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Title: Letters from James Buchanan to Henry Wise

Date: 1852-1857

Location: MC 1998.10

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Wheatland, near Lancaster 4 Feb: 1852

My dear Sir /

I have received your favor of the 25th ultimo, which has been as long on the way as it would have been from New Orleans. The cold weather of which you complain has not frozen your friendships; & I owe you many grateful thanks for the kind interest which you feel in my favor.

From ~~By~~ the information which I daily receive, I am convinced you are right in supposing that Virginia with me & I shall be nominated. Unless greatly mistaken in the signs of the times, this ^{me & mine} point to this result. You, also, think that I have "the voice & heart of two thirds of Virginia's people with me if they can be allowed fair play". With such an able & energetic champion in my favor as yourself, I know I shall have fair play, despite of the Richmond influence. Why, since you have changed your Constitution, not follow the example of other States & hold a State Convention, the delegates composing which to be elected by the Democracy of the different Senatorial & Representative Districts? With us, an attempt on the part of our Legislature, to interfere with the Presidential election would be denounced by the Democracy of the whole State. It is the plainest inference from the doctrine of State rights, that the voice of a sovereign State should be heard as such in the National Convention, & that its power should not be frittered away in many discordant voices.

New York has elected by Congressional Districts; but this because if they had met in State Convention, they could not have elected a common platform on the subject of Slavery.

I would give "a Jew's eye to see you" & why may I not enjoy this pleasure? I wrote to Mason last night accepting his invitation given some time since to pass a few days with him in Richmond, provided I should learn he was at home. In this event, I expect to be in Richmond on Wednesday ^{the eleventh} night, via Washington. I can't leave home before Tuesday & must be here again on Saturday ^{21st} ~~morning~~. I shall, therefore, stay but two or at most three days in Richmond, as I desire to pass a few days in Washington on my return. Cannot you contrive to meet me at Richmond or Washington?

From authority which I consider quite reliable, Messrs Meade, Mullson, Averett, Bocoock, Caske, Holladay, & Beale of the Virginia Delegation in Congress are my friends. Thompson of Wheeling is the strong friend of Cass; & Bagly is opposed to me. Of the remaining four democrats, Jewell, Leche, Edmondson & M'Mullen, I know nothing certain. Douglass is, undoubtedly, sinking fast, & Cass is recovering some strength. Parker who belongs to the sect of Optimists sees nothing but benefit to my cause in the re-election of Hunter, though I cannot view it in this light. He may now probably detach himself from Douglass & ["]take ["]his own course.

I shall act upon your advice in regard to the

appeal of Pennsylvania to Virginia. Forney was here the day
before yesterday. He says that the Enquirer publishes many articles
in my favor & to all appearance treats me as fairly as the
other Candidates. Our friend John G. Mason is now far more
friendly to me than he has ever been. Again let me express my
ardent desire to see you at Richmond. The moment I receive
Mason's letter in answer to mine, I shall drop you a line. De-
volente, in any event, I shall leave for Washington on
Tuesday next, as I must be at home on Saturday the 21st
Instant or at furthest the Monday following.

From sources entirely reliable at Nashville, I am
informed that a decided majority of the Tennessee Delegates
to the National Convention are my friends & were elected
for this very season.

From your friend
very respectfully
James Buchanan

Hon: Henry A. Wise

Wheatland, near Lancaster 4 Feb: 1852

My dear Sir/

I have received your favor of the 25th ultimo, which has been as long on the way as it would have been from New Orleans. The cold weather of which you complain has not frozen your friendship; & I owe you many grateful thanks for the kind interest which you feel in my favor.

From ~~By~~ the information which I daily receive, I am convinced you are right in supposing that Virginia with me & I shall be nominated. Unless greatly mistaken in the signs of the times, they point more & more to this result. You, also, think that I have "the voice & heart of two thirds of Virginia's people with me if they can be allowed fair play." With such an able & energetic champion in my favor as yourself, I know I shall have fair play, despite of the Richmond influence. Why, since you have changed your Constitution, not follow the example of other states & hold a State Convention, the delegates composing which to be elected by the Democracy of the different Senatorial & representative Districts? With us, an attempt on the part of our Legislature, to interfere with the Providential election would be denounced by the Democracy of the whole State. It is the plainest inference from the doctrine of State rights, that the voice of a sovereign State should be heard as such in the National Convention, & that its power should not be frittered away in many discordant voices.

