible that the Whigs will bring out another competitor. I know they would if they thought they could get more assigners to their petition than to Molloy's. But I think they have despaired of being able to do so.

I should be glad to hear from you occasionally about your prospects in your new Canvass. I am very doubtful about your success in this County. You know that our Citizens pretend to be under great obliga-
tions to Gov Cannon for his early services for them in removing their seat of Justice from Old Jefferson to this place. He has represented Rutherford frequently in the Legislature & commanded some of our companies in the Creek Wars. And some will vote for him on account of being "old acquaintance." Never the less if politicks should run high it is possible that you may get all the administration votes, and if you do I think you will get a majority. You say you will be in Franklin next week. I may possibly come down if not too much engaged. I fear that Wmson & Wilson will be hard cases for you. Williamson was always of federal politicks & Wilson you know has been sold sealed & delivered to the trator past redemption.

W. R. Rucker

Addressed to Columbia.
1. These letters have not been found.
2. Richard Blair's subscription to the Washington Globe apparently had been beset by problems. See Rucker to Polk, January 20 and April 22, 1837, and Polk to Rucker, June 15, 1837.
3. This refers to Polk's speech of August 30, 1838, in which he announced his candidacy for the governorship.
4. The Whigs had a dinner in Murfreesboro on September 27, 1838. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, September 27, 1838.
5. John Davidson Fletcher represented Rutherford in the lower house of the Tennessee General Assembly, 1839–1843, as a Democrat. James S. Smith also represented Rutherford County as a Democrat in the Assembly, 1839–1841. Born in Rutherford, he moved to Madison County in 1850. Leonard H. Sims had represented Rutherford and Williamson counties in the state senate, 1833–35. In 1839 he moved to Missouri. Later he returned to Tennessee and then settled in Arkansas. He served in the state legislatures of both Missouri and Arkansas and in the United States Congress from Missouri.
7. Telford was one of the earliest landowners in Murfreesboro; he had built a grist mill and sawmill in 1814–1815. In any case, Molloy, not Telford, became postmaster.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir

Pulaski Sept. 17th 1838

I rec'd your last¹ & have not been able to answer satisfactorily till now. The S. & Bell dinner² has not yet created much excitement. They had posted bills about the Pisga Camp ground³ inviting all to come & stating the strong probability that Mr. Bell & Mr Crockett would be here. The religious people I think did not take it very well about the
September 17 1838

camp ground. Now We having thrown cold water on their dinner could not very well turn right round & do the same thing, so we have hit on the expedient of addressing you direct, to come out as a candidate for Govr. & address your fellow citizens of Giles at the court house on Tuesday 25th. I expect the letter was sent on by this evening’s mail.4 If not it will come by the next, but write me by return mail any how, whether the arrangement will do & if it will, we will have hand bills in a few days all over the county & our friends I think will turn out finely. This plan it is thought will contrast well with the other. Besides, this town is now very sickly & so is the county & the preparations for a dinner would not be warmly gone into on that account.

I shall announce myself a candidate in the next paper5 & shall probably address the people on the same day you do & if you have a line of appointments west I shall go with you through [my district]6 & then turn from Savannah [Tennessee] to Columbus [Mississippi], to close up my business & decide as many of my cases before 1st Novr. as possible.

I followd. your suggestions as to my successor.7 I wrote my resigna­tion & sent it off & Mr. Jno. M. Bell, on learning the fact thought proper to write to his friend on the subject, & will expect an answer in a day or two. If he desires it you will probably hear from him shortly.

I left Fayettville saying to Fulton, Bonner8 & [Jesse B.] Clements, you see the difficulty. You are on the spot. You are his friends & mine & you can make me a candidate “if & when you think proper.” One of them, Doctr. Bonner sent me word a few days ago that I would have to offer. Still the rumor is here; that K[incannon] will offer. If so my skirts are clear & all that remains is prove that whether successful or not “I deserve to be.”

A. V. BROWN

Addressed to Columbia and marked “Confidential.”

1. Polk’s letter has not been found.
2. This Whig dinner, honoring Ebenezer J. Shields, took place on September 20, 1838. John Bell was present, but Crockett did not attend. While traveling, Bell attended other political dinners at Pulaski, Brownsville, Bolivar, Paris, and perhaps other towns.
3. This was the site of a Methodist church built in 1810. Camp meetings had been held there since 1811.
4. A committee headed by Archibald Wright wrote the invitation to Polk on September 15, 1838.
5. Brown had determined to seek the congressional post currently held by Shields, but the possible candidacy of Andrew A. Kincannon, a loser to
Shields two years before, caused him to delay until some arrangement could be made with Kincannon that would not cost votes.

6. It seems clear that Brown intended to travel with Polk through the western part of his own district. This district consisted of a single tier of counties along the southern boundary of Tennessee from Lincoln westward through Hardin, five counties in all. For plans being made for Polk's tour to the west, see West H. Humphreys to Polk, September 17, 1838. Brown's letter announcing his candidacy was dated September 17, 1838, and published in the Pulaski Trumpet of Liberty.

7. The tentative plan to take care of Andrew A. Kincannon was for him to succeed Brown as special agent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, based at Columbus, Mississippi. This plan worked out well and Kincannon succeeded Brown. John M. Bell is not further identified and the friend mentioned is unknown.

8. James Fulton was a prominent lawyer in Fayetteville and attorney-general for the eighth district, 1824–27. Doctor William Bonner was a well-known, wealthy surgeon who was also an ardent Democrat.

FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

The P. O. at this place is about to become vacant, by the resignation of Mr Wendel, and Molloy and Reeves have been engaged for several days in getting up petitions for the appointment. Reeves has upon examination of the Law concluded that there is doubt as to his eligibility, he now being Register of this County, and has withdrawn his application. He requests me to say to you that if any of his friends have written to you in his behalf that you may consider it withdrawn, and that nothing farther will be done for him towards procuring the office. Molloy & John M Telford are the only applicants now. Telford is not all qualified, and I think the Whigs do not sign his petition. We would all be pleased with the appointment of Molloy. Let me hear from you in the District. I will enclose this to Sarah to be sent to you if you have left home.

JOHN W. CHILDRESS

The envelope bore Polk's name but no address. Presumably it was delivered by hand in Columbia before Polk left home.

1. The day of the month was written above the rest of the date by some unidentified person. Contents of the letter indicate that it was probably the correct day.

2. See William R. Rucker to Polk, September 16, 1838.
FROM WEST H. HUMPHREYS

Sir

Nashville Hotel Sept 17 [1838]¹

Sir after reflection I have written to the following gentlemen: Bills & Neely of Bolivar, Coe & McLin at Sommerville or Lagrange, Gains and Judge Brown at Memphis, Dr. Hazen and Glenn at Covington, Talbot at Jackson,² and have made the following appointments for you: Perryville 22, 20th McNairy, 18th Sommerville, 6th Raleigh, 4 Covington, 3 Brownsville, 1st Jackson.³

I have written to Talbot to know if it would not be better to put the meeting at Jackson on the last Saturday in September.

All the lawyers will [be] at Brownsville on Monday. I shall be at Shelby and I should like to attend very much at that dinner. It would I am certain meet with the approbation of many of your friends to have it the Saturday previous. If a dinner is gotten up I want to be at it.

I have written to Talbot that I have written you to know whether you or they can coincide upon this point.

Please write to me at this place [ . . . ]⁴ correcting this fixing of the places and times if it requires alteration. If not please write confirming appointments. If the letter reaches [you] here after I leave I have directed them to mail me at Jackson.

If it will be as convenient to you to fix the Saturday previous at Jackson please notify our friends at Jackson that you [will] be there at such time as your friends may receive and that some wishing you to be there at the Saturday previous, You leave it to their choice (if you can do so [ . . . ] with other arrangements).

Jackson is now headquarters and if a day for the dinner can [be] fixed on Saturday and it shall be generally known the leading [ . . . ] of the whole district will be there.

We wish this in order to have general concert throughout the district.

And Jackson is the best organizing point and Saturday is the best day.

WEST HUMPHREYS

If this day suits we can make the necessary arrangements.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Although no year was given by the writer, Polk's endorsement and the content of the letter definitely place it in 1838.
Joseph H. Talbot were men of prominence in the Western District. After serving a term in the state legislature, 1841–42, Maclin moved to Texas. Dr. Hazen was an old friend of Polk and one of his most efficient supporters in Tipton County.

3. These political stops were scheduled in conjunction with Polk’s trip to his plantation in Mississippi in October. Jackson, Brownsville, Covington, and Raleigh were to be visited on the trip to Mississippi; the others were scheduled for the return trip.

4. This ellipsis and those below indicate words that are illegible because of poor penmanship and bad condition of the manuscript.

FROM HENRY MABRY¹

Dear Sir

Murfreesboro Septr 18th 1838

I write on the present occasion, to request from you, a particular favor, not only for myself, but also, in behalf of some of the strongest friends of Democracy.

I want you, to procure if possible, the memorable speech of the Hon. Henry Clay against the Bank of the United States, and delivered in the Congress of the United States some time about 1811.² My object for wanting a copy of said speech is this. On the 27th inst. the advocates of Biddle’s Bank aristocracy, and the apologist of the great political turn-coat Henry, intend holding a feast,³ and I want to give them a few thousand copies of his own words. He has swallowed them, I presume they can do like-wise. If you can procure the speech, you can send it to myself, Dr. Rucker, or Capt. Childress.⁴ It will be safe in the hands of either. Only be expeditious.

HENRY MABRY

I intend to publish the speech in extras, and also in my weekly sheet. Our side is getting along admirably in this section, the voice of the little Whiffling Telegraph⁵ to the contrary notwithstanding.

H. M.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. In 1838 Henry Mabry was publishing the Murfreesboro Weekly Times. A year later he was publishing the Winchester Highlander. Apparently he did the editing as well as the printing.

2. Clay’s speech against continuation of the first Bank of the United States was delivered in the Senate on February 15, 1811. The strict construction argument he used on this occasion came back later to haunt him many times.

3. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, September 27, 1838.
My dear Sir

I was astonished to receive by the mail of this morning, from Mr Greenville Cook, a letter of which the enclosed is a copy. His object is palpable enough. He probably thinks that as I am now a candidate before the people of the State, he can extort from me money to prevent disclosures (of what I know not) which he threatened he will make. I do not know what disclosures he can make to my prejudice. If he speaks the truth, I know he can make none. Still I would dislike very much to have my name mixed up in a Bill in Equity, even upon false charges. My enemies would not fail to seize upon it, and would affect whether they did or not to believe any thing he might be base enough to say. On this account I am very desirous that the matter should be settled with him, without a resort to a Bill in Equity, to which I have no doubt my enemies will stimulate him. His object seemed to be, to be “exonerated from the payment of the purchase money” which he says is now “hanging over him,” and credits given for the amount due in his Books. Why he should have written to me on the subject, I know not, for I know nothing about any of the transactions except what you casually informed me after they had taken place. I have no doubt from his letter that he intends to act improperly and if possible to injure [William] Gilchrist, you & myself, and for that purpose will be urged by our common enemies to file a Bill. He is I understand entirely insolvent and it must be desirable to avoid as far as possible having any thing to do with him. From what you told me, his endorsers will at all events have to pay the notes which he gave for the office, without any reasonable hope of ever having the money refunded. All things considered, rather than have such an outcry in the country, as the filing of a Bill, whether its alligations were true or false, would produce, I would advise you under the circumstances, to release him from liability on his notes for which Gilchrist & yourself are endorsers. You will lose nothing by this, for he will never in all probability, be able to repay his endorsers. I know nothing of his books, of which he speaks. I advise you to see him immediately and settle the matter with him. Gilchrist I know would dislike to be involved in an Equity suit, out of which no profit can come. Write me soon what you do. Direct your letter to Bolivar, Hardiman County, Tenn. where I will get it. I shall start to the [Western] Dis-
strict on the 25th or 26th and if you think your letter would reach here before that time, direct it to this place, or if you choose you can direct it to this place, at all events, and if I have left it will be forwarded to me by Mrs P. Do not fail to write early.

JAMES K. POLK

PS. I will not answer Cook's letter at all.

J. K. P.

Addressed to Shelbyville and marked "Private and Confidential." This is a copy, as attested by J. Knox Walker who, presumably, transcribed it.

1. See Cook to Polk, September 15, 1838.

FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT

Dear Sir

Jackson 20th of Sept. 1838

I am in receipt of your three favours of the 4th, 11th and 13th Inst.¹ and would have answered you sooner but for the receipt of a letter from Mr. Humphries advising me that he had written you² to change the time of your visit to this place from the 1st of Oct. to the 29th Inst. (Saturday) and that he would advise me by the next mail (which arrived to day), but having failed to do so. I have caused it to be announced in the paper of tomorrow that you will be here on Monday the 1st October. We will have a good opportunity to disseminate the information, as the races will be held the week previous, and a large proportion of the county will be here some time during the week.

Upon consultation with our friends here we have concluded not to give you a public dinner, but on your arrival invite you to give us your views upon State & National politicks. We have a difficult part to play in this county. The White majority was so overwhelming, and so many leading persons were free in their remarks of the present administration, that it is difficult for them to commence at once advocating Mr Van Buren and his policy. It would be our best policy to put the eceeding White men in the Van; those who thought with them would listen to them with more complacency that to an original supporter of Mr Van Buren. The position of the White men, who will not support Mr. Clay, they should be allowed to chose themselves. They will commence a war upon Mr. Clay without advocating Mr. Van Buren, and although there may seem to be no difference between this and advocating Mr. V B I take it, you have been long enough before the public to know that in practice there is a great difference.
We wish our oponents to take up Mr Clay broadly and defend his principles. This they will be compelled to do. We will then assault them in public assemblies and next spring in the thick of the fight, we can give you some demonstration of our regard by a public dinner. Mr. Bell and Mr. Peyton I learn are to be at Paris on the 12th. This we will call a foreign interference with our politicks, and immediately thereafter our friends in that county will give you a dinner and invite every body from the adjoining counties. I should not be surprized if they invite Mr. Bell here. If so we shall rejoice at it, because our enemies will then have assumed the ground we wish them to occupy. I wish to see you, to consult upon a general plan of operations, and to advise you of the State of local questions peculiar to this country. We must all understand the peculiar position of each other, before we can fight with a fair prospect of success. In this county we are gaining every day, but it would be wrong to hazzard to much by a rash movement, evincing to much confidence lest we might lose the county, which is very important. The loss of this county would throw the Whigs in more dismay that the loss of any county in the State save Davidson & Knox. I have written to some friends in Haywood and Tipton, that you would be at the first on the 3d and at the latter on the 4th. This I did at the request of Mr. Humphries. Upon your arrival here you can upon consultation make other appointments to be filled upon your return from Mississippi.

Jos. H. Talbot

NB I hope you will be able to reach this place by Saturday evening previous to the 1st of Oct., that I may give you some materials for your speech of a local character.

Addressed to Columbia.
1. None of these letters from Polk has been found.
2. See West H. Humphreys to Polk, September 17, 1838.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Dear Col.

Nashville 22d Septmr. [1838]¹

I send you enclosed the invitation from Hartsville.² I have fixed the 8th Nov. as the day you will meet your friends there, and at Hayesboro on 6th. Both meetings will be large and well attended from Wilson.

[Robert M.] Burton has been down but does not seem inclind to do anything; dreads Wilson.³ I was in hopes that you could have come in;
a talk from you would have been of service. We ought to have our man in the field. I fear he will not consent. My chief clerk is very sick or I would have been at Franklin. I will arrange your visits and have notice given in Smith, Jackson and through East Tennessee. Tell me where letters will reach you in the District and at what time. Write me often. You see that Hall & Norvell have both dropped Clay for the present. Not a word for him in either paper for a week, & Hall's last article (20th Inst) is an abandonment of him, but I can do nothing with our Editor. Have you heard any thing of [Edmund] Burke? Write me.

R. ARMSTRONG

Finley Gillespie, Wright and Nat Smith all give good accounts and are about to establish a paper at Knoxville &c. The news is good from every quarter, go forward & spare not.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The year has been supplied on the basis of Polk's endorsement and the contents of the letter.

2. A letter from Hartsville dated September 12, 1838, invited Polk to a public dinner to be held at Hartsville. John Lauderdale's name headed the list of about seventy names of citizens of Sumner, Wilson, and Smith counties who were senders of the letter. Armstrong noted on a separate sheet that he had promised that Polk would be at Hartsville on November 8, 1838. Lauderdale's letter with Armstrong's note was enclosed to Polk.

3. Burton's reluctance to run was probably based on the fact that Wilson was an antiadministration county. Furthermore, during political campaigning there in 1835, he had engaged in physical conflict with John Muirhead and in the fight had behaved badly. Threats of mob violence against him were circulated, but nothing came of it. See Polk to Andrew Jackson, September 23, 1838.

4. Allen A. Hall and Caleb C. Norvell were editors of the Nashville Republican Banner and the Nashville Whig, respectively.

5. This refers to John Finley Gillespy of East Tennessee, Wright Smith, and Gen. Nathaniel Smith. Wright Smith has not been further identified.

TO ADAM DECK, ET AL.

Gentlemen Columbia Sept 22nd 1838

I have received your letter of the 14th Instant, inviting me, in behalf of the "democratic citizens of Overton County," "to partake of a public dinner," to be given at Livingston on the 30th of October next. It would I assure you, Gentlemen, give me sincere pleasure, to meet my fellow-citizens of Overton County, as also my friend Mr
Turney, who you inform me, is expected to be present, on the day you have designated, but my engagements previously made, will make it impossible for me to do so. Regretting that I am compelled to decline your invitation, I beg you to assure those in whose behalf you act, that I will avail myself of some other suitable occasion to visit them, and confer with them, upon the great questions of public interest to which you allude, and which now agitate and divide the country. Tendering to you my thanks, for the honor conferred by your invitation. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Livingston, Overton County, Tennessee. This letter is marked "Copy," but it seems to be a draft, in Polk's handwriting and signed by him, of the letter that was actually sent.

1. Adam Deck was one of the founders of Overton County. His family was from North Carolina.
2. The letter of invitation of September 14, 1838, had almost forty names appended.

TO ANDREW JACKSON

My Dear Sir Columbia. Sept. 23rd 1838

I leave home tomorrow, will meet the people of Giles at Pulaski on Tuesday,¹ and set out on the next day, for my plantation in Mississippi, taking the Western District in my route. My friends have, I understand, made arrangements for me to meet and address the people at Jackson, Brownsville, Covington & Raleigh on my way down, and at several other points on my return,² so that I will not probably be at home earlier than the last days of October. I will not fail to see you on my way to Washington.

I learned from Dr. [Felix] Robertson and others at Franklin on Thursday, that [Robert M.] Burton was then in Nashville, and was hesitating whether he would run for Congress or not. He ought not to hesitate for a moment. My belief is, if he would announce himself immediately and enter vigorously into the contest, he could run successfully. A great revolution is now going on in the public mind. The people every where that I have met them will go by immense majority against Clay. Many, many of the White-men declare, they cannot support him and are returning to our ranks. It will be so, in Wilson as elsewhere, the moment there is full public discussion. Burton possesses the talents, and powers in debate, to make the issue, and make it successfully. Now is the moment for him to strike. Let him at once do so, and I
will be with him at any point, it may be desired, and address the people on my way to Washington, as also after my return. Surely he can be induced to act. He owes it to himself, as well as to his friends and the cause.

Letters directed to me at Bolivar Tennessee, during my absence will reach me. I deeply lament the death, of our good friend Col. Earle. I heard nothing of his indisposition until I saw his death announced in the newspapers.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. A. V. Brown Esqr. is announced in the last Pulaski paper as a candidate for Congress in that District.

J. K. P.

Addressed to the Hermitage. Marked “Private,” this letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

1. September 25, 1838.
2. See West H. Humphreys to Polk, September 17, 1838.
3. Ralph E. W. Earl, the artist, died at the Hermitage on September 17, 1838.
4. The Pulaski Trumpet of Liberty. See Aaron V. Brown to Polk, September 17, 1838.

TO JOHN LAUDERDALE, ET AL.

Gentlemen Columbia Sept 23d 1838

I received on yesterday, your letter of the 12th Instant, inviting me, on behalf of “a portion of the Citizens of Sumner, Wilson, and Smith,” “to partake with them of a public dinner to be given at Hartsville, Sumner County, at such time as may suit my convenience and engagements.” My engagements are such as to compel me to postpone to a later period, than I could desire, the day on which I could meet my fellow citizens of Hartsville. I must leave home, in the course of a few days, and will not return until late in October. On the 8th of November, it will give me pleasure to meet yourselves, and those citizens in whose behalf you act at Hartsville, should that be a day, that will suit your and their convenience. I beg to return to you my acknowledgements for this mark of regard.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Hartsville, Tennessee, and marked “Copy.” This copy and the signature are in the handwriting of an unknown person.
1. About seventy years old at this time, Lauderdale had moved to Sumner County in 1794, with his father, James Lauderdale. The Laudermiles were a large family with a definite military orientation.

2. This letter was forwarded to Polk by Robert Armstrong in his letter of September 22, 1838.

3. Armstrong had told Polk that he had committed Polk to be at Harvielle on this date.

FROM LEVIN H. COE

Dear Sir

Somerville Tn Sept 26th 1838

Your favor from Columbia\(^1\) reached me in due time. Also by the same mail I read a line from Col W[est] H. Humphreys advising that you would find it convenient to be here about the 18th of Octr. We will take the proper steps to get as large an audience as possible.

I was highly gratified to see you take the course you did, to come out promptly when called on at Murfresboro, and feel very confident you will whip out old [Newton] Cannon by a large majority.\(^2\) Your coming out has so far as my observation extends infused confidence into the party and nerved all for the struggle. The local candidates will all make common cause with you.

As yet we have no candidate announced on either side in this county. I cannot yet form any opinion as to who the Whigs will run. Probably Longwell.\(^3\) If so, we can beat him without doubt. We will run Sackfield Maclin of Lagrange, or Humphreys. It will be decided when the latter returns. In Shelby we have no candidate. Capt C. I. Nelson or Thos J. Turley\(^4\) or P[endleton] G. Gaines one will run.

Seth Wheatley is out for the Senate.\(^5\) He will get a large majority in Memphis. The place always has been Whig, and the people of Memphis always go for the candidate living there, from local considerations. I don't think he is personally popular or well calculated to get votes. I have not yet decided whether I will run for the Senate, but must do so next week.

For Congress I have always thought Genl [Rufus P.] Neely should take the field. He is the only person in the District who can beat [Christopher H.] Williams & his success will be doubtful. Neely from what I can learn will get 1200 or 1500 majority in Hardeman & McNairy. In Fayette, Shelby, Tipton & Lauderdale I think we may safely count upon a tie. And if candidates for the Legislature or even for the senate in favor of the Administration can be got out in the upper counties and you will give a liberal portion of your time to those counties, Williams majorities in Henderson and Perry might I
think be so reduced as to elect Neely. He has a personal popularity in
Hardeman & McNairy of which we must avail ourselves if we expect
to beat Williams. Humphreys or myself or [Phineas T.] Scruggs might
harass but we cannot beat him.

If the condition of my business here will permit I expect to meet
you at Covington on the 4th and failing in that I will see you at
Raleigh on the 6th.

L. H. Coe

Addressed to Jackson.
1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. This is a reference to Polk's gubernatorial candidacy.
3. Joseph M. Longwell was a lawyer in Fayette County in the 1830s.
4. Thomas J. Turley was a lawyer who came to Shelby County from
Virginia and served as attorney-general for the county in 1836. Nelson is not
further identified.
5. Seth Wheatley, born in Virginia, moved to Kentucky and then to
Tennessee. He was admitted to the bar of Shelby County in 1829 and served
as mayor of Memphis in 1831. Later he was president of the Farmers and
Merchants Bank.

FROM JOSEPH DRAKE
Carrollton, Mississippi. September 26, 1838

A Mississippi lawyer replies to Polk's inquiry about his suit to collect
money owed by Thomas Durham.1 The suit was successful and the money
collected. It is in the hands of Polk's agent and will be paid when Polk visits
his Mississippi plantation.

Addressed to Coffeeville, Mississippi, in care of Albert T. McNeal.
1. Durham had bought a tract of land from Polk and was hard put to
make the payments. At this time he was a resident of Mississippi. See Silas M.
Caldwell to Polk, March 18, April 11, November 25, 1834, and January 31,
1836; Ephraim Beanland to Polk, October 26, 1834.

FROM ABRAHAM McCLELLAN
My Dear Sir: Blountville Sept. 26, 1838

Yours of the 16th Inst. came to hand last evening.¹ I had been
expecting to hear from you for some time in relation to the Gentleman
we talked to at Washington City about establishing a paper at
Knoxville or Rogersville.² The Federal Whigs are about to establish a
paper at Rogersville if they can get subscribers, though it is said they are making every effort but have got very few as yet.3

I was much gratified to hear you had declared yourself a candidate for Governor, and all the Democrats I have seen are well pleased to see you have taken the field against Cannon.

Your suggestion that our candidates should come out early and declare their sentiments I think is a good one. Who is to be Genl. Wm. B. Carter's opponent is not yet determined. It is thought that John Blair can not be persuaded to oppose him. I suppose Thos. D. Arnold will run again, but who is to be the Democratic candidate is not determined. The Whigs in my district have not determined who they will run against me. John A. McKinney and John Netherland are both holding out the idea that they are going to be candidates;4 but I am inclined to think that Netherland is to be the man, though McKinney I have been told says he will offer.

I have returned a few days since from the courts in the western counties of my district. I find that the most of the leading White men are disposed to go for Clay, but a great many of the original White men will not go for him. My opinion is that this district can not swallow Henry Clay.

Our Circuit Court will be here on the 3rd Monday in November. I should like very much for you to be here on that day and address the people. If you can let me know that you can be here on that day, I can have a large collection of people.

I am very anxious that you should make appointments at Rutledge & Rogersville & especially at the former place for that is the strongest opposition county in my district.5

I did not make any speeches when at the courts. I was somewhat unwell. My journey in the coach from Washington increased my rheumatism, but I am now in tolerable health &c. I should be glad you should make a speech at Rutledge if there were but few to hear you, but if they can get the intelligence, when you are expected, there will be a goodly number of hearers.

A. McCLELLAN

Addressed to Bolivar and forwarded to Somerville.
1. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. Although it is not certain, it is believed that the person referred to here was Elbridge G. Eastman who was soon to become the editor of the Knoxville Argus. Lawson Gifford headed a group that arranged publication of the Argus to assist Democratic candidates in East Tennessee. The first number appeared on June 27, 1839.
3. The Whigs issued a prospectus for the *Holston Watchman* in August 1838, but it never appeared. In March 1839, a Whig paper, *The East Tennessee*, was started by William Wales in Rogersville.

4. McKinney was a Rogersville merchant and Netherland was a lawyer who had represented Sullivan County in the General Assembly, 1833–37. McKinney opposed McClellan without success. Netherland later married McKinney’s daughter.

5. This district extended from Sullivan County westward along the northern boundary of Tennessee. Rutledge and Rogersville were in Grainger and Hawkins counties, respectively. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, September 10, 1838.

FROM P. C. CALDWELL¹

Charlotte, North Carolina. September 27, 1838

Caldwell reports that the house and lot belonging to Marshall T. Polk's minor children² and which Caldwell has rented for four years has been advertised for sale to satisfy a mortgage. He fears that if nobody intervenes the property will be sold for less than its value. He says that he is in no position to intervene but that William J. Alexander would be present at the time of the sale.

Addressed to Columbia to James K. Polk or James Walker. This letter has been published in McPherson, editor, “Unpublished Letters,” *North Carolina Historical Review*, XVI, 330–331.

