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Title: Letters from James Buchanan to Thomas L. Hamer

Date: 1840-1842

Location: MC 1998.10

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My dear Sir,

Washington 1 January 1840

The day always recalls to my memory old & absent friends; and I cannot spend a few minutes more agreeably than in attempting to make bright the chain which formerly united us. May you live to see many a happy New Year & to witness the prosperity of your childrens children in the third & fourth generation!

Mr. Calhoun's visit to the President on Thursday last has given rise to much conversation. Many believe that he would have acted with more dignity had he merely supported the measures of Mr. Van Buren without holding any personal intercourse with him. It is true that Mr. C. has denounced the President most bitterly & soon contemptuously; but still such deeds ought not to be immortal. Every man must decide such questions for himself. He is now strongly with the administration; and I presume has his eye upon the succession. It is said that a jealousy already exists between him & Col. Benton; and that this jealousy first prevented the election of Simms & afterwards of Lewis as Speaker. How this may be I do not know; but of this I am confident, that if Col. Benton had been consulted upon the subject, he might not to have desired any thing more propitious than that Mr. Calhoun should become a candidate & be strong in the South. Let these two candidates only be before the National Convention & the result cannot be doubtful. For Mr. Calhoun I entertain the very highest respect, politically & personally; but he cannot, unless public opinion should change very much, be the successor of Mr. Van Buren.

The nomination of Harrison has united the Whigs, Antislavery, Abolitionists & Co.

of Pennsylvania. He will receive the earnest support, of all the fragments of the opposition in our State; but still I entertain no apprehensions as to the result. The contest will be animated & severe; but the Democracy of the Keystone will again triumph. The Whigs here seem to have cordially united in favor of Harrison; & from their conversation you would suppose that they really believed he would be successful. They ^{pretend to} calculate with confidence upon Ohio. I should be glad to know your opinion as to the result in your State. The Harrisburg Convention, upon calculation, abandoned the South, except Kentucky, ~~Ohio~~ Maryland & Delaware, & went for the North & Harrison.

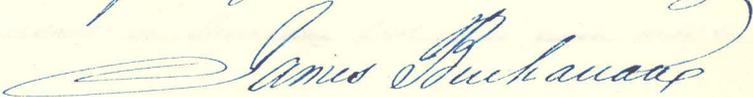
By a letter which I received a few days ago I am informed that Judge Patton of our State has lately been at Columbus & that he has been doing all he could to injure me there. He is the most insatiable office hunter I have ever known & has literally worried Governor Porter to obtain his present office. Thinking that I did not second his views on a charge d'affaireship with sufficient ardor he has become my most persevering enemy. On his return to Pittsburg, he boasted that my Sun had gone down in Ohio. As it never rose there it could not have set; and if it ever had risen, he is surely not the Joshua who could make it stand still. If he has circulated any falsehoods there in relation to myself, I should be glad to have the opportunity of contradicting them.

I thank you for the Statesman containing an account of the reception of Col: Johnston at Columbus. I fear we shall have serious difficulties about the Vice Presidency. The gentlemen from the South say they cannot run him on their tickets without endangering the election in their respective States. In Pennsylvania his friends are very numerous; but ~~there~~ there are individual Democrats, among the

religious portion of our citizens who ~~would~~ ^{will} not go to the election if he ~~was~~ ^{should be} the
candidate. Still I have no doubt we can carry him. Col: King would
receive the nomination easily of Pennsylvania if old Secumseh were not a
candidate. I should prefer him; but can cheerfully support Col: Johnston.

What I have written I need not say is confidential. I should
be glad to hear from you at your leisure.

Hon: Thomas. L. Hamer

from your friend's sincerely
James Buchanan

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Hon: Thomas L. Hamer

Private

Lancaster 29 November 1842

My dear Sir /

Absence from home & a brief indisposition

have prevented me from sooner acknowledging the receipt of

your letter. I delivered the enclosed letter to Col: Frazer

who promised that he would answer it immediately. I

presume that you may have already heard from him.

I thank you for the interest which you take in

my re-election to the Senate. I think there is not much

doubt of it, although there is no absolute certainty. I am

pleased to believe that the Democracy of the State are almost

unanimous on the subject; but our past experience in Penn^a

has proven that the Representative does not always obey the

will of his Constituents. The ban treason which rechartered the

Bank of the United States & has nearly ruined us may be

again repeated. Our security now is that the Whigs have no money to pay the wages of inequity.

This State is now in a dreadful condition. We are most heavily taxed & yet the interest on our funded debt is not paid. The proceeds of the taxes are applied to the payment of what are called the Domestic creditors, — or the contractors on the Canals &c. The State receives scarcely any thing except what is called relief money which is from ten to twenty per cent below par; and it is kept at this rate ^{only} by its incessant circulation between the Treasury & the people. In this richest County of the Union, where millions of hard money are hoarded, there is nothing in circulation but this miserable trash. The Democratic party must do something to arrest our present downward course at the next Session of the Legislature, or we shall be in the vocative at the next elections.

The recent election in New York presented a grand moral spectacle. The Democrats arrested the public works & imposed taxes sufficient to preserve the credit of the State & then appealed to the people; and most nobly have the people responded to

their appeal. The result of the election was to raise their
State Loan 2 or 3 per cent.

Pennsylvania is the soil for President makers. They
have recently had a Cap meeting at Harrisburg. The promi-
nences were Levi Reynolds one of the Canal Commissioners & J. P.
Anderson a subordinate Clerk. These two men are sufficient
of themselves to damn any cause in which they embark,
& they & their clique have done Governor Cap great injury by
their support. It is said they are going on to Boston to
receive him on his landing; & if this be so, it will be the
coup de grace of our worthy minister to France. They are
the same men who brought Col. Johnson here; and finding
he was not available, they have abandoned him without
the slightest hesitation for an individual whom they considered
more available.

I shall always be glad to hear from you. I intend to
leave tomorrow on the next day for Washington.

Thomas L. Kemmer.

Ever your friend
"fræ auld lang syne"

James Buchanan

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