Dear Mr. President : Language Change in Nineteenth Century U.S. Presidential Correspondence

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UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Dear Mr. President:
Language Change in Nineteenth Century U.S. Presidential Correspondence

Master's thesis

Neven Kliček
Supervisor: Alexander Hoyt, senior lecturer

Zagreb, March 2022.

SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU

FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET

ODSJEK ZA ANGLISTIKU

Dear Mr. President:

Jezične promjene u pismima američkim predsjednicima u devetnaestom stoljeću

Diplomski rad

Neven Kliček

Mentor: Alexander Hoyt, viši lektor

Zagreb, ožujak 2022.

Abstract

This Master's is based upon a historical-sociolinguistic analysis of the language in letters sent to U.S. presidents in the nineteenth century. The corpus consists of forty-two letters, and it was transcribed and assembled manually by the researcher. Four variables were chosen as the main foci of the analysis- two pragmatic issues and two orthographic. These are addresses, closings, abbreviations, and "long-*s*". The analysis was done through the lens of such sociolinguistic concepts as Politeness Theory and Audience Design Theory.

The analysis of addresses and closings showed that the writers at the time were quite concerned with coming across as negatively polite, which can be observed in the heavy use of honorifics and conventionalized phrases containing such words as respect, regard, etc., with the variability of closings also indicating sincerity. The heavy use of abbreviations implies that writers wanted to show a lack of vanity, since they were used in letters where the content was more important than appearance; and the analysis of the use of "long-*s*" yielded the conclusion that the writing behaviour in an individual is slow to change, especially in conventionalized phrases.

Key words: *historical sociolinguistics, corpus, letters, convention*

Sažetak

Ovaj diplomski rad temelji se na povijesno-sociolingvističkoj analizi jezika u pismima poslanima američkim predsjednicima u devetnaestom stoljeću. Korpus pisama je prikupljena i prepisana od strane istraživača i sačinjena je od četrdeset i dva pisma. Četiri varijable su uzete kao predmet istraživanja, od kojih su dvije vezane za pragmatiku, a dvije za ortografiju. Te varijable su: obraćanja, zatvaranja pisama, kratice i „dugo-s“. Analiza je provedena uzimajući u obzir sociolingvističke koncepte kao što su Politeness Theory i Audience Design Theory.

Analiza obraćanja i zatvaranja pisama je pokazala da su se pisci tog doba trudili ostaviti dojam „negativne“ pristojnosti, što se može vidjeti u obilnom korištenju počasnih izraza i konvencionalnih izraza kao što su poštovanje, obzir, itd.. Uz to, varijabilnost fraza u zatvaranju također ukazuju na želju za pokazivanjem iskrenosti. Obilno korištenje skraćenica ukazuje na to da su pisci htjeli ostaviti dojam da nisu tašti jer su se one koristile kada je sadržaj bio važniji od izgleda pisma. Na kraju, analiza „dugog-*s*“ je pokazala da se način pisanja pisama u pojedincu teško mijenja, a to se osobito može vidjeti u konvencionalnim frazama.

Ključne riječi: *povijesna sociolingvistika, korpus, pisma, konvencija*

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Dear Mr. President:

Language Change in Nineteenth Century U.S. Presidential Correspondence

1. Introduction

The nineteenth century was a substantial period of time for the United States. In this period the country rose from its infantile phase as a sovereign entity to one of the most powerful political forces in the world. As head of state and government, the president is the most important and powerful person within the country. The aim of this Master's thesis is to conduct historical-sociolinguistic analysis upon a corpus of letters sent to U.S. presidents in the nineteenth century. According to Conde-Silvestre and Hernandez-Campoy (2012), historical sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary subfield with a foundation in the sociolinguistic tenants of language change and variation, but which is oriented towards the language of the past. The field has somewhat widened since its conception, and they provide the definition that historical sociolinguistics is "the reconstruction of the history of a given language in its socio-cultural context" (1).

Given this sociolinguistic nature, this study is done through the lens of certain sociolinguistic paradigms, such as Audience Design theory and Politeness theory. For a brief example, given the exceptional position of power that the president of the United States occupies, the power dynamic between him and any interlocutor is unique in that the president almost always assumes the position of superior. This is important because sociolinguistic reasoning teaches that, among other things, the power relation between two speaker/hearers determines the choice of language. When talking to a superior, one would most probably employ strategies to come across as negatively polite. This can be seen in the observed letters, as honorifics and titles are often used in an effort to maintain distance. This and other substantial concepts will be explained in more detail further below.

But why study letters from the past? This is the "historical" part in historical sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics gives priority to spoken language, but as spoken language from the past obviously cannot be observed directly, letters are taken as the closest available resource to studying it, as they often reflect the way in which the writer spoke. That said, some of the variables that I have chosen to study are not reflective of spoken language, but rather of the norms of letter-writing and any changes that happened within them. Recounting the ideas

of Schneider (2002, 67-96), Hernandez-Campoy and Schilling explain this as follows: “Despite its limitations, historical sociolinguistics is not a second-best solution in those areas of study for which oral records are not available, but just the best solution in those areas of study for which oral records are not available, especially when studying long-term developments of language variation and change” (64). The limitations in question mainly pertain to the fact that only a small amount of all written text ever produced throughout history has survived until the present, and those pieces that have survived did so often by chance, while others were lost by chance. As Labov (1972) states, “Texts are produced by a series of historical accidents; amateurs may complain about this predicament, but the sophisticated historian is grateful that anything has survived at all. The great art of the historical linguist is to make the best of this bad data, ‘bad’ in the sense that it may be fragmentary, corrupted, or many times removed from the actual productions of native speakers” (100).