¹. Unidentified. He was probably a near kinsman of Dr. David T. Caldwell, a brother-in-law of Marshall Polk’s widow, Laura.

². Laura Wilson Polk had remarried, and the property now belonged exclusively to the children.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dear Sir,

Murfreesboro Sept. 27, 1838

Accident, and some business in the chancery clerks office, brought me here to-day in company with your warm old friend Gen Smartt.¹ This was the day you know of the *Great Whig Dinner*. Mr Foster Mr Bell, Mr Maury, and all their livery servants from Williamson, Davidson, and Bedford attended. Old Dr. Armstrong, [William H.] Wisener, W. F. Long &c from Bedford, Gentry and so on from Williamson.² The whole crowd was nearly as great as when you were here, I am told, for I did not go near. But Bob Lowing and the Rutherford Democrats and people from other counties, I am told by Morris, the clerk of the county court, [Moses G.] Reeves, and many others, who know everybody, made about two thirds of the whole assembly.³ Foster spoke first,
and made a long, ranting, funny, ridiculous speech, abusing Jefferson by name as a demagogue, Jackson, Van Buren &c. He disgusted many. Some said that if this was Whiggery and a contest for principle, "they would have none of it." Lewis Jetton a strong man from Cannon, a White-Whig, said openly, and left the ground disgusted, that if these called that course republicanism, for the sake of forcing Clay upon us, that he was off, finally off from the party. His speech, I am assured by all our friends, did us great good. After it was over, the dinner was eaten. Then Bell commenced speaking, and spoke til near sun set, giving nobody a chance to follow. Soon after he began, the people, having dined, and having come from curiosity, began to drop off and go away in scores, and before he was done, not more than enough were left to make a common militia muster. No time was allowed for toasts. The whole was a cold heartless affair and really, I have no doubt, strengthens our cause here. Gov. Cannon was not here, and "thereby hangs a tale."

[Charles] Ready, who was to be run for Congress, is an applicant it is understood, to Executive mercy for the office of Atto. Gen. vice [George S.] Yerger going to Mississippi. Gentry and [William] Ledbetter are the other two and his candidates for Congress, and among the leaders it is who shall and who shall who is to be put up. Ready, by making a virtue of his own wish for office, can retire, and give place to Ledbetter, and perhaps get Gentry kept back. If so, this will be such an acceptable piece of service to the Gov. in favor of his brother-in-law, as will compel his Excellency, upon Ledbetter's recommendation, to give the Attorn Generalship and reportership to Ready. The whole party are in caucus upon the subject of bringing out the candidate to-night while I am writing. The above, however, is an underplot that half of those who act in the play will not understand. If Ledbetter is selected, [William G.] Childress has him nailed to the cross. I must send this off in the morning before the result transpires.

I have just spent two weeks at Winchester. All things in Franklin are right, perfectly safe, and my little affair goes well without any expectation of opposition.

I expect you received a communication from Overton [County] before you left home. The mountain [district] must have a speech somewhere as you go on. Don't fail to write in time what day you will leave home. Turney has gone to a big Barbacue at Ross-Landing. I will see him next Monday at Sparta.

Rest assured the Whig parade here is a total failure, and results in dead loss to the enemy. Make my respects to Judge Austin Miller, if he is right, but he is kin to Cannon, nearly.
I have requested the P.M. at Bolivar to forward this after you to Jackson, or perhaps I had better send it to Jackson. It is not worth much, but I wish you to receive it.

S. H. Laughlin

Addressed to Jackson, Tennessee, with instructions to forward it if Polk had already left that place. The letter is marked "Private."


2. James L. Armstrong of Fairfield was one of the most bitter anti-administration men in Bedford County. W. F. Long was a physician in the Bell Buckle community. Meredith P. Gentry of Williamson County was a young lawyer whose political career was just beginning. He served six terms in Congress, 1839–43 and 1845–53, was a candidate for governor in 1855, and was elected to the Confederate Congress.

3. Other than that he was a resident of Rutherford County, nothing has been learned about Lowing. Robert S. Morris was county clerk in Rutherford for sixteen years before moving to West Tennessee in 1847. He was a member of the Democratic Convention that nominated Polk for the presidency.

4. Lewis Jetton was of a family that was prominent in both Rutherford and Cannon counties. He was a kinsman of Robert Jetton of Rutherford who served four terms in the state legislature, but the exact relationship has not been determined.

5. The meaning of the sentence has been obscured by some slips by the writer. At one point there is, seemingly, a repetition of two or three words.

6. Charles Ready and Governor Cannon were married to sisters. Gentry became the candidate in spite of their efforts to hold him back, and he was elected.

7. Laughlin ran successfully for the state senate from the district made up of Warren and Franklin counties.

8. See Laughlin to Polk, September 10, 1838.

9. Ross's Landing was a trading post in Hamilton County, Tennessee. Chattanooga later developed at this location.

10. Miller had lived in Rutherford County, where he studied law. He moved to Bolivar and became a wealthy lawyer, serving three terms in the legislature and eight times as a delegate to Democratic national conventions. The reference to kinship with Cannon is obscure.


FROM JAMES R. McMEANS

Dear Sir

Paris [Tennessee] 27th Septr. 1838

Permit me to introduce to your acquaintance my friend Capt David S Greer. He is a true democrat a real Jackson Van Buren man
and a friend to you. Capt Greer has latly left our place and is now living in Holly Springs Miss. but he has influence here yet. He will hand you this letter. I would have answered your letter long before now but have been confined to my bed. If I had not have been sick I would have tryd to get the people of Henry [County] together in order that you might have made them a speach on your way to Jackson. But your friends here however were of opinion that you had better adress the people here on your returne and have determined if it will suit your convenience to get up a dinner for you on your returne and by that means get the people togeather. If you can posibley do so you had better returne through Trenton Dresden & Paris and if you can do so let som confidential friend know what day you will be at each of these places and let me know when you will be in Paris. Mr Bell is to be here about the first of October to a dinner gotten up for him here by the Whigs. Your friends think you could do great good for yourself and to our cause by making a speech soon afterwards. Pleas write me if you can com here and when you can com. Our circuit court is just over. The foreman of the Grand Jury being a Whig would take the vote betwen you and Cannon. He thought Cannon would get them nearly all but to his great mortification you beat Mr Cannon one vote. I had left the jury room and there was no one to say a word for you. Col you must beat Cannon. If you do not I think our partie will be completely dead in Tennessee for many years. If you have time you had better write to Andrew McCampbell, William Fitzgerald, Col William N. Porter, Col John Busheart Col Solomon Copland and to James C Gainer Esq our Sheriff.² It is doubtful on which side he is on yet. Pleas write to me before you leve Jackson.

JAMES R. McMEANS

Addressed to Jackson and delivered by David S. Greer.

1. David S. Greer and his father, James, moved to Henry County in 1822 from Robertson County and established the first store in that county, one of the earliest in West Tennessee.

2. These were among the more influential Democrats in the county. McCampbell, a lawyer, was chancellor of the West Tennessee circuit, 1839-47, and is said to have declined appointment to both the state supreme court and to the U.S. Supreme Court. William T. Fitzgerald was attorney-general in the sixteenth judicial circuit, 1826-31; served as a Democrat in Congress, 1831–33; and was judge of the ninth judicial circuit, 1841–61. Porter settled in Henry County about 1820. He raised a company of soldiers for the Seminole War, but the men were never mustered in. He was county clerk, 1839-41. Busheart has not been further identified. Copeland represented Henry County in the state legislature, 1841–43. Gainer was sheriff, 1832–35 and 1836–40.
FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN

Dr Sir, Murfreesboro, Sept 28, 1838

I wrote you a hasty letter last night, at some length, about the meeting here yesterday, the speeches &c. The caucus today have brought out Gentry as the candidate for Congress against Childress. Ledbetter & Ready both backed out, both being afraid. It was pressed upon Ledbetter by Ready, I understand, and the reason was what I stated in my letter.¹

Foster, in his speech dwelt largely upon your coming out too soon, being a candidate before the usual time, endeavoring to forestall the election. I have heard twenty men swearing that the argument came badly from a man who had thrust himself forward as a candidate and procured himself to be unconstitutionally elected to office too years in advance of the time when the duties of the office were to commence.²

News from other states, Maine is glorious.³ The stage leaves for McMinnville, in a few minutes, so I must close & go. My last nights letter is addressed to you at Jackson.

S. H. Laughlin

P. S. I wrote you that Foster abused democracy, denounced Jefferson as a demagogüe, and Madison as his tool. The people in great numbers were disgusted. The dinner has completed the ruin of the Whigs in Rutherford.⁴

Addressed to Bolivar.

¹. See Laughlin to Polk, September 27, 1838.
². In their haste to elect a new senator while they still controlled the legislature, the Whigs elected Ephraim H. Foster on October 21, 1837, although the incumbent’s term would not expire until March 3, 1839.
³. The Nashville Union announced on September 26, 1838, that the Democrats had been completely successful in the Maine elections.
⁴. This postscript was written in the left margin of the letter.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Bolivar. September 29, 1838

Because of the illness of his daughter, Ophelia, Bills will not meet Polk at Jackson on September 30. Bolivar Whigs have announced a gathering for October 20, the same day that the Democrats were to entertain Polk. Bills suggests that the Democrats delay their meeting.

Addressed to Jackson, Tennessee, in care of J. H. Talbot.
FROM EDMUND BURKE

Newport, New Hampshire. September 29, 1838

Burke acknowledges receipt of the financial statement of the Nashville Union and regrets that he cannot accept the job as editor.¹

Addressed to Columbia.

1. For the financial statement, see Joel M. Smith to Polk, September 7, 1838. Also see Polk's correspondence with John J. Gilchrist and with Burke earlier in the summer of 1838.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Bolivar. September 30, 1838

Aware that the Whig and Democratic rallies are both tentatively set for October 20,¹ McNeal suggests that Polk be at La Grange on October 18, at Somerville on October 20, and then at Bolivar on October 22.

Addressed to Jackson, Tennessee, in care of J. H. Talbot.

1. See John H. Bills to Polk, September 29, 1838.

FROM JOHN P. CAMPBELL¹

Springfield, Missouri. October 1, 1838

Campbell thanks Polk for his assistance in getting Campbell an appointment as receiver of public moneys at the land office in Springfield. He hopes that Polk will also aid in the matter of Senate confirmation.²

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Polk's first cousin, John Polk Campbell was the son of Matilda Golden Polk Campbell, Ezekiel Polk's oldest daughter. He was a younger brother of Robert Campbell Jr. Born in North Carolina, John was reared in Maury County. In 1827 he married a daughter of Nathaniel Cheairs and, in 1829, moved to Missouri where he was known as the founder of Springfield. In 1835 his mother and her younger children also moved to Springfield.

2. Confirmation for a full term passed the Senate on January 21, 1839.

FROM MATTHEW ST. CLAIR CLARKE¹

Washington. October 1, 1838

Clarke has heard of the death of Walter S. Franklin, Clerk of the House of Representatives, and announces his candidacy for that post. He is aware that
as Speaker, Polk would not have a vote, but hopes that he will be friendly toward his candidacy.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A native of Pennsylvania, Clarke had served as Clerk of the House of Representatives through six Congresses, 1822–33. At this time Hugh A. Garland of Virginia was elected, but in 1841 Clarke was elected for a single term.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Bolivar. October 2, 1838

Convinced that the Democrats should change the date of their meeting in Bolivar, Bills invites Polk to attend two regimental meetings on October 8 and 9. He says this would not delay Polk's journey and would stir the Democrats to action before the Whig dinner. Rufus P. Neely appends a postscript agreeing with Bills's suggestion.

Addressed to Haywood County.

FROM ISAAC FLETCHER

Lyndon, Vermont. October 4, 1838

Fletcher has received the issue of the Columbia Tennessee Democrat carrying Polk's announcement for governor. He thanks Polk for sending it and hopes that Polk can make John Bell more unhappy than he already appears to be.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A lawyer and a graduate of Dartmouth College, Fletcher was a congressman from Vermont, 1837–41.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Bolivar. October 4, 1838

McNeal suggests that Polk's attendance at the militia musters on October 8 and 9 will not prevent Polk's meeting with Albert T. McNeal at Coffeeville. Albert T. McNeal is in Bolivar and can easily change his plans to conform with Polk's schedule. The writer emphasizes the importance of Polk's early appearance by listing as persons invited to the later Whig meeting: John Bell, Hugh L. White, Newton Cannon, John W. Crockett, Christopher H. Williams, and Ephraim H. Foster.

Addressed to Raleigh, Tennessee, in care of Thomas J. Turley.
FROM ALVIN W. BILLS¹

Millersburg, Kentucky. October 6, 1838

An old boyhood friend urges Polk and his wife to stop for a visit with him on their way back to Washington. He argues that such a visit would not only be a pleasure to him, but it might also give Polk a needed rest. He has heard that Polk is a candidate for governor and wishes him well in the contest.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. A physician, Bills had lived in Maury County at an early date. He was the oldest brother of John H. Bills.

FROM ANDREW JACKSON DONELSON

Coffeeville [Mississippi] 6th October 1838

Dr. Sir,

I reached here yesterday, several days sooner than I anticipated when we parted at Columbia. My object in visiting this section of country was to examine some locations made by Capt. John Donelson¹ in which I have an interest, but finding that there are doubts about their validity, have directed my attention to the Soosacona valley,² some 20 miles East of this. It may be that I shall return here for the purpose of seeing you and your farm, but think it more probable that I shall pass on to Tuscumbia [Alabama] and thence to Nashville.

I find that the lands in this quarter are rated so high that it is impracticable for me to make a purchase that would please me. Lands that with us in Tennessee would be reckoned poor are said to be selling here at 20 dollars per acre. Under these circumstances my conclusion is that your price for the tract south of this would be greater than I can stand, but should I be mistaken, and not find wild land to suit me we can as well make the trade in Tennessee as here.

There was a fine feeling manifested, on the score of politics when I talked with the people on the way. Shields was at Lawrenceburgh and was not cheerful. I told him that we regretted so clever a fellow should be deceived and led to take ground against the Republican party, but that we feared not the result.

I am satisfied that it is in your power to convince the people of Tennessee that they are wrong in following the lead of Bell & Foster, and that the next election will prove that the state is where she has always been, firm in the Republican faith.
Wishing you a pleasant trip and a safe return to your family, I remain. . . .

A. J. DONELSON

Addressed to Coffeeville, Mississippi, to be held until Polk’s arrival there. The letter was not sent through the mails.

1. This refers to John Donelson Jr., rather than to the pioneer of that same name. John Donelson Jr. was the writer’s father-in-law, as well as his uncle.

2. The broad valley of the Coosacoona River extended from Pontotoc County to Yalobusha County, where the river empties into the Yalobusha River.

FROM JACOB FRY JR.

Trappe,¹ Pennsylvania, October 6, 1838

Fry thanks Polk for sending the issue of the Columbia Tennessee Democrat in which his candidacy for governor is announced. He expects a fierce contest in Tennessee but predicts that the Democrats under the leadership of Polk and Grundy will redeem the state.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. This post office was located in Montgomery County.

FROM JOHN H. BILLS

Bolivar. October 11, 1838

Bills explains that the Whigs have changed the date of their rally from October 20 to October 17. Upon hearing this news, Bolivar Democrats announced at the militia musters that the Democratic celebration would be held on October 20 as first planned. Polk’s announced intention of speaking there on October 18, the day after the Whig meeting, has thrown affairs into confusion. Bills is trying to make arrangements for Polk to speak in Bolivar on October 19 and at Purdy on October 20.

Addressed to Holly Springs, Mississippi, in care of Roger Barton.

FROM SAMUEL BURCH

House of Rep. U.S.

Dear Sir,

Washington, Oct. 11, 1838

You have I do not doubt learned thro’ the papers the deplorable loss this office has sustained in the death of Walter S. Franklin, Esq.
its head and chief. The loss is not confined to us of the office only. I consider that the House and the country have sustained a loss also. There is not one about the Capitol who does not mourn his death most deeply.

At the time it took place I was at the White Sulphur Springs in the S Western Corner of Virginia, where I had been compelled to go on account of my own shattered health.

At that time too I was as was also my daughter, who accompanied me, suffering under the effects of wounds & bruises received in an overturn of the Stage between the Blue & White Sulphur Springs. I am now far from a recovery, tho' able to attend to business. My daughter was brought home with difficulty and is yet confined to her room and bed.

Mr. Franklin's death was wholly unexpected at the office, as I learned upon my return. You are aware it took place at Lancaster [Pennsylvania]. He was known to be sick, but was not believed to be dangerous, either here or by himself and attendants till a few hours before his death. He died of mortification. Bilious fever was his disease.

Every thing in the office & appertaining to the duties of the Clerk of the House, proceeds as a [. . .] usual and I shall be particular that nothing be permitted to suffer.

I have heard of only four candidates certainly, Mr. Clarke, Doct. Naudain, and Mr Shoch, the anti Mason who got 48 votes at the last election Sep 1837, and Mr. Shunck of Pa.\(^1\) Many more will doubtless appear before the election. The gentlemen of the office feel much solicitude upon the subject.

The alteration in the Hall, so far as regards the reversing its front, are nearly completed. The carpeting is now being put down, and every thing will be ready long before Congress assembles. The change would have been much better if the floor had been depressed about 14 inches where it comes up to the stone platform on which the row of columns stand at the south end of the room. By doing so the highest part of the floor would have been on a level with the entrance door sill, and the effect would have been very fine, whilst every thing would have been precisely as convenient and comfortable for the House and the members, as by the present arrangement. Now immediately upon passing thro' the door you rise three steps, which will be found to be inconvenient in practice, and, so far as regards the interior view, its effect upon the entrance is decidedly bad. It takes away, in appearance, so much of the elevation of the entrance as to render (to the eye) the width of the door disproportioned to its height. With this single exception I think the change admirable.
On the 2d July the House passed an order directing that in the new arrangement the members should be entitled as far as may be, during the present session [of] Congress "to the same relative positions to the chair which they now occupy."  

At first view there would seem to be no difficulty in executing this order but upon looking into it closely, and attempting to carry it out, it is found impracticable. To do it in any way that is possible, would produce nothing but discontent and dissatisfaction with three members out of four. To illustrate the impracticability of it, it is only necessary to refer to a few points of difference presented by the change in the Hall. As it stood last session, there were 17 seats on each side of the broad [a]isle. By the new arrangement there are 28, making a difference of 11 members who must take seats in the back row more than were provided for in that row before. Eighteen occupied the next row; in the new arrangement the corresponding row must hold 23. There are no two rows in the two arrangements which contain the same number of seats and there is one whole row of seats in the new arrangement less than in the old. The old arrangement has three small alleys, the new one has five.  

There is also some diversity of opinion as to the terms "same relative position to the chair." As the chair, and the whole ground plan has been reversed the true and correct import of the words relative position must mean that those who were on the right of the chair should continue on the right. This, of course, would throw those who lately sit on the East side of the Hall to the west, and vice versa. Now, I have no doubt there are many members on either side of the House who are opposed to changing sides. Yet if this were the only obstacle, I have no doubt that this change alone would create dissatisfaction.  

Under these views of the subject I have deemed it best to take your advice. I propose to write to each member & inform him of the difficulties that oppose themselves to an execution of the order of the House, or to give any thing like general satisfaction, and that, consequently, the seats will be considered as vacant, and that members must select for themselves as they may arrive, as in the commencement of a Congress. There will yet be time, generally, to give them this information after I shall have been favoured with your answer.  

Should you however deem it best to execute the order of the House in the best and most equitable manner that circumstances will admit of, have the goodness so to advise me, with such directions and suggestions as may seem proper, and I will do it to the best of my judgment.  

I send you the old and new plan, that you can judge for yourself. This city is now and has continued thro the season more than
usually healthy. The Summer has been dryer and warmer in all this region of country than is within the recollection of any inhabitant. The consequence is that the crops, generally, have failed to a great extent. Provisions are already scarce and at almost two prices. Before another crop can be raised they must become excessively high.

Be pleased to make my respects to Mrs. Polk, and to receive for yourself the assurances of my esteem and affectionate regards.

S. BURCH

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Matthew St. Claire Clarke was a former clerk of the House. Dr. Arnold Naudain of Delaware had served in the United States Senate after a successful political career at the state level. Samuel Shoch had recently served as secretary of a convention at Harrisburg, called to propose amendments to the state constitution. Francis R. Shunk, also of Pennsylvania, had been clerk of the lower house of the legislature and was twice elected governor of that state, serving 1845-48. His name was not put before the House at this time. On the first two ballots Clarke and Hugh A. Garland of Virginia ran first and second. All other candidates withdrew on the third ballot, and Garland was elected over Clarke, 106 to 104.

2. The resolution passed on July 2, 1838, concerning rearrangement of the House, provided for restoring the Speaker's chair and the seats to the positions they held prior to the alteration authorized by the House during the first session of the Twenty-second Congress.

3. These enclosures have not been found.

FROM WILLIAM V. PETTIT

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. October 12, 1838

Pettit reports that in a most severely contested election David R. Porter has been chosen governor and that the Democrats have won a large enough majority in the lower house of the legislature to assure the election of a Democrat to the United States Senate. The Democrats have also won fifteen seats in the House of Representatives with two others still in doubt. Pettit accuses the Whigs of various unscrupulous actions and says that the tide was turned against the Democrats in several counties by the votes of men brought in on public work projects.

Addressed to Columbia.

FROM DANIEL SHEFFER

York Springs, Pennsylvania. October 12, 1838

One of Polk's colleagues in the House reports on the Pennsylvania election. He places the winning margin of David R. Porter at about ten thousand
votes,² but says that he lost his own bid for re-election to Congress largely through disgraceful tactics of the opposition. He charges that workers on the Gettysburg Railroad, whose votes were controlled by contractors, had added a thousand votes to his opponent.³

Addressed to Columbia.
1. A graduate of Harvard, Daniel Sheffer had studied medicine in Philadelphia. After serving a single term in Congress, he returned to the practice of medicine.
2. The final margin was slightly under ten thousand.
3. Both Sheffer and William V. Pettit were convinced that Thaddeus Stevens controlled the votes of these men on public works. See Pettit to Polk, October 12, 1838.

FROM JAMES R. McMEANS

Dear Sir  Dresden [Tennessee] 13th October 1838
I have been confined to my room for the last 8 or 10 days and most of the time to my bed and have been unable to get amongst the people. I received your letter dated at Raleigh and had it shown to your friends.¹ The[y] will make the arrangements for a dinner for you on the 24th Inst. I am truly sorry to say to you that it will be entirely out of my power to be at Paris on that day but every necessary arrangement will be made. You will have in our town [Paris] a good many friends. All the Dunlap family are for you² Andrew McCampbell, William N. Porter, Mr. Goodman the Tavern Keeper³ and a great many others are warmly your friends. I will be compelled on that day to be eighty miles from home. My health is a little improved and I am struggling along to court. If I was well I would meet you at Paris or kill my horse, but it is all I can do to sit on him. I saw Col Caldwell of Huntingdon⁴ on yesterday. He says all things will be ready for your reception on the 23rd. Col., you will have to visit Dresden in Weakley County before you go home. The[y] are making large preparations for you and feel confident that you will not pass them by.

The Bell dinner was on yesterday. I cannot give you any of the particulars of it as I was not there. Bell made a long speech; tryd to anticipate the speach he said you would make in a few days afterwards; was somewhat personal as I am told. Foster made but a short speach. In my opinion Bell did not make one convert. I am so sick I will have to go to bed.

JAMES R. McMEANS
Addressed to Bolivar, Tennessee.

1. Polk’s letter has not been found, but see William N. Porter to Polk, October 13, 1838.

2. Hugh Dunlap and his sons, James T., John H., Hugh W., and William C., had moved from East Tennessee to Paris in the 1820s. Another son, Richard G., remained in Knox County. William C. Dunlap moved on to Bolivar, where he was twice elected to the House of Representatives, serving 1833–37.

3. Goodman is not further identified. On October 15, 1838, a committee of five persons invited Polk to a public dinner at Paris on October 24, 1838. Andrew McCampbell and John H. Dunlap were signers of this invitation.


FROM WILLIAM N. PORTER

Dear Sir.

Major [James R.] McMeans being in very bad health requests me to write you this to Bolivar as you requested.

You are anxiously looked for and expected here on the 24th. I announced it to the Regiment here on the 11th (the day before the Bell Dinner,¹ and the same day that we read your letter) and it was received with a general shout.

Bell, Foster, P. M. Miller & Gen. [George W.] Gibbs of Obion have all been here. The three first addressed the people publicly. The last, after candlelight with doors closed with a chosen junto of Federal Clay men, made a long and I am told a very animated speach. They are preparing [to] receive you at Huntingdon on the 23d and here on the 24th.

Wm. N. Porter

Addressed to Bolivar.

1. See Aaron V. Brown to Polk, September 17, 1838.

FROM COLLIN S. TARPLEY¹

Clinton, Mississippi. October 13, 1838

Having heard that the United States District Attorney for Southern Mississippi is about to resign, Tarpley seeks Polk’s aid in obtaining that appointment.² He is known to Grundy, but not to Van Buren.
Addressed to Columbia and marked "Confidential."

1. After studying law under Aaron V. Brown in the Pulaski office of Polk and Brown, Tarpley moved to Florence in 1831 and practiced there until 1836, when he moved to Hinds County, Mississippi.

2. Since the incumbent did not resign as expected, Tarpley obtained no appointment.

FROM HENDERSON K. YOAKUM

Murfreesboro. October 13, 1838

Explaining that certain Whigs have come out in opposition to the political revolution of 1798, Yoakum requests a history of the Alien and Sedition acts\(^1\) so that he can blunt their attack.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. These laws, passed by the Federalists, were vigorously opposed by Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and their party. The political upheaval resulted in the election of Jefferson in 1800.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir.

Columbia Octr. 15, 1838

I have not written you heretofore, mainly because I had nothing material to write. Things are here just as you left them. Smith, Thomas & Martin out, and no opposition yet to them or Nicholson.\(^1\) Kincade is threatened; Israel Fonville is said to be a candidate for Congress.\(^2\) I was at Nashville last week. Our friends are in the highest spirits, as to every thing else, except their own affairs, which as usual they seem not able to manage. [David] Craighead will not run for Congress or the senate under any circumstances. [Robert M.] Burton will not run for Congress, but says he can be of more use by running for the Legislature. [William] Car[r]oll spoken of, but I think he will not run. Things are miserably arranged in Davidson, but I do not see how it can be helped.

The news from East Tennessee is very flattering. All accounts agree that you are to get a much better vote in that end of the state than was expected. Mr. Gibbs of the Athens Courier says most confidently that you will get 9 out of 10 in the Sequatchy district. Every thing in Tennessee continues favourable. In Maryland Grayson\(^3\) (Rep) is elected governor by 8 or 900 majority. The [. . .] elections in Pennsylvania, have gone as far as heard from, decidedly for the administration. Porters election now seems certain.

We hear nothing from Washington on the subject of Cherokee
October 16 1838

The indications are that Mr. V B. has paid no attention to the remonstrances made to him, and that the Ross party, and the enemies of the administration will triumph. This will prove nothing against Republican principles, nor against home Republicans, but it will prove that Mr. V B is incapable of administering the government for public interest and justly to his friends.

I find it will be impossible, without a great sacrifice of interest, for me to be at home before you must leave for Washington. I will leave a letter for you with Maria, giving you such information as I think will enable you to settle with Samuel so far as you are concerned.6

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Bolivar and forwarded to Columbia.

1. Williamson Smith was a candidate for the state senate, while Jonas E. Thomas and Barkly Martin were candidates for the lower house of the legislature. All three of them won. At this time A. O. P. Nicholson was a candidate for Congress, but he later withdrew.

