

Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Documents Online

Title: Letter from James Buchanan to John R. Savage

Date: January 1, 1840

Location: MC 1998.10, B1, F24

Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

125
Dear Sir,

Washington 1 January 1849

A sense of duty compels me to write to you, as I have done to many other gentlemen, that your son can have no prospect of obtaining a midshipman's warrant. It would be easy for me to say that I would recommend him, as I should do with pleasure ~~had~~; and thus by presenting vain hopes of success to him prevent him from engaging in some other business; but I cannot pursue such a course.

For several years there were no appointments made from Pennsylvania, because we had more than our proportion & justice to the other States of the Union required that our number should be reduced. There either now is or soon will be ~~a~~ ^{one} vacancy; but there are at least twenty applications anterior to yours which are supported in the strongest manner. The objects of the Department is to scatter these appointments with an equal hand over the different States & several of the applications are from Congressional Districts in Pennsylvania which have never had a midshipman.

I deem it proper, under such circumstances, to deal frankly with you; because your son's attention ought to be fixed on some other pursuit. A short time before the meeting of Congress, I applied for a midshipman's warrant for a nephew of my own - the only application for a relative of my own which I have ever made, - and I was refused. I was glad of it; because the boy has in consequence turned his attention to another pursuit.

Yours very respectfully

W. John. R. Savage.

James Buchanan

Washington 1 January 1840

Dear Sir/

A sense of duty compels me to write to you as I have done to many other gentleman, that your son can have no prospect of obtaining a midshipman's warrant. It would be easy for me to say that I would recommend him, as I should do with pleasure [~~one word illegible~~]; and thus by presenting vain hopes of success to him prevent him from engaging in some other business: but I cannot pursue such a course.

For several years there were no appointments made from Pennsylvania, because we had more than our proportion & justice to the other States of the Union required that our number should be reduced. There either now is or soon will be a one vacancy; but there are at least twenty applications anterior to yours which are supported in the strongest manner. The object of the Department is to scatter these applications with an equal hand over the different States & several of the applications are from Congressional Districts in Pennsylvania which have never had a midshipman.

I deem it proper, under such circumstances, to deal frankly with you, because your son's attention ought to be fixed on some other pursuit. A short time before the meeting of Congress, I applied for a midshipman's warrant for a nephew of my own - the only application for a relative of my own which I have ever made, - and I was refused. I was glad of it; because the boy has in consequence turned his attention to another pursuit.

Yours very respectfully
James Buchanan

W. John R. Savage