More specifically, letter corpora have been the main source of historical-sociolinguistic data. As Cantos (2012) defines it, “A linguistic corpus is a collection of texts which have been selected and brought together, representing a sample of a particular variety or use of language(s) and presented in machine readable form so that this language variety and/or use of language(s) can be studied on the computer” (99). Camilo Conde-Silvestre and Hernandez-Campoy (2012) further explain the importance of the use of corpuses in conducting research on the history of languages: “By allowing researchers to deal simultaneously with almost all the texts that have survived from a given period, corpus linguistics partly solves the fragmentary nature of historical material, ensures that variability in past stages can reliably be reconstructed, and facilitates the selection of the variables that are worthy of analysis” (3).

2. Methodology

Corpus-linguistic research is usually conducted using the already-assembled large-scale digital corpuses available online. This enables researchers to comb through hundreds of thousands of tokens in a short amount of time without having to do the legwork of assembling a corpus themselves. However, for the purposes of this paper, a corpus has been assembled manually. This means that the letters were found, chosen, transcribed, and edited by the researcher. This path was chosen in an effort for the researcher to be as immersed as possible in the process of uncovering new knowledge by starting from the concrete language tokens found in the images of the physical letters and ending with the conclusions that the collected data will show. The corpus consists of letters sent to the president of the United States throughout the nineteenth century, using the online databases of The National Archives and the

Library of Congress. There, two letters that were sent to each of the presidents (except for Fillmore and Hayes, whose letters I was not able to find) were chosen. They were chosen based on certain criteria: they needed to be sent at the time when the recipient was actually occupying the position of president; they should be mostly legible; they should ideally not be too long or too short. This is not the usual methodology when conducting historical-sociolinguistic analysis based on letter corpora, as priority is more often given either to studying a single author's linguistic scope through a plethora of their writings, and with as much knowledge of their socio/educational background as possible; or to studying several writers in such a way and then comparing them. My corpus is different in that the position of the recipient stays static, while the writers change. The reasoning behind this methodology is that I might uncover some unique conventions that are employed when writing to the president of the United States, and how these conventions changed through the course of the nineteenth century. Besides the conventions that are uniquely attributed to writing to America's president, the analysis could also help to uncover how some general conventions developed in the nineteenth century. However, given the limited number of letters that are considered, any generalized conclusions must be understood tentatively. The corpus consists of forty-two letters to twenty-one presidents. The analysis was made considering four variables (two pragmatic and two orthographic): addresses, closings, abbreviations, and "long-*s*", each of which have their own section.

3. Literature review

For the purposes of this Master's thesis, I have consulted works appropriate for each of the variables that I have researched, along with some literature on historical-sociolinguistics and linguistics in general.

The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics, edited by Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (2012), is a comprehensive book on the study of historical sociolinguistics, consisting of thirty-five articles written by forty-four authors. The book is my main source for questions of methodology and scope of research. More specifically, the consulted articles mainly pertain to those dealing with different variables for historical-sociolinguistic research, corpus-linguistics, methods, and origins and theoretical assumptions of the field.

The main source of knowledge on letter-analysis is the book *Letter Writing*, edited by Nevalainen and Tanskanen (2007). It consists of seven articles written by nine authors, each representing a unique study based on letters from the past, the conventions that went into writing them, and the sociocultural implications that can be derived from them. The book was mostly

used for researching variables pertaining to addresses and closings. While I have used all of the articles in this book, the one that I used most was "Inside and out: Forms of address in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century letters," by Minna Nevala. The article compares address forms on the inside of the letter to those found on the outside (where the text is open for anyone to read it), with the assumption that the outside forms are written with expected and unexpected interlocutors in mind, and that they therefore exhibit a larger degree of negative politeness. By "address forms," Nevala here means the choice of linguistic items that are used when referring to the recipient, which is heavily dependent on the power relation between recipient and writer. The use of honorifics in addresses comes across as negatively polite, i.e. - it gives the impression of respect and personal distance, while the use of nicknames is seen as positively polite and as a desire of the writer to seem closer to the recipient.

Among the other articles in *Letter Writing,* "Power and politeness: Languages and salutation formulas in correspondence between Sweden and the German Hanse," by Tiisala, deals with the conventions of greeting in the official letters exchanged between the Swedish authorities and the Hanseatic League (a commercial and defensive configuration that existed in northern Europe in the Middle Ages) between 1350 and 1530. This article introduced me to the importance of letter-writing manuals, and the strict class-based rules that were employed in the conventions of letter-writing of the time.

Bijkerk's article in *Letter Writing,* "*Yours sincerely* and *yours affectionately:* On the origin and development of two positive politeness markers," deals with the history of the two closing formulae mentioned in the title, which have become the standard in today's correspondence, and how they took the place of the older "Your most obedient humble servant" formula. This study sets the rise of these newer formulae in the eighteenth century, which is interesting because the letters that are the object of my study still overwhelmingly exhibit the older formulae despite being written in the nineteenth century.

I have also used Dylewski's (2018) article, which deals with closing formulae in nineteenth-century private letters, although his focus was on the grammaticality of one particular type of closing formula. Shvanyukova's (2017) article has been more helpful in view of analysing closing formulae. Her study deals with the closing formulae found in Samuel Richardson's miscellany "Letters Written to and for Particular Friends" (1741). Along with letter-writing manuals, miscellanies were another tool which people used to learn how to write letters in the past. They were simply collections of model letters. Her study reveals that formulaic elements were quite important for multiple socio/pragmatic functions. Along with the findings,

Shvanyukova's article is helpful in that it explains some important concepts for the study of letters and formulae in particular.

Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2006) and Sairio (2009) were my main sources for researching abbreviation. Tieken-Boon van Ostade's article deals with the personal letters of some grammarians in the eighteenth century (especially Lowth), and the implications of politeness that can be observed there. Sairio's book is quite comprehensive, and I have used the sections on spelling in the eighteenth century.

When researching the use of "long-*s*", I mainly used Zeeuw and Straaijer's (2012) article "Long-*s* in Late Modern English Manuscripts." This article gives vital information on long-*s* and the reasons for its decline. To briefly explain, "long-*s*" is the name of an orthographic unit that was used in print up until 1800, and lingered in handwriting for some more time. It is written as "ſ", and it could be used instead of the now-normalised "short-*s*" or "s" in certain circumstances (to be covered below). The other two articles that I have used when researching long-*s* are Nash's (2001) "Abandoning of Long-s in Britain in 1800", and West's (2006) "Rules for Long S." Zeeuw and Straaijer reference both of these extensively in their article, so it served as the most comprehensive overview.

4. Addresses

The letters observed in this corpus, almost without exception, exhibit the same format: opening-body-closing. Superscriptions, that is, the text found on the outward-facing part of the letter, are also a necessary part of the letter, as they tell the courier the information which is needed in order to deliver the letter. However, most of the letters in my corpus lack the superscription.

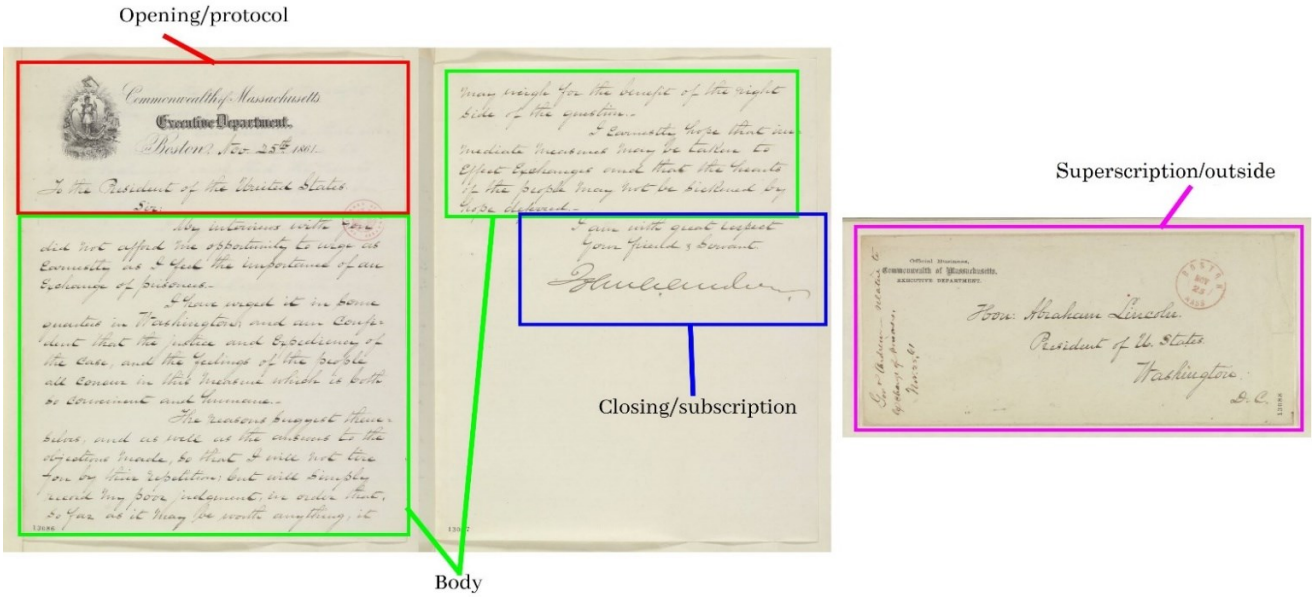


Fig. 1. The parts of a letter shown on the letter from Andrews to Lincoln, 1861.

The usual elements which may appear in openings are place of origin, date of writing, identification of the recipient (although this can also appear in the closing), and greetings. This is followed by the body of the letter, which is the part where most of the content is situated. Here, the writer writes about whatever they intended to tell or ask the recipient. This part is mostly free of conventional formulae, although some conventions do exist, and are sometimes adhered to. Examples of these include acknowledgement of letters received, asking about the recipient's health, answering some questions from previous letters, etc. A body may also have a "run-on conclusion," (Bannet 2005, qtd. in Shvanyukova 2017). These are instances where the last sentence of the body of a letter forms a part of the subscription (79). The body is followed by a closing, which usually consists of an appropriate formula, the writer's signature, and sometimes an identification of the recipient (if it was not given in the opening). The superscription, or outward-facing side of the letter is part of the letter that tells the courier where to deliver it. It may be located on the envelope or on the outward-facing part of the letter proper. It contains an identification of the recipient, their address (in terms of location, i.e., city/street name, etc.), and sometimes a place of origin.