2. This seems to have been written in jest. Fonville was considered a very weak candidate. Kincaid and Fonville were from Bedford County.

3. William Grayson served only one term as governor.

4. See Polk to Van Buren, August 8 and August 21, 1838.

5. Samuel W. Polk became twenty-one years old just two days after this letter was written. This refers to the approaching end of Polk's and Walker's guardianship over him.

FROM AUSTIN MILLER

Dear Sir

Owing to the Whigs having fixed on the 17th to give Mr. Bell a Barbecue at this place, your friends before I returned from Raleigh had made arrangements to give you one upon the 19th Inst. They were induced to place it a day later than we had expected when I saw you at Raleigh, believing that the people could be better got to attend than on the 18th. I hope this will not put you to any inconvenience. You can be able to make Purdy by 9 o'clock on the 20th. Large preparations are making and I expect a general turne out of the people of Hardeman on Friday. All that we now have to fear is the weather. Should the day be favorable we shall have a larger assemblage than ever has been upon such an occasion in the County. The administration party is stronger now than ever it has been since Judge White became a candidate for President.

Mr. Bell is here, the Hon C[hristopher H.] Williams is expected.
They will compose the sum totum of the invited in attendance. I have understood from an eye witness that the congregation at Paris was quite small to what was expected.² I do not think there will be much of a turne out here. Still the great anxiety to hear both sides will induce a great many of yr friends to attend.³

Austin Miller

Addressed to Somerville.

1. Incorporated in 1832 and located near the center of Shelby County, Raleigh served for a while as the county seat.

2. See James R. McMeans to Polk, September 27, 1838, and William N. Porter to Polk, October 15, 1838.

3. Enclosed was a sheet bearing the following brief note from Miller to Polk: "The committee of invitations has instructed me to invite you to partake of a public barbacue to be given at Bolivar by the citizens of Hardeman County on the 19th inst."

FROM JAMES G. M. RAMSEY¹

Dear Sir

Mecklenburg T.² Oct. 18, 1838

Several of your friends in this country have been speaking of making a demonstration in your favor & of organizing at an early period for a strenuous support of yourself & the great principles you advocate. Something of this kind would have taken place soon after your Murfreesboro declaration;³ but on account of the dreadful pestilence it has pleased Providence to inflict upon us it has been thought best to defer it for the present.⁴ I am requested however to ascertain from you at what time you will probably pass Knoxville on your way to Washington as we wish at least to see you a short time. In the Spring we will expect you of course to address our community & to receive such attentions as our improved condition in the health of our afflicted people may indicate as proper. I hope you can spend a night, as you go on, at Mecklenburg. We shall be happy indeed to see your family & yourself here. The annunciation of yourself as a candidate has disconcerted the Whigs (not of 1775) astonishingly & the candid amongst them admit Tennessee may be revolutionized by the next summers campaign. A call from a distance interupts me & I must close abruptly by wishing you & our friends every where the happiest success.

J. G. M. Ramsey

PS Please let me hear from you.
Addressed to Columbia.

1. This is the first of many extant letters to Polk from James G. M. Ramsey, a physician, author, railroad promoter, and banker in the Knoxville area. He wrote *The Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, which was published in 1853.

2. Mecklenburg was the name of Ramsey's home, located at the confluence of the French Broad and Holston rivers, four and a half miles from Knoxville.

3. Polk's announcement of his gubernatorial candidacy.

4. During 1838 a severe fever epidemic swept through Knoxville, causing much suffering. At the time it was thought that the disease was a form of yellow fever, but later study suggested that it was actually a malarial fever.

FROM MOSES G. REEVES

Murfreesboro. October 18, 1838

After mentioning favorable election news from Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Arkansas, Reeves predicts that a Democratic victory in New York in November will end all chance of Nathaniel P. Tallmadge being nominated for the vice-presidency. Reeves believes that the frequency with which opposition newspapers in New England have commented favorably on William H. Harrison indicates that he will be their choice for the presidency. In commenting on political affairs in Tennessee, he warns that if the Nashville *Union* boasts too much about recent victories, it will deter many from joining the Democrats as had Watterson, Kincaid, and Yoakum. He is optimistic about Polk's campaign and is especially pleased with Polk's planned itinerary from Nashville eastward on his return to Washington.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Tallmadge had led conservative Democrats into Whig ranks in support of William H. Seward for the governorship. If Seward should lose, Tallmadge's political star would fall.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Columbia Octr 20, 1838

I find it impossible for me to return from the District before you will have to leave for Washington. I shall leave tomorrow which is as soon as I could get off, and I do not see how I can do what I must and return under a month. I have been detained in consequence of the necessity of making important arrangements with our Iron Works, and the man we expect to make them with could not be there until Monday next. I regret not being at home, when you will be here on account of the settlement of the business of your Fathers estate, and the settlement with Samuel. We cannot fully make that settlement
until you return in the Spring. It may be important for you to adjust your account with Samuel, and to enable you to do so, I give you the state of my accounts. I have added up my a/es and find that the estate is indebted to me from 480 to $500 for advances made above receipts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have received for S W. Polk</td>
<td>$3346.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid out for him</td>
<td>1492.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1854.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add to this one half his assay</td>
<td>750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; half distribution</td>
<td>282.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2886.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is due to S. W. Polk in addition to the above $312 from Dr. [Silas M.] Caldwell, and about $600 from G[eorge] Moore's estate, besides the Rent & hire of 1838.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say in my hands</td>
<td>$2886.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pay this $500 due from estate, and one half of $1100 advanced [to] C. P. Bynum.³</td>
<td>1050.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving for me to provide</td>
<td>$1836.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have not counted interest, and the estimate may not be entirely correct, but is very nearly so.

I have not now got the money to pay up Samuel. I suppose he will be indebted to you on settlement. You can take an order on me for the amount agreed on, which I will pay as soon and in the most satisfactory way to you I can. What will be left to him I suppose he would as soon have in my hands at interest. I can supply him with money as he needs for expenses, or if he makes any trade make payment to answer him as Cash.

I repeat my regret that we have not the power to be together to fully settle this matter, but I hope the statements I have made will enable you to settle with Samuel so far as to guard against loss, in case of our not all again meeting.⁴

This printing office still gives me trouble. Thompson⁵ has been unable to collect money enough to pay for paper & expenses. He calls altogether on me. I have recently paid a note to prevent suit, and am sued as endorser on another. I suppose if collections could be made that the office will more than pay expenses. But the calls on me are exceedingly troublesome particularly in these pressing times. I really cannot advance any more money to keep it. My loss of time attending to editorials is very great & often inconvenient. I am willing to do all I
can for my principles & my friends reasonably, but justice to my family fixes a limit to expenditures for mere political objects.

I am pressed in money matters. If I could get any thing like justice from the Government in my mail transactions it would enable me to be more liberal than I otherwise can be.  

I will write you on my return home.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Columbia.

1. It appears that Walker was negotiating for the purchase of an iron works, but the details remain obscure.

2. Samuel W. Polk reached his majority on October 17, 1838; Walker and James K. Polk as his guardians were trying to settle the accounts with his estate. See Walker to Polk, October 15, 1838.

3. Chesley P. Bynum had helped establish the Columbia Democrat in 1835 but proved to be a poor manager and was asked to withdraw from the paper. See A. O. P. Nicholson to Polk, January 22, 1837, and James Walker to Polk, February 27, 1838.

4. Samuel W. Polk's illness was such that his recovery was not expected.

5. James Thompson had bought the Columbia Democrat, but Walker's troubles with the paper continued.

6. See Walker to Polk, February 27, 1838.

FROM WEST H. HUMPHREYS

Dear Sir Sommerville 22 October. [1838]  

In conformity with my expectations when I saw you last I have determined to adhere to my fir[s]t determination not to be a candidate for any office whatever and have so author[ised] the Editor of the Gazette to declare.  

I have in making up this final conclusion consulted with my best friends personal and political who in the general coincide with me in the propriety of the course. I was slow and reluctant in absolutely giving a final refusal in a public way so as to preclude myself, because I wished to hear from my father to whom I had written and because there seemed to be such a general expression in favor of my running. But I have sent forth the declaration. My father I imagine would concur with me, and I could not under existing circumstances wait any longer for an answer from him.

I have an extensive and lucrative business at this time which I cannot agree under my present circumstances to give up as in a few years if pursed will make me independent.
I hope these facts together with an actual want of disposition on my part to run for any thin[g], will form a sufficient apology for my conduct with all those who may deem my running in any Degree essential to the success of Republican principles. I don't think however that my services are at all so necessary as some seem to think them. I believe if "Kit" as they call him don't dodge the question any decent administration man can beat him, if the change now in progress goes on in the community. [Levin H.] Coe, I believe will run. He deserves to run, and this furnished an additional inducement with me to decline in favor of a man whom I would gladly gratify, when I believed he could accomplish the object as well as myself and when it would not conflict with either my inclinations or my interest.

Coe has not determined to run. He says it depends upon pecuniary contingencies. He got himself bit in Arkansas Speculation. Col Joseph M Longwell is a can[d]idate to represent this county. He came back openmouthed from the Bell Dinner at Bolivar. We can beat him very easily. This is Circuit Court (Monday morning) and gentlemen are here from Madison, Haywood, Tipton, Shelby and Hard[e]man who all concur on the best accounts from these counties. That your prospects are on the gaining ground in Every quarter here is most unquestionable. I know myse[lf] of at least one Dozen leading men in this county that have held rather decided positions against the opposition of late.


I understand Col Bell produced no effect at either Brownsville or Bolivar and that his speech consisted of endless and interminable foul mouthed vituperation without indicating any course for the federal party to persue either as to men or as to measures. He spoke 4 hours. Genl Bradford has refused to run for the Senate and so has Genl [William B.] Miller. These of course are the wheel horses to use the slang of the day. All those who have expressed an opinion to me upon the subject seem to think [William] Conners election and Tolivers to be certain beyond a doubt. Mr Glen tells me they mustered a company at a little plac[e] in Tipton to make efforts to give Bell a dinner (Charleston) & the Whigs bantered a vote. This was 48 for Polk, 12 for Cannon. “Coming events cast their shadows before.”

I have written till my time is called for by the client who is standing before me. I should be very glad to hear from you from time to time. Tho I shall take no part in the actual conflict I shall continue
to feel a deep and abiding interest in the success of those principles upon which I believe the freedom of our institutions depends.

Present my best respects to Mrs Polk and your Mother and accept for yourself the assurances of my best respect.

WEST HUMPHREYS

Postscript. Mr McLin [Sackfield Maclin] has just answered from Lagrange and says he will run. Longwell[’s] fate is sealed.

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Humphreys apparently recorded the day as the twenty-eighth, but then corrected the 8 to 2. The letter was postmarked at Somerville on October 23. The year has been supplied correctly by the Library of Congress.


3. Parry W. Humphreys, a distinguished jurist and politician, was residing in Hernando, Mississippi.

4. Christopher H. Williams.

5. See Aaron V. Brown to Polk, September 17, 1838.

6. Humphrey's prediction was wide of the mark. These two Haywood County candidates for the legislature were narrowly defeated by John B. Ashe and John P. Perkins.

7. This place has not been located on any of the early maps of the county.

FROM SAMUEL MITCHELL

Dear Sir. War Trace Bedford County Ten¹

October 26th 1838

Your letter containing a copy of a communication from Greenville Cook to yourself, came to hand in due time.² I lost no time in submitting a compromise proposition to him through Medicus A Long Esq'r., from which proposition I could not learn any thing until Monday last, when Mr. Long informed me that he had submitted it to Cook, and that Cook had not the means of complying with it. My proposition was this, that I would take the press at the enormous price that he had agreed to pay for it, say $1500, provided he would pay up the money for which he had given Davidson³ and others a mortgage on the Press, and also pay up some other debts for which Mr. [William] Gilchrist and myself are bound for him, all of which would amount to about $1000. Long says he is not able to pay any of it, and of course we could not settle the matter. But Long informed me that Cook had started on Sunday morning with his family for Mississippi with the
intention of settling there to practice medicine and so I presume the
matter will rest. I did not intimate to Long that I had reed. any com-
munication from you in relation to the matter, nor did I insinuate to
him that I had ever heard of Cook's threat about filing a Bill, and
when he informed me that Cook had such intentions I let on to him
to be very much surprised. Be on your guard about making any con-
fidential communications to him, as I think he has been Cook's coun-
sellor and adviser in all his dirty work.

They are pressing on me for the one thousand and sixty dollar debt
at Nashville and I shall have to draw on Esqr. Walker for one third
part of it. It has been due ever since the 25th day of December 1836,
and has been drawing twelve and a half per cent interest. You must
attend to your part of the matter before you leave home.

I am winding up my business and expect to start to Arkensas in
the course of two or three weeks. When Cook made his blow out, he
mortgaged the press to George Davidson and others for five hundred
and sixty six dollars. I thought it bad policy for the press to go into
the hands of the enemy, and I went to town and bought it from the
Trustee, and still hold the right to it, and as I am going away it does
not suit me to keep it, nor does it suit me to lay out of the use of the
money and I think there ought to be some arrangement made to take
it out of my hands. I have talked to some of our friends here upon the
subject and they all plead the want of means. I had previously buried
three or four times as much in the establishment as I had anticipated
when I first got into the scrape, which was more than I could well
bear, and then to have to redeem the press from the hands of the
enemy at $566, with interest from the 28th day of Sept. 1837, is put-
ting too much on my shoulders and more than I am able to bear. I
wish you would talk to your friends in Maury and see whether you
cannot make some arrangement by which I can get my money back
again before I leave for Arkensas. It is needless for me to remind you
how I come to get into the scrape, or of the amount I have had to pay,
as you are well acquainted with all the circumstances and you cannot
but perceive that it is too hard for me, after suffering so much to have
to furnish a press for the benefit of our party, when I am out of the
State. All I ask is to be reimbursed the amount that I have actually
paid out for the Press.

I would like very well to see you before you go on to Washington.
The late news is most glorious for the Democracy and has cast a
gloom over our political enemies, that they will not be able to recover
from before the August elections.5

SAML. MITCHELL
Addressed to Columbia. The letter was stamped "free" four times, each "free" forming one side of a square. A postal clerk penned an apology saying that the unnecessary printing had been done by an impudent boy in the office.

1. The letter was actually mailed in Shelbyville.
2. See Greenville Cook to Polk, September 15, 1838, and Polk to Mitchell, September 18, 1838.
3. George Davidson was a businessman in Shelbyville for many years.
4. See Mitchell to Polk, November 5, 1838, footnote 2.
5. Democratic newspapers over the country were rejoicing over victories in Maine, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Ohio.

FROM JOHN CATRON

Dr Sir Nashville, Oct 27, [1838] Saturday

Supposing you'd be at home, I say a word, on various matters. I leave for Ky. on Wednesday, Mrs. C. & Mrs. Grundy 14 Nov, & I have supposed Mrs. Polk would do well to go with them. I will meet them at Lexington, or Louisville. We will go to Elliotts, & should I fail to have a room engaged by Mr. Grundy, or Mr. Carroll, I wish you to take the largest for us, on the 2d floor, say the one Mr. [Silas] Wright occupied in 1836-7. As to scot & lot Mrs. P & Mrs. C. have arranged it.

Politically, prospects look well. There is again the courage to act with effect. Gov. Carroll, or Col Burton will run agst Bell. Burton promised Genl Jackson & Mr Kendall to do so, if Carroll declined which I think he will not. The Editor from N. H. is badly needed. Mr. Smith has not heard from him & is very anxious to do so. Our Banks will resume 1 Jny. What effect it will have I cannot say. The opposition are exceedingly alarmed, but equally active, Foster, especially. They are most anxious to bring out Judge White for Govn. against you, apprehending youl. beat Cannon! This youl. do, if you can make an even race in the District, & E. Ten. taken together; and make the Election to depend on the middle.

Judge White will act on his vindictive feelings, & if highly excited he can be duped to do anything; see to your course with an eye to this controlling motive. Foster is moving Earth & Hvn. to secure a Whig legislature. Says, if it is otherwise hel. resign. Says so every day. Hel. induce [Richard] Cheatham again to run if his passions can be excited; C. has joined the Church, I am informed and is disinclined at present. Foster is nursing of him most carefully, & going to travel north with C. & family.
The news from O. Pen. & Myld. has exceedingly sunk Bell's character & prospects. His young friends, & the only active ones he ever had, are distrusting his Judgment, & lamenting his temper. Say he assured them of Maine, & Ohio, & Myld, beyond all question & in all probability, Pen. He gave the Whigs every thing. They've got nothing, but are sunk, not to rise over the old republican party in 20 yrs. That Clay is worn out, White's prospects ridiculous, & with poor old Harrison theyl. have nothing to do. Yet, that he is their strongest man. Mr Bell's trip west, is injuring of him.7 If Carroll's health is tolerable Hel. beat Bell, especially shd. N. York be for us.

A note from you to Nashville or Frankfort. Say whether Mrs. P. will go with us? I think it would be best, & s[ai]d so to her.

J. CATRON

Addressed to Columbia.

1. The year was supplied on the basis of the content of the letter. The fact that Saturday fell on October 27 in 1838 confirms its correctness.

2. This is William Thomas Carroll, who has not been further identified. Jonathan Elliot operated a fashionable boarding house on Pennsylvania Avenue.


4. On September 29, 1838, Edmund Burke wrote to Polk saying that he would not accept the editorship of the Nashville Union. Joel M. Smith, who owned the Union, was one of several correspondents involved in these negotiations.

5. The Nashville banks resumed specie payments in full on Wednesday, January 2, 1839.

6. The Democrats had won gubernatorial elections in Maine, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Maryland; and they made gains in congressional elections.

7. See Aaron V. Brown to Polk, September 17, 1838.

TO ROBERT ARMSTRONG

My Dear Sir

Columbia Oct. 29th 1838

I reached home last night, having met and addressed the people of ten Counties, in the Western District, viz. Madison, Haywood, Tipton, Shelby, Fayette, Hardeman, McNairy, Carroll, Henry and Weakley. I have never witnessed so great a revolution in public sentiment, as has been and is taking place in that part of the State. The visit of Bell and Foster,4 has injured the cause they advocate, and added decidedly to our strength. It has every where roused the people, and they are every where enquiring what these gentlemen are offering-for. The
people cannot and will not be transferred to the support of Clay or any more of his politics. I have now no doubt, but I will receive a handsome majority (my friends think a very large one) in that part of the State. Bell was in Huntingdon, all day, on the day I addressed the people at that place, and it was given out by his friends that he was there to meet me in discussion. He did not however do so. We stopped at different taverns. I made my speech, and after the dinner & the people had dispersed, I left late in the evening for Paris, where I met the people of Henry the next day. He remained at his lodgings, and as far as I learned did not go out, or mingle with the crowd during the day.

I see from the Union, that the arrangement has been made for me to meet the people of Davidson on the 6th, at Hartsville on the 8th, and at Gainsboro' on the 10th of November. From the latter point I will of course pass on through East Tennessee, giving notice in advance that I will stop at points to be specified and address the people. I wish you to inform me, whether you have made any appointments for me, after I leave Gainsboro'. It is important that I should know this, at the earliest possible time, as I met on my return home, several letters from East Tennessee, desiring to know what my route would be. These letters should be answered immediately. If you have made no appointments East of Gainsboro', it suggests itself to me, that I could stop at Kingston in Roane, at Rutledge in Grainger, at Rogersville and at Blountsville in Sullivan; or if deemed more advisable I could turn to the right at Knoxville, and stop at Dandridge in Jefferson, in Greene and Washington & thence to Blountsville. I did desire to have addressed the people at Knoxville more than at any other point, but Dr. Ramsey writes me, that my friends think in consequence of the fatal disease which has lately prevailed there, I had best not do so as I go on, but postpone it to the spring. This however they may possibly reconsider, and in any arrangement, that may be made, give time for me to stop a part of a day, at Knoxville after leaving Kingston, so that if Ramsey and other friends shall ultimately determine that I shall address the people at Knoxville I will have time to do so. The least travelling I have to do, the better, and I incline to think, it may be best for me to keep the main-road, through Grainger, Hawkins & Sullivan. If how[ev]er you think it best that I should go through, Jefferson, Greene and Washington, it can be so arranged. You are authorized to make either arrangement, (omitting for the present to appoint any day at Knoxville, but leaving that to Dr. Ramsey) and when you have done so, you will know the persons, to whom to write, giving notice of it. After leaving Gainsboro' you will know the distance, the road I will
travel, and how long it will take me to get to Kingston. It is important
that the appointments, (if they have not been made) should be made
immediately.

Write me by the return mail, without fail.

JAMES K. POLK

P. S. Will [William] Carroll run for Congress?

J. K. P.

Addressed to Nashville; the envelope, however, has not been found. This
letter is in the Papers of Andrew Jackson, Division of Manuscripts, Library of
Congress.

1. See Aaron V. Brown to Polk, September 17, 1838.
2. See James G. M. Ramsey to Polk, October 18, 1838.

FROM GEORGE W. HOPKINS

My Dear Sir

Lebanon Va. October 29th 1838

I received the copy of your Speech which you were so kind as to
send me, for which I return you my thanks.2 For notwithstanding, I
have thought, what it is right that I should confess, that during the
last session of Congress, upon more occasions than one, I had grounds
of complaint against you, for the manner in which you treated me.
Still, I can truly say that I read your speech with great pleasure, and
wish you success in your high canvass, with all my heart. We shall per­
haps part at the termination of the coming session to meet no more,
and I am disposed with all my heart to part with you in peace. I
sustained your election twice to the distinguished station which you
now occupy, with the ardour of a sincere friend personal and political,
and refuted all propositions for opposition to you from friends and
foes. How, you may have requited the kindness, it is not my purpose
to inquire, or even complain. You have my best wishes, and I am will­
ing to commit the past to oblivion.

I have lately been into East Tennessee, and take the liberty of sug­
gest to you the propriety, if convenient to you of your making an
early start for Washington, and spending some little of your time in
that region. I cannot doubt, but that Hawkins and the surrounding
counties, is reclaimable ground. The enemy has not so fast a hold
there, as strangers might apprehend. Hawkins can boast some as re­
liable democrats, as any county in the state or union, and I say with­
out intending the slightest flattery, that your presence, and a speech
from you at Rogersville would secure you a triumphant majority in
that county. Should you come by that place, I must remind you of a plain, but worthy and honorable democrat, two miles and a half west of Rogersville, upon whom you must call, if for five minutes only. James McClure Esq., formerly of my district, is the man to whom I allude. He is your friend, and warmly so, and feels the strongest solicitude for your success. I was lately at his house, and spent a day or two with him. He had known my estimation of you by letters which perhaps at a later period of our acquaintance, I might [not] have made so strong, but my present feelings did not induce me to qualify them in the least. On the contrary, I only said to him, what was calculated to confirm the first impressions. You will find him also in the modern acceptation of the term a good loco fico. I am gratified to see the manner in which you have bested Mr. Bell. I have no love for him, and never can have.

My own political relations are unchanged so far as I have the capacity of controlling them. I mean that my political feelings are unchanged, although for what I know to be an honest difference of opinion upon the currency question, others may attempt to ostracize me. I believe that my district in both these respects are thoroughly with me, against the Sub-Treasury, and against Henry Clay. But I have said more than I expected, and that hastily for the mail is about to depart. I must therefore conclude with the assurance of my regard, and best wishes for your health happiness and prosperity.

G. W. Hopkins

Addressed to Columbia and forwarded to Washington.

1. George Washington Hopkins was a lawyer and politician from southwestern Virginia. After serving in the state legislature, 1833–35, he was elected as a Democrat to Congress, where he served, 1835–47, 1857–59. Polk appointed him Chargé d’Affaires to Portugal, where he served, 1847–49.

2. The speech mentioned was perhaps the one at Murfreesboro in which Polk declared his candidacy for governor.

3. Not further identified.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir Pulaski Nov. 1st, 1838

I have been back from Mississippi about two weeks & have attended two regimental musters in Lawrence. Shields attending also, all milk & cider yet, for nobody against nobody. He has made his points & they will make a case of him. He starts tomorrow for Washington through Illenois with his niece.¹ I go to Lincoln [County] on Monday
next. Colo. Kincannon has gone to Virginia. His friends assure me all will yet be right. I read a letter from Kurtz acting Comr. of Ind affairs, making some enquiries about the present state of the business & stating that if it should be necessary (after my letter) Colo. Kincannon will be appointed. I expect his appointment will be forwarded shortly.

I shall spend the month of Nov. in attending the Circuit Courts in Lawrence, Wayne & Hardin & meeting the people of those counties in different neighborhoods during court week in each. I mean to go in industriously. Colo. Allen or rather "the Genl." is warm for both of us & I expect will address a letter to you on the following subject. It seems your old friend Welch has been told that when the Occupant Bill came up you refused or failed to make a speech for it as you had promised some member of Congress you would do & the loss of it is attributed to your refusal or failure aforesaid. The point in the story is that you had promised something & broke that promise & so was no friend of the occupants. Genl. Allen requested me also to name the subject to you. This was the only difficulty in the mind of Welch & that removed all will be well. This matter has not yet acquired publicity.

I cant go to Nashville. I wrote to them, that whilst they were getting ready I was already in the field fighting sword in hand in the good cause. Let me hear from you sometimes & be sure to contrive me a copy of the Journals. Cant I get your copy at Columbia & you replace them at Washington.

A. V. Brown

Addressed to Columbia.

1. Unidentified.
2. Daniel Kurtz of Maryland was the chief clerk in the Bureau of Indian Affairs but, apparently, was serving as the acting commissioner.
3. Richard H. Allen had been prominent in militia affairs, mostly in Giles County, ever since the War in 1812. During Polk's career he moved from Giles to Maury County and then to Lawrence County. In 1825 he had been elected a colonel and recently had risen to general.
4. Welch was probably John L. Welch, a farmer and early settler in Lawrence County. The occupant bill was the Tennessee Land Bill and involved the volatile issue of squatters' rights. The bill would authorize the State of Tennessee to issue grants and perfect titles to certain lands and to settle the claims to the vacant and unappropriated lands within the state. On June 30, 1838, the bill failed in the House by a vote of 51 to 91. For Polk's response to this charge against him, see Hopkins L. Turney to Polk, December 14, 1838, and Abraham McClellan to Polk, December 15, 1838.
5. Brown probably wanted copies of the journals of the House and
Senate for the last several sessions of Congress. William G. Childress also asked Polk to furnish him with those aids for his own congressional race.

FROM JONATHAN ELLIOTT

Washington. November 1, 1838

Polk's landlord of the previous year says that he cannot rent the rooms formerly occupied by Polk and his wife at the previous rate. He regrets having to raise the rent, saying that his pecuniary affairs dictate it.

Addressed to Columbia and forwarded to Washington.
1. See John Catron to Polk, December 8, 1838.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Dear Sir

Bolivar T. Nov 1. 1838

As this is the last mail by which a letter will reach you at Nashville, I address a few hasty lines to let you know how the Barbacue of the 19th went off.

I think that we can safely say that your speech on that day, warmed up your friends & made all wavering democrats steady & brought back many White Whigs to the true faith. All parties agree (with a few exceptions) that your speech here was to the point and almost unanswerable & that you surpassed their expectations. The feeling of the people are very different, as to the honesty & talents of Mr. Bell. It is a great misfortune for that gentlem[an] & his party in this County & I may say the district, that they had him here at all. He was looked upon by all as a much greater man before he ever seen this County, than he ever will be again by this community.

The Jackson Tellegraph will publish this week a very correct review of the speeches of the 17th & 19th at this place. The proceedings of the 19th are sent to the Memphis Gazette, for publication. Col King & Saml. McDowell, have undertaken to procure the proper documents for publication as to what Bell said relative to the Candidates for the Presidency.

