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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letters from Oliver Worden to Eli Slifer

**Date:** 1850-1859

**Location:** MC 2003.4, B11, F11

### Contact:

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

717-245-1399

[archives@dickinson.edu](mailto:archives@dickinson.edu)



Lewisburg, Jan. 17, 1830.

My Dear Colonel: Major Hickok entertained a few of us not long since by reading you very interesting and very racy No. 1 of the "Shades of Public Life." If you were not warned of it all beforehand, my memory is somewhat at fault, but you see I do not say, Experience is a dear school - it teaches. We all hope your next effort may bring out the "Light of Public Life," and realize in full the sweet anticipations of your well-told dreams. You asked a separate letter from "several" among whom was one I know how any remembrance of this nature cheers one when far away from all they love best. I take my pen this dizzling evening, (after a hard day's work as usual) by the side of my wife and a cozy fire, to "drop you a line." But what shall I write about? The Chronicle gives you all the news of a public nature. The Methodists and Chri: tians have evening meetings - of which you perhaps know more than I, as I have not time to attend all of our own. A good feeling still exists in the Baptist congregation - 26 have been baptized - more are expected next Sabbath - and "stability" appears to be characteristics of the young converts' walk. - My dear Sir, I hope your religious character will not be injured by your new associations: but you know well that especial watch over your heart is needed in any business and will not take offence if I allude to it thus plainly. One of your friends called on the



office this evening, and remarked that it was almost a pity to send so fine a man to Harrisburg after all - Jack was the most fitting character for such a place. I mention this to show how the station is viewed by many, and to express the hope that a change is occurring in the habits of our Legislators for the better.

I see you are set to work occasionally, but have not as yet given your tongue an airing. When you do "take the floor," be sure you are master of your subject, and make an effort. Your friends and the public expect much from you. You of course if you succeed at first will not wear yourself out, little ram fashion: and if you have occasion to urge a bill of local interest only, the most plain and practical & concise explanation you will find the best. Tom Kelly's speech might come in a proper if political harangues become fashionable; and to me to give the "Lokys" their "two-horned gods." If you can speak without putting your hand upon your chest, it would improve your position while speaking. You will not have either the open air or suffocated corners to speak in, but a pleasant room and a select audience; and when you get "the hang of the house" I should think it rather a pleasant place to hear one's self talk. - But really, I am running on freely for "one of the people:" excuse me for presuming to intimate advice to a most grave and potent senator who is a hundred and thirty-third part of the wisdom of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



The new Editor takes things as easily as could be expected from his excitable disposition: small matters exult and depress his spirits, equally, and often. He has sent off some fifty papers which have not been returned - which, with ten or a dozen new ones near home, make quite an addition to our postbag, especially as we suspect a prelude of that "better time a: coming." I think the May'n gets up a far better amount than his predecessor and if he has pluck will be a great advantage to it. The C. I. and S. do not take yet, nor the N. tribes, but "the people" are with us. "The Guardian" does well - 5 or 600 subscribers: and still talks of giving me a book to print on Botany. So you see there is no danger of my being out of work.

If that printer's memorial comes up in the House, I hope you may feel inclined to favor it. There are many reasons why laws should be made known to the people sooner than they are: and not the least is that printers are a meritorious set, and as country printers are continually encroached upon by the mammoth capital employed for City papers, a little patronage will be of essential service in saving the dignity, the independence, and the usefulness of the country press.

And here occurs a joke played off upon Bill Fick. One of your franked envelopes to him, he left in the P.O., when a couple of fellows picked it up, took an ace of spades and a counterfeit \$2 bank bill, and enveloped it in the wrapper, sealed it, and left it for Bill again! The story is that when he opened it he stared long and loud - and finally observed that if you could not make more than that playing cards, you'd better give it up. - By-the-by, I hope you have subscribed for father Hitchcock's "Union" as this. I think you is who ever else send "The Chronicle" the Catharine Watcher occasionally, but would prefer a translation accompanying it.

