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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letters from James Buchanan to Robert Tyler

**Date:** 1851-1857

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Wheatland 24 Jan: 51.

My dear Sir,

I have received your favor, & must deny myself the pleasure of giving it an answer in extenso, as I leave for Washington tomorrow morning on a brief visit & have many things to do before my departure.

I most cordially rejoice at Campbell's success. I have done all for him I could & consider his success ~~as~~ certain. Black, Woodward & Plumer have all visited me since their defeat & I think they will all support him: & Plumer actively. I think Judge Campbell ought for my sake to be less strenuous in favor of Rounfort. He will be removed & Baker appointed I think beyond a doubt. It is a life & death matter with me in my own County. Besides, the business men & transporters say Rounfort is wholly unfit.

Brodhead, during Mr. Polk's administration, was my steady personal & political friend & whenever I have met him since has always expressed the same sentiments. I have no reason to doubt him, nor do I doubt him, though I have not heard from him since his election. I wrote to him two days ago; but <sup>there has</sup> ~~have~~ not yet <sup>been</sup> ~~had~~ time to receive his answer. It is impossible that he can attach himself to the fall of Cameron who is now a stretch in

the nostrils of the honest Democracy throughout the State.

If you can carry the City & County for me the State will go it with a rush. I am glad, truly glad that Mr. Allen has changed his sentiments. What can Kneaps & the Horns, who are honest & independent politicians expect from Cap should he be nominated & elected either of which I consider impossible. He would fall into far different hands.

<sup>been published as</sup>  
Resolutions have passed in Huntington County in favor of Cap: & probably he could obtain this small Whig County. My friend David Lynch, however, informs me that when in Harrisburg he saw a delegate to the Convention who assured him that no Cap resolution had passed & that it must have been prepared & published by the Committee after the delegates had left. This is the work of "red headed John Anderson" as great a scamp & scoundrel as there is in the State (I don't often indulge in harsh terms) who was appointed by the late Board a superintendent on the Canal for no other reason of which I can conceive than that like all his tribe, he is my bitter enemy.

Tommy will be invaluable at Reading on the Lancaster dispute. He was himself Chairman of our County Committee for several years & would be perfectly at home in the matter.

Robert Tyler Esq

Ever your friend  
very respectfully  
James Buchanan

Wheatland 24 Jan: 51.

My dear Sir/

I have received your favor, & must deny myself the pleasure of giving it an answer in extenso, as I leave for Washington tomorrow morning on a brief visit & have many things to do before my departure.

I most cordially rejoice at Campbell's success. I have done all for him I could & consider his success [~~one word illegible~~] certain. Black, Woodward & Plumer have all visited me since their defeat & I think they will all support him: & Plumer actively. I think Judge Campbell might for my sake be less strenuous in favor of Roumfort. He will be removed & Baker appointed I think beyond a doubt. It is a life & death matter with me in my own County. Besides, the business men & transporters say Roumfort is wholly unfit.

Brodhead, during Mr. Polk's administration, was my steady personal & political friend & whenever I have met him since has always expressed the same sentiments. I have no reason to doubt him, nor do I doubt him, though I have not heard from him since his election. I wrote to him two days ago; but ~~have~~ there has not yet ~~had~~ been time to receive his answer. It is impossible that he can attach himself to the tail of Cameron who is now a stench in

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the nostrils of the honest Democracy throughout the State.

If you can carry the City & County for me the State will go it with a rush. I am glad, truly glad that Mr. Miller has changed his sentiments. What can Kneass & the Horns, who are honest & independent politicians expect from Cass should he be nominated & elected either of which I consider impossible. He would fall into far different hands.

Resolutions have been published as passed in Huntingdon County in favor of Cass: & probably he could obtain this small Whig County. My friend David Lynch, however, informs me that when in Harrisburg he saw a delegate to the Convention who assured him that no Cass resolution had passed & that it must have been prepared & published by the Committee after the delegates had left. This is the work of "red headed John Anderson" as great a scamp & scoundrel as there is in the State (& I dont often indulge in harsh terms) who was appointed by the late Board a superintendent on the canal for no other reason of which I can conceive than that, like all his tribe, he is my bitter enemy.

