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Title: Letter from Harriet Lane to Lily Macalester

Date: September 13, 1857

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Tuesday. Left 13. 1859. My dear Tily. I Had no eden you would write me from West Pout, & Therefore cras not very much disappointed. I know how full of pleasure your orient are - how your chands are filled with pleasant duties. I how your eyes are dayyled The glitter & glace ofbrass buttons - & Knowing all this, dear Vely, I really did not expect you

to write. Toe all cegut you could not pay us a visit There this summer - but as the Foloyd's Thave been absent the centure season, you would not have enjoyed The country much. cheefully, but does not consider humself restored in health. dus Holoyd is for from well. of that been unserable all summer - They will return very soon. Washington has been shockingly dule this summer - a few foreigners

were the only persons left in town. This last week has brought a few of the wanderers home. The are having delighful weather, & I enjoy my daily rides intensely-I have a wice lettle beau, always ready at my command. He lives close by, & you can unagine how charmingly courement it is. The will return to town by the 1st of Oct probably cooks to dusty of duty, that I thate to think of it will the cold weather. , Did I tell you that

your chances were all over with De Ring; 8 that he astomshed us all this summer, try bringing home one fine day-a nouvelle, maries! of du shall have your on thoo. I fear I cannot do more than I promised you in the Eferine dear Lily. I that is, to fooks a few days with you, if you are Still in The country you may be sure I will " stay as long as foosible. dry "leave of absence " must be day short this esuluming to

bashington until the writer .- I ames Henry is away, & when I leave, Uncle will the entury alone. so I shall only be from home long enough to "right up" for the writer 8 take a glimspe at some few friends. I must go to Lancaster - my brother That lost one of his children this summer, & I feel it to be a duty to go to see them - there are also other things make it my duty to pass a few days in Lancaster this Autumn. We respect a visit from whom I believe you know!

He has no doubt awired in The country, & expects to be here the last of the mouth. In & clus Henry!!! were at Lake George when last I heard from them. They arle pay a lettle nisit t Annapolis, & These facts, & settle down in New york thappy to mite - & advise, Jam bound to believe what you say about the medico" & if I find myself deceired, my faith in woman is foverer grue. When is Sally Butter to

I be married? I hear Dr Wistar was engaged to a lovely gil here, a dies de Kane, & that he Cheard Dome umour, about her family-doubtles, unfounded f- & Droke he engagement. The has fell it very Reculy ever since. for the was kincere. Sarah had better keep an eyes to her lover. to Philia. I has been very Ill within a the last - few weeks, but I trust she is quite well again. Give any love to your father. write me, dear tely, the sure that I will see you sometime this Autumny

Though my visit will not the as long as I should teke it. Believe me, dlevarys, dear Mours very affectionally Hanes Exense carlessness, as the posturan is waiting. & There is no time to haview. What think you of Douglas's promuneiamento?!!!

My dear Lily,

I had no idea you would write me from West Point, & therefore was not very much disappointed. I know how full of pleasure your visit are - how your hands are filled with pleasant duties - & how your eyes are dazzled ^with the glitter & glare of brass buttons & knowing all this, dear Lily, I really did not expect you to write. We all regret you could not pay us a visit here this summer - but as the Floyd's have been absent the entire season, you would not have enjoyed the country much. Mr. Floyd writes very cheerfully, but does not consider himself restored in health. Mrs. Floyd is far from well, & has been miserable all summer - they will return very soon. Washington has been shockingly dull this summer - a few foreigners were the only persons left in town. This last week has brought a few of the wanderers home. We are having delightful weather, & I enjoy my daily rides intensely - I have a nice little beau, always ready at my command. He lives close by, & you can imagine how charmingly convenient it is. We will return to town by the 1st of Oct. probably earlier; - town looks so dusty & dirty, that I hate to think of it until the cold weather. Did I tell you that your chances were all over with Dr. King? & that he astonished us all this summer, by bringing home one fine day - a nouvelle mariée? You shall have your Army Register in a day or two.

I fear I cannot do more than I promised you in the spring dear Lily - & that is, to pass a few days with you, if you are still in the country when I go to Pennsylvania. You may be sure I will stay as long a possible. My "leave of absence" must be very short this Autumn. Miss Hetty is not coming to Washington until the winter. - James Henry is away, & when I leave, Uncle will be entirely alone - so I shall only be from home long enough to "rig up" for the winter & take a glimspe at some few friends. I must go to Lancaster - my brother has lost one of his children this Summer, & I feel it to be a duty to go see them - there are also other things have it my duty to pass a few days in Lancaster this Autumn. We expect a visit from our old friend Sir H. Holland, whom I believe you know! He has no doubt arrived in the country, & expects to be here the last of the month.

Mr. & Mrs. Henry!!! were at Lake George when last I heard from them. They will pay a little visit to Annapolis, & these parts, & settle down in New York by the 1st. He is too happy to write - & advises every one "to go & do likewise." I am bound to believe what you say about the "Medico" - & if I find myself deceived, my faith in woman is forever gone. When is Sally Butler to be married? I hear Dr. Wistar was engaged to a lovely girl here, a Miss McKane, & that he heard some rumour about her family - (doubtless unfounded) - & broke the engagement. She has felt it very keenly ever since, for she was sincere. Sarah had better keep an eye to her lover.

Mrs. Plitt has returned to Phil^{ia}. - & has been very ill within a the last few weeks, but I trust she is quite well again. Give my love to your father. Write me, dear Lily, & be sure that I will see you some time this Autumn though my visit will not be as long as I should like it.

Believe me, always, dear Lily - Yours very affectionately

Harriet R. Lane

Excuse carlessness, as the postman is waiting - & there is no time "to review." What think you of Douglas' *pronunciamento*?!!!

[letter sent to Lily Macalester]

LANE, HARRIET.

Autograph Letter Signed as First Lady, Soldier's Home, 13 September 1857. 8 pp., 8" x 5".

The ward and niece of James Buchanan, Harriet Lane served as First Lady for her bachelor uncle throughout his Presidency. Attractive and vivacious, she achieved great social success and popularity.

Here, Lane writes from Soldier's Home, the Georgetown cottage where she and Buchanan would often spend the summer months during his administration. In this long, chatty letter to an old friend, she passes on news of many mutual acquaintances, some of them very well-known political figures such as Secretary of War John B. Floyd. Lane also remarks that "Washington has been shockingly dull this summer - a few foreigners were the only persons left in town.... We will return to town by the 1st of Oct, probably earlier; - town looks so dusty & dirty, that I hate to think of it until the cold weather." She explains that she will be able to visit her friend in Pennsylvania only briefly. "My 'leave of absence' must be very short this Autumn.... when I leave, Uncle will be entirely alone, so I shall only be from home long enough to 'rig up' for the winter & take a glimpse at some few friends. I must go to Lancaster - my brother has lost one of his children this summer, & I feel it to be a duty to go to see them." In a postscript, Lane adds, "What think you of Douglas' pronunciamento?!!!"

Lane's letters as First Lady are quite scarce, and a long, very personal one such as this is quite rare.