After tea - wifey fussing - nothing more to write - good night - and God bless you and return you soon to your family. Write to me if you can. O. N. Woodrow



Lewisburg  
Jan. 17, 1850

My Dear Colonel:

Major Hickok entertained a few of us not long since by reading your very interesting and very racy ch. 1 of the "Shades of Public Life." If you were not warned of it all beforehand, my memory is somewhat at fault, but an old proverb says, Experience is a dear school, et cetera! We all hope your next effort may bring out the "Light of Public Life," and realize in full the sweet anticipations of your well-told dreams. You asked a separate letter from "several" among whom I was one - and knowing how any remembrance of this nature cheers one when far away from all they love best, I take my pen this drizzling evening, (after a hard days work as usual) by the side of my wife and a cozy fire, to "drop you a line."

But what shall I write about? The Chronicle gives you all the news of a public nature. The Methodists and Christians have evening meetings - of which you perhaps know more than I as I have not time to attend all of our own. A good feeling still exists in the Baptist congregation - 26 have been baptized - more are expected next Sabbath - and stability appears to be characteristic of the young converts' walk. My dear Sir, I hope your religious character will not be injured by your new associations: but you know well that especial watch over your heart is needed in Harrisburg and will not take offence if I allude to it thus plainly. One of your friends called in the

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office this evening, and remarked that it was almost a pity to send so fine a man to Harrisburg, after all - Jack was the most fitting character for such a place. I mention this to show how the station is viewed by many, and to express the hope that a change is occurring in the habit of our Legislators for the better.

I see you are set to work occasionally, but have not as yet given your tongue an airing. When you do "take the flour," be sure you are master of your subject, and make an effort. Your friends and the public expect much from you. You of course if you succeed at first will not wear yourself out, little [illegible] fashion: and if you have occasion to urge a bill of local interest only the most plain and practical common sense explanation you will find the best. Your Kelly speech might come in apropos if political harangues became fashionable; and be sure to give the Lakeys their "two-horned gods." If you can speak without putting your hand upon your chest, it would improve your position while speaking. You will not have either the open air or suffocated corners to speak in, but a pleasant room and a select audience; and when you get "the hang of the house" I should think it rather a pleasant place to hear one's self talk. But really I am running on freely for "one of the people:" excuse me for presuming to intimate advice to a "most grave and potent senior" who is a hundred and thirty-third part of the wisdom of the Commonwealth of Penna!

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addition to our patronage, especially as a prelude of that “better time a coming.” I think the Major gets up a {two words illegible} than his predecessor, and if he has pluck will be a great advantage to it. The C. G. and S. do not take yet, nor the K Tribe, but “the people” are with us. “The Guardian” does well - 5 or 600 subscribers: and Noel talks of giving one a book to print on Botany. So you see there is no danger of my being out of work.

If that printers’ memorial comes up in the House, I hope you may feel included to farm it. There are many reasons why laws should be made known to the people sooner than they are: and not the least is that printers are a meritorious set, and as country printers are continually encroached upon by the mammoth capital employed for City papers, a little patronage will be of essential – in saving the dignity, the independence and the usefulness of the county press.

And here occurs a joke played off upon Bill Frick. One of your pranked envelopes to him, he left in the P.O., when a couple of Majors picked it up, took an ace of spades and a counterfeit \$2 bank bill, and enveloped it in the wrapper, sealed it, and left it for Bill again! The story is that when he opened it he stared long and loud - and finally observed that if you could not make more than that playing cards, you’d better give it up. By-the-by, I hope you have subscribed for father Richie’s “Union” on this. I think you or whoever else send “The Chronicle” the [Vathulina Hactcha?] occasionally, but would prefer a translation accompanying it.

After ten - wifey hurrying - nothing more to write - good night- and God bless you and return you soon to your family.

Write to me if you can.

