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Title: Letters from James Buchanan to Charles Gontar

Date: 1849-50

Location: MC 1998.10

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Wheallant near Lancaster 8 August 1849

My dear Sir /

In consequence of an absence from home of between four & five weeks, I did not receive your favor of the 13th unless until very recently. This is the only reason why it has not been sooner answered.

I feel greatly indebted to you for the kind sentiments which it contains: and am rejoiced that I shall enjoy the pleasure of seeing you personally in September. I hope you will pay me a visit as soon as you reach Lancaster where the opportunity will be afforded of conversing fully on the subject of your letter.

Who shall be selected as standard bearer of the great Democratic party of the Union in 1852 is a question of small importance compared with the success of our time-honored & time-tried principles. That candidate ought to be selected, provided he be sound in political faith, in knowledge & experience, who can command the strongest popular support. We ought not to suffer our partialities for men to endanger the triumph of the good old cause. It is now perhaps too soon to decide who shall be our Candidate. One thing is certain that he ought to be selected with ^{some} view to his strength in this State, as the time has ^{I regret to say} passed when a ~~Democratic~~ Democratic nomination in Pennsylvania is equivalent to an election.

The selection of Mr. Gamble, as our Candidate for Canal Commissioner, is a good one, & unless the signs of the times greatly deceive me, he will be elected by a handsome majority. In this State, I think I cannot be mistaken in saying, that General Taylor has lost much ground since his inauguration.

Charles G. Gorton Esq

from your friend
very respectfully
James Buchanan

Wheatland near Lancaster 8 August 1849

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In consequence of an absence from home of between four & five weeks, I did not receive your favor of the 13th. ultimo until very recently. This is the only reason why it has not been sooner answered.

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from your friend
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James Buchanan

Charles G. Gonter Esq

My dear Sir /

Wheatland near Lancaster 15 July 1850

Absence from home & other circumstances have prevented me from soon acknowledging the receipt of your interesting letter of last month. You indeed present a gloomy picture of the condition of the Democratic party in Missouri. I fear with you that we are destined to be beaten in your State & that we may witness the election of a Whig Senator in the place of Col. Benton.

The lamented death of General Taylor & the succession of W. Fillmore to the Presidency will most probably produce a regular old-fashioned Whig administration & restore the ~~old~~ ^{former} issues of a general system of internal improvements, a protective Tariff &c. It is believed that the present Cabinet will be changed & a new one appointed under the auspices of Clay & Webster. Should the Slavery question be settled, the parties will then stand as they did years ago, with this exception that we shall then still have a free soil & abolition party. The success of either of the two old parties will, in a great degree depend upon the fact which of them will lose the greater number by the secession of free soilers. I think no man at present can pretend accurately to predict the future, though I have an abiding conviction in the triumph

of the ~~Dem~~ Democratic party with whose ascendancy I believe
that the prosperity & even perpetuity of the Union are identified.
We shall all anxiously look for the result of the August elections
in Missouri.

We have but little news here. Our ticket for Canal
Commissioner, Auditor General & Surveyor General is popular
throughout the State & I think there can be little doubt of its
election by a handsome majority.

Our friend William Mathiot has taken his bride to
his own house & they live very snugly. He is an amiable &
excellent man & is highly esteemed by the whole community.

You ask my opinion whether you ought to purchase the
paper in Iowa. On this subject I am incapable of giving you
advice. Generally speaking it is but a poor business ^{in this State}, so far as
profit is concerned, to become the editor of a County newspaper.
Every young man when settling in life ought to look to the end
& select such a position as would promise him eventual independence.
I have no doubt that with ^{industry &} experience, your talents would enable
you to edit a respectable & useful paper.

With sentiments of regard, I remain sincerely
Your friend

W. Charles G. Gorton

James Buchanan

Wheatland near Lancaster 15 July 1850

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James Buchanan

Mr. Charles G. Gonter