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Title: Letter from James Buchanan to John M. Read **Date:** 1843-1849

Location: MC 1998.10

# **Contact:**

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Washington 5 Occamber 1843. My dear Sio / I reques that I could not pays through Theladecphea on my way to this tity. As well most probably be necessary that I should pass one or two days in Theladecphia, before the first of April; and if so, I shall called and enjoy The pleasure of making your house my home. I am far from being one of those who feel offended with advice which they want follow. There is no man in the States to whom I are personally or politically more allached than to Mr. Muhlenberg; and yet such are my felings I obligations towards Mr. Shank, that I cannot lake any parts between These two meno; furt shale to commend & defend them tothe whenever they may be apached. For me & for them, I believe this is true policy, and the ends well show. I ardently desire that the one or the other of them should be momentated & elected, and I thenk He chances are in favor of M. Muhlenberg. So for so my influence ceptents, I shall endeavor to prevent any such exaspiration of feeling between their friends as might produce the nonunation of a new man greatly inferent to eather . I have been frank & candid

with M. Muhlenberg himself I believe he is satesfield.

Now for the other side of the question ; - I have never heard from Shunk himself whon the subject, but some of his friends and me shange letters. They points to the leading Van Buren men every where from Henry Horn to John Galbraith I they say wherever you find a Van Buren man you find a Muhlenberg man & in very many instances not march a Nan Burn man, but a personal enemy of Buchavan, They ask what can you appear from an administration the most devoted a confidentiat friend of which are your enemies. And one letter goes so far as to say that it is the boart of one of M. M. funds in Ene County whose masme I shall not mention that M. ell, well be elected Governor & then walk Superside me calenty & become the Candidate for the Vice Theridenez,

Now I need scarcely say to you That all there things

move me not nor deminisk in the slightest deque my confidence hi ell. Mullenberg; aethough I believe I have not a personal energy we the Democratic party of the state who is not a devoted friend of dV. ellublenberg. -

With every Sentements of respect I kindnep, I remain your friend

Annes Buchanan

John . M. Read Erg

Washington 5 December 1843.

### My dear Sir/

I regret that I could not pass through Philadelphia on my way to this City. It will most probably be necessary that I should pass one or two days in Philadelphia yr city before the first of April; and if so, I shall certainly enjoy the pleasure of making your house my home.

I am far from being one of those who feel offended with advice which they cannot will not follow, There is no man in the State to whom I am personally or politically more attached than to Mr. Muhlenberg; and yet such are my feelings & obligations towards Mr. Shunk, that I cannot take any part between these two men; further than to but shall command & defend them both whenever they may be assailed. For me & for them, I believe this is true policy, & the end will show. I ardently desire that the one or the other of them should be nominated & elected, and I think the chances are in favor of Mr. Muhlenberg. So far as my influence extends, I shall endeavor to prevent any such exasperation of feeling between their friends as might produce the nomination of a new man greatly inferior to either. I have been frank & candid

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with Mr. Muhlenberg himself believe he is satisfied.

Now for the other side of the question:- I have never heard from Shunk himself upon the subject, but some of his friends write me strange letters. They point to the leading Van Buren men every where from Henry Horn to John Galbraith & they say wherever you find a Van Buren man you find a Muhlenberg man & in very many instances not merely a Van Buren man, but a personal enemy of Buchanan. They ask what can you expect from an administration the most devoted & confidential friends of which are your enemies. And one letter goes so far as to say that it is the boast of one of Mr. Ms. friends in Erie County whose name I shall not mention that Mr. M. will be elected Governor & then will supersede me entirely & become the Candidate for the Vice-Presidency.

Now I need scarcely say to you that all these things move me not nor diminish as in the slightest degree my confidence in Mr. Muhlenberg; although I believe I have not a personal enemy in the Democratic party of the State who is not a devoted friend of Mr. Muhlenberg. -

With every sentiment of respect & kindness, I remain

your friend James Buchanan

John. M. Read Esq.