Forney will be invaluable at Reading on the Lancaster dispute. He was himself chairman of our County Committee for several years & would be perfectly at home in the matter.

Ever your friend  
very respectfully  
James Buchanan

Robert Tyler Esq

Wheatland, near Lancaster 6 Decmber 1857.

My dear Sir,

I did not receive your kind letter of the 30<sup>th</sup> from Washington until after I learned by Telegraph that the question had been decided by the House & we had secured the victory. I am glad, - sincerely glad you went to Washington & have no doubt you contributed much to the glorious result. Other letters from Washington, as well as your own, speak in most encouraging terms of my prospects; but what of that. A Sweep Band of letter writers are there, at the head of which is Grund who disseminate the reverse all over the Country without contradiction so far as I have observed. The Public Ledger circulates every where the misrepresentations of "Observer" paper for truth among thousands. No contradiction of them, <sup>and</sup> that I have noticed <sup>ever</sup> have appeared in the Pennsylvania at the present moment they are calculated to do me much injury.

I feel at the present moment deeply solicitous about the County of Philadelphia. The Gov would nearly sure one of the enemy will expend upon it any amount of money & unparalleled exertions. Should I carry it, I shall consider

myself almost out of the woods. I know my opponents  
are calculating largely upon it. Pray devote some time to your  
friends cause. I know & appreciate the extent of my obligations  
to you already; & whatever may be the result, I shall ever hold  
them in grateful remembrance & never rest satisfied until I shall  
reciprocate your kindness. Cameron pursues me with the malignity  
of a Demon. He spends time & money without stint & is watering  
in his efforts. He can do nothing himself directly, but employs  
corrupt agents every where who have not lost their credit with the  
people & instructs them in political treachery & how to take all  
advantages at Delegate elections.

Even in Clearfield County where I did not know I had  
an opponent in the Democratic party they fought me; though they  
were in a small minority. Col: Barrett is the Representative  
& George J. Wilcox the Senatorial Delegate, with strong instructions  
in my favor. Indiana <sup>Co</sup> has elected a devoted friend in the  
person of Major Abner Kelly.

I think not a particle of doubt remains concerning this  
County. The feelings of my friends here are now thoroughly enlisted  
in the cause & they are at work. This is all that was necessary.

With ever feelings of regard, I remain your friend

Robert Tyler Esq

James Buchanan

Wheatland, near Lancaster 6 December 1851

My dear Sir/

I did not receive your kind letter of the 30th from Washington until after I learned by Telegraph that the question had been decided by the House & we had sensed the victory. I am glad, sincerely glad you went to Washington and have no doubt you contributed much to the glorious result. Other letters from Washington, as well as your own, speak in more encouraging terms of my prospects; but what of that. A Swiss Band of letter writers are there, at the head of which is Grund who disseminate the reverse all over the Country without consideration so far as I have observed. It is even denied that Boyd is my friend. The Public Ledger circulates every where & the misrepresentations of "Observer" pass for truth among thousands. No contradiction of them, ~~and have observed~~ that I have noticed, has appeared even in the Pennsylvanian and at the present moment they are calculated to do me much injury.

I feel at the present moment deeply solicitous about the County of Philadelphia. Its loss would nearly ruin me and the enemy will expend upon it any amount of money and unparalleled exertions. Should I carry it, I shall consider

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myself almost out of the woods. I know my opponents are calculating largely upon it. Pray devote some time to your friends cause. I know and appreciate the extent of my obligations to you already; and whatever may be the result, I shall ever hold them in grateful remembrance and never rest satisfied until I shall reciprocate your kindness. Cameron pursues me with the malignity of a Demon. He spends time and money without stint and is untiring in his efforts. He can do nothing himself directly but employs corrupt agents every where who have not lost their credit with the people and instructs them in political trickery and how to take all advantages at Delegate election.

Even in Clearfield County where I did not know I had an opponent in the Democratic party they fought me; thought they were in a small minority. Col: Bassett is the Representative and Alonzo J. Wilson the Senatorial Delegate, with strong instructions in my favor. Indiana Co has elected a devoted friend in the person of Major Abner Kelly.