From all that I can learn from the different Counties that you have visited your efforts have produced prodigious changes & will be ultimately crowned with success. In the County of McNairy the people are alive to your success. Dunlap has advised me from Paris of your movements &c. up to your departure for Dresden all of which is very gratifying to your friends in this section of the country. I at one time feared that Cannon would out run you in the District considerable but now I am induced to believe that you will obtain a handsome majority
west of the Tennessee [River]. The democratic successes coming in from the large states, has a very fine effect, shewing that where the currency panic has ceased that the people are doing their duty.

Fayette County has her candidates out, L P Williamson, Whig, Sackfield Maclin, Dem. Coe is not yet announced for Congress but will be soon. He is the most available man we can start. Genl Neely, has nearly consented [to] run for the Senate. The Whigs will run against him Seth Wheatly of Memphis or E[dward] D Tarver of this county, either of which he can beat very badly. [Elihu C.] Crisp will run for reelection. We will carry all, unless it should be Coe, & him too if he takes well with the people of McNairy & Perry. He is you know a stranger to that part of the Congressional District.

Our Press is here & up and issued her prospectus today, and will be in complete operation in a few weeks, when we will notice in a proper way, the Nashville Whig papers that are laboring to make the people of this County believe that they are influenced by your rich kin, Nabob & Co. If poor folks can-not be found in our kin I dont know where they are to be found.

It would afford me much pleasure to be in Nashville on the 6th. I have no doubt it will be a great day for the democrats of Middle Tennessee and a proud day for you, to be able to "beard the Lyon in his den" backed as he is by the aristocrats of the metropolis of the State. Lay on & spare not. Every thing is to be gained & nothing lost by a complete exposure of all their nefarious designs.

E. P. McNeal

P.S If I can serve you, command. I fear my long letter will tax your patience.

Addressed to Nashville.

1. See Ezekiel P. McNeal to Polk, September 30, 1838, and John H. Bills to Polk, October 11, 1838.

2. This Democratic newspaper was the Jackson District Telegraph, which was published for only about one year.

3. This could be a reference to E. W. M. King, a lawyer at Bolivar.

4. The Dunlaps in Paris were numerous, but the Dunlap most likely to be known to McNeal was William C. Dunlap, a near relative of the Paris Dunlaps, but himself a resident of Bolivar. He was a former colleague of Polk in the House of Representatives.

5. Lewis P. Williamson won the election and served one term. He was a graduate of Yale who became a planter, a railroad promoter, and an advocate of temperance.

6. No other notice of this newspaper has been found, but a paper called the Bolivar Sentinel appeared briefly in 1839.
7. On November 6, 1838, Polk spoke at a barbecue in his honor at Island Spring, about a mile from Nashville. Apparently John Bell was the adversary who was to be confronted in his own stronghold, in spite of the fact that Polk was running against Newton Cannon.

TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir

Columbia Nov. 2nd, 1838

I received your letter of yesterday this morning. I hope and believe with you, that all will yet be well, so far as our friend Col. K. is concerned. Upon the letter of Mr Jno. M. Bell of Pulaski, I recommended him [Kincannon], before I left home for the South, for the appointment, which you have lately filled. Mr Bell urged me to write in his behalf, stating that he had a letter from him, stating that he would not apply for the office, but would accept it, if tendered to him. Since my return I have received a letter from the Secretary of War stating, that if the business was not completed, and it was necessary to continue the commission, that the appointment would be conferred on Col. K. This letter I have inclosed to him, stating to him what Mr Bell had written to me, and the circumstances under which I had written in his behalf, and requesting him to say whether . . . .

This is an incomplete letter in Polk's handwriting. The single page found bore no signature, and no envelope has been found. In the handwriting of an unidentified person, there appears at the bottom of the page, "To A. V. Brown." The letter is obviously intended for Brown, although there is no proof that it was ever completed, or if so, that it was ever mailed.

1. Andrew A. Kincannon. For other information of the plan to get Kincannon an appointment that would leave the way open for Brown to run for Congress, see Aaron V. Brown to Polk, September 17, November 1 and November 20, 1838; and Andrew A. Kincannon to Polk, November 6, 1838.

FROM WILLIAM G. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir,

Franklin November 2nd 1838

The necessity of the occasion is the only apology I have to offer for the many & perhaps heavy demands I shall make upon your few spare moments of the present session. There is great difficulty in obtaining the many authorities I need in the present canvass and believing that you have it in your power to get them at the fountain head, the source of all information, I must beg of you in the first instance to send me such as I find I cannot get here, viz: The Journal of both houses the
last session & of the call session, The Report of [John] Sergeant & Popes (minority) giving the causes of the revulsion &c.¹ I also want the names of the members of Congress and their votes upon the Bill chartering the first U. S. Bank, 1791. There are other documents wanted but I will see if they can not be obtained here before I will trouble you.

The late news from New York has cast a gloom upon our party in this county rarely to be seen and the other side all is hilarity & in an extreme that really renders them ridiculous; our cause seemed to be on rising ground & growing fast until the New York damper came and gave it such a sudden check that I fear it will not commence a second growth until spring.²

No change that I am aware of has taken place in the State in your election since you left. The impression as far as I can gather it from the different parts of the State [is] that you will succeed, that at this time you are the stronger in the middle & west end of the State. The only difficulty seems to be with East Tennessee. I presume you are in possession of the most correct information as to that section. As to myself, I am as yet unable to speak with much precision, having been out since you left, to but few public gatherings. I find many for me that voted against me at the last election & some changes the other way though as yet not as many. However you know it is more difficult for a candidate to learn the changes against him than those for him. As to Rutherford I say nothing, not knowing cannot say. You have long known my notions about the politicks of Rutherford. Self³ has a great & powerful influence (nothing more of this at present & this with you alone.) Majr. [Leonard H.] Sims has declined a further canvass for the Senate & Colo [Henderson K.] Yoakham [Yoakum] has been announced in his place. I cannot think this augurs much for us or our cause.

I think there is a probable prospect of his Excellencys⁴ bringing a cloud of difficulties upon himself under the Internal Improvement law. He is under [the impression] that properly [he is] the guardian of the State & hence it becomes his duty to watch over & guard her interests. I have no doubt you have heard that companies have organized upon the principle of making the State build the road and then the individual Stockholders sharing half the profit, & owning one half the road; such a charge has been made as I have understood against a company in your county the truth of which I know nothing but if it should be so it would be well if they are somewhat tardy in their application to the State for her bonds as it is more than possible he will have to commit himself shortly on a road running near me and passing his mill in
November 2 1838

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the upper end of the county and it is my opinion that he is fully in possession of all the facts attending this. His directory are divided & the case has produced some feeling already. All this [is] confidential & fearing of accidents when read burn it but be sure & send the documents asked for.

W. G. Childress

Addressed to Washington.

1. The minority report mentioned remains obscure. On February 3, 1839, Childress apologized to Polk for being ambiguous in his request. The Pope mentioned was John Pope, a Democrat from Kentucky.

2. The New York Whigs had been successful in elections for governor, Congress, and the state legislature.

This seems to be used in the sense of self-interest.


5. Details of a scheme to build a road at state expense may be found in James Walker to Polk, May 2, 1838. The Harpeth Turnpike, built with state funds, passed near Cannon's mill.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir

Clarksville November 2nd, 1838

I reed. yours upon your return from the District. Am truly pleased to hear from you as well as a variety of other sources [of] your favorable prospects in the district. I could not get to Paris as I intended or rather hoped to have done. Our Circuit Court at Waverly was in session & I could not with propriety leave it. As I had not heard from you & fearing that you might not be able to reach Dover & the disappointment might excite some dissatisfaction among our friends, I went & read a letter from J[oseph] N. Johnson on the morning informing us of your movement. We had I suppose 150 voters from various parts of the county, mostly leading men. They were a good deal disappointed & a few left before I reached there about 12. I made suitable & satisfactory apologies for your absence & gave them an hour or two's harangue on matters & things in general, and the good news that I had just reed. of our success in Ohio, Pennsylvania & New Jersey & the many hard things I said of the Whigs, seemed to give verry general satisfaction & they expressed themselves entirely satisfied with your course, believing that you were advancing the cause elsewhere and that they would have an opportunity of hearing you next spring. I have heard of no friends of the administration in this district who will not zealously & cheerfully support you. As far as I am able to judge &
from all I can hear in the different counties I have never known a more general change. I am assured upon the best authority that in many places, whole neighbourhoods have changed. Indeed, out of our little towns it is difficult to find any man for Clay. Many of the leading Whigs in the country avow themselves openly against him and everybody that is for him. We have an extraordinary activity among our friends & particularly the old men, who have a horrid aversion to Federalism or any thing like it.

If I continue in the District I see no chance of escaping. I shall be compelled to be a candidate or remove. It is evidently the earnest wish of every friend in the district. They believe there is no other man who can beat [Richard] Cheatham. If therefore matters continue as they are present and my health should continue tolerable you may calculate upon finding me in the field upon your return in the spring. Even if I run, it would be an injury to me now to become a candidate, not only in profession but in the election. It would create at once a concert of action among the Whigs at home & create combinations agt. me, that would keep alive to some extent the prejudices excited against me in the last election. Cheatham has joined the Presbyterian Church and has not been out of Robertson during the summer, which has a good deal of influence against him & which he will feel if he is ever again a candidate & I believe he has acted upon the supposition, that turning out & making speeches might excite me & probably bring me out at once, whereas a contrary course might keep me quiet & probably induce me to give up all notions of public life.

We understand now that Turner² will be probably a candidate for the Legislature in this county, no doubt designing to assist Cheatham and [Henry] Frey and rally the party again if they can.

I cannot come to Nashville the 6th which I regret very much.³ Our Dover court sits at that time, one of my most important courts, and it will not do to miss it.

I shall be anxious to hear from you after you pass thro East Tennessee, as I shall always be when your time allows.

C. Johnson

Addressed to Nashville with a request written on the envelope that the postmaster at Nashville hand the letter to Polk.

1. Polk's letter has not been found.

2. William K. Turner was a Clarksville lawyer who was a brother-in-law of Richard Cheatham. He was attorney-general for the tenth judicial district, 1819-36, and for the seventh district, 1836-39. In 1835 he had run against Cave Johnson for a seat in Congress, but Johnson beat him easily. In the
election mentioned here, however, he was successful and served in the state legislature for one term, 1839-41. In his latter years he was a criminal court judge, 1848-62.

3. Polk was scheduled to address a crowd at a barbecue in his honor on November 6 at Island Spring near Nashville.

FROM SAMUEL MITCHELL

Shelbyville November 5th 1838

I am winding up my matters with as much rapidity as possible, with a view of being off to the State of Arkansas, and want to start in the course of ten or fifteen days. I addressed you a few days ago at Columbia about our matters, but am fearful you will not receive that letter before you leave for Washington. I requested you in that letter to make arrangements for the $1060 to Mrs. Pugsley before you set out for Washington. The note has been sent out here to a Lawyer with instructions to bring suit if it is not paid immediately. I also informed you in that letter that I wished you to make some arrangements with our Political friends in Maury to take the [Shelbyville Western] Star establishment off of my hands. I was unwilling that it should remain in the hands of our enemies and stepped in and redeemed it, from the mortgage that [Greenville] Cook had given them upon it, and by so doing have brought upon myself responsibilities that I am not able to stand up to, and now as I am going away think I ought to be relieved from them. I have since I saw you, been sucked in, about three hundred and fifty dollars by our pretended friend W. B. Anderson and I think the loss of that added to what I have already and will have to pay for Cook is enough for me to loose, and that you ought to see me relieved from the amount I have to pay for the redemption of the Press. I have tried to get some of our friends here to form a company and take the Press but cannot prevail upon them to make a motion towards it.

The press is richly worth the amount that I had to give for it, and I presume would readily bring its cost $600 (which it amounts to by this time) if it was put in market, but is so import[ant] a matter in keeping things strait in this County that it ought not to leave here, and it is strongly whispered about here that the [Shelbyville Peoples] Advocate is about to go down, after which the Star will do well. You must think of these matters and write me your views.

Old Bedford will give you a good account of herself in August. You will beat his Excellency from three to five hundred votes in this County, and it will be the first time any man has ever lead him here.
Nicholson will beat his opponent, I dont care who he is, with a great deal of ease.

SAM'L. MITCHELL

None of our County candidates have come out as yet. All eyes are upon Frierson⁵ for the Senate, but we cannot get him to announce himself. The others appear to be waiting for him, and I think he is willing to run, but does not like the idea of being a candidate so long before the election.

Addressed to Nashville.

1. See Mitchell to Polk, October 26, 1838.
2. Mrs. Pugsley was the widow of Dr. Charles Pugsley of Davidson County. The Pugsley debt was made to purchase the press for the Shelbyville Western Star. See James McKisick to Polk, November 4, 1835, and William Gilchrist to Polk, March 30, 1836.
3. William B. Anderson had been the editor of the Shelbyville Western Star, briefly, about a year earlier.
4. Governor Newton Cannon.
5. Erwin J. Frierson was a Shelbyville lawyer who at one time had studied law in Polk's office. He had moved from Columbia to Shelbyville. Unlike most of the Maury County Friersons, he was a loyal Polk supporter.

FROM ANDREW A. KINCANNON

Dear Col. Fayetteville 6th Novr. 1838

Your kind favor from Columbia is to hand. The course you have taken in relation to the successor of Mr. Brown, meets my approbation to the fullest extent.¹ I am not only satisfied, but feel myself under renewed obligations to you, for this additional manifestation of friendship towards me. If the commission is tendered I shall accept without hesitation.

Brown was here on yesterday, and I hope & believe that all things will result as they should. We conferred together & if it should so turn out, that both of us shall run, our course will be friendly & so conducted as not to effect the great cause injuriously. This you may rely on as certain beyond doubt.

I greatly regret that it was out of my power to attend the festival to day.² I have just returned from Abingdon Va. & could not possibly be with you.

Be good enough to make this appology for me, to the committee, & especially to Genl. Armstrong.³

I saw McClellan at Blountsville, & many others of our friends in
the East end of the state. Prospects there are decidedly favourable. Your friends are warm & decided. My decided opinion is, that even now, you are ahead of the Col. in E. Tenn. He has but little personal popularity any where, and there is no doubt but the influence of our old friend the Judge, is greatly on the wain. The recent successes of democracy has, & will work a mighty influence in our favour there & every where else.

I hope to hear from you often during the winter, and should it so turn out that I shall not go to Miss. you may expect me at Washington before the 4th of March.

My best prayers are with you. Go on and fear no harm.

ANDW. A. KINCANNON

Addressed to Nashville but forwarded to Knoxville.
1. Aaron V. Brown was resigning as a special agent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in order to run for Congress. Kincannon, in turn, was in the process of agreeing not to run for Congress if appointed to Brown's former position. Polk's letter has not been found.
2. Polk was addressing the people at a barbecue in his honor at Island Spring just below Nashville.
3. Robert Armstrong was an important political organizer for Polk and was behind the rally at Island Spring.
4. Governor Newton Cannon.

FROM CHARLES G. OLMSTED

Col Polk Columbus Missi Novr. 6, 1838

You are this day to be at the Island Spring. All sorts of good wishes, such as good speech a great crowd and many converts. I concluded to stop here as the Irish say. Have hung out my sign as Attorney at law. Not having at present much business I have leisure to think of politics; do not say much yet. While I was in Tennessee, I requested the editor of the Weekly Record to republish the Independent Treasury bill as originally reported. He complied. I became convinced that this republican was of more service to the cause in Williamson than the Republican address and all my talks and Van's editorials. A few days after my arrival here, I called at the office of the Columbus Democrat on business intending also to request the Editor to republish the bill. In the course of our conversation, he informed me that he should publish it in his next number. The necessity of the request was superseded. Many of our folks, here, are so fully convinced of the utility of this course, that they have requested the Editor to keep it
as standing matter till the bill shall be passed. I have heard more than one Whig say to his fellow "It is not as bad as I thought, and it is a truth, we must confess it, that none of our papers have published it." On these occasions I have ventured to say "No, gentlemen, the bill is not so bad, and make up your minds to see Mr. Van Buren re-seated in the chair of state by a greater majority than ever old Hickory reed. We shall succeed partly through the merits of the bill; but principally on account of the Whig misrepresentations of it and the principles advanced by your party in opposition to it. The people will all be made acquainted with the provisions of the bill before 1840. They will compare them with the declarations made by the Whig leaders in relation to them and such will be their indignation at the attempt to mislead them, that they will leave Mr. Clay farther behind than they ever did." You will perceive that I consider it of vast importance that the people should all read and understand the bill. How is this to be effected is the question? Permit me to suggest to you the propriety of a full meeting of the administration members in congress, that they resolve to publish some hundred thousand copies of the bill together with that section of the law of 1789 which treats of the treasurer's powers, duties &c, some extracts from the speeches of Clay, Webster, White &c, the pamphlet to conclude with a few heavy licks by way of comment and a request to every administration editor in the nation to publish the bill at least every three months till the contest is over. Let it be distinctly shown that those members of congress who voted against the bill, voted for the law of 1789 (the law of 1836 being at the late called and regular sessions, a dead letter) and let them be contrasted. The very singularity of this proceeding will excite admiration and thus induce the people to make themselves acquainted with all those matters and things about which they heretofore have heard so much and known nothing. My anxiety for the triumph of the divorce or rather the separation party (for there never was a legal marriage) is my excuse for presuming to make these suggestions.

Col. Polk, I want nothing of the administration, but I discover that some of its friends here are disposed to concede to me some little consequence, in other words, they seem to be under the impression that I may have somewhat of that thing called influence. It would be of some service to me in my business, that they should not be undeceived. I am more than willing they should all believe that I am known and stand well at Washington. You will therefore oblige me by corresponding with me, (I mean, sending me documents) and mentioning me favorably to your correspondents in this state. You understand.

C. G. Olmsted
Addressed to Washington.

1. Polk was addressing the crowd at a political barbecue in his honor at Island Spring near Nashville.

2. Henry Van Pelt was the editor of that Franklin newspaper at that time.

3. This was a statement of party principles, sometimes called the Democratic Manifesto. See John H. Bills to Polk, August 25, 1838.

4. The Columbus Democrat was published continuously from 1836 to 1861. From 1836 to 1859 the editor was H. H. Worthington.

FROM A. M. M. UPSHAW

My Dear Sir

Memphis Nov 8th 1838

I arrived at Holly Springs (Miss) the day after you left there. I was informed by Maj. Coe, Harley & Mason that you would be there on Tuesday, but you were a day a head, and I am in hopes you will keep a head. My brother who lives in the North edge of this County, I mean Taswell, informed me that he was at the Regimental Muster in Tipton, and in two companies they took the vote for Governor and you got all but 9 or 10 votes. In the same two companies, Cannon got all at the last election except 16 votes. I was in company last evening with Judge Brown, formally of Nashville, who had just returned from Somerville where he had been for two weeks, and he informed me that the Sheriff said that he knew of 26 of the most influential in that County who had been Whigs, that said they had to give it up, and go for you & Van Buren. It is my opinion that in three years from the date of this letter, that it would be difficult to find a Whig anywhere. Those that were really so, would be like they used to be about Genl. Jackson. They had not firmness to cheer against him, in fact, they pretended to be the greatest Political, and personal friends that he had until Poor old Judge White was bewitch[ed] by Bell, & his wife; and then they cried for White for 8 months, then found some fault of Van and then of the old Chief. But their days are numbered.

I must ask of you and my old friend Judge Grundy, to keep a close eye, to my application for Agency of the Chicksaws West. With the recommendation I have sent on and those that, have been sent without my knowledge, in my behalf, and your self Judge Grundy, Wm B Lewis, C. A. Harris, and Mr Van Buren on the spot, I assure you that I do not dread all the Whiggs in the Country. I have admired Mr Chamberlin from N York, & Mr Duncan, from Ohio very much. Mr Duncan, is just such a man as I have wanted in Congress for a long while jus[t] on Mr [Henry A.] Wises account.

A. M. M. UPSHAW
N.B. I leave here to day for the far West, with a party of three hundred Chicksaw Indians. They are the last that will be moved by an agent. I would be pleased to receive a letter from you direct to Little Rock Arkansas.

A. M. M. U.

Addressed to Washington.
1. Joseph Coe, Basil C. Harley, and Joseph Mason had signed an invitation to Polk, dated October 3, to attend a public meeting in his honor at Holly Springs.
2. Taswell Upshaw has not been further identified. He is probably the M. T. B. Upshaw who was a resident of Giles County when the 1830 census was taken.
3. Nathaniel Atkinson was sheriff of Fayette County, 1836–42.
4. Previously engaged in removing the Indians as far west as Memphis, Upshaw was appointed agent for the Chickasaws and confirmed by the U.S. Senate on February 28, 1839.
5. William B. Lewis, Andrew Jackson's confidant for many years, was still second auditor in the Treasury Department. He was not a friend of Polk, Grundy, or Van Buren.
6. Churchill C. Cambreleng and Alexander Duncan. Duncan's colorful and forceful style fitted him for the sort of debate in which Wise frequently engaged.
7. Upshaw's immediate destination was Fort Smith, Arkansas.

FROM ABRAHAM McCLELLAN

Dear Sir: Blountville Nov 12, 1838

I have receiv’d. yours of the 1st inst and am pleased to hear of your appoint[ment]s to address the people at several points in E. Ten on your way to Washington.

You wish me to meet you at Rutledge which would give me great pleasure, but when I come to consider my private arrangements which I am compelled to make before I start to the City, I am compell’d. to say that I can not comply with your request.

I do assure you I should be delightd. to travel through this district with you. We have had a great many notices printed and I have frank’d. them throughout the district.

I have no doubt but there will be a good turnout at each place of your appointments.

A. McCLELLAN

P. S. I expect to be ready to start on to the City by the 23rd. (Friday) and should be glad to have your company.

A. Mc.
FROM JOHN H. DEW

Dear Sir. Murfreesborough Tennessee November 13, 1838

Since my arrival in this place I learned for the first time, that the Post Master David Wendal [Wendel] Esq. had tendered his resignation to the Hon. Post Master General, and that David Maloy [Molloy] and Robert D. Harris were applicants to the Department for the office. They are both democrats and I have endeavored to ascertain what was public opinion and the popular wishes of the citizens immediately concerned with the office, and I am prepared to say the appointment of Major Harris would be decidedly the most acceptable.

I hear this remark frequently made, that Harris has been consistent a Jackson, Van Burin, Polk democrat all the time, that Major Maloy has recently deserted the old White Whig party in this county (Rutherford) and become a democrat because he is unwilling to go into the support of Mr Clay. The Whigs would prefer Harris because of their dislike to Maloy for having recently deserted them. In fact Maj Harris is decidedly the more popular man of the two. I am intimately acquainted with both gentlemen. They are both highly respectable, and popular men and either would discharge the duties of the office with fidelity and ability. Maj Harris is deservedly popular for his deep piety, moral deportment and business habits, and I hesitate not to say that he will discharge every duty connected with the office of Post Master [with] neatness, dispatch and the strictest fidelity and correctness. I therefore take pleasure in soliciting your aid and interference in his behalf and through you the Honorable Department, to appoint him.

You may be assured that Col. Polk has not a more decided and influential friend in old Rutherford than Maj Harris! Already the citizens begin to utter a low, voice that you have recommended Maj Maloy, which would be decidedly to your prejudice if it were known.

Mrs Polk is in this place but I have not seen her, but understand she is very well, and all your friends as far as I have heard. You shall here from me on all suitable occasions. This county is very doubtful, but your friends claim a majority of some 300.

Jno. H. Dew

Addressed to Washington.

1. Amos Kendall was still Postmaster General. Robert D. Harris has not been further identified. Molloy received the appointment.
FROM SAMUEL McROBERTS

Dr Sir, Danville Illinois Nov. 16, 1838

You have no doubt noticed the result of the election in Illinois. By great exertions we have carried our Governor, & Lt Governor, and a nominal majority of the Legislature. I say nominal, because one or two deaths among the members elect, and two resignations, leaves the point uncertain how the majority may be.

The democracy have never had such a struggle in this state, as that preceding the late election. The great obstacle we had to encounter grew out of the conduct of our members of Congress.

At the special session, the members of the House, Casey, May, & Snyder joined the federal party, and voted against Blair & Reeves [Rives] for Public Printer, and for Conservative [Thomas] Allen. They voted against withholding the fourth instalment to the states; against the issuing of Treasury notes; and virtually against the separation of the Government from the Banks. I say virtually, because the vote to lay upon the table, at that time, was equivalent to a direct vote. All this you have means of knowing much better than I have. These things gave the federal party all the advantage to be derived from a claim to Illinois, in the votes of her members.

The strong democratic district of Snyder came out openly against him; the Democrats in Mays district also denounced him. These men had to make a virtue of necessity, & decline being candidates, to prevent a defeat by thousands. Casey returned to Illinois, between the special and regular session. He told the supporters of the administration that the vote he gave to lay the Sub Treasury bill upon the table was not indicative of his final vote, but only to get time to consult the wishes of the people. He induced the Globe to make some explanation for him. This movement which was carried out with some skill, induced a portion of the democrats to suppose that he would vote for the Sub Treasury. When that measure came before the house in March last, he voted against laying it on the table. This seemed to be a further proof that he would act with the administration. But this was all done to mislead the public, and to enable him to carry out his plans for the opposition, vote against the bill, and yet secure his re-election, because he knew that from the time the final vote was given, it would be too late for the Democracy in his district to rally against him. His political perfidy secured all the federal presses for him. The Vandalia Whig expressly stated, that they had pledges from him. A few months before the election a Mr. [Ebenezer J.] Shields, a Whig member of Congress from your state, wrote a flaming letter to a leading man in this district,
urging him to rally on Casey!!! Casey, from his vote upon the Sub Treasury & for months before the vote was given, had become the head & leader of the opposition. His name was placed at the top of the federal Ticket, and was followed in the list, by those of Edwards, Davidson, & the other federal candidates. It was termed "the Casey & No Sub Treasury ticket." To aid his new allies still more effectually, two weeks before the election, he issued a Circular to the people, charging home upon the administration and alleging that it was attempting "to increase Executive patronage, to increase the number of federal offices," and was trying "to render less safe and secure the money of the people" in recommending and supporting the Sub Treasury. These words were adopted as the motto of the federal party. The people were told in hand bills that Mr Casey was still a democrat, but had become so thoroughly disgusted with the administration that he could not support it. The article from the Globe, which I have no doubt Casey induced the Editors to print apologizing for him, & several other articles from democratic newspapers, were collected and re-printed in hand bill form & circulated. It was also stated that the "Hon Mr. Polk, the Speaker of the house, had such confidence in Mr Casey's democracy that he often called him to preside as chairman." These things the federal party printed, & circulated, to keep the democracy from uniting against Casey, & to keep as many of them for him, as these statements & publications, would necessarily do. By carrying this political Judas, the federal party secured their own ticket, aided by all the influence that his position gave him. From the time he gave the final vote upon the leading and test measure of the Republican party, and the news reached Illinois, we had no time to select a candidate. If we had had only two weeks more we should have had one, and in that event, this man would not have had it in his power to betray the country after this session. He acted a part to render more effective service to the federal party, than any man in Illinois. He occupied the true ground for them, by proclaiming his democracy, and inducing the Globe, which he had basely betrayed, to endorse for him, and yet aiding the federal party upon the test measure before the country. His course has aided to defeat several democratic candidates for the Assembly. Since the election he preserves a dark and mysterious silence. If his future co-operation can defeat the party, or defeat you, or Mr Van Buren, I have no doubt he will be against the democracy. If he can do nothing, & his co-operation would not be available, why then he will be proclaiming democracy, in hopes of keeping himself where he can repay federal kindness hereafter.