As stated by Dylewski (2018), this layout of letter elements was the usual practice in the 19th century, and it was carried out by writers from all social structures, be they poor and uneducated or wealthy and highly educated (64). Along with other letter-writing conventions, it was "passed along" through the medieval art of letter-writing called "*ars dictaminis*" which in turn followed principles inherited from the Romans and perhaps even the Mesopotamians

(Nevelainen 2007, 2). *Ars dictaminis* was taught through letter-writing manuals called "*Summae dictaminis*". Tiisala (2007) points out that "The European tradition of letter-writing rules has continued unbroken over centuries […] most of the general standards concerning letter forms and expressions of politeness were shared across Europe." (18). These *summae* also contained instructions on how to write to members of different social ranks, as well as separate instructions for writing to social superiors as opposed to social inferiors. Still, it is important to keep in mind that, although the traditions pertaining to letter-writing span unbroken over centuries, variations still emerge across such a long time-span, as would be expected. In fact, Richardson claims that the *Ars dictaminis* was already fading by the late Middle Ages, probably because the feudal system was fading (2001, cited by Wood 2007, 54). Confusingly though, letter-writing manuals were still very much in use after the Middle Ages, including the nineteenth century.

In this section I shall investigate the conventions pertaining to address - i.e., the part of the letter which identifies, greets, and/or refers to the intended recipient. These aspects might be the most obvious and immediate purposes of an address. Yet, in accordance with the theories of Politeness and Audience Design, the choice of address form can also reflect the relative power relations and social distance between writer and recipient. In relation to this, Nevala (2007) writes that: "In epistolary form, address formulae may be positively polite, negatively polite and a mixture of both. Address tending towards the addressee's positive face usually takes the form of informal and intimate terms like first names or nicknames. Negative politeness manifests itself in such formulae as titles and honorifics" (96). According to Politeness Theory, introduced by Brown and Levinson (1978), the main difference between positive and negative politeness is that an act of positive politeness is orientated towards creating a feeling that the speaker's and the hearer's wants are aligned, while acts of negative politeness are "avoidance-based," and the speaker's goal is to show respect for the hearer's "freedom of action" (70). Although the influence of classical *Ars dictaminis* faded greatly by the nineteenth century, I believe that politeness and audience design markers are something that remained throughout the discourse and can be observed in the letters from this era. However, an example that shows that the influence of *Ars dictaminis* was fading is that the addresses sometimes appear at the end of a letter, instead of appearing in the opening, as *Ars dictaminis* instructed.

After isolating all addresses in my corpus, certain categories of address elements become apparent. Namely, the president is generally addressed through some combination of honorifics, name, and position/occupation (either "president" or "general"). This is most

usually accompanied by a greeting, where "Sir" or "Dear Sir" is by far the most common variant. More specifically, the president is addressed or greeted as "president" 41 times in the 42 letters; his name is mentioned 30 times; 4 writers refer to him as "general"; and honorifics are used in 19 instances. It is also interesting to see the extent to which these elements are combined, as there are instances where only one is used, those where two are combined, and those where three are combined. The overall distribution of these combinations is relatively even. There are 14 instances where one element is used, 15 where two are used, and 14 where three are used. On the other hand, the distribution of the combinations in relation to the location in the letter is more interesting. For instance, it seems that the tendency is to write more elaborate addresses in the openings compared to closings. The ratio in openings is 6:8:10 (6 with one element, 8 with two elements, and 10 with three), while in the closings it is 5:5:2. The honorifics used are either "his excellency," or "honorable," usually abbreviated to "Hon." Interestingly, when honorifics are used, the whole address sequence almost always comprises all three elements (honorific, name, and "president"), and is often followed by location ("Washington DC").

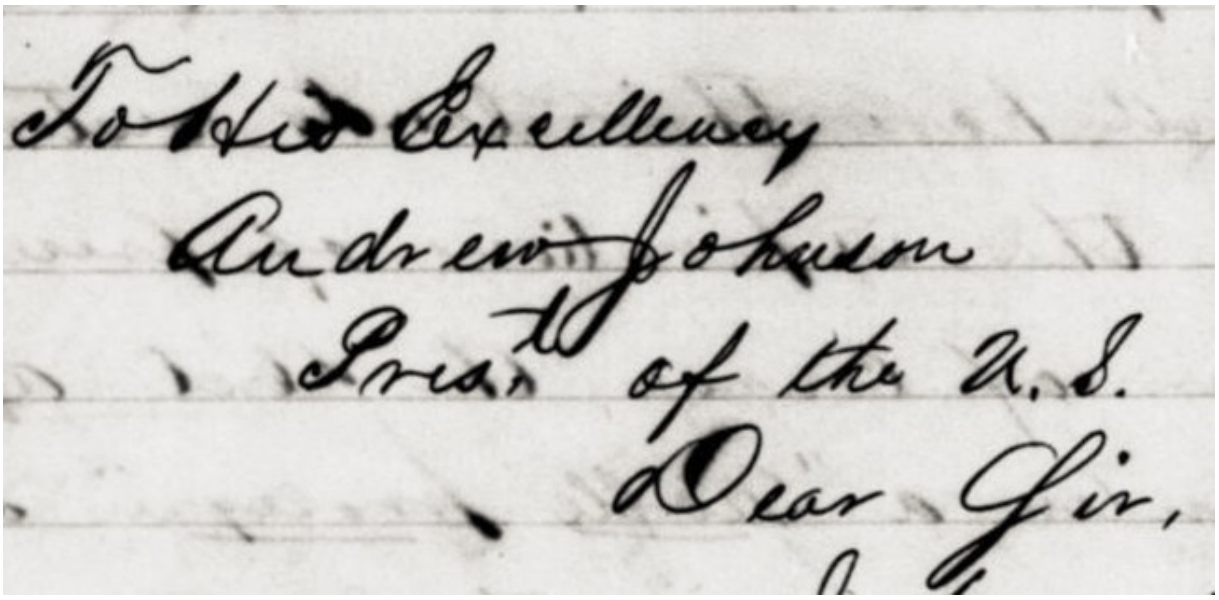


Fig. 2. "To His Excellency + Andrew Johnson + Pres.t of the U.S. + Dear Sir," in a letter from Kyle to Johnson, 1865.

