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Title: Letters from James Buchanan to Thomas Elder

Date: 1827-1828

Location: MC 1998.10

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My dear Sir /

Lancaster 11 November 1827.

Judge Duncan is truly very unwell. He has not been able to lie down for several days & nights. He is ~~now~~ somewhat better than he was & hopes are now entertained that he may get so well as to be removed to Philadelphia. I do not believe however that the physicians entertain hopes of his recovery. Mrs. Duncan & Stephen are now here.

It is believed by some persons that Mr. Shulze will accept the nomination which it is expected will be ~~made of~~ ^{offered to} him by the Convention on the fourth of January. Can this be possible? If he should it will make the next election in Pennsylvania the most bitter contest which we have witnessed since 1799. The experience of every day convinces me ^{of the correctness of your opinion &} that the friends of General Jackson are not destined to obtain an easy victory in Pennsylvania. I shall not write a political letter to you however until I go to Philadelphia & see how the land lies there. I expect to leave Lancaster on Tuesday week & as I want money I shall annex a receipt for my dividend. You will please to insert the dates.

The Court is not going on well here & the Judges are in a bad humor. We
all prepared in ~~the~~ a number of the first causes on the list in which Judge
Rogers had been concerned. The inability of Judge Duncan to sit & the absence
of the Chief Justice compelled the Court to pass over the first causes &
thus many of the gentlemen were taken by surprise. I am glad I was
not. The causes however were ~~passed~~ not urged by the counters of the
Bar & this seems to have given great offense to Judge Norton which he
has expressed in his usual courteous, elegant & gentlemanly language.

To be

Thomas Elden Esquire

From your sincere friend
James Buchanan

Lancaster 11 November 1827.

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from your sincere friend
James Buchanan

Thomas Elder Esquire

My dear Sir /

Washington 13 February 1828.

Pardon me for so long neglecting to answer yours of the 27th ultimo.

I feel much indebted to you for the information which it contains & have been prevented hitherto from answering your questions, by an incessant press of business.

Should Congress determine to construct a road from Washington to Buffalo, unless I should change my opinion, I shall be decidedly in favor of making Harrisburg a point. I do not think however that any appropriation will be made for that purpose during the present session. The truth is the administration have, ~~by an~~ attempting to engineer themselves into office, made so many surveys between given points, ^{when} that we now come to fix ^{the particular} ~~the~~ route of any road, those members who ought to unite in its favor, are divided among themselves between ~~the~~ different surveys. Nearly one half of Pennsylvania has been embraced by the surveys of different routes between Washington & Buffalo. This is one of the many evils which flow from a weak administration.

To answer your questions more particularly, it is my opinion Harrisburg & Sunbury will be two points in ^{certainly Harrisburg will be one} the road ^{it} & I think ~~the road~~ will end at Buffalo. I do not believe it will be a railway; because it is chiefly intended for a post- not a commercial road.

If former laws should be pursued, a superintendent ^{of the road} will be appointed with the advice & consent of the Senate to make the contracts for its construction & see that they shall be faithfully executed. (Vide the Act for the continuation of the Cumberland Road passed 3 March 1825)

LARGE 11

I have but little news to communicate. Chillon's resolutions at first threw us all into confusion; but we rallied & beat the enemy in gallant style. We had another victory on Monday last in relation to printing the documents concerning the six Militia men. You have in this issue an account of it in the Telegraph. We have at length arrived at the point from which we should have started & I now entertain no fear that we shall do any thing imprudent or improper during the present session.

The six Militia men will I trust hereafter be permitted to rest quietly in their graves. It is as clear a case in favor of General Jackson as ever was presented.

I expect the Tariff will be up next week. It will pass unless a division among the friends of the system should defeat it. I fear the Eastern members will not be willing to concede to Pennsylvania & New York a protection for those articles in which they are most deeply interested. Should no additional duty be imposed upon Molasses - an additional duty on foreign spirits will protect New England rum as much as it does Pennsylvania whiskey. It is said that at least three fourths of all the Molasses brought into this country are converted into New England Rum.

Please to present my most respectful compliments to Mr. Elder. I fervently hope your son may be restored to perfect health & your mind relieved from apprehension on his account.

How do you like the appointment of J. Smith? Who will be our judge in place of Bradford?

From your sincere friend
James Buchanan

Washington 13 February 1828.

My dear Sir/

Pardon me for so long neglecting to answer yours of the 27 ultimo. I feel much indebted to you for the information which it contained & have been prevented hitherto from answering your questions by an incessant press of business.

Should Congress determine to construct a road from Washington to Buffaloe, unless I should change my opinion, I shall be decidedly in favor of making Harrisburg a point. I do not think however that any appropriation will be made for that purpose during the present session. The truth is the administration have, by in attempting to engineer themselves into office made so many surveys between given points that when we now come to fly ~~the~~ the particular route of any road, those members who out to unite in its favor are decided among themselves between ~~the~~ different surveys. Nearly one half of Pennsylvania has been embraced by the surveys of different routes between Washington & Buffaloe. This is one of the many evils which flow from a weak administration.

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If former laws should be pursued, a superintendant of the road will be appointed with the advise & consent of the Senate to make the contracts for its construction & see that they shall be faithfully executed. ([one word illegible] the [one word illegible] for the continuation of the Cumberland road passed 3 March 1825)

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Please to present my most respectful compliments to W. Elder. I fervently hope your son may be restored to perfect health & your mind relieve from apprehension on his account.

From your sincere friend

James Buchanan

How do you like the appointment of F. Smithd who will be our Judge in place of Bradford?