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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letters from James Buchanan to Charles Ingersoll

**Date:** 1837-1847

**Location:** MC 1998.10

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My dear Sir,

Leicester 12 June 1837.

I regret that I have already distributed every copy which I had of the Geological Reconnoissance. Had I retained even one for myself, I should send it, with pleasure, to Mr. Foulkrode. Either you or I can procure him a copy when we reach Washington in September; ~~but~~ let him <sup>then</sup> remind one of us that he desired it.

Cox, through the agency of Ford who was an Antimasonic member of the Legislature from this County during the last Session, has prevailed upon a certain Anthony McGinn to furnish a certificate against me. I know not exactly what it contains; but no doubt it is full & complete. A certificate from Anthony that he heard me, at a public meeting, speak the words attributed to me by Mr. Cox would be treated with universal derision in this City where he is known. It is possible they may have prevailed upon some other party here to certify to this falsehood or something like it. I know that ~~there is~~ a notorious character here, by name John Litcham, was sent round the town with some such paper; but I believe he procured no subscribers.

But why should Cox be allowed to degrade the Convention by introducing

his testimony upon this subject against an absent individual who is no member of the Body. <sup>P</sup> Let him, in this respect, place himself on the same footing with me & publish his testimony in the Newspapers.

I believe the Rev: Mr. Keenan has written to Mr. Doran as to the character of Anthony M'Glavin.

From your friends  
Very respectfully

Charles Ingersoll Esq

James Buchanan

Lancaster 12 June 1837

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I believe the Rev: Mr. Keenan has written to Mr. Doran as to the character of Anthony M'Glinn.

from your friend  
very respectfully  
James Buchanan

Charles Ingersoll Esq

Leicester 8 May 1843.

My dear Sir,

I have been almost in a state of mental torpor since the adjournment of Congress, and am now just beginning to rouse myself. I have passed two months more idly than any of the past two months of my life. In looking over the mass of letters which has accumulated on my hands I find a note from you inquiring from whom I took the quotation in my speech on Peck's trial. You suppose correctly. It was Edw. Livingston.

Van's letter to Indiana in which he opposes all discriminations, even in a revenue tariff, <sup>intended incidentally to protect</sup> ~~in favor of~~ domestic industry, will render him still less popular in this State than he was before. I am sorry he has gone so far in pleading for the South. Should he be nominated, we shall be placed in an awkward position in Penn<sup>a</sup>. So far as the tariff is concerned he & Calhoun now <sup>practically</sup> stand on the same footing, & our people will more readily apologize for such opinions in a Southern than a Northern man.

I shall be at a wedding at the Woodlands (W<sup>m</sup> Kitteras') tomorrow night; but expect to return the next day.

C. J. Ingersoll {

Yours sincerely  
James Buchanan

Lancaster 8 May 1843

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I have been almost in a state of mental terror since the adjournment of Congress, and am now just beginning to rouse myself. I have passed two months more idly than any of the past two months of my life. In looking over the mass of letters which has accumulated on my hands I find a note from you inquiring from whom I took the quotation in my speech on Peck's trial. You suppose correctly. It was Edwd. Livingston.

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Yours sincerely  
James Buchanan

C. J. Ingersoll Esq

Lancaster 16 October 1844

My dear Sir /

I have received your favor & deem it a work  
of more <sup>as well as arrogance</sup> supererogation <sub>^</sub> to endorse the statement of such gentlemen  
as have signed the paper to which you refer. Besides, I have  
made it a rule through life never to sign a certificate, <sup>though this is not asked</sup> without  
being personally apprised of the truth of the contents. We are  
devotedly at work here & my news from different parts of the State  
is cheering. Nothing can produce an effect upon the Iron masters  
of the State. They are perfectly impenetrable; and like the owl, the  
more light you cast upon them, the less they can see. But they  
cannot accomplish ~~my~~ our defeat.

Eva n. p. amico in hanc

Wm. C. J. Ingersoll

James Buchanan

Lancaster 16 October 1844

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Ever yr friend in haste  
James Buchanan

Hon. C. J. Ingersoll



Saratoga Springs 12 September 1846.

My dear Sir!

I have received yours of the 9<sup>th</sup> Instant, with its enclosure, which letter I now return according to your request. You ask my advice whether you ought to send it which I shall give in all sincerity. After having carefully examined its contents, I am constrained to answer in the negative. What good could it possibly do either to yourself or the President? Thus, I confess, I cannot perceive; whilst I can readily imagine that it may do harm. Under such circumstances, I cannot advise you to take a step which may possibly alienate the President & yourself from each other. There seems to have been a misunderstanding between you; & this can always be best corrected by personal & friendly explanations. I know not what may have passed between him & yourself on the subject of the Russian mission; but of this I am certain that

You ought never to publish the conversation without his consent, or at least without first ascertaining that your recollection & his correspondence.

This is a delightful spot & I pass my time in most agreeable idleness. The fashionable crowd has dispersed; but still ~~we~~ have much pleasant company remain.