We have lost near 2000 votes in two years, & most of these in the
district represented by this hypocrite and apostate, Zadok Casey. In other states the democratic members of Congress take a stand & aid in uniting the party at home, but with us, the members appear all the while to be trying to make themselves acceptable to their political opponents. One half the appointments they have procured are men who have been most open in their violence against Mr Van Buren. Wilton, the Marshall; Dement, Receiver at Galena; Strode, Register at Chicago; Thompson, Register at Edwardsville; & Forquer, Register formerly at Springfield, are among the number.8

Unless our friends are put upon their guard, the opposition will carry the state at next election.

You will pardon the liberty I have taken in writing you this free confidential letter. When Mr. [Amos] Kendall was here a few weeks ago, I mentioned these things to him. Mr. Whitcomb9 is also acquainted with the course of events here. I desired that you should know them.

I notice that you are out for Governor of Tennessee. The Democracy here, & you have thousands of devoted friends among us, who know you, & many of them personally, are greatly rejoicing at it. We have the strongest hopes that noble, Democratic Tennessee can rally & be herself again; and that your great strength will enable the democracy to marshall for the conflict, in defence of free principles, against Bank Government, & Bank federalism.

SAML. McROBERTS

Addressed to Washington.

1. A Danville lawyer, McRoberts had served several terms in the legislature. Later he served in the United States Senate.

2. Thomas Carlin and Stinson H. Anderson were governor and lieutenant-governor, respectively, 1838–42. Both had served in the state legislature. Carlin was a native of Kentucky, and Anderson was born in Tennessee.

3. Zadoc Casey, a native of Georgia, served in the legislature, 1822–30, and as lieutenant-governor, 1830–33. He was in Congress, 1833–43. William L. May had moved from Kentucky in 1817. He was a member of the House of Representatives, 1834–39. Adam W. Snyder moved from Pennsylvania in 1817 and was a member of Congress from Illinois only one term, 1837–39.

4. See William B. Turley to Polk, April 28, 1837.

5. On October 14, 1837, the Washington Globe observed that, had members of Congress voted directly on the merit of the bill, the measure would have passed. No specific explanation of Casey's vote has been found in the Globe.

6. The Vandalia Whig was published under the direction of S. C. Sherman from 1832 until its dissolution in 1839.

9. This probably refers to James Whitcomb, Commissioner of the General Land Office, 1836–41. He was governor of Indiana, 1843–48.

FROM WILLIAM M. LOWRY¹

Greeneville. November 17, 1838

Lowry regrets that Polk could not include Greeneville in his northward itinerary and hopes that he will visit there as he returns from Washington. He thinks the Democrats of his region will give Polk a handsome majority.

Addressed to Rogersville and delivered by Lawson Gifford.
1. A close business, personal, and political friend of Andrew Johnson, Lowry was postmaster at Greeneville, 1843–50, and marshal for the East Tennessee District during the years preceding the Civil War.

FROM HENRY EWING

Sir Bank of Tennessee Nashville 19 Nov 1838

It is understood that the Secretary of the Treasury will instruct the Entry Takers of the different Land Offices and perhaps other Public Officers to receive in payment of Public Dues the notes of some of the State Banks. If this is correct I have to ask the favor of you, if consistent with your other duties, to present to Mr. Woodbury the claims of this Bank to such an order.¹ I annex you a Statement of the situation of the Bank & Branches on the 1st day of Oct last.² In addition to the means mentioned in the Statement the Bank has $1,500,000 of State 6 perCent Bonds not disposed of, $600,000 due in Specie or its equivalent from the Union & Planters Banks of this City³ on the 1 day of Jany. 1839, & a like sum on the 1 day of Jany 1840, & about $300,000 of Stock in those Banks, & will receive in Feby. & March next about $500,000 from the sale of Lands in the Ocoe District.⁴ The Principal Bank & Branches will certainly have in their vaults on the 1 Janey next $300,000 in Specie, which will be increased during the Spring, & from & after that day will redeem all their Issues in Gold & Silver on demand at their Counter. I presume no Bank in the Union will be better able to commence & continue Specie payments. The Charter prohibits the Issue of Notes under $5, & after 1 Janey 1841, of Notes under $10, and I sincerely hope this provision will in a few Years be extended to $20.

The Capital is $5,000,000. The Faith of the State is pledged for the
Redemption of the Notes. The Profits of the Institution are appropriated by the Legislature to the cause of Education and Internal Improvements, two objects in which you in common with our most intelligent Citizens feel a deep interest.

An order directing the Notes of this Bank to be received for public dues in this State and at the land offices in Miss., La., Ala., Mo., Ill., & Arks. would be a public convenience and very much promote the Interests of the Bank.

I have written to our mutual friend Mr Grundy on this subject & have no doubt he will join you in doing any thing in favor of the Bank that may be consistent with the Interest and Policy of the Government.

Please let me hear from you at your earliest convenience.

HENRY EWING

Addressed to Washington.

1. On January 1, 1839, the Secretary of the Treasury issued a circular instructing receivers of public moneys to use discretion in accepting bank paper. He did not, however, supply a list of sound banks as anticipated by Ewing's request.

2. A handwritten balance statement was enclosed.

3. The Union Bank was chartered in 1832, and the Planter's Bank received its charter the next year.

4. The Ocoee District was in the extreme southeastern part of Tennessee. The Ocoee River, for which it was named, is a tributary of the Hiwassee.

FROM THOMAS LOVE

Paris. November 21, 1838

Love reports that, since Polk's dinner speech in Henry County, Tennessee, public sentiment is increasingly favorable to the Democrats. He promises to write again when he returns from a swing through the counties of the southern part of the Western District.

Addressed to Washington.

1. In 1775, when he was nine years old, Thomas Love moved with his father from Virginia to the Watauga settlements. Later he opposed Sevier's separatist activities, finally moving to North Carolina. Between 1797 and 1820 he was almost continuously a member of the legislature of that state. He moved back to Tennessee and lived for a while in Hawkins County before moving on to Maury County. After four years there, he settled in Henry County in 1837. In 1839 he was elected to the Tennessee legislature, where he served a single term.
FROM ROBERT B. REYNOLDS

Sir,

Knoxville Nov. 21st 1838

A severe attack of fever rendered me inactive for two months (& which had near carried me off) prevented me from having the pleasure of seeing you as you passed thro our town. I had rec'd from Nashville, some days prior to your arrival, several packages of your appointments, &c which I had forwarded to the upper counties.

Your prospects are daily brightening in E. T. I have seen several intelligent gentlemen from different Counties, all of whom concur in saying that a reaction has taken place in behalf of the democratic party. I have no doubt but that you will obtain majorities in 15 Counties in E. Tennessee. Sullivan, Hawkins, Washington, Greene, Blount, Campbell, Roane, Monroe, McMinn, Bradley, Meigs, Rhea, Bledsoe, Hamilton & Marion, will all give you majorities, which leaves only 10 for Cannon, several of which the elections will be close & possibly you may succeed in some of them. The contest in Grainger, Claiborne, Anderson, Cocke & Sevier will be close.

Permit me to say to you that you must give old Knox a complete canvassing on your return from Washington. She has given abundant signs of discontent at her present situation, which if properly fanned will result beneficially to the democrats.

We must do something in Tennessee to regain our loss in N. Y. Bell ought & if possible must be beaten. The democrats of East Tennessee are doing all they can to overthrow the apostates from our party. In the 1st district Carter & Gen. Arnold, both apostates, will be opposed by a democrat. McClellan's chances of success are good. Jos. L. Williams will be opposed by Genl. Wallace or Col. [George W.] Churchwell, both of whom voted for White, but decidedly opposed to Clay & the U. S. Bk. In the 4th dis't the democrats will run J. W. Blackwell.¹

Please inform me early at what time it will suit your convenience to speak at this place & you had better fix it on some County Court day (the first Monday of the Month), the Circuit Court not sitting until the 2nd Monday of June.

There is a vacancy in the Post Office at this place & the son-in-law of the late incumbent is an applicant.² Mr. Deaderick is one of the most intolerant old fashioned federalists in the state & has been, as I have been informed, trying to injure you here, because you did not address the people. His father-in-law was the only Post Master Knoxville has ever seen & now his son-in-law wishes to make it hereditary. Deaderick is now an applicant for office of Cashier of the Branch of
S. W. R. R. Ban[k]² which will be located here & will get the office.

I wrote some time ago to Mr Kendall recommending Mr Lewis P. Roberts a democratic Merchant, who justly deserves the office alone from his superior qualifications.⁴ Mr Roberts is an efficient democrat & has rendered great service to our cause by the many articles he has written from the press in E. T. Mr. Kendall would not have a more efficient officer in his department. Will you please to see the Post Master General in his behalf, if the office be not filled on your arrival in the City.

R. B. REYNOLDS

P. S. Excuse me for troubling you with this almost illegible scroll.

Addressed to Washington.

1. William Wallace, a native of Sevier County, Tennessee, attained several responsible positions in his community: sheriff of Blount County, 1820-42; treasurer of Maryville College, 1833-64; commissioner of the Hiwassee Railroad, 1831; director and president of the Knoxville and Charleston Railroad, 1852; and member of the lower house of the General Assembly, 1853-55. A native of Virginia and resident of Tennessee's McMinn County, Julius W. Blackwell won election to the United States House of Representatives in 1839 and 1843, but lost bids for re-election in 1841 and 1845.

2. John Crozier, wealthy businessman and planter, was Knoxville's second postmaster and served from 1804 until his death in the fall of 1838. Crozier's daughter Elizabeth Jane married David Anderson Deaderick, who conducted a mercantile business with his father-in-law from 1834 until 1838. Deaderick was secretary of East Tennessee University, 1838-68, and clerk of Knox County's chancery court, 1859-70.

3. In 1837 the Tennessee legislature granted banking privileges to the Cincinnati and Charleston Railroad, which subsequently formed the Southwestern Railroad Bank. In 1839 David Deaderick was named cashier of the Knoxville branch of this short-lived banking enterprise, which failed with its parent company later that year.

4. Roberts was appointed Knoxville's third postmaster on December 3, 1838.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Columbia, Nov. 22d 1838

Dear Sir,

I was detained in the [Western] District much longer than I expected. I found I was compelled to commence suit to sustain a deed of Trust I hold on a part of Geo. Moore's property. I have received your letters and will certainly remit Genl Mitchell $313 in a few days.¹

You will see by the [Columbia] Democrat of to-day that I am interested in Williamson Smith's contract. I purposely concealed, or failed to inform you of this fact, thinking it prudent to guard against
the very thing which has happened.² I have thought it proper to place
the matter as it really was and is over my own signature.

My interest in Smith's affairs makes it necessary I should assist
him, in closing it up. He is in bad health and unable to go to Washing­
ton. All concerned insist upon my going on immediately. I have con­
sented to start 11th December and shall then see you as soon as I can.
I think Smiths contract with the explanatory testimony he can procure
will entitle him to a large amount from the Cherokee fund.

I am very desirous of getting my mail business settled if possible
this session.³ I hope at Louisville to obtain important evidence as to
the steam Boat Mail in 33 & 4. I wish very much you would speak to
Mr. [Reuben] Chapman and others of our friends and get our Bill
started in the House again as soon as possible.⁴ If it can be passed
early in the House I suppose there will be not much delay in the Sen­
ate, and by possibility I can have the whole matter settled whilst I am
at Washington. I rely on your judgment in this matter and hope you
will be able to give it early attention.

Everything is working well politically in the District. The impres­
sion you made was very fine, as I learned from various quarters to be
relied on. It is confidently believed by men of sober judgement and the
means of forming correct opinions, that you would now easily beat
Cannon in the District, and your strength is increasing every day.

JAMES WALKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. Polk's letters have not been found. The payment to Samuel Mitchell
was for part of the purchase of the press for the Shelbyville Western Star. See
Mitchell to Polk, October 26 and November 5, 1838.

2. Walker had sought to guard against newspaper publicity concerning his
role in Williamson Smith's contracts, knowing that Polk's name would in­
evitably be brought into the discussion. In a statement published in the
Columbia Democrat, he explained how his involvement in Smith's contracts
came about. Smith was awarded a contract to remove a large number of
Cherokees to the west and hoped to use water transportaton as far as
practicable. Finding that to carry out the contract would require a larger cash
outlay than he could manage, he asked Walker and Hilary Langtry of
Columbia to supply some of the cash and share in the profits. Walker denied
that Polk had known anything of his negotiations with Smith.

3. Walker and his associates allegedly lost money through their mail­
contracting business. A long effort to obtain relief from the Post Office De­
partment was finally successful in 1845. See Walker to Polk, February 27,
March 18, March 31, and May 2, 1838.

4. It is not clear why Walker singled out Reuben Chapman. It is possible
that Chapman was a friend of W. T. Caruthers, Walker's mail-contract part-
ner. Caruthers and Chapman lived within a few miles of each other in North Alabama.

FROM GEORGE W. BRATTON

Sir \[Yellowbusha \[Yalobusha\] County Mississippi November 24 1838

Sir we are all well at present. I shall soon be done gathering of my crop of cotton. I think that I shall make about seventy bales of cotton. I have made the arrange\[ment\] with James Minter and Chisolm\(^1\) agreeable to your requst about your cotton. There has not no cotton gone of yet. The river has not rise yet. I think I shall have my cotton all ready for shipping by the first rise.

You rote to me that you wanted a good crop made. If I can have seasones I shall make you as good a crop as you want if health will permit and strength. If I can keep before I can do perty well. I think I have keep before this year.\(^2\)

I will make the exchange of negroes at the time appointed. Losa\(^3\) died the sixteenth of this month. I had good atten paid to her. I call in and other phisian to Loosa. She died with the brest complaint.

As it respect your cotton that was sunk on the river last winter\(^4\) Minter sas he took the insurence polacy up legally and mailed it at Vixburge to Harris & Careathers Co. Minter told me they got out three or four bales of the cotton and was sold for the benefit of insurence company not for yours at all an your merchants are a swidled you.

GEORGE BRATTON

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Bassett, \textit{Plantation Overseer}, 114–115.

1. Minter and Chisholm shipped cotton from Polk's plantation in 1838 and 1839, but they are not further identified.

2. The word \textit{before} is used here in the sense of \textit{ahead}, and \textit{keeping before} meant \textit{not falling behind}.

3. Lucy was a slave woman who had been at the Polk plantation in Mississippi almost from the time it began operation. The "breast complaint" was obviously tuberculosis and seems to have been the cause of many slave deaths.

4. See Caruthers, Harris and Company to Polk, March 17, 1838.

FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT

Dear Sir \[Jackson \[Tennessee\] Nov. 24th 1838

I presume by the time this reaches you, you will have received full returns from all the elections to be held this fall and can give one a
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pretty good idea of the probable state of parties, in the next Congress. The last intelligence received here from New-York is quite distressing. We have accounts that make it probable that Marcy has been beaten 10,000 votes and that the Federalists have elected to Congress two members to one Democratic, and a large majority to the Legislature. If this be true I fear we are in a bad box. If the opposition have a majority without counting the contested elections, they will elect their speaker, and decide the contested elections in their favour. This will to say the least defeat all the democratic measures and through their committees, throw out to the country all the party venom and misrepresentation for which their orators have heretofore been so distinguished. I hope you may be able to count better than I have and give me a little comfort.

Things go on very well here. Our cause is gaining daily here. Mr. Bell made a speech at Huntingdon the day after you, to some 150 or 200 persons. I learn Col. S. Dickens¹ was present and admits Mr. Bell did his cause great injury. Old Pleasant M. Miller has taken the field against you in the most unwarrantable manner. The other evening in a public company he assailed your dead father and to a question put by me, to wit: what had the conduct of your father to do with you? He replied that rascality run in the blood, that there was as much in the blood of people as horses &c. He stated that your father applied to the Legislature to pass an act directing the issuance of certificates for certain land warrants, represented by him to have been lost. That A[lexander] B Bradford and yourself drew the petition that he had the law past for his relief, for some 5 or 10,000 acres of land warrants. That since, the originals have been found, and located, as he was informed by Genl. Tipton who was the Surveyor General.² I am sorry sir, to be the channel of communicating such information, but this will show you the mode of warfare waged against you and I think it my duty to give you timely notice that you may be preparing your defense. Mr. Miller will no doubt promulgate this all over the country. I learned some months ago, that there was two original land warrants located some where in this district, I think one in Shelby and the other in Gibson, for which duplicates had issued by special act. And upon inquiry, I think, I learned that Pillow and Bradshaw had something to do with locating the originals,³ but in whose name or for whose benifit such warrant issued I do not remember, but I can ascertain if important. In the cases I allude to Grants have issued upon duplicates and originals. As Mr. Miller did not specify where the warrants were located I cannot tell whether he alluded to those I speak of or not. If I can be of any service to you in explaining this matter you may command me. Let me hear from you as early as convenient.⁴ Present me to
Mrs. Polk and say to her in sincerity, that I know of no female acquaintance that I have, I entertain a higher regard for, than herself. And for yourself, accept assurances of my high regard. . . .

Jos. H. Talbot

Addressed to Washington.

1. Samuel Dickens, a former North Carolina legislator and congressman, moved to Madison County, Tennessee, in 1820. He engaged in the business of locating land warrants and became one of the district's larger landholders.

2. Jacob Tipton, son of Jacob and Mary Bradford Tipton, was organizing commissioner of Shelby County and surveyor-general of the eleventh district, which embraced Shelby and Tipton counties.

3. Gideon Pillow, father of Gideon J. Pillow, was among the earliest locators in the Western District, as was John Bradshaw, who settled in Weakley County.

4. See Polk to Talbot, December 12, 1838.

FROM WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother

Columbia Nov. 25th 1838

I received your letter from Rutliger & was much gratified to learn that you still bore up under the fatigue of your campaign, and had experienced no evil consequences from the excessive bad weather which you had during your trip. The New York news has been received. It was as unexpected, as it was disagreeable and unfortunate. It came "like a thunder clap in a clear sky." No one anticipated a defeat, and least of all such a defeat. The triumphant jeers and excessive shouts of the Whigs in this quarter seem to be operating greatly to our advantage. Our friends instead of being chopfallen and discouraged at the result, seem to be more active, zealous and determined in the cause than heretofore. Goaded by disappointment and harrassed by the taunts of the Whigs, they are alive to the necessity of vigilance and action to prevent a similar misfortune here.

As yet the opposition in this District have brought no candidate on the field for Congress. No one has come out for the Legislature against [Jonas E.] Thomas and [Barkly] Martin. The Whigs still say that Cahal will oppose Nicholson but he has given no indication, himself, of his intention. Genl. [Samuel] Mitchell was in Columbia a day or two ago, direct from Bedford. He says the cause of Whiggery in that county is still on the decline; that nothing Nicholson can do, except a total abandonment of principle, can effect him so far as to give Cahal a majority in Bedford.
You will perceive from the Nashville Whig, that you are charged with being interested in Smith's contract for the removal of the Indians; with using your exertions to procure the contract for Smith and your Brother in law James Walker. Mr. Walker has answered the charge over his own signature, stating the facts, and clearing you entirely of all censure in the matter.

You will have heard before this reaches you, as Mr. Walker intended to write to you that Jack Long is dead, killed by Mr. Gee his overseer. Mr. Walker leaves for the District in the morning to attend to the matter. My understanding is that he will, if he can so arrange it, take one of Gee's negro boys, he owns several, in lieu of Jack. I requested him if he made the arrangement and got a boy, that would make an available hand on your plantation in Mississippi to write to [George W.] Bratton, stating the circumstances, to send up and get the boy in place of Jack. This I thought best for you, and the loss of Jack would make no material change in your arrangements. I done it for the best, and hope it will meet with your approbation.

Brother Samuel has had no return Hemorage since you left. He is improving slightly. I think Mother & all the family are well. Give my love to Sister Sarah.

WILL HAWKINS POLK

Addressed to Washington.
1. Rutledge was the county seat of Grainger County. The letter from James K. Polk has not been found.
2. The Whigs had swept the recent New York elections.
3. See James Walker to Polk, November 22, 1838. In his public statement Walker explained how he was involved with Williamson Smith of Maury County in some contracts connected with the removal of the Cherokees. Walker further stated that Polk was in no way involved and, indeed, did not previously know of the contracts.
4. Jack Long, a slave, had been on Polk's plantation in Fayette County and had not gone to Mississippi when Polk acquired the plantation there. Gee has not been further identified. See James Walker to Polk, December 10, 1838.
5. Samuel W. Polk had tuberculosis.

FROM RICHARD H. ALLEN

Lawrenceburg. November 26, 1838

After requesting certain information concerning benefits to widows of Revolutionary War veterans, Allen reports that John L. Welch, always Polk's friend, has heard that Polk's actions have prevented legislation favorable to
Allen does not believe the rumor and asks Polk to clear up the misunderstanding so that Welch will not be alienated.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Polk not only vigorously denied the story, but charged that Ebenezer J. Shields was responsible for its circulation. See Aaron V. Brown to Polk, November 1, 1838; Hopkins L. Turney to Polk, December 14, 1838; and Abraham McClellan to Polk, December 15, 1838.

FROM ELISHA WHITTLESEY

Marietta, Ohio. November 27, 1838

One of the founders of the Whig Party who has resigned from the House of Representatives introduces his successor, Joshua R. Giddings. He suggests that Giddings could serve well as a member of the Committee on Claims.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Giddings was appointed to the committee that Whittlesey recommended. An ardent antislavery Whig, Giddings served in the House, with one brief break, from 1838 until 1859.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Nashville 28th Novemr. 1838

I expected to hear from you at Blountville but receivd. nothing as yet. I am satisfied that the New York election will have no effect upon Tennessee. We are a little disapointed but not disheartened and have no fears but what we shall carry Tennessee. What have you done for us in the way of an Editor. What think you of Col. Wilson. For myself I confess I do not approve of his taking charge of the Union tho I may be mistaken. We could arrange to get him. Smith is of no force or aid as the publisher & the whole matter must be changed.

I feel confident that West Humphreys will agree to a proposition I have made by 30 Decemr. About that time he is to be marri[ed] here and the girl makes a condition that he shall live at Nashville. He is full of it & I want very much that he should have the Editorial Department.

I hold Mr Kendall's letter of appointment as General Agent for the [Post Office] Department. It is important that I should visit many places on business for the Dep't. and of this fact they are apprised, both for the better Regulation of mail routes and to attend to Lapses on several lines. I wish you to get the Post Master Genl. to say to me in a letter that my expences will be paid &c. for any trips or charges
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done under that Commission. It is important that I should go to many counties and to East Tennessee & the District.

Write me immediately. The Genl is well. No news. Write me fully.

R. ARMSTRONG

Addressed to Washington and marked “Private.”

1. Wilson was a former editor of the Baltimore Republican. See Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, May 18, 1838.

2. On January 1, 1839, Humphreys married Amanda M. Pillow, a sister of Gideon J. Pillow.

FROM ABSALOM JOHNSON

Flynn’s Lick, November 28, 1838

Johnson reports that Polk’s recent address at Gainesboro has caused great excitement in Jackson County. His use of old documents was particularly effective, especially the speech by Clay in which he opposed rechartering the first Bank of the United States. Johnson asks for copies of this speech to circulate among those who did not hear Polk and to silence Clay’s friends who still deny that Clay ever opposed the rechartering.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Little has been learned about Johnson other than that he was a practicing physician under forty years of age.

2. Flynn’s Lick, a community along Flynn’s Creek, was near Ft. Blount in the western part of Jackson County, Tennessee. Fort Blount, once called Williamsburg, was on the Cumberland River about sixty-five miles northeast of Nashville. At one time Williamsburg was the county seat of Jackson.

3. Clay’s speech was delivered in the United States Senate on February 15, 1811.

TO WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Washington City Nov. 28th 1838

We reached here last evening, in health, but as a matter of course, fatigued from our journey in the State. On receiving my mail one of the first things which attracted my attention was Col. [Ephraim H.] Foster’s letter addressed to “The Editor of the Memphis Enquirer,” and republished in the Nashville Whig of the 14th Instant. He has as you will see by reference to the letter, upon no better authority, than one of his own reckless party prints chosen to connect my name with the charge that at the Murfreesboro Whig dinner he had denounced
Jefferson as a demagogue &c. It is wholly untrue that in any of my public speeches, I have reiterated the charge connected with his name. Being absent at the time his speech was made, I could know nothing personally of what he said. Whilst in the District, I received three letters giving me some account of the proceedings of the Whig dinner at Murfreesboro, one from yourself, one from Col. Yoakum and one from Col. Laughlin, each stating that in his speech he used the language subsequently attributed to him, in the newspapers. These letters were opened in my room at Raleigh [Tennessee] in the presence of a few friends, who were anxious to hear from the Whig meeting at Murfreesboro, and to whom parts of the letters were shown. In passing through the State afterwards the subject as charged in the newspapers was occasionally mentioned in my presence. I made no endorsement of its truth (though I did not doubt it) for I had no other means of knowledge, than any other citizen of the State who was not present to hear the speech. The manifest object of Col. Foster's letter however, is to impress the public, that I am responsible for the charge. His letter now makes it important that the whole truth should come forth, and that what he did say, should be proved in an authentic and undoubted form. I hope you will see Col. Yoakum and see that the proof of those who heard the speech, is taken and published. I see the Times reiterates the charge. Col. Foster makes an issue of veracity with it, not with me, though he would have the public to infer that I had endorsed and was responsible for it. He knows better. I have not fully made up my mind as to the course proper for me to pursue, though I think it probable that I shall to day, address a letter to some of the Tennessee papers repelling the gratuitous and unmannerly use he has made of my name in his letter.

Every consideration of propriety however requires that the proof of what he did say should be taken and published without delay.

You can shew this to Maj. [John W.] Childress.

Addressed to Murfreesboro. Marked "Private," this letter is in Polk's handwriting but lacks his signature.

1. Foster's authority was an editorial in the Memphis Enquirer of October 23, 1838. Francis S. Latham was the editor. The November 14 issue of the Enquirer claimed that the Murfreesboro Weekly Times, the Nashville Union, and the Memphis Gazette were circulating the charges against Foster.

2. See Samuel H. Laughlin to Polk, September 27, 1838, and Henderson K. Yoakum to Polk, October 13, 1838. The letter from Rucker has not been found; the reference in the letter from Yoakum was indirect. There could have been another letter from Yoakum that has not been found.
3. It appears that Polk had a copy of the Murfreesboro Weekly Times in which the charge was reiterated.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Pulaski, Novr. 30th, 1838

I have just returned from a three weeks tour through Lawrence Wayne & Hardin. The Circuit court sitting in all. In Lawrence we have a decided majority. In Hardin I put it down as a tye. In Wayne a decided majority against us. I shall begin the work in Giles shortly & hope to report satisfactory progress. Colo. [Andrew A.] Kincannon left here to day, a little surprised that his commission has not yet arrived.¹ I explained to him the slow progress of such things at Washington & expressed to him, my full belief that it will yet arrive. He is anxious to get it & when it comes, will withdraw from the contest, in the best manner to the general cause. You will remember how confident I was that he was laboring under misapprehensions as to my course in his last election & that on his learning the true state of facts, our personal relations would be restored to their ancient condition. All of which has now come to pass.

I enclose you a letter to the acting comr. of Indian affairs,² to be sealed & delivered to him, provided a former letter in reply to his, enquiring the state & condition of the business yet remaining to be acted on in my law office, should have miscarried. If so this may supply its place. If however that did not miscarry, this can be destroyed by you.

I shall write you soon & more at large than I have time now to do.

A. V. BROWN

Addressed to Washington and marked “Confidential.”

