

Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Documents Online

Title: Letter from James Buchanan to Nathaniel Chapman

Date: May 8, 1847

Location: I-Friends-2009-1

Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

Washington 8 May 1847.

Gentlemen /

I feel honored by your invitation
to attend, "a farewell dinner to Mr. Rush to be given
by some of his friends" in Philadelphia on Monday next.
It would afford me much pleasure to unite with them
in this testimonial of respect to a gentleman so eminently
worthy of their regard: and, I have, therefore, to regret
that my public duties render this impossible.

Yours very respectfully

James Buchanan

D. N. Chapman Esq
& al, Committee

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Autograph Letter Signed as Secretary of State to Dr. N[athaniel]. Chapman and others, Washington [DC], 8 May 1847. 1 page, 10" x 8", plus integral blank leaf.

A future President who had already been a Congressman, Senator, and minister to Russia, James Buchanan was Secretary of State in the Polk administration at this date. In this letter with many fine associations, he addresses a committee in his home state of Pennsylvania, expressing his regret that he cannot attend a special testimonial dinner in honor of Richard Rush.

"I feel honored by your invitation to attend 'a farewell dinner to Mr. Rush to be given by some of his friends' in Philadelphia on Monday next," Buchanan asserts. *"It would afford me much pleasure to unite with them in this testimonial of respect to a gentleman so eminently worthy of their regard: and, I have, therefore, to regret that my public duties render this impossible."* He has signed, *"Yours very respectfully / James Buchanan."*

Richard Rush, an eminent Philadelphia lawyer and statesman, was the son of Benjamin Rush, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence. By this date, the younger Rush already had a distinguished career, having held several Cabinet posts and performed important service as the U.S. minister to Great Britain. He had recently been named the American minister to France, so the farewell dinner in his honor doubtless preceded his departure for Europe. Buchanan would have been invited not only as a prominent Pennsylvanian but as the Cabinet officer responsible for the diplomatic service. With the Mexican War still ongoing, however, Buchanan's own *"public duties"* would have been pressing.

Buchanan's principal correspondent here is Nathaniel Chapman, a noted physician who had been a pupil of Benjamin Rush and who would become the first president of the American Medical Association a year after this.

The letter has some tears to the left margin, resulting in a few paper losses, one of which just touches the text. There is also a little soiling, mostly in marginal areas. Overall, the letter is in good condition.