Confidential provident of the confidential and provident per section and the Senate Chambu 22 March 1844 ely dear Sir / I have been descrous of writing to you for Several days; but are so meetpantly occupied that I have not found the time. I now write in the medit of a debate. Judging from the information I receive from the West, I fear that things do not look as favorable there for ellutileubus as I could desire , The is my wish to write a letter expressing my fulings Strongly within a compaps of two columns of a Country News kaper. Occasions well not be wanting. Now what I wish from your is the to state the lopics must descrable to be introduced & the facto in support of theme. I have not the time neerpary to collect, them. Our friend is injured by the false supposition that if Jodenson; L the warm support of most of the swindling brood to which the present administration has given buth. yet I do not know, how any reference Cau be brade to mo on this Julycet; unlip the general & others declaration that M. slands wholly uncommitted & unfiledged to any human There are some who from the hostility of the Tennylvanian L Several of these who control its to myself believe that M. elluklenberg's not friendly to me. My letter would just an end to all such being. Suppositions.

After writing the letter, if such a letter should be deemed advisable, I would send it's to you so that its may be submitted to ell'eller ; for we ought to be very cauteous last any thing contained in it may elly dear sei do harno.

to harm . I leave this matter very much to your discretion I should be glad to hear from you we a legeble mannee.

I fear the County of Westmoreland more than any other in the state. from your friend

John M. Read Eng James Suchance

I.S. I underland that Shunk is doing his duty like a man: Chaugh I have never written huve a line no had a line from here on the Governor question, elly neutral position between Shunk L Muklenberg may sive some weight to my telle dween Shunk I and and 35 to be alluded to . alministration has grown fronthe . By I do not haven to

law he but the me manthe subject ; which which galant + strong

declaration that it, stands what's un committed, aparticipation to any human

not grantly to my off, Mry letter would put an give to all dack

# Confidential

Senate Chamber 22 March 1844

## My dear Sir/

I have been desirous of writing to you for several days; but am so incessantly occupied that I have not found the time. I now write in the midst of a debate.

Judging from the information I receive from the West, I fear that things do not look as favorable there for Muhlenberg as I could desire. It is my wish to write a letter expressing my feelings strongly within a compass of two columns of a country newspaper. Occasions will not be wanting.

Now what I wish from you is the to state the topics most desirable to be introduced & the facts in support of them. I have not the time necessary to collect them.

Our friend is injured by the false supposition that of Portenson; & the warm support of most of the swindling brood to which the present administration has given birth. Yet I do not know how any reference can be made by me on this subject; unless the general & strong declaration that M. stands wholly uncommitted & unpledged to any human being.

There are some who from the hostility of the Pennsylvanian & several of those who control it to myself & from other causes believe that Mr. Muhlenberg is not friendly to myself me. My letter would put an end to all such suppositions.

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After writing the letter, if such a letter should be deemed advisable, I would send it to you so that it may be submitted to Mr. M.; for we ought to be very cautious lest anything contained in it may do harm.

I leave this matter very much to your discretion & should be glad to hear from you in a <u>legible</u> manner.

I fear the County of Westmoreland more than any other in the state.

from your friend James Buchanan

John M. Read Esq.

P. S. I understand that Shunk is doing his duty like a man: though I have never written him a line nor had a line from him on the Governor question. My neutral position between Shunk & Muhlenberg may give some weight to my letter. Ought the proceedings of 35 to be alluded to?

Wheatland 18 August 1849.

elly dear die for the start

I rejore to learn that you have accepted my invitation & that I may indulge the life of second you declong at Wheatland, It is my earnest desire that our defension of openeen on the free Soil question shall not, at the stightest degree, with fee with our personal friendship: and I know What I shall not say or do, not have I said or done any thing which could que you the stightest cause of offence.

Whilst I do not dery the power of Congress to legistale in the question of slavery in the levitories; yet I am deeply conversed that the papage of the Wilmot provise in any form would be unnecessary to accomplish the object of its fuerides, unjust to the South & dangerous to the Uncon . It may probably pass & I doubt not write be approved by General Joylor. In that event, we shall have reached a real crises. The South will then be united the fire which has long been smouldowns will busst fack, not in an ignus fatures blage as heretofore but with sleady entensily. They well insist that the agilation of the question shall ceave in regard the (bistuct of Columber, unless at should be raised by the people of that District & that efficient measures shall be adopted to carry into effect that claure of the Constitution, wichout which the Constitution never would have existed, to enable them to reclaim then runaway slaves. They day, with bath, that which the agilation of the Mave question in the Month may be sport to us, it