From all I can learn Governor Wright's re-nomination is certain; & the prevailing opinion seems to be that he will be re-elected. I saw him but for a few minutes on my way to this place; & there was so much company present, that I had no opportunity of holding any private conversation with him. So far as I have observed the measures of the general administration are decidedly popular with both branches of the party in this State, & I venture to predict that their members of Congress will return to Washington in a better state of feeling than when they left

from your friend  
very respectfully

Hon: Charles J. Ingersoll

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From your friend  
very respectfully  
James Buchanan

Hon: Charles J. Ingersoll

Washington, 24 September 1846.

My dear Sir,

Your letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> Instant did not reach Saratoga before my departure; but has been forwarded to me here since my return. I have destroyed it, as I do the letters of valued friends the publication of which by any probability could do no good & might be productive of much mischief.

I am pleased with your suggestion of visiting Washington. A personal explanation with the President would be far better than any correspondence. I know to a certainty that he was much at a loss to find a suitable person for the Russian mission & at the time he held the conversation with you had no other person in view. Should you visit Washington I hope you will come directly to my house. I shall give you a hearty welcome & shall be glad <sup>to enjoy</sup> your society.

In natural temperament I am somewhat of an optimist, Should you be re-elected, as I earnestly hope

I believe you will, it may all be for the best. You should  
make every honorable exertion to secure success. Were I  
in your situation I would spare no pains to accomplish  
this object.

I am very sorry I had not the opportunity of seeing  
you in Philadelphia. I expected to remain there several  
days, but the news by the arrival of the Princeton attack  
I learned on Sunday evening hurried me away,

from your friends  
very respectfully,

Hon: Charles J. Ingersoll.  James Buchanan

P.S. I have not alluded to the subject in any conversation  
with the President & shall not unless in compliance with  
your express request.

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Washington 2 October 1846.

My dear Sir,

I have received your letter & as the merchants say, noted its contents. I do not intend to interpose between two such high dignitaries as yourself & the President except on one condition. This is, that after the election, you shall come, with carpet bag in hand & pass at least 48 hours under my roof & as much longer as you please. The longer the more agreeable. You do the President no more than justice when you say you really believe he means to be kind. As your friend, though I make but few professions, I shall heartily rejoice that you were not appointed Minister to Russia, should you be re-elected. I feel the deepest interest in the result; & my enquiries in different quarters

have all been answered as I could desire. God send  
you a safe deliverance! Your friends should not  
relax their efforts till the battle is won.

The war is going on swimmingly & there is no  
danger of a dishonorable peace. We must at least  
have New Mexico & upper California.

You & I differ entirely in regard to the course of  
the President on the Oregon question. It was plain,  
direct & statesman like throughout. Had it not been  
for the interference of the Senate we should have got  
much better terms than we obtained: & had Congress  
& the Country stood up for the whole of Oregon, he  
was prepared to maintain our title to  $54^{\circ} 40'$  at  
any hazard. If our Envoy meant to say, which I  
cannot believe, that he was obeying the wishes of the  
President in urging  $49^{\circ}$  upon the British Government, my  
instructions & letters to him, every word of which has



been published prove that he was mistaken. The President never wrote him a private letter containing different sentiments.

The President is an honest, able, firm & energetic man; & it is impossible that you & he shall not understand each other. Your letter unquestionably ought to have been answered; & yet I have given serious offence to several of my best friends - from the same cause. It is utterly impossible for me to keep up my private correspondence.

With my most ardent wishes for your re-election, I remain sincerely & respectfully

Your friend  
James Buchanan

Hon: Charles J. Ingersoll

P.S. I hope you will forward me the earliest returns of your election.

Washington 2 October 1846

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Hon: Charles J. Ingersoll

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Washington 15 November 1847.

My dear Sir /

I have received your two favors of the  
8<sup>th</sup> Instant; & was rejoiced <sup>once more</sup> to receive letters bearing  
your well known superscription. However wise & politic  
your suggestions may be in regard to our missions, & I  
shall be glad to converse with you on this subject when  
I have the pleasure of meeting you, what chance think you  
there would be for carrying such reforms, through a Whig  
House of Representatives, during the last year of Mr. Polk's  
term? I have sent estimates to the Treasury for Charges  
to Rome, Guatemala, Equador & Bolivia; because I consider  
such missions indispensable to the public service; but I  
~~consider~~ Consider it doubtful whether Congress will grant  
the necessary appropriations. If without increasing the outfit  
or salary a dollar, the denomination of Charge could be  
changed to that of Ministro Resident, a great point would  
be gained especially in Europe.

We have been directing much of our attention to the increase of our trade with the Continent & especially with Germany, & not without success. How far it would be expedient, or even practicable to reduce our duties by Treaty, for similar advantages granted <sup>to us</sup> by other nations may well be questioned.

The members of Congress are beginning to arrive. Holmes has been here for a week or ten days as busy as a bee, according to report in pursuit of the Speaker's chair.

We are all anxious to obtain the response of the Oracle of Ashland. Various are the conjectures as to what he has said. I think from the revelations of his friends it is now beyond a doubt that the aged counsellor <sup>has</sup> ~~is~~ determined to run another race. So mote it be!

Why dont you come on & secure comfortable lodgings?

I should be most happy if you would pay me a visit for this purpose. I shall promise you good meat, drink, washing & lodging. But, perhaps, you would not accept an invitation from one & yet I am, as for many years past I have been, sincerely & respectfully your friend

Hon: Charles J Ingersoll, 

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