I think not a particle of doubt remains concerning this County. The feelings of my friends here are now thoroughly enlisted in the cause and they are at work. This is all that was necessary. With every feeling of regard, I remain your friend

James Buchanan

Robert Tyler Esq

[James Buchanan to Robert Tyler]

Wheatland, near Lancaster 8 June 1852

My dear Sir /

I have received your favor of yesterday, condoling with me on my defeat. You ought rather to congratulate me on the ability, devotion & energy of my friends. They have fought a good fight & I have deserved success. It was not their fault if they could not command it. For the first time, I have had a fair trial & have been fairly defeated; & I can say from my heart that the only circumstance which now grieves me is that I shall be without the power to benefit such true & valued friends, <sup>as yourself</sup> to the extent of my wishes; & I yet may do them some good even in a private station.

I am truly gratified that Colonel King has been nominated as Vice President. He is a pure, honorable & sound judging man & would make a safe & excellent President. I am well acquainted with General Scurry, having served with him for four or five Sessions in the Senate. He is a sound & inflexible Democrat & an honest & honorable man. Should he be the President, I feel confident he will give no countenance to the speculators & corruptionists which now surround the public Treasury. Virginia has nominated him & must now look after him & keep him straight.

I now give you your final discharge after long, able & faithful services but live in the hope that I may yet be able to manifest my gratitude to you by something more decisive than words.

Robert Tyler Esq

from your friend  
very respectfully  
James Buchanan

Ms. Don't forget to send copies to me as

Wheatland, near Lancaster 8 June 1852

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I have received your favor of yesterday, condoling with me on my defeat. You ought rather to congratulate me on the ability, devotion & energy of my friends. They have fought a good fight & have deserved success. It was not their fault if they could not command it. For the first time, I have had a fair trial & have been fairly defeated; & I can say from my heart that the only circumstance which now grieves me is that I shall be without the power to benefit such true & valued friends as yourself to the extent of my wishes & their deserts. I yet may do them some good even in a private station.

I am truly gratified that Colonel King has been nominated as Vice President. He is a pure, honorable & sound judging man & would make a safe & excellent President. I am well acquainted with General Pierce, having served with him for four or five Sessions in the Senate, He is a sound & inflexible Democrat & an honest & honorable man. Should he be the President, I feel confident he will give no countenance to the speculators & corruptionists which now at like vultures surround the public Treasury. Virginia has nominated him & must now look after him & keep him straight.

I now give you your final discharge after long, able & faithful services but live in the hope that I may yet be able to manifest my gratitude to you by something more decisive than words.

from your friend  
very respectfully  
James Buchanan

Robert Tyler Esq.

P. S. Don't forget to bring Mr. Tyler to see us.

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Private & Strictly Confidential.

Wheallands, near Lancaster 1 April 1853.

My dear Sir /

Your letter came apropos. I urged the appointment of Governor Porter with all my might as collector; but my strong recommendations were disregarded by the <sup>Pres</sup> President as they have been in every instance. I expect daily to hear of the sacrifice of Wandyke & the appointment of Dallas. I now know exactly my position & shall endeavor to sustain it with dignity & self respect. I never recommended Westcott for the Post office to the President; because this would have been unjust to Campbell: & of course no person could have expected me to recommend Miller. — But enough of this. I not only recommended Porter, but opposed Brown. How, then, can I ask Brown for appointments for my friends. I think of him precisely as you do yourself: & after the physical labors which I have endured for the last three weeks, it is impossible for me to answer all the applications which are flowing in upon me. It would not appear like presumption I think I shall

address you a brief note upon the subject for publication  
I can state truly the deep gratitude which I feel for  
my friends in the City & County & my anxiety to serve them.  
I can say that this is impossible because I cannot select  
a few & refuse to recommend the rest; & if I should  
recommend all, it would amount precisely to the  
same thing as recommending none. Under these circumstances  
& as the Collector is a Citizen of the County & knows the  
people, I intend to leave his appointments to him &  
them. Besides, I verily believe, though it would not do  
to state this, that my recommendation would do the  
applicant a positive injury. How would this do?