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I would give "a Jew's eye to see you" & why may I not enjoy this pleasure? I wrote to Mason last night accepting his invitation given some time since to pass a few days with him in Richmond, provided I should learn he was at home. In this event, I expect to be in Richmond on Wednesday next the eleventh, via Washington. I can't leave home before Tuesday & must be here again on Saturday [~~one word illegible~~] 21st. I shall, therefore, stay but two or at most three days in Richmond, as I desire to pass a few days in Washington on my return. Cannot you contrive to meet me at Richmond or Washington?

From authority which I consider quite reliable, Messrs Meade, Millson, Averett, Boccock, Caske, Holladay, & Beale of the Virginia Delegation in Congress are my friends. Thompson of Wheeling is the strong friend of Cass; & Bagly is opposed to me. Of the remaining four democrats, Powell, Letcher, Edmundson & M'Mullen, I know nothing certain. Douglass is, undoubtedly, sinking fast, & Cass is recovering some strength. Parker who belongs to the sect of optimists sees nothing but benefit to my cause in the re-election of Hunter, though I cannot view it in this light. He may now probably detach himself from Douglass & ~~but~~ "nous verrons".

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candidates. Our friend John Y. Mason is now far more friendly to me than he has ever been. Again let me express my ardent desire to see you at Richmond. The moment I receive Mason's letter in answer to mine, I shall drop you a line. Deo volente, in any event, I shall leave for Washington on Tuesday next, as I must be at home on Saturday the 21st. Instant or at furthest the Monday following.

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James Buchanan

Hon: Henry A. Wise

1791-1868

ms. B. 1. 47

Wheatland 30 December 56.

My dear Sir /

I have this moment received yours of the 28th Instant. Ere this you have doubtless received mine in answer to your former letters.

I know of no hub-bub stirred up about ~~my~~ using any influence to elect Col. Fowey to the Senate. Of all men in this State, it is admitted he did the most to secure the triumph of our ticket both at the State & Electoral election. The Democrats are not only willing but anxious to give him any thing within their power. If I were a member of the Legislature I should certainly vote for him & I have said so without further attempts to influence any person. It is, I believe, the second choice of all the true Democratic candidates. I deeply regret that our friend Tyler is so hostile to

him; & would for many reasons have prevented it if I could. Fong is universally popular throughout the interior of the State & you have certainly nothing to fear from his election. He is the special favorite of the young, active & ardent politicians.

In regard to Messrs Cap & Cobb, - neither does ~~any~~ person for them or either of them, so far as I know, have pressed their claims for Cabinet appointments. It is quite true that Cobb is universally popular with the Northern Democrats for the services he rendered throughout the Campaign & General Cap appears to have the sympathy of nearly every body North & South. I have not determined upon any one member of my cabinet, except so far as you know; but upon my conscience I do not think there are any two men in America whose appointment ought to give you less uneasiness. I know not when I shall be in Washington; but you

Shall certainly have due & timely notice of
it; & this you should have had without
any suggestion from yourself. I desire to hear
all you have to say; & then if I should not
be able to please you in all my appointments,
I know you will ~~take~~ make ~~an~~ due allowance.

What excites my special wonder is that you
under all the circumstances
should be opposed to Foinig's election. In haste,
I remain always sincerely your friend
James Buchanan

Honr Henry A Wise

Wheatland 30 December '56

My dear Sir/

I have this moment received yours of the 28th. Instant. Ere this you have doubtless received mine in answer to your former letters.