1. See Brown to Polk, September 17 and November 1, 1838, and Polk to Brown, November 2, 1838.

2. Daniel Kurtz of Maryland was the acting commissioner in the Bureau of Indian Affairs; his regular job was chief clerk in that bureau.

FROM WILLIAM CARROLL

Nashville, November 30, 1838

When I was at Washington last summer, and accepted the appointment of special Creek Agent, my son William¹ was appointed to close the Chickasaw business, of which he had a correct knowledge having
been with me two years at Pontotoc. On our return home he entered upon the duties of his appointment, and is always at the Agency when there is any thing to do; but on the first of November he was at home, and drew on the Commissioner of Indian Affairs\(^2\) for his October pay. The Commissioner protested the draft upon the ground, that as it was dated at Nashville he could not then have been in the discharge of his duty. This is rather a strange decision especially as my son’s draft of the first of October for previous services was dated here and paid by the same Commissioner. Now it seems to me strange, when there happens to be no business to do at the Agency, that a deduction shall be made for a visit to Nashville which can be done by the stage in two days as you know, whereas if he had remained idle at the Agency all the time no such deduction would be thought of. Such a rule has not been thought of heretofore, as it is well known to the department that I came home frequently when I was Agent at Pontotoc, wrote to the Com. & Secy. of War\(^3\) and drew drafts on both dated here. My accounts were all settled without a word about deduction. While an individual holds such an appointment he must hold himself in constant readiness to discharge its duties, and he can give his attention to nothing else. If there be such a rule as the Commissioner suggests, as it has never been inforced, so far as my experience goes, it was improper to protest the draft, as my son is now on duty, and would have submitted to any deduction which might have been made, in a future settlement. The course taken has subjected us to mortification, costs and damages. Do me the favor to see the Secy. of War and send me his decision immediately on the subject. The appointment will end in two or three months by a final settlement of the Chickasaw business, and pay for the whole time is not great affair. My son will be at the Agency, and will attend faithfully to the business.

A word about my own appointment as special Agent to the Creek country. I had intended to draw for the amount which I conceived due to me, but as I wish no more protests from the Commissioner I shall delay until I hear from the Secy. of War to whom I wish you to submit the subject. On my return home in July I appointed persons to value two hundred and thirty ½ sections of land I was directed to sell. I have been superint[en]ding the business ever since, and should have set out for the Creek country about this time to attend the sale which was to have taken place in December, but the sale was suspended by an order from the Com. of In[di]an Affairs. As the sale of those lands was only a small part of the duties of my appointment, I could not doubt but that I would be immediately directed to do something else, and wrote the Commissioner that I should hold myself in readiness to
execute any instructions he might give. On looking at his letter carefully since the protest of my son’s bill, I have thought it not improbable that he intended to dismiss me from office, or at least suspend my pay, and call me again into service when his own whim may suggest. Now as I was appointed by the Secy. of War by direction of the President, I cannot submit to be either dismissed or suspended by a subaltern. If the public good requires a course of any kind, and it is communicated to me by the Secy. of War, I shall cheerfully submit, but as I am in readiness to do my duty, I shall take it unkind if pay is not allowed me until I hear from him. I have incurred a heavy expense in the purchase of a pair of horses and Barouche to go to that country and spend the whole winter there. Be kind enough to have an immediate decision from the Secy. of War, of which let him advise me that I may be relieved from suspense. If there is no use for my services, I can give my attention to my own business and the government can do the same. I have never solicited the favor of the government and I am sure I never will, as past experience has taught me to place but little reliance in the promises of public functionaries. But I will not complain, and as I love my country and its institutions I shall always be found in the discharge of my duty.

Things look well in Tennessee, but we have still some uphill business to do. But harmony and energy, will, I think give us success. If the state of my health authorizes it, you may expect to see my name announced, about the 25th of Decr. as a candidate against Bell as by that time we will know whether the disease I mentioned can be removed or not.4 If God spares me my health, he shall be told of things in a plainer way than he has yet been accustomed to. I shall fight with gloves off and am determined not to be defeated.

I have written this letter in great haste having had but little time before the mail closes. Do me the favor to let me hear from you as early as possible.5

Wm. Carroll

Addressed to Washington.

1. Less than twenty years old at this time, William Henry Carroll was later a general in the Confederate Army.

2. Daniel Kurtz was acting commissioner in the Bureau of Indian Affairs at this time, but it is not clear whether he was in this position when Carroll was first appointed to the position at Pontotoc.


4. The nature of this disease remains obscure.

5. Polk’s reply to Carroll has not been found. The Secretary of War,
however, stated that under his orders the Commissioner of Indian Affairs had acted correctly with regard to young Carroll’s pay. He expressed regret that Carroll was displeased but told Polk that Carroll’s case should be handled as a routine one and that Democrats should not ask special favors that would bring criticism that could be used as a political weapon.

FROM LYMAN KNOWLES

Sir, Philadelphia Novr. 30th 1838

Presuming you are in Washington I have the pleasure of informing you, your Carriage is nearly finished, and when finished I feel free to say it will be the most splendid and best finished for materials, workmanship and style I have ever turned out of my Manufactory, and have no doubt it will give satisfaction.1

With respect to the Carriage Horses, I have not been able to obtain a pair yet that I think will suit you. I have seen several. I do not believe I shall get a good pair for less than $400. Perhaps you might suit yourself better at Washington, but if you had rather I should purchase them, I will do so to the best of my judgement. Please let me know by return of mail.

L. KNOWLES

Addressed to Washington. This letter was penned and signed by an amanuensis. The signature reads, “L. Knowles for A. Knowles.”

1. In 1836 Knowles and Thayer of Amherst, Massachusetts, built a carriage for Polk. On January 26, 1837, apparently in response to an enquiry by Polk, Lyman Knowles wrote to Polk saying that his company would build a similar carriage for James Walker. During 1837, crippled by the panic, Knowles and Thayer sold their factory, and Lyman Knowles moved to Philadelphia, where he joined his brother in a similar business. It is probable that the carriage involved here was the one that Knowles had earlier agreed to build for Walker.

FROM SAMUEL MARTIN

D. Sir Campbells Station 3 Decr. 1838

I enclose you a Petition on the subject of the Post Office1 which I hope you will have attended to & that before presenting it you shew it to the President & say to him if he takes my advice he will so far as he is concerned give it his support. Since you left here I recvd. a long letter from Gov. Cannon & had copied it to send it [to] you, but on reflection concluded to say to you if you would say it never should be
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referred to by you or any one else, I would send it, but not otherwise.²
I have managed this election in my own way & will do so on condition
you will let me do so, but you must make no more speeches nor must
you introduce any more letters from Gen. Jackson or Amos Kendall.
I have other means more powerfull than ten such folks can bring to
bear on it. You with proper care can get, I think, Col Ramsay of
Knoxville, the Editor of the Register, on your side. Look at his paper
of 28 Nov & judge.⁸ A postmaster is wanted in Knoxville & the Col.
would be the very man who ought to get it,⁴ & you & your friends ought
to take during the session at least 20 copies of his paper if not more.

SAMUEL MARTIN

Please have my petitions entered at length on the Journals of the
House⁶ & present them as you may think proper, shewing them before
presentation to the President & his secretaries especially Mr. Poinsett.

Presumably addressed to Washington, but no envelope has been found.
1. On December 20, 1838, Polk presented a petition from Martin pray­
ing for the revision in postal laws and a reduction in postal rates.
2. See Polk to Samuel Martin, December 18, 1838.
3. William B. A. Ramsey was editor of the Knoxville Register at this time.
The issue mentioned here has not been found.
4. Ramsey had supported Hugh L. White but was thought to be return­
ing to the Democratic party. He was not, however, appointed postmaster at
Knoxville.
5. Polk presented two other memorials from Martin, who urged establish­
ment of a new national bank, modification of the curriculum at West Point,
and endowment of a literary institution for the instruction of females, the
funds for which would come from the Smithsonian bequest.

FROM JOHN B. HAYS

Dear Sir Columbia Tuesday Deer. 4th 1838

On yesterday evening a most unfortunate affair occurred between
your brother William & Richard Hays.¹ Mr. Hays was killed, William
was not hurt. Mr. Hays was the assailant.

The particulars are as follows, as near as I can gether them. On
Friday, last a Mr. Park² from Nashville, an acquaintance and probably
an old schoolmate of Wms invited Wm to dine with him at Edmon­
son's.³ During dinner, they were conversing on the subject of a fancy
ball that had recently been at Nashville, Mr. Park describing it. Wm
mentioned to Hays that he, Hays, would be a proper person, to in­
terest himself with the ladies, to get one up at Columbia, being pop-
ular among them &c. Mr. Hays with some excited feeling replied, that 
you democrats & negroes ought to get up one, and that he would give 
two suits of clothes, to a couple of negroes, if they would get up one. 
Wm then threw a glass of wine in Hays' face. Hays threw one in 
Wms face. Wm then got a hold of Hays & beat him, Hays not much 
resisting. It there ended, they making peace.

In an hour or two some one told Wm that Hays had represented 
the affair to the disadvantage of Wm. Wm called on Hays, who would 
not give any direct answer to Wm. Wm then gave Hays a horse­ 
whipping. I presume from the accounts of those who saw it, a severe 
one, Hays not resisting at all. This is about the substance of what I 
have heard from the various persons who have spoken of it. From Wm 
I have heard nothing on the subject, specially. But I presume that this 
condensed statement, will be about as correct as any one person can 
gather & state. The precise words and manner &c that would give a 
more correct meaning, of course, I cannot give you in writing, with the 
stock of information that I possess on that subject.

On Saturday morning Wm requested S[amuel] P. Walker to call 
on Hays with an apology, stating that he had acted with too much 
haste & his regret &c. But Mr. Hays would receive none. On hearing of 
this, I called to see Wm for the purpose of advising him to keep en­ 
tirely on the defensive in all respects, in word & in deed. I found that 
his had already determined on that course. Mr. Hays had written to 
Nashville & Franklin for his friends. He [was] endeavouring to pro­ 
cure arms & ammunition &c at this place, at the same time stating that 
there was but one course, for him to pursue, to reinstate himself &c.

On Sunday evening Dr. Hightower4 from Franklin came. They 
were loading and shooting pistols that night. Also the next morning.

As far as this I have given what will be able to be proved in sub­ 
stance. Now I will give you principally what was given in evidence on 
the committing trial.

Dr. [William J.] Polk about breakfast time on Monday received a 
note from Hays inclosing one to Wm informing Wm that he was armed 
and would attack him &c. Dr. Polk returned the letter to him stating 
to him, that he would have nothing to do in the affair, except that he 
had informed Wm verbally of the contents of his letter & expressed 
his regrets that nothing could be done &c. Wm was at [that] time un­ 
armed. He then procured weapons &c. Wm then went to the square, 
remained a couple of hours, returning home to dinner, came in town 
about 3, was standing on Herndon's corner. In a few minutes Hays 
left his office, came up the pavement opposite [Hilary] Langtry's 
doore, advanced over the street about 8 or 10 paces, called to Wm in a
loud tone to defend himself, drawing a pistol at the same time. Hays fired & missed. Wm fired so soon as to make several to believe that the fires were simultaneous, others stating positively, that they saw & heard Hays fire first, an instant after calling to Wm. Wm struck him a little above the right eye, between the hair and eye. He died this morning and has been taken to Davidson for interment. Hays & Wm both acted with great firmness. The evidence was taken from the crowd that were standing about at the time of the affair. G[ideon] J. Pillow & S[amuel] D. Frierson for Wm, T[erry] H. Cahal for the state. Mr. Herndon & Porter & Hillyard at different times called on Hays yesterday to arrest him. But he pledged his word to them, that he would not do any act of violence. Consequently they did not arrest him. His attack in the absence of his friend, after his promise to him to delay untill today, is unaccount[able], probably excessive excite­ment from some cause, that he could not control. It is to be regretted that the affair had not ended at the table on Friday. The community are disposed to censure Wm for the last part of Friday evenings work. I regret it in common with his friends. I saw him a little after dinner that evening. Had heard nothing of the affair untill after the second affair. I do not believe that he was under the influence of spirits at any time since this unpleasant affair has commenced. I have heard of no one who has any knowledge that he has been even excited with spirits.

On yesterday morning having heard from Dr Polk of the letter, I went to Wm and cautioned him on the subject of any offensive opera­tion whatever, and on those circumstances that might subject him to the duelling law &c. I was gratified to find, that he had no idea what­ever, of any offensive operation of any kind, but regretting the circum­stance, and determining to act on the defensive in all respects. I am satisfied, from what I saw & what I have heard, (the substance of which is related on the last page,) that his conduct was as purely de­fensive as it was possible to be. I did not see any imprudence in his conduct yesterday. In this the great mass of the community agree with me. He was committed for trial in Jany next, bound in $2000 himself, each security 1000. Whether Hays friends will prosecute I do not know. I presume, if they are not disposed to do so themselves that they will be urged to do so, by some person about here. But this is con­jecture.

When I called on Wm I told him, that between him & Hays, no one ought to interfere, in an affray, let what would happen. He said that he would not wish any one whatever, nor would he have any. I then told him that Hays had friends here, they probably were to par­ticipate. If so he needed a friend to watch him, that I was not fond of
such sport, but if he had no other among his more immediate associates, that I would stand by him to prevent a second person from injuring him. But that I would not in any event, let the consequences be what they would, to either, interfere between him & Hays, if there were but the two. He said that he would prefer me to any person whatever. I determined to see him through as far as concerned a secondary person. Consequently I called on Hays to know if any of his friends would participate in what might be expected, from the purport of his note to Wm. He as well as Dr. Hightower assured me in the most gentlemanly way that no human being would have anything to do in the matter, but himself. I told him that the honorable course that he had taken in giving information &c was duly appreciated. That between him and Wm that there was no disposition to interfere, nor would there be any interference, unless commencing on his side. That then it could not be expected that Wms friends would stand by, idle spectators. He then expressed his friendship for Wms friends, stating that they were the best friends that he had, but that the injury he reed from Wm he could not bear. I then expressed the regret of Wms friends in the matter, and wished that I could suggest some way that it could be repaired. Consequently I took no part in it. He assailed at a time when he had promised his friend Hightower, that he would not assail untill today. I suppose that some fresh accumulation of excitement overcame him. Hightower was sitting in Chaffins at the time. S. P. Walker, Jack Johnson & L. Philips & myself were sitting in Walkers store at the time talking about it, and having just arrived at the conclusion that he would not assail, when we heard each pistol fire.

Your relatives of course were in trouble, and still continue somewhat so. But they do not see how Wm could have acted otherwise. I have advised them all to the utmost prudence in speaking of the affair. Mr. Walker is in the District, but will be at home in a day or two, on his way to Washington.

I wish that you would write a long letter to Wm as to his trial &c. If any thing occurs worthy of communicating, I will write to you.

J. B. HAYS

Hays had 4 or 5 pistols and large knife or dirk, in his pockets.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Richard H. Hayes, a young lawyer, was a son of Oliver B. Hayes and Sarah Hightower Hayes of Nashville. He had been living in Columbia for about a year and recently had formed a law partnership with A. O. P. Nicholson.

2. This was probably William Park, who had been admitted to the Uni-
versity of Nashville in 1833 for work toward a second degree. He probably knew William H. Polk at that school.

3. The Columbia Inn was operated at this time by John Edmonson. This same inn had been operated earlier by Pleasant Nelson. Later Nelson re-acquired the inn.

4. Dr. Richard R. Hightower of Franklin was a brother of Sarah Hightower Hayes and was, therefore, an uncle of Richard H. Hayes.

5. Joseph Herndon and Anderson W. Hilliard were Columbia merchants. Nimrod Porter was sheriff of Maury County, a post he held for more than two decades.

6. William H. Polk's securors were William P. Martin and Gideon J. Pillow.

7. On January 12, 1839, after rejecting a charge of murder, the grand jury for Tennessee's eighth circuit court indicted William H. Polk for assault and battery. Four days later he was found guilty.

8. Lemuel Phillips was a Columbia merchant and also operated a tannery.

FROM LEWIS P. ROBERTS

My dear Sir 

Enclosed you will receive 5 dollars which you will please pay over to the "Editors of the Democratic Review" with the request that they will send me the Jany no. as it never came to hand, and I cannot have it bound without that no.

Our worthy Governor, as I expected, will not accept the resignation of our distinguished, and consistent Senator, fearing it would injure his election I suppose. The trouble is that Judge White and his Nashville friends anticipate the defeat of his excellency, and wish to throw as few impediments in his way as possible, hence the Judge consents to resume his seat in the Senate, as the people cannot do without his invaluable services, (as the Governor modestly says). I have heard some of the most prominent Whigs say that they would not support Cannon, and I should not be surprised if the Honl. John Bell, should not be a candidate.

Thomas Lyon observed to me, that if you would come out in favor of internal improvements, that he would support you. Upon reflection I think that it would be a good move, and a very popular one, as almost every influential farmer in this, and the adjoining counties, hold stock in one or the other of our two rail roads, and they would go "head and shoulders," for any man who would advocate those measures. You can think about it. You will have divers difficulties to contend with. You will have to carry Mr. Van Buren, come in contact
with Judge Whites personal and political popularity and have to contend with the local prejudices that exist against West Tennessee. However Govr. Cannon will have to contend with the same. However I think we will be able to give a good account of old Knox in August next.

My sister Eliza, is at present going to school in “Hamiltonville West Philadelphia Penn.” and I suppose never sees anything like a political document. I would take it as a favor if you would send her a message or any other document that you think would interest her.

New York as I supposed has partially gone vs this administration, and that most efficient friend of M V B left out, but I hope only for a short time. I would rather that we had lost ten common men than he, but I hope he will be provided for.

L. P. Roberts

NB I will write you more fully hereafter. L P R

Addressed to Washington.
1. John L. O'Sullivan and Samuel Daly Langtree.
2. Newton Cannon was governor. Roberts's satirical comments about the senator refer to Hugh Lawson White, who had written a letter of resignation in November because of poor health. Cannon deferred accepting the resignation; and when White's health improved, he returned to his duties in Washington.
3. The reference is probably to Thomas C. Lyon, a Knoxville attorney who became United States district attorney in 1845.
4. At this time Knoxvillians were keenly interested in the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad and in the Hiwassee Railroad Company. Neither railroad went into operation, although the latter did begin construction in 1837 and commenced operation in 1855 under a different name.
5. Neither Eliza nor the school has been further identified. Hamiltonville, or Hamilton Village, was laid out in 1804 by William Hamilton on his estate, The Woodlands, in West Philadelphia.
6. Roberts refers to the defeat suffered by the Democrats in the recent elections in New York and in particular to William L. Marcy's defeat in the gubernatorial race.

FROM SACKFIELD MACLIN

La Grange. December 5, 1838

Needing information to use in his campaign for election to the legislature, Maclin asks Polk to send him Jackson's veto messages on certain land and bank bills, as well as some of Hugh L. White's speeches on those subjects. He
December 6 1838

says that his district is handicapped for lack of a good candidate for Congress and believes the only hope of success is to force William C. Dunlap to run.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM AMOS KIRKPATRICK

Dear Sir

Meigsville [Tennessee] Decem 6th 1838

As I have no Representative I will take the liberty to ask you to be my step Representative. Will you be so good as to send such documents as you should think might be of service in our cause in this Neighbourhood. I do believe the Post office at Gainesboro has been in the hands of the enemy long enough. It gives them great advantage over us. S W Cassetty is Postmaster but Kenard and Bransford keeps it. They have always been Adams men. Cassetty told me he was a going to resign. Will you be so kind as to tell the Postmaster genl. if he does resign to appoint Magor Alexander Montgomery and if he does not resign I do believe it would be right to remove him. I do not believe in one man holding an office for another. They cannot be aggrieved to do any more than they do so there is nothing to fear on that score. Major Wm. Plumlee says send him some documents to Lodi Jackson County Te. If Campbell voted against the squatters send me the proof as quick as you can. I do believe the Whigs would like to remove me if they could. Have we gained strength or lost at the late Elections. Do you think the divor[ec]e bill will pass this session or not.

AMOS KIRKPATRICK

Addressed to Washington.

1. Born in South Carolina about 1780, Amos Kirkpatrick was the postmaster at Meigsville in Jackson County.

2. William B. Campbell, the congressman from that district, was a Whig and, apparently, no help to Kirkpatrick.

3. Sampson W. Cassetty was the postmaster at Gainesboro at this time and later was clerk of the Jackson County court. Russell M. Kinnard and Col. Thomas L. Bransford were the first merchants of Gainesboro. Bransford, the senior partner in their joint enterprise, was one of the leading Whigs in the state. Both merchants were born in Kentucky.

4. Cassetty did not resign until 1842.

5. Born in North Carolina about 1790, Alexander Montgomery was a farmer in Jackson County.

6. Like Montgomery, William Plumlee was born in North Carolina about 1790 and, apparently, was a farmer in the county.
FROM LYMAN KNOWLES

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. December 6, 1838

Knowles writes that for $500 he can obtain for Polk a pair of handsome carriage horses and that the coachman who has been driving them is available for hire. Knowles adds that the carriage will be delivered in Washington by his brother and urges Polk to instruct him promptly as to what he should do about the horses.

Addressed to Washington. This letter was written by an amanuensis and was not signed. Polk's endorsement identifies the writer.

FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Dear Uncle Columbia Dec 7th 1838

Before this reaches you, you will doubtless have received Dr. Hays' letter giving an account of the melancholy affair between William & R. H. Hays Esqr on the 3d. Inst.¹ I presume, of course, the Dr. has given you all the particulars though he has requested me to write you upon the subject. Of the difficulty at the Dinner Table on Friday I have heard several accounts. The one given you by Dr. Hays is probably as correct as any, though Hays may not have intended to insult William. Some of the persons present (Park of Nashville) represent the language used as even more insulting than Bill.² However this may be, William probably acted imprudently in whipping him, though it was without reflection and under great excitement (I do not think he was drinking) from hearing that Hays had given an incorrect version of their previous difficulty.

I saw Hays a short time after the last affair and understood from him that he would be satisfied with an apology. He added what Wm. had misunderstood his language at the dinner table & that it was not his intention to insult him.

I saw Bill the next morning & told him of the conversation I had had with Hays. He said, if Hays did not intend to insult him he was very sorry for what he had done, that he had acted under the influence of excitement and was too hasty, and was willing to make an apology. I then saw Hays again. He seemed very much excited and I could not satisfy him. Not content to let the matter rest here I went to Alfred [O. P.] Nicholson and requested him to intercede and use his influence with Hays³ to suppress an affray which I then feared would be fatal to one of them. He did attempt it but without success. Hays told
him, "it could be settled in but one way," without saying what that way was. This was on Saturday. On Monday morning Hays wrote to Dr [William J.] Polk enclosing a note to William. Dr Polk returned his note and wrote him that he could have nothing to do with the affair, but that he had considered it his duty to inform William of the contents of his note, which was that [he] was armed &c. When I heard of this I immediately saw Wm. and found that he had consulted with Dr Hays and was aware of the importance of being prudent, and acting entirely on the defensive. He did not wish to kill Hays unless it were necessary for his own safety. The Bal. of the story you know. The poor fellow made the attack the same evening. Armed with four or five Pistols, dirk &c, advancing on Wm. he called on him to "stand and defend himself" at the same time presenting his pistol. They both fired, Hay[s] first. He was shot through the head and died in about 15 hours. Wm. immediately gave himself up. He was bound over to Court in a bond of $2,000 for himself & $1,000 each for two securities.

Thus I have given you an account of this most unfortunate and unhappy affair. William seems to regret it as much as any one. He has not been in town since, & although he cannot recall what is past I hope it will have a good effect on his future life.

It is getting late and I fear the mail will be close[d].

Sam. P. Walker

Be sure to write to William and give him advice about his trial &c.

Addressed to Washington.

1. See John B. Hays to Polk, December 4, 1838. Both Dr. Hays and Samuel P. Walker, for obvious reasons, spell the name of Richard H. Hayes as Hays.

2. Although William H. Polk was Walker's uncle, in this case the nephew was older than the uncle. The two young men were near the same age, and Samuel Walker normally called his uncle Bill. In this letter he alternates Bill and William.

3. Nicholson and Hayes were law partners.

FROM JOHN S. YOUNG

Dr Sir McMin[n]vil[l]e 7th Dec 1838

Since the explanation is on paper in relation to Cherokee affairs which I sent you the Nashville Whig has ceased its attacks upon you and the slander is about to recoil upon its authors and is looked upon by the people as originating in that malicious spirit of persecution by
which Bell & his satalites hoped not only to be able to injure your political prospects [but also] to affect your reputation.\footnote{1}

Your cause is evidently growing every day. If you can get one third of the votes in East Tenn the combined powers of Whigery cannot defeat you[r] election.

The Whigs seeing that they cannot get their man along carrying Clay & a Bank, they are trying to convince the people that the question of an U S bank is [done?] away and that the true question is Sub treasury or no Sub Tr. This will be strongly tried in the District.

But touching my private interest upon which I wrote you a short time since\footnote{2} Maj Genl [Winfield] Scott was at this place a few weeks ago. He offered me his testimony of the faithful manner in which I had discharged my duty in the late Emigration. He wrote a very strong letter to Mr Poinsette [Joel R. Poinsett] recommending my employment as a Disburseing Agent in the Indian service of the Govt. This letter of Genl Scott can be referred to in any intercourse in my behalf you may have with Mr Poinsette. During the whole time I was in the Cherokee service it was my study so to demean myself as to deserve something else at the end of the time.

I saw the Hon C C Clay on his way to Washington. He said to me that although he had recommended another gentleman for the Land office in Alabama he would give on paper to Mr Van Buren or any body else his opinion of my merits. He is warmly & zealously my friend and for any thing that would not violate his pledges to others would go every length in my favour.

If you think it would promote my interest I would come to Washington in Jan, but if not I do not feel able to incur the expense on uncertainties. I fear I am troubleing you too much with my interests. To you alone am I indebted for the station I hold in public life & for which I feel truly grateful.

The unfortunate affair between Mr William Polk & Mr Hays is much regretted.\footnote{3} The circumstances on the part of Mr. P. are no doubt justifiable.

\begin{flushright}JNO. S. YOUNG\end{flushright}

\textit{Addressed to Washington.}

1. Polk had been charged with having an indirect financial interest in a War Department contract to remove the Cherokees westward. See James Walker to Polk, November 22, 1838, and William H. Polk to Polk, November 25, 1838.

2. The most recent letter from Young to Polk that has been found was dated November 16, 1837.
3. William H. Polk had killed Richard H. Hayes in a street fight on December 3, 1838. See John B. Hays to Polk, December 4, 1838, and Samuel P. Walker to Polk, December 7, 1838.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Dear Colo,

To keep up [John W.] Ford's McMinnville Gazette (and Ford is now here), I have been forced to draw on you for . . . $150.00 To be paid as follows

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I have also raised for him here $300 which will save his press and save the Mountain district. Call on the two Hon[ora]bles for $50 each. We are working hard. Carroll will be out² and we will carry Tennessee & they know it. I have no time to say more. My draft must be honored.

R. ARMSTRONG

I have written Catron & Grundy.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Polk's notation on the envelope that he answered this letter on December 17, 1838, confirms the year of this letter as suggested by the Library of Congress.