Apart from openings and closings, addresses also appear in superscriptions (on the outward-facing side of the letter), and even in some other places, which is explained below. Also, the president is sometimes addressed more than once in a letter, and in more than one location in the letter. Specifically, out of the 42 letters, 24 feature an address form in the opening, 12 in the closing, 5 in the superscription, and 2 in other locations, as mentioned. Superscriptions are the

part of the letter that is outwardly oriented, so as to be seen by the courier, and potentially anyone. As Nevala (2007) explains: "By the 'outside' forms, on the other hand, I mean the forms used on the back (the outside) of a letter, which are usually intended to be read both in private, i.e. by the recipient, and the public, for example by the person who carries the letter to the recipient" (90). It should be noted that more of the letters that I have included in this study probably had superscriptions, but I included only those that I could find. Moreover, the term "superscription" will henceforth be referred to as "outside form" in order to minimize confusion pertaining to the fact that "superscription" is also a term for raised letters in texts, which I will be dealing with in the section on abbreviations. Still, the differences between address forms found on the outside and those inside the letter will be analysed to show different politeness strategies, as inspired by Nevala's (2007) study. In her study, Nevala analysed English letters from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and found that "The forms in superscriptions may have to be looked at from another angle [as opposed to those inside the letter]. Here, audience, meaning both ratified[1] and unratified auditors, may be seen to be as equally influential as the addressee" (107). Here, Nevala is referring to Bell's (1984) audience design model in which the participants of a conversation are determined on the basis of whether they are known and ratified. In this model, the addressee is both known and ratified, and addressed, but other members of the audience may include auditors (known, ratified), overhearers (known, not ratified), and eavesdroppers (not known or ratified) (94). Interestingly, she also found that, while addresses inside the letter show the relative power relationship between addressee and writer (letters sent to inferiors show positive politeness, and letters sent to superiors show negative politeness), outside forms are always negatively polite (107). My corpus is interesting in this respect because the president is always the superior in terms of the power dynamic (or at least equal, when corresponding with ex-presidents, for example). What the five outside forms in my corpus show is a similar situation. The first one (1810), only has an address on the outside ("[Pre]sident of the United States"), while on the inside there is only a greeting. The second one (1826) has only the "president" element both outside and inside. The third one (1827) has the "president" element outside, and [name] + "president" on the inside. The fourth one (1861) has [honorific] + [name] + "president" on the outside, and just "president" inside. And the fifth one (1863) has [honorific] + "president" on the inside, and [honorific] + [name] + "president" on the outside.

[1] In this context, I understand the term "ratified" as roughly meaning "approved of", i.e., the speaker is not against a ratified hearer hearing the message, while they would disapprove of an unratified hearer hearing it.

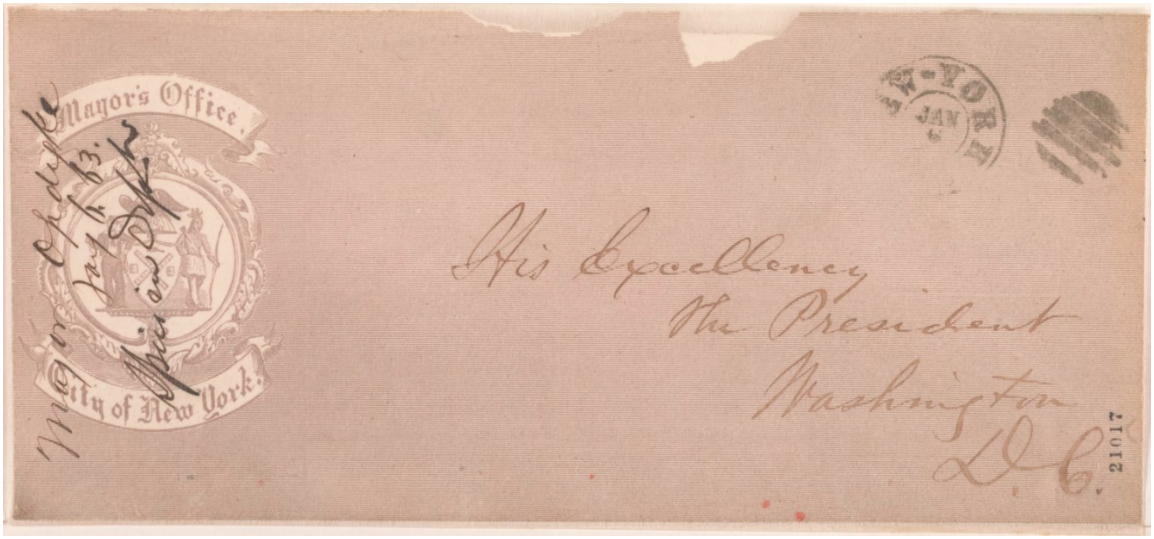


Fig. 3. “His Excellency + The President + Washington + D.C.” on the outside of a letter from Opdyke to Lincoln, 1863