O. N. Worden



Lewisburg, Feb. 3. 1831.

Dear Colonel:

Yours of some time since, was very thankfully received, and in the superior depth of the melancholy prospects presented, dissipated my blues entirely, and has made me a somewhat more happy man, ever since. I sincerely hope you are now better, and alas that you feel better.

I have guessed from your letter that your friend "Angle" is the man for whom you made your maiden speech, and that to his cessation of labors as Clerk of Congress Committee, I am indebted for that communication. The greater part of it is in type. Express to him our thanks for his trouble; and assure him that the only reason we have expunged certain portions, is, that a correspondent of the Philad. paper used language so very similar, that we feared if we inserted it, the Philad. paper aforesaid might be accused, to the charge of committing plagiarism from the columns of the Chronicle! In kindness to the Sun, then, we yielded them the exclusive claim to the more saline parts of the article. We hope the explanation will be satisfactory, and that the Sun and its humble satellite at Scranton may work along without violating, even in appearance, any of the laws of mine and thine.

You ~~it~~ seem to interpret ~~as~~ a lack of ambition, as an excuse for never lifting up your voice in Senate. Now, my dear Sir, you are just where you should be, to speak to purpose on great questions. If you avoid all appearance of affection or whining (as I doubt not you would) and speak the honest feelings of a full heart on a question of immutable Right, and in denunciation of foul and hateful Wrong, you will do just what great Orators have always done for truth — do good — and that is a noble incentive than Ambition, in every heart of noble and honest qualities. Speak as a dying man to dying men, and even nursing politicians who worship Self as a God, will honor you in heart if not by lip.

Colonel, there should be a Reward offered for the Murderer, or a Committee of Investigation in that Wells case. Think of it. I will write again. Write soon. In much hurry. Oct. Warden



[Lewisburg]  
Feb. 3, 1852

Dear Colonel:

Your of-some time since, was very thankfully received, and in the superior depth of the melancholy prospects presented, dissipated my blues entirely, and has made me a somewhat more happy man, ever since. I sincerely hope you are now better, and also that you feel better.

I have guessed from your letter that your friend “[Ingle?]” is the man for whom you made your maiden speech, and that to his cessation of labor as clerk of [canvassing? committee, I am indebted for that communication. The greater part of it is in type. Express to him our thanks for his trouble; and assure him that the only reason we have expunged certain portions, is that a correspondent of a Philad. paper used language so very similar, that we feared if we inserted it, the Philad. paper aforesaid might be – to the charge of committing plagiarism from the columns of the Chronicle! In kindness to the [Sen?], then, we yielded them the exclusive claim to the more saline parts of the article. We hope the explanation will be satisfactory, and that the Sun and its humble satellite at Derntown may work along without violating, even in appearance, any of the laws of mine and thine.

You seem to interpose a lack of ambition, as an excuse for lifting up your voice in Senate. Now, my dear Sir, you are just where you should be, to speak to purpose on great questions. If you avoid all appearance of affection or whining (as I doubt not you would) and speak the honest feelings of a full heart on a question of immutable Rights, and in denunciation of foul and hateful wrong, you will do just what great orators have always done for truth – do good – and that is a nobler incentive than ambition, in every heart of noble and honest qualities. Speak as a dying man to dying men, and even [one word illegible] politicians who worship Self as a God, will have you in head if not by lip.

Colonel, there should be a Reward offered for the murderer, or a committee of Investigation in that Miller case. Think of it, I will write again. Write soon. In much hurry,  
O.N. Worden



Col. E. S. Sifer.

Sunday, March 13, 1854

Dear Sir

Enclosed I send you copy of matters designed to assist Casey in securing his seat, got up by advice of Srs. Wagners & Jaggart. I have sent a copy to Wagners, and if he approves he will telegraph you authorizing you to <sup>sign</sup> endorse it for him as President.