What a rare act of political injustice it would be  
to sacrifice Van Dyke after having appointed Pettit.  
I have never heard politically of the latter, since he  
& a few others attempted to "abolitionize" the Democratic  
party at Pittsburg & thus put me down.

Notwithstanding all this I retain absolute & entire  
confidence in Campbell. I shall bear all philosophically;  
but take an outside seat & observe the grand Drama.

With my kindest regards for Mr. Tyler & <sup>a</sup> keep from  
for Jones, I remain as ever, sincerely your friend  
Robert Tyler Esq. James Buchanan.

P. S. Can you inform me who Captain Wade is, where he  
is from & where he now resides. I have been asked these  
questions twenty times; but have been unable to answer them.  
It is said he served in the Mexican war. In what  
regiment, & in what rank. James Reynolds heard in  
Philadelphia that he was at the Mass meeting at Greensburg  
& made a speech at night in the Court House. This may  
be. He may be & doubtless is a good man; but I should  
like to know something of him. I tell the people who  
express astonishment at his appointment, that it cannot  
be expected that we in the County should be acquainted  
with all the worthy Democrats of Philadelphia. -

Please give the enclosed to Harriet.

Private & Strictly confidential

Wheatland, near Lancaster 1 April 1853.

My dear Sir/

Your letter came apropos. I urged the appointment of Governor Porter with all my might as collector; but my strong recommendations were disregarded by the President as they have been in every instance. I expect daily to hear of the sacrifice of Vandyke & the appointment of Dallas. I now know exactly my position shall endeavor to sustain it with dignity & self respect. I never recommended Westcott for the Post Office to the President, because this would have been unjust to Campbell: & of course no person could have expected me to recommend Miller. - But enough of this. I not only recommended Porter, but opposed Brown. How, then, can I ask Brown for appointments for my friends. I think of him precisely as you do yourself: & after the physical labors which I have endured for the last three weeks it is impossible for me to answer all the applications which are flowing in upon me. If it would not appear like presumption I think I shall

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What a rare act of political injustice it would be to sacrifice Van Dyke after having appointed Pettit. I have never heard politically of the latter, since he & a few others attempted to "abolitionise" the Democratic party at Pittsburg & thus put me down.

Notwithstanding all this I retain absolute & entire confidence in Campbell. I shall bear all philosophically, but take an outside seat & observe the grand Drama.

With my kindest regards for Mrs. Tyler & a kiss for Toucy, I remain as ever, sincerely your friend.

James Buchanan

Robert Tyler Esq

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something of him. I tell the people who express astonishment at his appointment, that it cannot be expected that we in the Country should be acquainted with all the worthy Democrats of Philadelphia.-

Please give the enclosed to Harriet.

President of the U.S.

LG 12

Legation of the United States,

London, 1 February 1856.

My dear Sir,

My public duties at this crisis  
are so onerous, without a Secretary of Legation,  
that I have been obliged almost altogether to  
suspend my private correspondence; yet your  
letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> ultimo is of so excellent &  
generally a tone & character that I cannot  
deny myself the gratification of thanking you  
for it most cordially before the closing of the  
Bag. I did expect confidently to hear of  
the appointment of my successor by the

Atlantic; but her Mails & Despatch Bag  
have just reached me & the Secretary does not  
even allude to the subject of my earnest appeals.

I am most heartily tired of my situation &  
most anxious to be relieved from it; but  
when I shall get away, Heaven only knows.

One storm succeeds another in the relations  
between the two Countries, & there is always  
something which renders it impossible that I  
should take French leave; & entrust the affairs  
of the Legation to General Campbell, our  
worthy Consul. I do not even hear a word as  
to their sending me a Secretary of Legation, though

W. Appleton has been at home more than  
two months.

Your expressions of friendship for me  
are most warmly reciprocated. On my part,  
there have been of old standing as you well  
know, & I trust you <sup>also</sup> know me well enough  
to believe that my friendships are lasting &  
sincere.

I am truly sorry I have not time to  
write more. I hope you will write often &  
tell me the news.