I know of no hub-bub stirred up about ~~my~~ using my influence to elect Col: Forney to the Senate. Of all men in this State, it is admitted he did the most to secure the triumph of our ticket both at the State & Electoral election. The Democracy are not only willing but anxious to give him any thing within their power. If I were a member of the Legislature I should certainly vote for him & I have said so without further attempting to influence any person. He is, I believe, the second choice of all the true Democratic Candidates. I deeply regret that our friend Tyler is so hostile to

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What excites my special wonder is that you should under all the circumstances be opposed to Forney's election. In haste, I remain always sincerely your friend

James Buchanan

Hon: Henry A Wise

Wheatland 7 January 1854

My dear Sir /

I return Gov: Wrights letter & am truly sorry it was ever sent simply because to my own knowledge the statements ^{of facts} it contains is unfounded. Besides Mr. Wright could scarcely have boasted at Washington that he had cut Gov: Wrights throat with me, when Mr. B. has had no communication with me of any kind since my election. If he desires a Cabinet appointment at all, he has never made this known to me: & Mr. Sedell, who would accept nothing ^{from me} ~~for himself~~ & who has proven himself to be a disinterested friend of many years standing, has never to the best of my knowledge mentioned the name of Governor Wright to me. If Sedell is in favor of the appointment of Cap: I know it not & do not believe it.

I am sorry you entertain so very bad an opinion of Mr. Cochrane. I have been on terms of social intimacy with him for many years; though I know nothing of his speculations. I know

he is a benevolent kind hearted man, has done
much good & is highly esteemed at Washington.
Probably you may think ~~it~~ ^{it} strange; but it is
no less true, ^{that} Mr. Cochrane, in his intercourse with
me since the election has never named Mr. Bright
in connection with the Cabinet. In fact I in
truth the friends of Gov: Wright, ^{not in Indiana} have been more
active in presenting his name to me as a Candidate
for the Cabinet, than those of any other gentleman
named. In this declaration, I have no reference whatever
to yourself. I have ^{recently} rec'd a long letter from a distinguished
Methodist preacher in his favor.

Now, my dear Sir, I wish I could persuade
you to trust to my friendship. In forming a Cabinet
I cannot select ~~them~~ ^{the members} all from those who have been
my own friends or yours. Besides, you ought not
to desire this. As I always intended, I shall give
you notice of the time I shall be in Washington & shall be
happy to hear all you have to say.
I am glad Gov: Wright writes to no person
but yourself. The letter which I return, if
published in Indiana, would do him much injury.

from your friend
very respectfully

Hon: Henry A. Wise.

James Buchanan

P.S. I write in haste & by "snatches". Hence the interlining.

Wheatland 7 January 1857

My dear Sir/

I return Gov: Wrights letter & am truly sorry it was ever sent simply because to my own knowledge, the statements of facts it contains is unfounded. Besides Mr. Bright could scarcely have boasted at Washington that he had cut Gov: Wright's throat with me, when Mr. B. has had no communication with me of any kind since my election. If he desires a Cabinet appointment at all, he has never made this known to me; & Mr. Slidell, who would accept nothing ~~for himself~~ from me & who has proven himself to be a disinterested friend of many years standing, has never to the best of my knowledge mentioned the name of Governor Wright to me. If Slidell is in favor of the appointment of Case, I know it not & do not believe it.

I am sorry you entertain so very bad an opinion of Mr. Corcoran. I have been on terms of social intimacy with him for many years; though I know nothing of his speculations. I know

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he is a benevolent kind hearted man, has done much good & is highly esteemed at Washington. Probably you may think ~~this~~ it strange; but it is no less true, that Mr. Corcoran, in his intercourse with me either before or since the election has never named Mr. Bright in connection with the Cabinet. In fact & in truth the friends of Gov: Wright not in Indiana have been more active in presenting his name to me as a Candidate for the Cabinet than those of any other gentleman named. In this declaration I have no reference whatever to yourself. I have recently recd a long & able letter from a distinguished Methodist preacher in his favor.

Now, my dear Sir, I wish I could persuade you to trust to my friendship. In forming a Cabinet I cannot select ~~them~~ all the members from those who have been my own friends or yours. Besides, you ought not to desire this. As I always intended, I shall give you notice of the time I shall be in Washington & shall be happy to hear all you have to say.

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