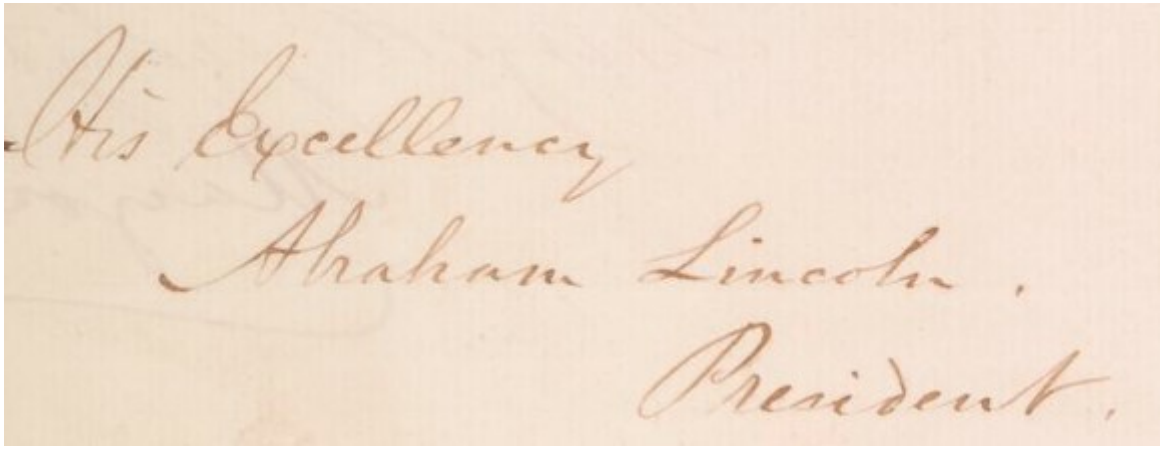


Fig. 4. “His Excellency + Abraham Lincoln + President” inside the above letter.

As for the two unusual positionings of addresses, one appears in a letter from Hayne to Van Buren (1838), where it is positioned at the end of the first page of a letter consisting of two pages. The other appears in a letter from Twichell to Taylor (1849) in which there is an additional piece of text written by someone other than Twichell at the end of the paper. This text is there to validate what Twichell had written, and the writer addresses the president at the beginning. So, this could be viewed as an opening section, but being that the separate message is written within the same letter that already has an opening, I have decided not to count it as another opening.

As for the development of addresses through time in my corpus, up to 1839, the common practice was to simply address the president as “President of the United States” or some version

of this, with only a few deviations in which the name is used. Honorifics in the address first appear in 1838, when Hayne wrote "For: his Excellency Martin Van Buren".

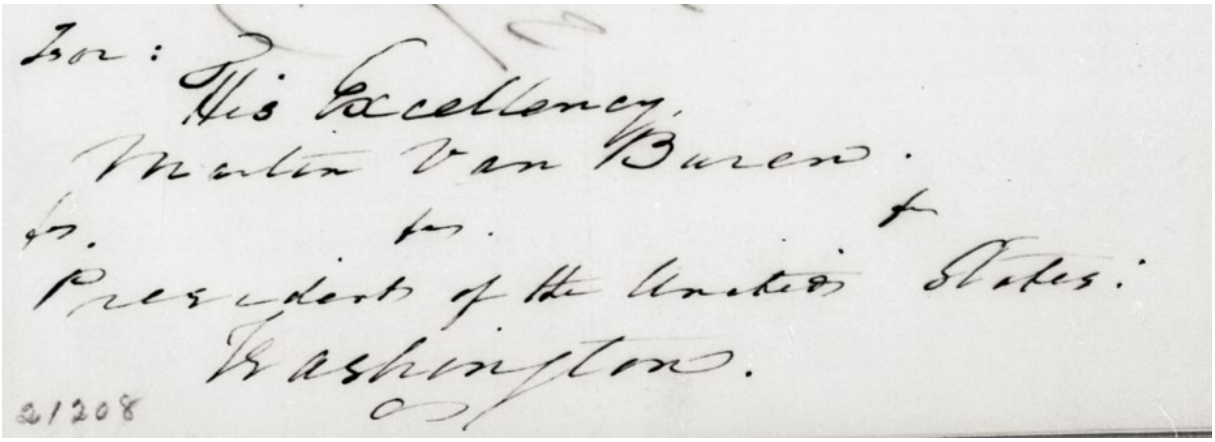
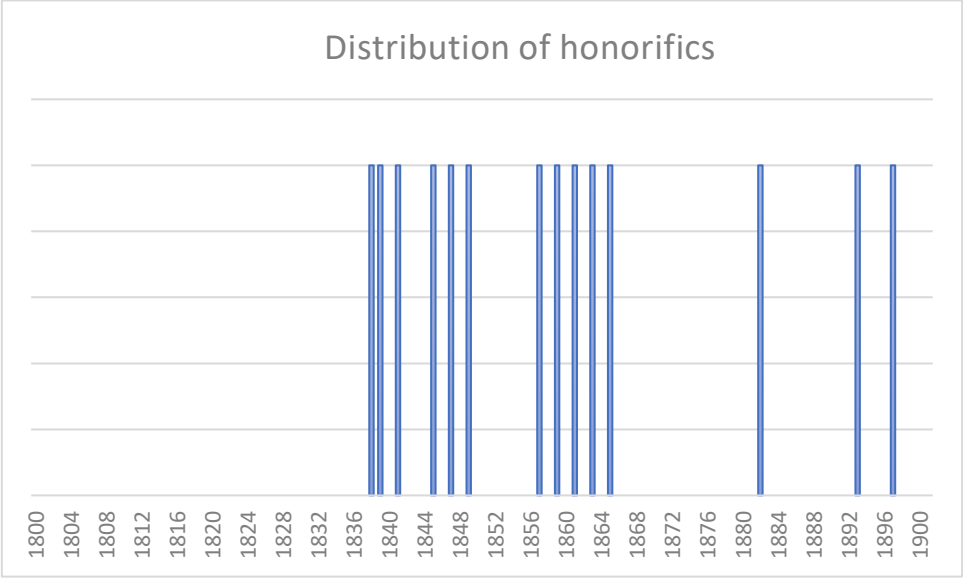


Fig. 5. "For: His Excellency, Martin Van Buren. for. for. for. President of the United States: Washington." in a letter from Hayne to van Buren, 1838.