We saw Simonton on Saturday night. He says "you should have said you could pass the Division over Simonton's head," and from the man was told it as coming straight from you, he seemed to believe it. The same thing he heard as coming from other advocates of Division. Of course it made him salty. I hope you will see him, state the matter frankly, deny it fully as you no doubt can, and demand the author, and follow it up till you make him assure that it is, as I believe it to be, a half-Bellevue wholesale lie, got up to make him obstinately hostile to Division. Simonton said he wished to do what was right, but he thought last fall's election was about as fair on one side as the other, and he and you ought to be satisfied with it. He told him to take the petitions from Buffalo, White Deer, and Kelly, and compare them with the vote last fall, and see if there were not enough men to his own knowledge to overcome the 181 majority. He seemed to think that might be so. I am confident he should be dealt with easily, as the less his opposition, the better.

I enclose a copy of last year's Snyder county bill, with two or three amendments for your consideration. That relative to the bonds I consider essential to a fair understanding of the intent of the Section.

I enclose also a copy of last Presidential vote, showing that both counties would be Whig. They tell some of our Whigs that it would make a loco county. I am convinced that a smaller majority is more reliable than a larger one. The Division would remove the red contest between the North and South, who are divided in language,



habits, business and social intercourse and character. Besides,  
double the number of Offices to fill, would make double inducements to  
keep united. And if the upper end of North were added to  
Merion, it would give us still 2 to 300 majority.

Judge Beull says Gov & of standing Committee attended  
meeting which ratified Wood - no Convention nor Conference  
appointed him. It is understood Woods will go for anybody,  
rather than Pollock.

I hope John Steward of Plymouth will be taken up  
for Canal Commissioner. M. H. Taggart says, whoever took  
up David, did it to block Pollock. I suspect that  
Telegraph & Journal clique is hostile to Pollock.

If David Taggart helps Carey though, it may be  
we can keep him next fall, should he be a candidate  
for Senator.

"So no more at present."

C. V. Woods

Telegraph if you get Bugh's bill through by Sunday.

Also telegraph if Gov. be nominated Wednesday as I wish to get my paper  
out Thursday - one day sooner than usual.



Lewisburg  
March 13, 1854

Col. E. Slifer  
Dear Sir-

Enclosed I send your copy of matters designed to assist Casey in securing his seat, got up by advice of Snyder, Wagonseller & Taggart. I have sent a copy to Wagonseller, and if he approves he will telegraph you authorizing you to sign it for him as President.

We saw Simonton on Saturday night. He says "you should have said you could pass the Division over Simonton's head," and from the men who told it as coming straight from you, he seemed to believe it. The same thing he heard as coming from other advocates of Division. Of course it made him salty. I hope you will see him, state the matter frankly, deny it fully as you no doubt can, and demand the author, and follow it up till you make him assured that it is, as I believe it to be, a [illegible] wholesale lie, got up to make him obstinately hostile to Division. Simonton said he wished to do what was right, but he thought last fall's election was about as fair on one side as the other, and he said you ought to be satisfied with it. We told him to take the petitions from Buffalo, White Deer, and Kelly, and compare them with the vote last fall, and see if there were not enough men to his own knowledge to overcome the 181 majority. He seemed to think that might be so. I am confident he should be dealt with easily, or the less his opposition, the better.

I enclose a copy of last year's Snyder county bill, with two or three amendments for your consideration. That relative to the bonds I consider essential to a fair understanding of the intent of the section.

I enclose also a copy of last Residential vote, showing that both counties would be Whig. They tell some of our Whigs that it would make a [one word illegible] county. I am convinced that a smaller majority is more reliable than a larger one. The Division would remove the old contest between the North and South, who are divided in language,

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habits, business and social intercourse and character. Besides, double the number of offices to fill, would make double inducement to keep united. And if the upper end of Northd were added to Union, it would give us still 2 to 300 majority.

