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**Title:** Letter from James Buchanan to E. L. Molineux

**Date:** September 1, 1858

**Location:** MC 1998.10, B3, F26

### Contact:

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Washington 1 September 1858.

E. L. Molineux Esq  
Corresponding Secretary:

Sir:

I have received your favor of the 27<sup>th</sup> ultimo communicating the request of the Board of Directors of the Mercantile Library Association, that I would "appoint from the Cadetships at large that merchant clerk of the City of New York who should the most creditably pass a public Examination held under the auspices of this Association". And they observe in conclusion that "it could not be thought New York was more especially favored above other

cities by receiving in trust a gift [a  
Cadetship at West Point] from the  
Chief Magistrate of the United States."

I need not Express how high-  
ly I appreciate the patriotism, Enterprise,  
and character of the merchants of New  
York and what pleasure it would  
afford me to gratify them in any manner  
in my power. It is, therefore, with  
extreme regret that I feel myself  
compelled to decline their request.

Every Congressional District  
in the United States is entitled to  
have one Cadet at West Point.  
and he is nominated by the Rep-  
resentative to Congress. But a  
large class of cases always exist  
in which the applicant is not a  
permanent resident of any particular

Congressional District, such as the sons and descendants of officers of the Army, especially of those who have been killed in battle or died in the service. These often leave their families in poverty. To provide for such cases, the President has been authorized to appoint ten Cadets at large: and their selection is a trust imposed upon him by the law which it would be a violation of duty for him to surrender. It sometimes occurs that the President can, without violating the spirit of this law, make some of these appointments outside of the class for which they were chiefly intended. Should this prove to be the case in February next, it will afford me very great pleasure to give to any

Recommendation of the Mercantile  
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Yours very respectfully  
James Buchanan

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