Graph 1. Distribution of honorifics[2]

As the above graph shows, honorifics were truly common around the middle of the century in my corpus. Specifically, this period was between 1838 and 1865, when there is an obvious spike in their use. I am unsure of the reason for why this spike occurred around this time, but it might have been a fad.

4.2. Greetings/Salutations

[2] The graph shows the distribution of honorifics through the eighteenth century, with each bar representing a year when they occurred

I have also included greetings into this analysis, since in a way, the recipient is also addressed through them. I would use the terms *greeting* and *salutation* interchangeably, but I would differentiate them from addresses on the basis that an address' most important role is to identify the intended person, while a greeting is more of a conventionalized form of courtesy. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary further narrows it down with the definition of *salutation* as "the word or phrase of greeting (such as *Gentleman* or *Dear Sir* or *Madam*) that conventionally comes immediately before the body of a letter". I would further compare greetings in letters to reference markers in speech. What I mean is that, just as we make known to the other party that we are referring to them in an oral conversation, often through extralinguistic means such as gaze or other body-language signs, perhaps it would feel unnatural to communicate through writing with a specific referent without using a reference marker. Part of the reason surely lies in the knowledge of *Ars dictaminis* that was passed along through the centuries, but there must have been a reason for introducing greetings into *Ars dictaminis* in the first place, and for the convention to remain. According to Tiisala (2007), "Letters were originally delivered orally, and for that reason letter-writing rules drew on rules for general rhetoric that had grown out of the classical oral tradition." (17). The most common variant of greeting in my corpus is "Dear Sir," or simply "Sir," along with variations pertaining to punctuation, capitalization, and abbreviation.

Fig. 6. "Dear Sir" in a letter from Monroe to Jefferson, 1802.

Fig. 6. shows the greeting "Dear Sir" in the earliest dated letter in my corpus, and it can be noted that this phrase is written in a less legible manner than the rest of the text, presumably because of its nature as a convention. The writer, in this case Monroe, probably wrote this phrase in almost every letter that he ever wrote, so he stopped paying attention to *how* he wrote it. At the same time, he could assume that the reader knew what was written here, as the reader is used to reading this phrase at the beginning of each letter. This phrase is used as the

convention for greeting throughout the century, with the last one appearing in the very last letter in my corpus, shown below.

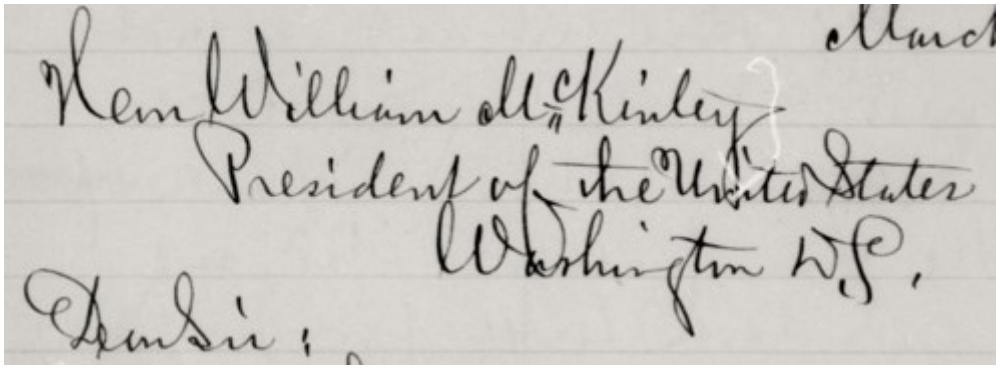


Fig. 7. “DearSir:” in a letter from Someone to McKinley, 1897, accompanied by the address “Hon William McKinley President of the United States Washington D.C.”

“Dear Sir” and “Sir” were unchallenged as conventional greetings until 1855, when Atherthon wrote “Mr. President” in her letter to Pierce.

Fig. 8. “Mr President.” in a letter from Atherton to Pierce, 1855.

Some form of “president” was used in addresses quite often, as discussed above, but I would argue that in some cases, they function as specific greetings for presidents. I differentiate these instances on the basis that greetings are accompanied by “dear” or “Mr.”, and are written directly above the beginning of the main body of the text. The other variants of the “president” type of greetings are “Dear Mr. President” and “My Dear Mr. President”. After 1855, these two types of greeting conventions (“Sir” and “president”) co-existed.

All in all, while there are patterns of convention to be found in the considered addresses, there is also a considerable amount of variation. It is not surprising that the most common form of address in this corpus is the “president” type, since all of the letters are addressed to the president. This particularity is obviously not what the classical *Ars dictaminis* taught *per se*, as its influence had faded by the nineteenth century. Rather, what remained of its influence in terms of addresses were the implications of politeness, which one should consider when writing a letter. So, as can be seen from my analysis, when writing to a superior such as the president of the U.S., honorifics are quite common, and names are rarely used without them. As for greetings, they are also a legacy left from the medieval art of letter writing, and all but four

letters in the corpus have them. The interesting find in relation to greetings is that a unique form emerges around the middle of the century -the "president"-type. Presumably, the "Sir"-type is the most common greeting in general, and in my corpus, it is still far more common than the "president"-type, but the fact that many writers after 1850 abandon the deeply conventionalized former version for the latter speaks to the high-regard which the presidents of the time enjoyed.