Judge Beull says 6 or 8 of standing committee attended meeting which ratified Woods - no Convention nor Conferences appointed him. It is understood Woods will go for any body rather than Pollock.

I hope John Struderant of [one word illegible] will be taken up for Canal Commissioner. M.H. Taggart says whoever took up David, did it to block Pollock. I suspect that Telegraph & [one word illegible] clique is hostile to Pollock.

If David Taggart keeps Casey through, it may be we can keep him next fall, should he be a candidate for Senator.

"So no more at present."

O.N. Worden

Telegraph if you get [Borough?] bill through by Thursday.



And telegraph if Gov. [De?] nominated Wednesday, as I wish to get my paper out Thursday - one day sooner than usual.







Lewisburg  
15 March 1856

Dear Sir:

Your of 14<sup>th</sup> is recd. I observe that the Lewistown Gazette has a call for a meeting to appoint Sen. & Rep. Del., and as Juniata has a call to elect one Del., they with Israel will make one too many already, and perhaps little Union had better stand back. Personally, I have no end to gain; but as Israel and all the other Editors are mad-wrong for Fillmore, I think our attempt should be made to counteract. I know not your opinion, but if you can stand Fillmore, Aiken and Ross will be all the men I have faith in on the great question of human liberty. God help our country if the thousands who have talked right for years can be led with eyes open into the slavery trap of Fillmore & Donelson! If Juniata can concur in giving Union a Representative and Snyder a Senatorial Delegate, or vice versa, let me know. You see I have called a meeting, and some one will probably be appointed, to be governed as after circumstances may dictate.

[Hurry for Kunkel?]

Yours,

O.N. Worden



Louisburg, July 12, 1839

Dear Sir

Leising has been beaten by Chicago! Admittedly as the fact may be, it is nevertheless true. In doing in our motions, Mr. Benth accepts the definite salary of \$2,000 for year, and \$3,000 afterwards, and becomes head of the Law Department of the University of Chicago.

In his Letter announcing the fact of his decision, he expresses much regret at this disappointment as may feel - as indicated by ~~expressed~~ the Circular, which did not reach him until his mind had become fixed - and recommends in another name as in his opinion as well as better qualified for the post than himself. It is Charles S. Minor, Esq. of Honesdale - a gentleman whom I have long known as an honorable and talented lawyer - much such a man as Mr. Benth. I suppose I do not think Mr. B. would so strongly urge him, without some ground for whatever he might say.

Suppose you write to your cousin, E. M. Hamilton - tell him of the plan for a Law School here - state that Mr. Minor had been suggested as suitable for <sup>an</sup> Instructor - and ~~decide~~ his private opinion of his capacity, and adaptability for the station. <sup>I have</sup> ~~He~~ written to Peckham, Samp, and Milner, and Miller will write to Barrett.

Yours

J. N. Borden



[Lewisburg]  
July 12, 1859

Dear Sir:

Lewisburg has been beaten - by Chicago! Humiliating as the fact may be, it is nevertheless true. Too slow in our motions, Mr. Booth accepts the definite salary of \$2,000 first year, and \$3,000 afterwards, and becomes head of the Law Department of the University of Chicago.

In his letters announcing the fuel of his decision, he expresses much regard to the disappointment we may feel - as indicated by the circular which did not reach him until his mind had become fixed - and recommended us another man as in his opinion as well or better qualified for the part than himself. It is Charles S. Minor, Esq., of Honesdale - a gentleman whom I have long known as an honorable and talented lawyer - [much?] such a man as Mr. Booth, I suppose. I do not think Mr. B. would so strongly urge him without good grounds for whatever he might say.

Suppose you write to your crony, E.W. Hamlin - tell him of the plan for a Law School here - state that Mr. Minor had been suggested as suitable for an Instructor - and elicit his private opinion of his capacity, and adapted for the station. I have written to Peamiman, Jessup, and Wilmot, and Miller will write to Barrett.

Yours &c

O.N. Worden