2. Armstrong thought that William Carroll would run for Congress against Bell.

FROM JOHN CATRON

Col Polk,

My contract with Mr. [Jonathan] Elliott was founded on the enclosed letter of Mr. [William Thomas] Carroll, acting as my agent.¹

Mrs. Polk, & Mrs. Catron had agreed to spend the winter in the same parlor. Mr. Elliott now agrees that Mrs. C. & I go in jointly with you & Mrs. P. in parlor & table, and pay 25$ per week. This is all I will pay, & the highest in the City. Now make your own bargain with Mr. Elliott, or take any course you please without being trammelled with my situation.²

J. CATRON
No address appeared on the envelope. The letter was delivered to Polk by hand.

1. For earlier negotiations, see John Catron to Polk, October 27, 1838.
2. The Polks remained at Elliot's during the third session of the Twenty-fifth Congress.

FROM JAMES M. LASSITER

Trenton. December 8, 1838

Lassiter solicits aid in getting appointed postmaster of Trenton. He recalls that his support of Van Buren in 1836 had cost him his job in Columbia and that Samuel P. Walker had helped him by giving him a job. He assures Polk that in the approaching gubernatorial contest he will repay him for his kindness.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Lassiter had started a business of his own in Trenton. He was not appointed as postmaster.

FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT

Dear Sir

Jackson [Tennessee] Decr 8th 1838

I learn that it will be attempted to repeal or modify the law establishing a federal court here, at the instance of the Nashville Bar, and that they rely upon Senator Foster to effect it. It will be of service to keep your eye upon it. I have no doubt an attempt will be made to rob the Marshall of this district of the fees upon executions issued upon judgments in the court at Nashville, against citizens of this district. This should not be allowed. For the Marshall of Middle Tennessee to collect money in this district because the same judge may be on his court is nonsense. As well might the sheriff of Davidson collect an execution in Maury from the circuit court of Davidson.

Jos. H. Talbot

Addressed to Washington and marked "Confidential."

1. An act of June 18, 1838, created a third judicial district in Tennessee, with the apparent intention of establishing three independent districts in the state. The legislation, however, was faulty. The law omitted the names of three non-contiguous counties, Madison, Henderson, and Weakley, that were obviously intended to be a part of the new district. Moreover, the law required that the court meet at Jackson, Madison County, which was not in the new district it was to serve.
2. Ephraim H. Foster was appointed to the Senate post that Felix Grundy vacated when he became a member of Van Buren's cabinet. Foster had already been elected to a full term in the Senate, to succeed Grundy on March 4, 1839. Interestingly enough, Foster served only until March 3, 1839, when he resigned without serving a single day of the full term to which he had been elected.

3. Even though Foster had not been in Congress when the new district was created, Democrats in West Tennessee expected him to use the faulty legislation to the advantage of his friends in Nashville. See Robert J. Chester to Polk, December 10, 1838, and Polk to Talbot, December 27, 1838.

FROM ROBERT J. CHESTER

Dr Sir

Jackson, Ten. 10 Decr. 1838

You will be informed by this mail that Senator Foster is to be written to on the subject [of] the Branch of the Federal Court which was fixed here at the last session, &c.¹

You have now been sufficiently through this district to know that we are as much entitled to a court as either portion of this state and I hope that you will see that nothing at least be taken off from this court. The 3 countys which were accidentely left out, will I hope be added.

I got home last night from a tour through a part of Gibson, Carroll, & Weakley County's. Weakley County is truly Democratic & your majority will be overwhelming. I feel confidnt that Gibson will giv you a majority² and I have strong hopes of Carroll. Madison will now giv you a majority. Write me when you can. Send documents.

ROBT. J. CHESTER

Addressed to Washington. Because the writer's irregular abbreviations have in some places made the text difficult to comprehend, the editors have silently exercised more than the usual amount of editorial license.

¹. This refers to the act of June 18, 1838. See Joseph H. Talbot to Polk, December 8, 1838, and Polk to Talbot, December 27, 1838.

². For a different opinion of Polk's strength in Gibson County, see Thomas Love to Polk, December 12, 1838.

FROM THOMAS DEAN

My Dr. Friend

Flatcreek Bedford Cty Ten 10th Decem 1838

This will let you know that it is the opinion of your humble serven[t] that the cause of democracy is gaining friends in Old Bed-
Correspondence of James K. Polk

forth as well as throughout the state. Some news recently received from East Tennessee is quite cheering as regards your prospects of success. The federal Whigs that puffed so much about betting on Cannon is quite still & I have lately heard that some of them have backed from there propositions.

You have before this no doubt heard of the unfortunate rencounter between your brother & Hays which resulted in the death of the latter. So far as I have been able to learn, both friends & foes justifies your brother in the act.

Coln Record is a candidate for Brigadeir General to fill the vacancy occasioned by Mitchills removal. Nicholson has as yet no opponent. Ther is no candidates out in this county for the legislature.

Inclosed you will find a five Dollar bill, as well as prospectus for the Congressional Globe. You will please have them sent on as soon as convenient to the subscribers. You will also confer a favour in having the Globe stop to Coln Bobo & myself. If there is any thing due them, please settle it and on sight it shall be refunded. You will recollect that when we agreed to take the Globe it was printed weekly. Since changed to semi weekly which has so enhansed the price that Bobo is dissatisfied & we have concluded to discontinue, which as above observed you will please to attend to for us & oblige your friends & servants.

I should be glad to see a line from you as regards the state of parties, & what course the Subtreasury will be likely to take & such other matters as you inight think I should like to know. Must conclude with my best wishes for your health and happiness.

THOS DEAN

Addressed to Washington.

1. William H. Polk had killed Richard H. Hayes in a street fight in Columbia on December 3. See John B. Hays to Polk, December 4, 1838.

2. James C. Record was a former resident of Maury County who resided at Farmington in Bedford County. He was a colonel in the militia and a man of some political influence. Samuel Mitchell was moving to Arkansas.

3. Dean did not yet know that A. O. P. Nicholson had recently withdrawn as the Democratic candidate for Congress.

4. Elisha Bobo was a militia colonel who had commanded the 103rd Regiment, Tennessee, in 1830.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir, Clarksville Dec 10th 1838

I have heard a rumor to day, coming from a source that induces me to think there is something in it and I let you know it that you may
December 10 1838

look out. It came from [Mortimer A.] Martin, the brother in law of [Richard] Cheatham & probably from him that a serious effort was making to induce Reeves to play the part of White for them in the next Presidential election.1 They find they cannot run Clay, Harrison or Webster & they must have some body for the South & then White against you & they would feel secure.

I cannot think Reeves will be such a goose unless all hope of getting back is lost.2 I cannot believe any serious effort will be made in this District to support Clay H or W. It is a very general impression here that White will run agt you in the spring. In this District he can get no more than Cannon. I continue to hear every [where] the most favorable accounts from the District.

My health continues pretty good.

C. JOHNSON

West Humphreys will marry Miss Pillow, move to Nashville & take charge of the Union, it is believed.3

Addressed to Washington.

1. There were several rumors about possible action by William C. Rives of Virginia, a Democrat recently allied to the Whigs. The alleged Whig scheme for the presidential election resembled closely their strategy that had failed in 1836.

2. Johnson apparently thought that there was a chance that Rives would rejoin the Democrats.

3. Humphreys married Amanda M. Pillow on January 1, 1839, but he did not take charge of the Union.

FROM JOEL M. SMITH

Nashville. December 10, 1838

Smith says that he does not know what success Polk has had in obtaining an editor for the Nashville Union. He says that Robert Armstrong has suggested that West H. Humphreys might be willing to take the position. Smith asks Polk's opinion.

Addressed to Washington.

FROM JAMES WALKER

Dear Sir

Columbia Dec. 10th. 1838

Dr. Hays informs me that he has written you the particulars of William's unfortunate affair which resulted in the death of R H Hays.1 It is therefore unnecessary for me to repeat the facts of the case.
Unfortunate and distressing as the occurrence has been I do not see that William can be blamed. Indeed from Saturday morning up to the fatal termination, he could not have acted otherwise than he did, unless he had determined to be shot down without resistance.

Public sentiment is very generally in his favor, and I believe he is blamed by no one except for the occurrence of Friday evening, the cause of which is not generally known. You know that Wm has felt himself injured by efforts, that he believed were unjustly made to fix upon him the character of being dissipated. Therefore when he understood that H. had said (after the affair at the dinner table) that he should not notice "Polks drunken assault upon him," or that "he was but a drunken fellow" he was very much excited, and happening to meet H. at his office door, as he was passing up, he asked him what he meant by his language at the dinner table, and whether or not he intended insult to him or his family. Hays equivocating, saying neither no or yes produced the blows which caused the fatal termination. But is useless to repeat what I presume Dr. Hays has already informed you of.

My object in writing to you is to prevent you from feeling any unnecessary uneasiness. So far as the law is concerned William is perfectly safe. There can not be even a possibility of his conviction. The death was produced by a clear and undisputed act of self defence, which can be established by at least 100 witnesses. On Wm's part it was not even an indirect duel; on Hays's it was. If there be any blame, it can be only for imprudence on Friday evening. I think it best that the trial should be had at the first Court, (January) that the excitement may be over. You had better so advise William, but that is his own notion.

I know you cannot avoid unpleasant feelings, but there is no necessity or propriety in your allowing it to give you very great concern.

The opposition show some inclination to make a political matter of it. I think they will fail. At all events they cannot make it operate to your prejudice, nor do I think to Williams. On this point you may give yourself no uneasiness. It is an unpleasant melancholy occurrence, but not criminal I really believe.

I suppose you have been informed of the cause of my sudden return to the District (the death of Jack Long). I found Gee had fled. Him and family are perfectly willing to pay his value, and I think will leave to Saml $1000 for him this week. This is nearly all that detains me. I have the means of securing the loss and if it is not done this week will take out an attachment and hold on to his property until indemnity is [. . .].
[I hope?] you have had our Bill started in the House, as I am extremely anxious to get it through this session.\(^5\)

I hope to leave for Washington in 7 or 8 days.

\textit{James Walker}

Addressed to Washington.

1. See John B. Hays to Polk, December 4, 1838.
2. Jack Long, a slave on Walker's plantation in Fayette County, had been killed by Mr. Gee, the overseer; Walker was trying to obtain compensation. See William H. Polk to Polk, November 25, 1838.
3. The reference is probably to Samuel P. Walker.
4. The last part of this paragraph and the beginning of the next are illegible.
5. Walker was still trying to get compensation from the Post Office Department for alleged losses over several years on his mail contract business. See Walker to Polk, February 27, 1838.

\textbf{FROM JOHN W. CHILDRESS}

\textit{Dear Sir} MurfreesBoro. December 12h 1838

I recievd yours and Sarahs letter of the 29th ult. and was pleased to learn that you had reached Washington safely. Dr. Rucker has not recieved the letter you alluded to in yours to me, but I can guess at its contents, from what you have written to me.\(^1\)

You have doubtless before now discovered from the tone of the "Union" that the attempt to get proof upon the subject of Mr Fosters remarks in relation to Jefferson, at this place, has failed. Cunningham came up and made application to many of both parties, who were present, but could not prevail on any one to make a statement, or permit their names to be refered to in the newspaper. They recollect the remarks as made by Foster, but are not willing to become Certifiers, when they know they will incur the virulent abuse of the whole Whig press in this state. Cunningham was much mortified as I understood, and upon his return made a half way retraxit\(^2\) of what he had written upon the subject.

I think no one here pretends to deny the truth of the statements as published, neither Whig or Democrat. Indeed two or three of the most intelligent & respectable of the Whig party have been heard to assert it both before and since the publication of Mr Fosters letter, but they utterly refuse to make any statement that would injure their party through one of its prominent members. You will therefor percieve
that any further efforts to get proof would be wholly fruitless. I think both sides here have concluded to let the matter rest. If application for statements had been made before Fosters letter, they could have been obtained with ease, for no one here dreamed that he would dare to deny it.

We have nothing new in political affairs at present. There seems to be quiet times throughout the State. The Whigs evince some little dissatisfaction with their candidate for Gov. Some pieces in the Knoxville Register have caused a good deal of uneasiness here. The Democrats here think Cannon is their strongest man and are willing that some one else would be substituted in his stead.

I think your election sure if the Press throughout the state are properly aroused to a sense of their duty. The Union is a weak concern, and the village papers are not conducted with sufficient spirit. Our candidate for Senator (Maj [Leonard H.] Sims) has withdrawn on account of private business, and Col. Yoakum is running in his stead. I have not seen or heard of Childress & Gentry since you left home.

I presume you have had full accounts of the unfortunate occurrence at Columbia, from your friends there. I have not been able to learn whether the Whigs there are trying to use it to your prejudice. If they should, from all I can learn of the affair, they can make nothing out of it.

Will you be so good as to subscribe for the semi weekly [Washington] Globe and have it sent to me.

We are all in good health. My love to Sarah and tell her I will write to her soon.

JNO. W. CHILDRESS

P. S. Your horse is in good hands and in good condition.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Polk's letter to Childress has not been found. Polk's letter to William R. Rucker, also dated November 29, 1838, was devoted to an episode surrounding Ephraim H. Foster's speech in Murfreesboro and Foster's alleged denunciation of Thomas Jefferson.

2. A retraction. On November 26, 1838, [Joshua] Cunningham devoted a column of the Nashville Union to a qualification of his charges against Foster. Earlier charges had appeared in the paper on October 31, November 14, and November 19, 1838.


4. William G. Childress and Meredith P. Gentry, both of Williamson County, were candidates for Congress.

5. This refers to the death of Richard H. Hayes at the hands of William H. Polk.
FROM WILLIAM CONNER

Dear Sir

Brownsville Tenn. Dec 12, 1838

When I saw you here last fall you promised to send me some documents to combat the Whigs (alias Federalists) with, and I can assure you I am in much want of them.

If possible procure me Judge Whites Speech of 1834.\(^1\) John Bells Bedford letter\(^2\) in which he disclaims all idea of dividing the party and some of the acknowledgements of the friends to the U. S. Bank, that exchanges could be regulated without the Bank, and that the presure was not in consequence of the veto on the U. S. Bank. I also wish to procure Henry Clay’s speech against the Occupants in 1838 printed by the Intelligencer Office,\(^3\) and any other paper you may suppose I need.

James L. Green is the Republican Van Buren Candidate for the Legislature in this County, opposed by John P. Perkins.\(^4\) Green is a man of fine education & well qualified to sustain the cause, but like myself he has not paid much attention to politics of late years. He should be furnished with papers if possible. My opponent is John B. Ashe\(^5\) a lawyer of this place, an anti Jackson Anti Van Buren and all other Anti man, but says he is not for Clay, but I will make him shew his hand. He shall be a Clay man or a Van Buren man.

I have lately been over this Senatorial District, and in Tipton you will beat Cannon 2 to 1. In Lauderdale 5 to 1. In Haywood I think the contest will be nearly equal and in Madison you will beat about 2 to 1½. Our prospects are better ev[er]y day & I have no doubt but that Whigism will die a natural death at the next August Elections.

If I had time I could give you a most laughable description of the Bell dinner, [John W.] Croquetts & [Alexander B.] Bradford’s eloquence and the long faces compelled to wait Mr. Bells 5½ hour speech out before they could eat.\(^6\)

But sir this speech here added much to our cause. The people say that he is a political missionary sent out to enlighten we savages of the District.

I send you a list of names, as you requested, to whom whenever you can you must send political documents.\(^7\) You will discover some marked X, and I wish them particularly attended to if possible. I am politically & personally your friend.

William Conner
Addressed to Washington.

1. On March 24 and 25, 1834, Hugh Lawson White made a speech in the Senate in opposition to the Bank of the United States.

2. Bell’s Bedford letter is probably his letter of May 11, 1835, to Charles Cassedy. That letter was published in the Nashville Union of June 26, 1835.

3. Clay spoke against squatters’ rights several times in the Senate in late January 1838; the Washington Daily National Intelligencer of January 29 published several of his remarks of January 26 and 27. A leading newspaper from 1800 until after the Civil War, the Intelligencer at this time was a Whig organ edited by Joseph Gales Jr. and William W. Seaton.

4. James L. Green, a farmer and operator of a steam sawmill and gristmill in Lauderdale County, did not win this contest but did serve as a Democrat in the lower house of the state legislature, 1841–43, representing Lauderdale and Tipton counties. John P. Perkins, a farmer and member of a prominent political family, represented Haywood County in the lower house of the legislature, 1839–43, as a Whig.

5. John B. Ashe, a lawyer and a member of a family that was prominent in North Carolina politics, represented Haywood, Madison, and Tipton counties in the state senate, 1839–43, as a Whig. He served in Congress, 1843–45, and later moved to Texas.

6. In the early autumn of 1838, John Bell made a political tour with stops at Murfreesboro, Pulaski, Brownsville, Bolivar, and Paris. This reference is to the dinner at Brownsville.

7. Enclosed was a list of seventy-six names of people in Haywood, Tipton, and Lauderdale counties, with the post office for each person.

TO JOSEPH H. TALBOT

My Dear Sir

Washington City Decr 12th 1838

I have received your letter of the 24th November. After what has happened, I ought not perhaps, to be surprized at any means, however base and reckless, to which my political opponents may resort, for the purpose of affecting my election. I cannot however avoid expressing my utter astonishment, at the story you tell me, of the means resorted to by Pleasant Miller, with that object. My father had been dead upwards of eleven years. In his life he maintained a spotless reputation, and was as honest a man as Mr Miller or any other. I envy not, any man the fiendish spirit, that can now disturb his ashes. The story you communicate is the first intimation of the kind I have ever heard. I remember that in the year 1819 or 1820, I am not certain which, my father lost his saddle-bags containing a number of land warrants, some of them his own, and some of them belonging to others, that he applied to the Legislature for relief, and that a law was passed,
authorizing the issuance of duplicates, upon condition that he gave bond to the state, with sufficient and approved security, in a very large sum (I think not less than $50,000 though the law will show)\(^1\) conditional that the state should never be chargeable, with satisfying the originals should they ever appear, or be brought forward by persons who had purloined them, or into whose hands they might fall. This bond he executed, giving the security required. This is all I ever knew upon the subject. From that day to the receipt of your letter, I never heard the slightest intimation from any quarter, that any of the originals had ever appeared or been heard of. I am sure that my father in his lifetime never heard of them after they were lost. And I cannot believe that there is the semblance of truth in the story. I never heard such a thing intimated before, and am sure that my father in his lifetime never did.

I have passed through many ordeals, in the course of a long public service, have occasionally had to meet and expose the attempts, of reckless and unprincipled men to injure me, and have passed through them all unscathed, because “truth was mighty” and would prevail. I have been and am at all times ready, to answer before the public judgment, for any act of my life. For all my own acts I am accountable. It seems however, that in the canvass in which I am now engaged, I have others ordeals to pass. A prostituted press, and reckless and unprincipled men, are not content to fill the state with the grossest calumnies and falsehoods in regard to my public acts and opinions, are not content with having resorted to a system of slander and defamation that has no parallel, but must dig up the bones of a venerated and beloved parent, that have long mouldered in the tomb, from their silent resting place, to gratify their infuriated party passions, and with the hope of affecting me. Let them go on, if they will. I thank God, that I live in a land of enlightened and just men, who will properly appreciate the behavior and fiendish attempts, that are made to affect me.

I thank you for your letter. . . .

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Jackson, Tennessee. Marked “Copy,” the letter is in Polk’s handwriting and bears his signature.

1. On July 13, 1820, the Tennessee legislature passed “An Act for the Relief of Samuel Polk and others.” On June 17, 1820, Samuel Polk had lost his saddlebags. The legislation authorized the issuance of land warrants to replace the lost ones and required a bond of $50,000 from Samuel Polk.
FROM JOHN B. FONVILLE1

Dresden. December 14, 1838

In reply to a request from Polk, Fonville writes about the political prospects in the Western District. He says that the northern part will give Polk a majority but suggests that Polk visit certain counties, especially those lying immediately west of the Tennessee River.

Addressed to Washington.

1. A native of North Carolina and a doctor, Fonville represented Weakley County, Tennessee, in the legislature, 1837–43.

FROM HOPKINS L. TURNLEY

Dear Sir

Washington City Dec. the 14th 1838

I have attentively read the letter of Genl. R[ichard] H. Allen to you of the 26th of Nov 1838, which you handed to me and in pursuance to your request will state the part you acted in the discussion and passage of the Tennessee Land Bill, so far as they came within my knowledge.1

The Speake[r] is precluded by the rules of the house from participating in the debates of the house. He may if he chooses engage in the discussions when in Committee of the Whole, though it is very unusual, and I think highly improper for him to do so, unless under very extraordinary circumstances and a pressing necessity for his doing so.

I came in the Hall but a few moments before the Committee of the Whole reported the bill to the house, and cannot therefore state what occurred in committee. In the House however I was present, and have a distinct recollection of what Transpired, which was substantially as follows, to wit. After a brief discussion of the merits & details of the bill in the house the previous question was demanded. The effect of this demand if sustained by the house, was to cut off all amendments and debate, and put the bill on its passage. I was not satisfied with the details of the bill, and for the purpose of offering an amendment thereto I requested that the demand for the previous question might be withdrawn. In making this request I assigned to the house as a reason for so doing that I desired to offer an amendment to the bill, and that I did not believe that I could vote for the bill in its then shape. This was the first intimation that I was not satisfied with the bill. You then sent one of the pages of the house to
request me to come to you. I done so. You commenced a conversation with me on the subject of the passage of the bill in which you expressed a deep interest and great anxiety for the passage of the bill, and urged upon me as reasons why I should vote for it, every argument in favour of the bill. You referred me to your former reports and speeches in favour of the measure. In a word, you exhibited as much interest and zeal for the success of this bill as you did for the success of any measure during the last session of Congress.

H. L. Turney

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.

1. The Tennessee Land Bill involved the politically explosive occupant question. Rumors had been circulated in Lawrence County to the effect that Polk, while pretending to favor passage of the bill, had dragged his feet and thus helped prevent its passage. Levin H. Coe, Aaron V. Brown, and Richard H. Allen were concerned about the matter and suspected that the rumor was being circulated by Ebenezer J. Shields. See Levin H. Coe to Polk, March 25, 1838; Aaron V. Brown to Polk, November 1, 1838; and Richard H. Allen to Polk, November 26, 1838. For Polk’s efforts to get his role clarified, see Abraham McClellan to Polk, December 15, 1838.

FROM SAMUEL P. WALKER

Columbia Dec 14th 1838

Dear Sir

Since I last wrote you nothing of interest has occurred. William has not been to town since his unfortunate difficulty with Hays, except to his Mother’s to see Saml. [W. Polk].

The Draft on Dr Bretney, as you know, was protested at the Bank of Tennessee where it was deposited for collection. He has promised me that he will certainly pay it before 1st Jany and I think he will. I have agreed to take good cash notes for his note to you for the rent. I will get such from him as I can collect sooner perhaps, than I could get the money from him. He has sold out his establishment to Fisher & Kilpatrick of Lebanon and they have proposed to make some alterations in the house (at their own expense) which I think would be an improvement, though I have refused to permit it until I could hear from you. They wish to take down a portion of the partition wall (from the door to the wall opposite the Stair case) and extend the shelves through the counting room. They wish to make other improvement such as painting, papering &c.

If they improve the house they wish to rent it for a term of years
(say 3 years after expiration of Bretney's time). Upon that subject
I have said to them that you would give them the refusal as long as
it was for the rent, though I could not say you would let them have
it at the present rate, as I thought it entirely too low. Please write me
immediately on receipt of this and give me full instructions on this
subject.

The President's message has been received and has given entire
satisfaction to his friends. The Whigs are very proud of their triumph
in New York.

Accounts from different portions of the state speak favourably of
your prospects in August. Ellen & Mary Harris join in their love to
Aunt Sally.

SAM. P. WALKER

Addressed to Washington.
1. William H. Polk had killed Richard H. Hayes in a street fight on
   December 3.
2. See Samuel P. Walker to Polk, March 27, 1838.
3. When Fisher & Kilpatrick made their trade with Bretney, they assumed
   his contract with Polk for rental of a building in Columbia. It appears that
   Bretney, a druggist, had sold his stock to Fisher & Kilpatrick.
4. Van Buren's message was delivered on December 3, 1838.
5. Ellen was Samuel Polk Walker's wife. The Mary Harris mentioned was
   Maria Harris, daughter of Adlai O. Harris.

FROM WILLIAM C. CAMPBELL

Dear Sir

New Market, Polk City Mo. December 15, 1838

Fortune has placed us a great distance apart but I am glad you
occupy a station in life that you can be serviceable to your friends. There
is at this time a vacancy to fill as receiver in the Platt Country. You
will confer a favor on me by using your influence in procuring that
appointment. I am now writing in the land office at Springfield & if the
vacancy is not filled I will procure a Recommendation from Joel
Haden, Register at this office. I will also write to Miller, Harrison,
Benton, & Lynn & Grundy & refer them to you. The favor will not be
forgotten whether procured or not. Write to me immediately on the
receipt of this letter & inform me of the probability of the appointment.

WM. C. CAMPBELL
Addressed to Washington. The almost complete absence of punctuation and the irregular usage of capitals have required extraordinary editorial license on this letter.

1. A son of John Campbell and Matilda Golden Polk, William C. Campbell was Polk's first cousin. The correct name seems to be William St. Clair Campbell, but the writer used only one initial in his signature.

2. The settlement of New Market was in the northeastern part of Polk County.

3. The Platte River land office was located at Dubuque in the Iowa Territory.

4. John Miller, Albert G. Harrison, Thomas Hart Benton, and Lewis F. Linn composed Missouri's delegation in the Twenty-fifth Congress. Campbell did not receive the appointment, as there was no vacancy.

FROM ABRAHAM McCLELLAN

Dear Sir

Washington City December 15th 1838

I have read the letter of R. H. Allen to you of the 26th of Nov 1838.1 As to your course last Session of Congress upon the Tennessee land Bill I can say with certainty that you ware very desierious that it should become a law, for you conversed with me at several times and expressed great anxiety for the passage of the bill. I also heard you pressing others to support it.

When the Bill was before the Committee of the Whole you requested me to look for a friend of ours whom you had been told spoke of not voting for the Bill.2 You told me to say to him from you that you was vary desiarous that he should vote for the Bill, that it was a measure you had been labouring to get past for years and that you would do all you could at that time to procure its passage. I further know and believe that you did all you could in the way you thought most likely to effect the passage of that Bill into a law.

I thought at that time and do yet that you was as much the friend of that measure as any man from Tennessee.

A. McClellan

Addressed to Washington and delivered by hand.

1. See Richard H. Allen to Polk, November 26, 1838.

2. Although the reference is not clear, the friend mentioned was probably Hopkins L. Turney. See Turney to Polk, December 14, 1838.
FROM ADAM HUNTSMAN

Dear Sir Jackson Dec 16th 1838

I suppose this will reach you in the Christmas Hollidays when you may perhaps have an opportunity to answer some inquires I shall make. But first we have just recd Vans message. It has created much fluttering in the camps of the opposition. I think it a masterly movement myself on the subject of the separation of Government monies from individuals, its tone in regard to State Banks, and the rigid scrutiny & economy it recommends. It will help our cause much. We are gaining ground here daily.

[Andrew L.] Martin and myself have taken the opportunity in answer to invitations to your dinners, to explain our position as White men and we now go on without embarrassment. Great dismay exists in the opposite ranks at the late symptoms manifested to drop Clay and hoist Harrison. Vans bitterest enemies here swear they will not stand that, but will vote for Van before Tippe. Harrison cannot get one 4th of the opposition here. I wish to know your opinion as to the probability of his superseding Clay. Is N York gone. Can't we get a long without her. Will not Reeves & Talmadge form a Ticket for President & Vice President. I have ascertained satisfactorily that the Foster Whigs in Ten are about trying to bring it about, and as strange as you may think it they are prepared to drop Bell if a good chance should occur. That chance is to drop Clay and take up Reeves & Talmadge & leave Bell with Clay. I got the information no matter how. How far the Foster Whigs can accomplish this is yet to be seen.