With my affectionate & respectful  
regards to W. J. L., I remain always

your friend,  
Robert J. L. & James Beutner

Legation of the United States  
London 1 February 1856

My dear Sir/

My public duties at this crisis are so onerous, without a Secretary of Legation, that I have been obliged almost altogether to suspend my private correspondence; yet your letter of the 8th. ultimo is of so excellent & friendly a tone & character that I cannot deny myself the gratification of thanking you for it most cordially before the closing of the Bag. I did expect confidently to hear of the appointment of my successor by the

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I am truly sorry I have not time to write more. I hope you will write often & tell me the news.

Trust my affectionate & respectful regards to Mr. Tyler, I remain always,

Your friend  
James Buchanan

Robert Tyler

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Book 48

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Wilmington 11 June 1857.

My dear Sir /

I returned from Lebanon on Wednesday night

& have since had a pretty severe touch of Cholera Morbus. I

am now far from being well; but am getting better very fast.

I have read Governor McDonald's letter with care; & am

no little surprised at the report he has heard concerning myself.

I was not in Washington for more than six months before

the passage of the Compromise measures; & you must be well

aware that my constant adherence to the Missouri Compromise

has been the cause of many attacks against me from the fierce

democrats of our State. My way has ever been to leave nothing

in doubt regarding my public course: & therefore although there

was no necessity for it <sup>silence</sup> & ~~it~~ would have been policy, <sup>yet</sup> in my

letter to the Union meeting in Philadelphia, dated 19 Nov: 1850.

I say; — "The defeat of the Webster Proviso & the passage of the

Fugitive Slave Law, are all that the South have obtained by the

Compromise. They asked for the Missouri Compromise, which it is

known that for me I was always willing to concede believing

this would be the most <sup>just</sup> equitable & satisfactory arrangement of the

territorial question between the North & the South. But that has

passed away". &c &c &c

My course upon the Slave question has always been open  
& direct. I have never concealed my views; but have always expressed  
them whenever an opportunity offered. If the South had sustained  
me ~~on~~ the ground which I took in favor of the Missouri  
Compromise, it would have been as easy for them to obtain this  
as Non-Intervention. They abandoned me & my platform &  
went for General Cass & the Nicholson letter: & then only when  
it was too late they were willing to accept the Missouri compromise.  
In the mean time I was denounced as being more Southern  
than the South, &c. &c. But more than enough of  
this. —

I would write you a much longer letter, if I were  
well & besides I have company which I cannot leave long.  
I write this to enable you to say what you think proper  
to Gov: McDonald; but do not send him my letter.

It is written in haste; — besides in my situation I  
ought to write no political letters except to confidential  
friends like yourself —

Robert Tyler Esq

In haste as ever  
Sincerely your friend  
James Buchanan

P.S. I agree with you in believing that the Democratic (State Rights)  
party are in the majority in Mississippi & Alabama; & that a majority  
of the Democratic party in Georgia are State Rights men. — not secessionists.

Wheatland 11 June 1857

My dear Sir/

I returned from Lebanon on Wednesday night & have since had a pretty severe touch of cholera morbus. I am now far from being well; but am getting better very fast. I have read Governor M'Donald's letter with care: & am no little surprised at the report he has heard concerning myself. I was not in Washington for more than six months before the passage of the Compromise measures; & you must be well aware that my constant adhesion to the Missouri Compromise has been the cause of many attacks against me from the fishy Democrats of our State. My way has ever been to leave nothing in doubt regarding my public course: & therefore although there was no necessity for it & I silence would have been policy, yet in my letter to the union meeting in Philadelphia, dated 19 Nov: 1850, I say; - "The defeat of the Wilmot Proviso & the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law are all that the South have obtained by the Compromise. They asked for the Missouri Compromise which it is known that for one I was always willing to concede believing this would be the most just equitable & satisfactory arrangement of the territorial question between the North & the South. But that has passed away". &c &c &c

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I would write you a much longer letter, if I were well - besides, I have company which I cannot leave long. I write this to enable you to say what you think proper to Gov: M'Donald; but do not send him my letter. It is written in haste; - besides in my situation I ought to write no political letters except to confidential friends like yourself -

In haste as ever  
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Robert Tyler Esq

P. S. I agree with you in believing that the Democratic (States' Right) party are in the majority in Mississippi & Alabama; & that a majority of the Democratic party in Georgia are State Rights men. - not secessionists.