may also, become death to cheme . A produces an unesay 2. excelet faling among the Slaves I places in peapardy the safety of all they hold most dear on earth , Devoledly allached to the union as they are, they soborty declare that if the North should persest at applying the match to the Magazine of gun powder in which they live, Self preservation will compel Hem to Separate from as. I have no doubt that the Union must & well be preserved;that the North well eventually percure the propriety of regraining from all unnecessary agilation on the Subject; I that the South well not flare up as they have done heretofore upon every hiplens occasion. But in order to accomplish this object, we Shale probably have to pap through a hemendous slow. A the North we are lolatly egnorant of the deep, pervading 2 determined feeling of the South on the subject. It is not a politeral fecting; but one that is domestic Lacef preserving. " am as much oppored to slavery in the abstract as you can be; but whether popular or not I shall ever adhere to the Constitutioned in letter Lie spirit I to our glorious compart of Union. I have expressed my sentements on the subject as my Backs County letter to there I shall adhere . I know that the Mepouri Compromese, which I believe to be enteredy constitutioned is serve out of the questione; but I shall aprime no new ground. I write you this lettic confidentially, without any hope of onducing you to change your ground, but murely to communicate my own convictions. In the expectation of seeing you room, I remain, Sincerely John M Read En Buchanan

P.S. as I am often from home for a day, I would thank you to. let me know the day before ijou come to Lancaster. I cocke vend for you to the cars. gill could great get the fight the second state of the se A MARK AND A REAL PROPERTY AND A

### Wheatland 18 August 1849

#### My dear Sir/

I rejoice to learn that you have accepted my invitation & that I may indulge the hope of seeing you 'ere long at Wheatland. It is my earnest desire that our difference of opinion on the free soil question shall not, in the slightest degree, interfere with our personal friendship: and I know that I shall not say or do, nor have I said or done anything which could give you the slightest cause of offense.

Whilst I do not deny the power of Congress to legislate on the question of Slavery in the territories; yet I am deeply convinced that the passage of the Wilmot proviso in any form would be unnecessary to accomplish the object of its friends, unjust to the South & dangerous to the Union. It may probably pass & I doubt not will be approved by General Taylor. In that event, we shall have reached <u>a real crisis</u>. The South will then be united & the fire which has long been smoldering will burst forth, not in an ignus fatuus blaze as heretofore but with steady intensity. They will insist that the agitation of the question shall cease in regard to the District of Columbia, unless it should be raised by the people of that District: & that efficient measures shall be adopted to carry into effect that clause of the Constitution, without which the Constitution never would have existed, to enable them to reclaim their runaway slaves. They say, with truth, that whilst the agitation of the Slave question in the North may be sport to us, it

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may become also prove death to them. It produces an uneasy & excited feeling among the Slaves & places in jeopardy the safety of all they hold most dear on earth. Devotedly attached to the union as they are, they soberly declare that if the North should persist in applying the match to the magazine of gun powder in which they live, self preservation will compel them to separate from us.

I have no doubt that the Union must & will be preserved; - that the North will eventually perceive the propriety of refraining from all unnecessary agitation on the subject: & that the South will not flare up as they have done heretofore upon every trifling occasion. But in order to accomplish this object, we shall probably have to pass through a tremendous storm. At the North we are totally ignorant of the deep, pervading & determined feeling of the South on this subject. It is not a political feeling; but one that is domestic & self preserving.

I am as much opposed to slavery in the abstract as you can be; but whether popular or not I shall ever adhere to the Constitution in letter & in spirit & to our glorious compact of Union. I have expressed my sentiments on this subject in my Berks County letter & to these I shall adhere. I know that the Missouri Compromise, which I believe to be entirely constitutional, is now out of the question; but I shall assume no new ground. I write you this letter confidentially, without any hope of inducing you to change your ground, but merely to communicate my own convictions. In the expectation of seeing you soon, I remain, sincerely

> your friend James Buchanan

John M. Read Esq

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P. S. As I am often from home for a day, I would thank you to let me know the day before you come to Lancaster. I will send for you to the cars.