Miller & Martin has got in a political paper war here. [Alexander B.] Bradford will move to Mississippi (Jackson) in a few weeks. He is a loss to the whigs here. Hess or Marr will come out for Congress in February. Our Organization throughout is then complete. If you intend at the close of Congress to fall down the River into the district let me know it as we White Gentry intend to collect the people and eat dinners upon a large scale, & make such a routine of appointments for you and our candidates as will draw out the democracy fully. I would not take less than $500 for my share of the fun. Will not this declension in New York throw a Whig Speaker in. If so it will embarrass us much. Every man here will do his duty. Let me hear from you &c.

A. HUNTSMAN

Addressed to Washington. This letter has been published in Williams, editor, "Letters of Adam Huntsman," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, VI, 342–343.
1. Van Buren's message was delivered on December 3, 1838.
2. Huntsman and Martin had supported Hugh L. White in 1836. They had previously been Democrats and now had returned to that party.
3. William Henry Harrison was better known for his narrow victory at Tippecanoe Creek in 1811 than for his political activities.
4. The Democrats had recently suffered a decisive defeat in New York.
5. William C. Rives and Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, conservative Democrats, were adamantly opposed to Van Buren and the Subtreasury and recently had gone over to the opposition. The possibility of a Rives-Tallmadge ticket had been rumored for some time.
6. Pleasant M. Miller and Andrew L. Martin, recently collaborators in the ranks of the Whigs, were now on opposite sides. Their political disagreements were freely aired in the Jackson newspapers.
7. William R. Hess of Haywood County and George W. L. Marr of Obion County were prominent in political circles in their respective counties. Hess was frequently considered as a candidate for the legislature, but he never served. Marr had served one term in Congress from Montgomery County before moving to Obion. Later he became a Whig.

FROM THOMAS H. FLETCHER

Nashville Deer 17, 1838

In September 1836 the Planters Bank of Tennessee was constituted a Deposit Bank. When, in May 1837, the Banks throughout the United States suspended specie payments the Planters Bank owed the United States about $70,000. Although the Planters Bank, also, suspended Specie Payments in 1837 yet that Bank continued to pay all drafts drawn on it by the Treasury Department, and never in one single instance, protested a single draft drawn by the United [States] and has paid the General Government every dollar that it owed. I am a Director of the Planters Bank, and I think I can with confidence say that so far as the Planters Bank is concerned the operation of the General Government has never been, in the slightest degree, retarded by the Planters Bank.

The Banks of this place will resume Specie Payments on the 1st Monday in next month, and the means of all of our Banks are very ample to sustain this measure.

I can assure you that the Gold, Silver and Philadelphia Bank notes now held by the Planters Bank exceeds all the whole amount of its circulation. The Circulation of the Planters Bank is about $800,000, and it has on hand, this day, nearly $400,000 in Gold & Silver, and upwards of $500,000 in Philadelphia funds. There is not a Bank in America in a better condition than the Planters Bank, and to prepare itself for specie payments it has not borrowed one dollar from any
quarter whatever, but has prepared itself out of its own resources. Now, as before remarked, the Banks in Nashville will resume Specie Payment on the 1st Monday in next month, and the object of this letter is to get you to apply to Mr Woodbery and get him to address a letter to the President of the Planters Bank informing him that the notes of the Planters Bank will be received at the Land Offices in payment of lands. We wish to have such a letter as it would have a great tendency to save our specie. A man who presents himself at our Bank, with our notes, demanding specie for the purpose of going to the land sales would decline drawing our specie if we could have it in our power to shew him such a letter. It would be a convenience both to the Bank and to the holder of our paper.

I will also add that our Bank has adopted Resolutions in conformity with the provisions of the Act of Congress passed at the called session of Sep 1836, and that we now issue no notes of a less denomination than $5.

If we can preserve our specie that will enable us to relieve this country to a greater extent and in using your best exertions to effect the object of this letter I think I may safely say you will confer a benefit on the people of this state.

As we will resume, on the 1st Monday of January next it will be desirable to have Mr Woodbery's letter by that time.

THO. H. FLETCHER

Addressed to Washington.

1. The Nashville banks resumed specie payments on Wednesday, January 2, 1839, several days before the date originally chosen for that event.
2. Levi Woodbury, Secretary of the Treasury.
3. John Sommerville was elected president of the Planters Bank on February 7, 1836. For a similar letter from the Bank of Tennessee, see Henry Ewing to Polk, November 19, 1838.
4. The called, or special, session of Congress was in 1837.

TO SAMUEL MARTIN

[Washington. December 18, 1838]

"You are a better judge than I can be, whether it is proper for me to see or know the contents of the letter of which you speak. That I must leave to your better judgment. It strikes me however that if it contain matter, which I ought to notice (and of this not having seen it, and knowing nothing of its contents I cannot judge) that it would not be proper for me to make the pledge, which you suggest, viz. that it is
not to be referred to, by me or any one else. Such a pledge might embarrass me, and place me in an awkward condition, and for that reason, I do not make it. I do not of course, ask to see the letter, but if voluntarily communicated to me, I must exercise my judgment, whether there be a propriety or necessity of referring to it, or not."

Probably addressed to Campbell's Station, Tennessee.

1. Polk made a notation at the top of this document saying that it was an extract from a letter he addressed to Samuel Martin on December 18, 1838. The extract is in Polk's handwriting, but is not signed. The full letter has not been found.

2. See Samuel Martin to Polk, December 3, 1838.

FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT

Jackson Ten Decr. 18th, 1838

Dear Sir.

We have received the Presidents message, which appears to give satisfaction to “Independent Treasury” as well as “Conservative” men. The first think they see a determination on the part of the administration to force the oposition into a responsible position. They have defeated the measure of the executive and if they do not propose some measure to correct the present state of things the opposition, with the conservatives[,] will be held responsible for the disasters that may follow.

I have no idea that the Banks of Louisiana and Missi. will resume [specie] payments on the first of January. The Banks of Miss. have held a meeting and determined not to resume until July. They are again preparing to make heavy advances on cotton, $60 per bale, and Biddle is also in the market. The New Orleans banks cannot resume even with all the aid Biddle may promise them (and a promise only it will be, for a more deceitful charletan never had an existence), because the trade being against New Orleans as between Miss. Kentucky and Tennessee, they cannot resume while the people & the Banks above are satannically drawing upon them for specie. I am of opinion the Banks of Tennessee rely on the resumption at New Orleans as the proper time for them. They have not specie enough, but say they can bring home specie from New Orleans, and this with a credit at the East will sustain them.

If I am right, Congress will rise with the money matters as much deranged as at their last rise. The proposition of the President recom-
mending a rigid retrenchment has taken the opposition aback. They know not what to say. They affect not to believe in the sincerity of the President, and that his party in Congress will not sustain him. I hope they will, and let the Journals tell who was for retrenchment and who against it. We should resist every attempt to enlarge the appropriations beyond the estimates for the current year, and repeal some of the appropriations made at the last Congress, and repeal the law making any further distribution of the public money amongst the States. This latter proposition Mr Crocket [John W. Crockett] dare not vote against, because he has said the treasury was bankrupt, and let him and Mr Bell vote if they dare to impoverish it further. Our friends must be taught the necessity of union and harmony as to retrenchment and rigid economy. I know it will go hard with some of them, but if they possess one patriotic feeling I hope it will on this subject gain the ascendancy over their avarice. The proceedings of the present Congress will secure us a victory at the next fall elections, if our party act with moderate discretion. Otherwise we shall be routed in Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina, and these with the loss of New York will more than neutralize the victories we gained the past fall.

The subject of a triweekly stage from Columbia to this place and from this to Ashport on the Miss river by way of Brownsville, has been much agitated, and much desired, particularly from here to Columbia. It would be of service to you, to interest yourself in behalf of the citizens of this section, who have heretofore been much neglected.

I have a very promising nephew an orphan boy the son of my deceased brother Eli, who I would like to procure a cadets commission for, and would feel very grateful if you could procure it. He is now about 14 years of age and learns well and would make a smart man if he had an opportunity. Please let me know as early as convenient, the prospect of procuring such a commission, and the necessary qualifications preparatory to entering West Point.

I presume before this reaches you, you will have heard of the melancholy tragedy enacted at Columbia, in which your brother bore a conspicuous part. I learn however that public opinion is in his favour. I hope it may prove true on the trial.

Great exertions will be made to bring out White or Bell against you. But I apprehend they will find Cannon too much of a mule to give way, and they dare not attempt to run him off, lest by division they endanger their cause. They are in great trouble. It is likely, you will at Washington, gain the first intelligence of any movement, as the High Priests Bell & White are there, and must be communicated with,
before any step is taken. If so, you must not fail to have your friends advised in time.

Jos. H. Talbot

Addressed to Washington.

1. Eli Talbot had died in 1832 while clerk of the chancery court in Williamson County. One of his sons was James L. Talbot, who edited a Jackson newspaper for a short time. The young Talbot mentioned here never made formal application for a commission as a cadet.
2. See John B. Hays to Polk, December 4, 1838.

FROM JOHN A. THOMAS

West Point, New York. December 18, 1838

Thomas says that the Secretary of War has recommended removal of inequities in pay existing among assistant professors at the Military Academy and asks Polk to use his influence in support of legislation to that effect. He reports that Cave Johnson Couts is doing reasonably well and is rooming with Cadet Joseph B. Boyd of Bedford County.

Addressed to Washington.

1. Thomas reveals that, as assistant professor of ethics, geography, and history, his annual pay is $500 less than that of other assistant professors of similar rank. The legislation desired by Thomas was passed in 1840.

FROM WILLIAM R. RUCKER

Dear Coln. Murfreesborough Decr. 20th 1838

I received your letter written shortly after your arrival in Washington, a few days ago & should have answered it immediately but for the fact that you will before now have had the information you desired through the papers of Nashville. You know that I informed you in my letter to the Western District that I was not at the Whig Dinner and only got my information from those who were there. Some Whigs after the reports became common that Coln. Foster used the language charged against him denied that he called Jefferson a Demagogue but a good many Democrats & several Whigs I am informed say he did, but all of them are very much averse to giving certificates to that effect. Coln. Yoakum says that he did unequivocally call him a Demagogue but it was in a conversation immediately after his speech. Yoakum says he did not attend to his speech & therfore can not know what he then said. Coln Foster must be perfectly aware that you did
not originate the story for it was published in the Times of this place and several other papers in Middle Tennessee before you could have gotten any news of it from yr correspondants. I do not suppose that you ought to notice his letter on the subject in other way than what may be proper in your explanations to the people in your future canvassing.

We have nothing here in our County that should interest you. There does not appear to be much excitement on the subject of Politics. You will pretty equally divide this County with Cannon. Syms declension did us some injury in as much as he would not have had Ready for an Opponant if he had remained a Candidate. But Yoakum has since taken the field against Ready for the Senate.

Our friends are all well. Mjr. [John W.] Childress is trying to sell out his possessions here with a view of removing to Madison in the District where his father in law has a pretty extensive farm. It is probable that it would be to his interest to remove some where as he has but a small farm where he now lives.

My respects to Sarah.

W. R. RUCKER

Addressed to Washington.

1. See Polk to Rucker, November 28, 1838.

2. This letter has not been found.

3. Leonard H. Sims had withdrawn as the Democratic candidate for the state senate for personal reasons. Charles Ready was the opposition man mentioned. Yoakum was elected.

4. John W. Childress married Sarah Williams, a daughter of Elisha Williams, in 1831. A resident of Rutherford County, Williams had owned a considerable amount of land in the Western District for several years.

FROM GEORGE W. L. MARR

Dear Sir, Hickman Ky. Demr. 22nd, 1838

I think a favourable change is gradually taking place in Obion tho we have some talking Whiggs of a most inveterate character. Some communications to Norton Oaks, Tho. A. Polk. Wm S. S. Harris, Colo. Henry Darnell, James Garrison, James Reaves, Frank Taylor, Robert Stovaul [Stovall], Colo Joel S. Enloe, Samuel Henry Esq., Benjamin Totten, William Maxwell (an old Maury acquaintance), Seth Bedford, Revnd. Jonas Dancer, John Robertson, & George White would probably be well recevd & produce exertion. All may be directed to Troy Ten. except Tottens may well [be sent] to Tottens Wells.
December 24 1838

The Congressional Globe has been heard of tho seldom seen in Obion. I wish a copy for the present session, also a copy of all the published numbers since its commenc[eme]nt if the publisher has them to furnish.

We have a case of adjourned veracity between a Whigg & Democrat on the subject of the importation of wheat into the U. S. from G. Britain & elsewhere. The Whigg denies the fact of any importations of that art[icle] being made except a small amt from Germany. If it is easy to obtain an official statement on that subject I would be glad to receve. it.

Your friends here expect you in the Spring. The Anties fear it. Govnr. Cannon passd through the Dist. lately. Private business his professd object. Had some greetings in one of the little towns (such as lighting a few candles) where he stoped at night. These matters light as they [are] are taken by the poor Bankites as indications of the peoples voice. Nothing is farther from the fact.

As yet we have no candidate for Congress in our District. The candidates for the state Legislature are mostly out. As to them I think we need fear nothing.

As I do not know whether all or a part only of the C. Globe may be sent I cannot guess at what may be amt of the Editors axe. When asertained I will transmit or pay to some agent here as he may direct.

G. W. L. Marr

Addressed to Washington.

1. Hickman County, Kentucky, was just across the state line from Obion County, where Marr lived.
2. Of these potential Polk supporters, three, Harris, Henry, and Thomas A. Polk, later served in the state legislature. Thomas A. Polk, however, served as a Whig. Totten was the father of Archibald W. O. Totten, James L. Totten, and Benjamin C. Totten.
3. Totten's Wells was a post office a few miles northeast of Troy, then the county seat of Obion County, Tennessee. Troy was in the east-central part of the county on the road between Trenton and Mills Point, Kentucky.
4. The word in brackets was smeared, perhaps deliberately, with the idea of making a change that would prevent repetition of the word.

FROM GEORGE W. BRATTON

Dear Sir

Yalabusha Cty Mi December 24th 1838

After my best respects to you I have the pleasure to say to you that I & family are all well & also all the negroes belonging to the
planted. I am almost most through with the cotton. I have delivered 50 some odd bales at Troy. I think I will get through in about a week. I expect to be able to ship seventy some odd. The negro you was to send me I understand that Gee killed him, & Julius I sent him to Bolivar a week sooner than I was to send him by A. C. McNeel [Albert T. McNeal].

As to the cotton that was lost by the sinking of the boat Gladiator last fall was a year ago, I saw [James] Minter a few days since. He requested me to say to you that a protest was drawn up by A C. Baine Esqr & served on the managers of the boat and qualified before Esqr Boon and made oath that your cotton was not damaged. The protest was then returned by Minter to the Insurance Company and its service by them acknowledged. The cotton then was reshiped on the Gladiator belonging to the insurance company. After getting up some of the cotton it was then sold for the benefit of the insurance company. Esqr Minter says that at any time that he is called on he will render any assistance necessary.

I now have further to say to you that I do earnestly and wishfully look for one or two negro men as my force is too weak for the place at best as one of the women will be of little or no service in April & May. If you can in any way send your waiting boy here I have no doubt but he will make a good hand. If you cant get him here try and swap him with Wm. [H. Polk] for the one he took away. T R Reed has never wrote to me respecting the bill you sent him. I have made a punctual contract about the Insurance of the present crop.

Please write immediately.

George Bratton

Addressed to Washington. This letter, including the signature, is in the handwriting of someone other than Bratton. It has been published in Bassett, Plantation Overseer, 115–116.

1. Troy, Mississippi, was a village on the Yalobusha River about eighteen miles southwest of Coffeeville.
2. A slave.
3. The Gladiator actually went down on January 18, 1838. Bratton's account is so garbled that it is almost impossible to get the story straight. From his account in this letter, it appears that the Gladiator was put back into service and the cotton again shipped on it. See Bratton to Polk, November 24, 1838.
4. Baine has not been identified. Boon was perhaps Reuben H. Boone, who had moved from Tennessee to the Chickasaw Nation in 1835. A lawyer and a farmer, he served several terms in the Mississippi legislature.
5. Unidentified.
FROM HERNDON HARALSON

Dear Sir

Brownsville Haywood County Dec 25th 1838

I was disappointed in sending on for a copy of the Journal of your proceedings this session. I always have subscribed heretofore and feel the disappointment the more serious. I cannot now transmit the sum required in current money. Will you oblige me so far as to order me the copy. I will pay you on sight or remit on your return.

Nothing new from the District. Your prospects for August next are brightening and increasing in this County. I should not be disappointed at your getting two thirds on the day of Election. We had a Democratic Convention a few days ago for the appointment of a Candidate for State Representative in this County: the sentiments and proceedings was truly mortifying to the Hoco poco. No opposition to the Hon. J. W. Crocket[3] as yet, however that is time enough.

Should any thing of importance occur in which you are at liberty, please write me.

H. HARALSON

Addressed to Washington.

1. Herndon Haralson was born in North Carolina, where he fought in the Revolution and rose to the rank of major. He then served in that state’s House of Commons, 1793–1800, before migrating to Tennessee, where he was a leader in the founding of Madison and Haywood counties.

2. The word disappointed is used here in the sense of surprised.

3. This reference remains obscure. Its similarity to Loco Foco may be the key.

FROM ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Dear Col.

Nashville 26 Decem. [1838]

I enclose you a line from William Purdy in Relation to the appointment of a post master at Mifflin. I have no doubt that the person recommended by Purdy should be appointed. Smith has recevd. your letter and will answer by tomorrow. We must have a man & should lose no time. All is going on well and every thing looks through the State. Carroll’s conduct I fear will destroy him. Let it be understood that he is to have nothing offerd, no employment by the Genl. Government unless he runs. He had deceivd. us, and acted badly & unless he runs will be Dropd. by the party & receive I hope no em-
ployment from the Government. We will bring the affair to a close in a day or two.

R. ARMSTRONG

Ford has gone home Happy, tell Turney. 5

Addressed to Washington.

1. The writer did not indicate the year, and the Library of Congress tentatively suggested 1835. The reference to Purdy's letter, which is dated December 21, 1838, establishes the date of this letter as 1838.

2. Polk's letter has not been found. This reference probably is to Joel M. Smith and the effort to find an effective editor for the Nashville Union. See Smith to Polk, December 27, 1838.

3. A word is illegible here because of a tear in the manuscript.

4. Former Governor William Carroll had decided not to run for Congress against John Bell. See Carroll to Polk, November 30, 1838.

5. John Ford was in Nashville to raise money for the McMinnville Central Gazette. See Armstrong to Polk, December 8, 1838, and Polk to Andrew Jackson Donelson, May 8, 1838. Hopkins L. Turney, the congressman from that district, was vitally interested in having a strong Democratic paper in McMinnville.

TO JEREMIAH G. HARRIS1

Sir Washington City Decr. 27th 1838

Mr Joel M. Smith, the sole proprietor of the Nashville Union newspaper, proposes to pay to a gentleman who is qualified, and who will engage to conduct the Editorial Department of his paper, a salary of fifteen hundred dollars, for a year, with the privilege afterwards should the parties be mutually satisfied with each other, of becoming interested as a part owner of the establishment, upon reasonable and favourable terms. These terms we are authorized in his behalf to offer for your acceptance. Should you accept them, he will expect you to be at Nashville, and enter upon the duties of Editor, in the course of all the month of January next. Mr Smith will pay your reasonable expenses on your journey to Nashville. Should you accept the terms offered by Mr Smith, we will guaranty, that he will on his part perform them. An early answer to the proposition, is requested.

This letter bears no address, but was probably delivered to Harris at Washington. Marked "Copy," the letter is in Polk's handwriting, but is not signed.

1. Jeremiah George Harris, a native of Connecticut, was the new editor of the Nashville Union. He had been connected in an editorial capacity with newspapers in New London, Connecticut, and New Bedford, Massachusetts, as
well as in Boston. From boyhood he was on friendly terms with George Ban-
croft, and later was an associate of Charles G. Greene. His first issue of the
Union appeared on February 1, 1839. He remained with the Union until 1843
and returned as its editor during Polk's presidential campaign.

FROM JOEL M. SMITH

Dear Sir

Nashville, Dec. 27[t]h 1838

Yours of 17th enclosing one from Mr Jarvis from Boston under
date the 13th, on the subject of an Editor for the "Union" were reed
last night.¹

I am glad to find that there is a prospect of obtaining the services
of a man who is likely to meet the wishes of our friends and to raise
the character of the paper, a matter which is so essential to our cause
in Tennessee.² I have entirely failed in procuring the services of Mr
Humphreys, as I expected, and depend entirely on you and our friends
to obtain an Editor, and sooner he can be had the better, as my paper
seems to [be] getting worse, or becoming less interesting.

Should you succeed in your expectations, in reference to the indi-
vidual alluded to, you will please let me know immediately, what time
he can be here, whether he is a man of a family or not &c. The offer
you made of $1,500 is as high as I can venture to go at present. Mr
Cunningham seems conscious of his inability to edit the paper. He told
me this evening that whenever I became dissatisfied with him to let
him know the fact and he would retire. Let me hear from you.

J. M. SMITH

Addressed to Washington.

1. Neither Polk's letter of the 17th nor Leonard Jarvis's letter of the 13th
has been found.

2. This refers to Jeremiah George Harris, whose first issue of the Nashville
Union appeared on February 1, 1839. See Polk to Jeremiah George Harris,
December 27, 1838.

TO JOSEPH H. TALBOT

Dear Sir

Washington City, Decr. 27th 1838

I have received your letter of the 8th and also one from Mr Chester
of the 10th upon the subject of the Federal Court lately [establis]hed
at Jackson.¹ Before these letters [were rece]ived a Bill had been in-
troduced and [passe]d the Senate, a copy of which is herewith
[trans]mitted to you. It is not probable that [the] Bill will be acted upon, much before the close of the Session, and there will be time for me to hear from you whether its provisions be satisfactory, and if not, in what respects it may require amendment. Any attention which it may be necessary to give to the subject, will be cheerfully bestowed.

JAMES K. POLK

Addressed to Jackson, Tennessee, this letter is in the hands of Mr. Cyril Clemens, Kirkwood, Missouri.

1. A tear on the margin of the manuscript has removed portions of five lines. The bracketed words indicate probable readings of the missing words.

FROM E. S. DAVIS

My dear Sir, La Grange Ten Decr. 28. 1838

Although one month of your Session has expired we have recd. nothing, or heard, or seen, any thing of the proceedings of Congress except the Presidents message.

Gov Cannons construction of the law of the last legislature to promote internal improvement² has rendered him odious with every man who desires to see the Improvements of the state progress. I have no doubt but the "Goth"³ will persist in his stupid interpretation of the law, and hence will seal his own fate.

The rencontre in which your brother was recently engaged is spoken of here by every one as perfectly justifiable on his part.⁴

Be pleased to forward me the public documents, & accept of the assurances of my first & best wishes.

E. S. DAVIS

Addressed to Washington.

1. Apparently a physician, Davis moved to the Western District from South Carolina and became a railroad promoter. Later he moved to Washington, where he occasionally gave Polk political news while the latter was serving as governor of Tennessee.

2. In his legislative message of October 2, 1837, Cannon encouraged internal improvements; but in practice he was quite cautious because of unfavorable monetary conditions.

3. This term of opprobrium has not been encountered elsewhere. The Goths were perhaps the most barbaric of the Germanic peoples who overran the Roman Empire, beginning in the third century.

4. See John B. Hays to Polk, December 4, 1838.
TO WILLIAM NOLAND
FROM RICHARD M. JOHNSON
AND JAMES K. POLK

Sir:  
Washington, Dec 29, 1838

By a joint rule of the two Houses of Congress, it is provided that “no spirituous liquors shall be offered for sale, or exhibited, within the Capitol, or on the public grounds adjunct thereto.” You will take measures to cause this Rule to be faithfully and rigidly observed.

RH. M. JOHNSON
JAMES K. POLK

This is a clerk's copy, signed by both Polk and Johnson. The letter is in Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds (RG 42), National Archives.

1. William Noland was Commissioner of Public Buildings, 1829–46. The keeper of the refectory in the Capitol Building had written to Polk saying that his operation was losing money because he was not permitted to sell alcoholic beverages. A similar letter was probably sent to Johnson.

FROM DANIEL KENNEY

Dear Sir  
Jonesboro [Tennessee] Dec 31. 1838

By this time perhaps you may be looking for a line from some of your friends in this part of the State, tho I hope you have rec’d several communications from some of your many friends here. Politically our cause is looking up, and thriving upon the justness of its principles. I have no doubt, but the struggle in which you are engaged for the welfare of Tennessee and its true political principles, will be successful at our next August Elections. The people in this part of Tenne. are fast getting their eyes opened. They now see as clear as noon day, the juggling of White & Bell, and their union with the New England Federalists, to attach Tennessee and her long and well known Republican principles to the Federal ear of Old Federalism & New Whigism. We have nearly completed in this part of the State, the getting out all our candidates for the State legislature, and of course we have the best and ablest selections.

It is not altogether certain, who will be [William B.] Carters opponent for Congress, but we intend to running some one. Major John McGaughey of Greene, has been called on through our paper here, to suffer his name to be run as our candidate. He has responded to the
call, but declines the race. We however think he yet can be prevailed upon to take the field against Carter, if no other strong man can be got out instead of him. I think Carter is in a bad box. During the time he was here, between the last and present Session of Congress he was much pressed to say who was his candidate for the next Presidency. He would not come out, but observed "that he was for nobody, and that he believed that Mr Van Buren would be dropt by his party and that Mr Calhoun would be run in place of Van Buren." Thus you see the noncommittal course of Carter, whilst here amongst his constituents, till he shall have reed. his cue at Washington this Winter from his Political Masters and Managers of which we will be fully informed at the close of the present Session of Congress.

When I saw you at Blountville it was your opinion that Clay would be their candidate. Do you think so yet? I should like to know if you have gotten into their secrets on this subject. I see from the papers that the Antimasons & Abolitionists in Penna. are not favourably disposed toward Mr Clay. Can these discordant elements be got to unite in the great cause in which they profess to be engaged. If not what will they do?

The opposition here and as far as I can learn in East Tenne. except about Knoxville seem to take the [same] course that Carter did, that is to [say] they are not for Clay, Harrison, or Webster. I suppose they are like Carter, waiting for the wink or the nod from the Master spirits of the Mongrel & "Spotted pig party" at Washington and their allies at Knoxville & Nashville. When this is known, we can meet them in the open field, foot to foot, shoulder to shoulder, and if need be to the knife and the knife [to] the hilt.

The doings in the Penna. Legislature, will help our cause much in Tenne. I see as usual you have your troubles in the station, which you now fill. But I am happy to see that you meet all the difficulties of the opposition like a statesman and patriot, and that you are equal to the crisis, be it what it may. If you can find leisure, from the many duties devolving on you, I should be much pleased to hear from you by letter.

Give my respects, to Grundy & McClellan. Say to McC. that Genl [John] Cocke is out in his district for Congress, but the opposition there want to run John A. McKinney.

DANL. KENNEY

Addressed to Washington.

1. A farmer, politician, and railroad promoter, McGaughey had served in the Constitutional Convention in 1834 and in the General Assembly, 1827–33 and 1835–37.
2. The Anti-Masons’ National Convention had met in Philadelphia in November and had nominated William Henry Harrison for President, with Daniel Webster as his running mate.

3. This part of the manuscript is torn, making the reading uncertain in two places.

4. Disputed election returns for eight legislators from Philadelphia County had led to “the Buckshot War” between the Democrats and a coalition of Whigs and Anti-Masons led by Joseph Ritner.
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