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**Title:** Letter from James Buchanan to James Tallmadge

**Date:** January 5, 1845

**Location:** MC 1998.10, B2, F9

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Private.

Washington 5 January 1845

My dear Sir /

I have delayed to answer your very kind letter until I could find time to read your address; but I must delay no longer. I have kept it before me for the purpose of giving it a careful perusal, as I have no doubt it richly deserves; but my public engagements are so incessant that I have not yet enjoyed this pleasure. The truth is that my life is that of a gally slave. I have not read Thurl's consecutive pages in any book since I came into the Department of State.

I am greatly gratified by your approbation of my Oregon correspondence. *Sans est a te laudari.* I endeavoured to conduct the negotiation with discretion as well as firmness. Constitutionally I despise all bluster. This is not an evidence of courage but of cowardice. To unite our Country in our Country's cause has been my object. This is the best mode of preserving peace which every patriot must desire; & it is the best preparation for war should this be inevitable.

The number of falsehoods in regard to the Oregon question which are sent over the Union from this City exceeds what I have ever witnessed in regard to any other public question. M<sup>r</sup>.

Mr Lane never had any instructions to negotiate a Treaty on this subject. Although he possesses eminent abilities & the entire confidence of the President, it was deemed the wisest to keep the Oregon negotiation on this side of the water.

Mr. Polk has never made to this Government any proposition to compromise the question by establishing any line between the two countries except that which was so promptly & properly rejected by Mr. Calhoun. But all this is for yourself alone,

from your friends  
very respectfully

General James Tallmadge

James Buchanan

Private

Washington 5 January 1845

My dear Sir/

I have delayed to answer your very kind letter until I could find time to read your address; but I must delay no longer. I have kept it before me for the purpose of giving it a careful perusal, as I have no doubt it richly deserves; but my public engagements are so incessant that I have not yet enjoyed this pleasure. The truth is that my life is that of a galley slave. I have not read thirty consecutive pages in any book since I came into the Department of State.

I am greatly gratified by your approbation of my Oregon correspondence. Laus est a te laudari. I endeavored to conduct the negotiation with discretion as well as firmness. Constitutionally I despise all bluster. This is not an evidence of courage but of cowardice. To unite our Country in our Country's cause has been my object. This is the best mode of preserving peace which every patriot must desire: & it is the best preparation for war should this be inevitable.

The number of falsehoods in regard to the Oregon question which are sent over the Union from this city exceeds what I have ever witnessed in regard to any other public question. Mr.

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M'Lane never had any instructions to negotiate a Treaty on this subject. Although he possesses eminent abilities & the entire confidence of the President, it was deemed the wisest to keep the Oregon negotiation on this side of the water.

Mr. Pakenham has never made to this Government any proposition to compromise the question by establishing any line between the two countries except that which was so promptly & properly rejected by Mr. Calhoun. But all this is for yourself alone.

from your friend  
very respectfully  
James Buchanan

General James Tallmadge