5. Closings

The following section deals with the closings of letters. As stated by Shvanyukova (2017), closings give information that the recipient already knows (such as name and/or relationship), but they can also introduce some new information as well (56-57). More specifically, this section deals with the apparently conventionalized formulae which appear in the closings of the letters in my corpus. Virtually none of the closings observed in this corpus are identical, although many share commonalities which could be analysed as different renderings of the same type of formula. One of the most common formulae is the phrase "Your (most) obedient servant", which often appears in abbreviated form, although rarely abbreviated in the same way. This will be investigated further in the section on abbreviations. This formula, featuring both the words "obedient" and "servant", appears in fourteen of the forty-two letters in the corpus.

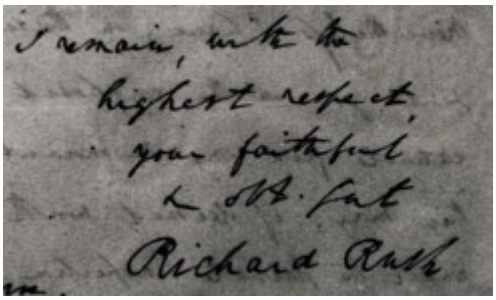


Fig. 9. "I remain, with the highest respect, your faithful & obt. Srt Richard Rush" in a letter from Rush to Monroe, 1822.

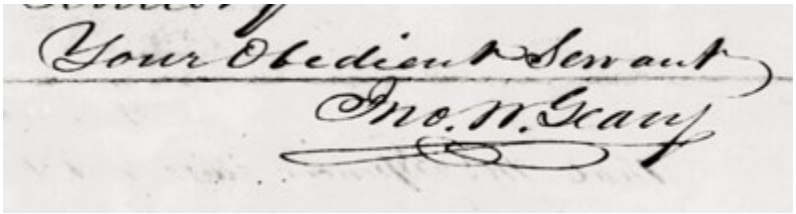


Fig. 10. "Your Obedient Servant, Jno. W. Geary" in a letter from Geary to Pierce, 1957.

Additionally, there are three letters which do feature "servant", but not "obedient", which could also be recognized as variants (albeit more distant) of the "Your (most) obedient servant" formula.

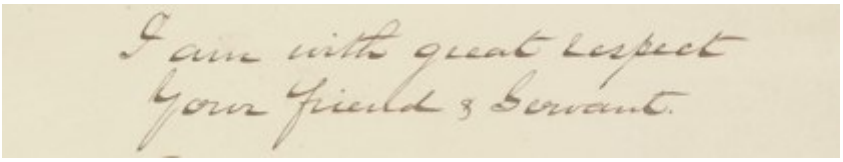


Fig. 11. "I am with great respect Your Friend & Servant." in a letter from Andrews to Lincoln, 1861.

I have not been able to determine the origin of this closing formula, but I suspect that it was taught in the *Ars dictaminis* at some point in time, as is apparently the case with many letter-writing conventions. Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1999) categorizes such formulae as "Type 1" as opposed to "Type 2" formulae, which she describes as those that feature "sincerely" or "affectionately" (106). In fact, she makes a point that Type 2 formulae came to be used in the eighteenth century in order to distance the writer from the "routinised standard usage of *Your most humble Servant* and its variants." (107). As Bijkerk (2007) says, this separation from the standardized form can be explained as an attempt to minimize social distance between addressee and writer (116). This makes sense, as sticking to the prescribed *form* is usually seen as *formal*, while deviating from it and introducing a *personal touch* is usually seen as *in*formal. This is in accordance with Bergs' (2007) statement: "However, it has also been argued that in between the formulae and even within the range of possible formulae there is a certain degree of variability which may be used for functional, communicative purposes." (30). Still, with fourteen instances in the corpus, Type 1 formulae are quite prevalent in contrast to Type 2, which appear in only two instances, both having "sincerely" and not "affectionately" and appearing at the end of the century.

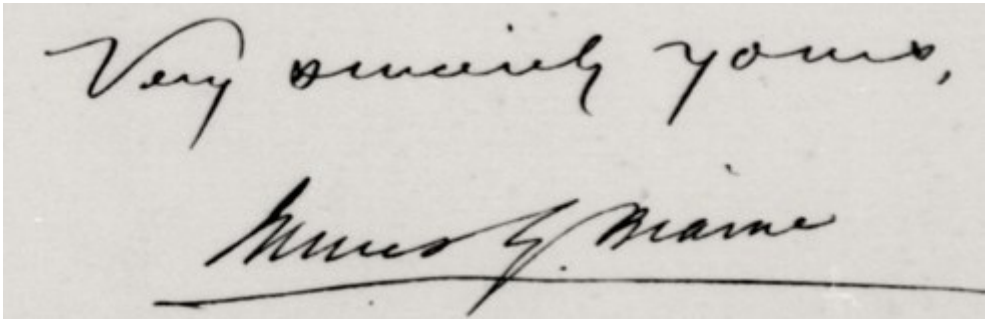


Fig. 12. "Very sincerely yours, James G. Blaine" in a letter from Blaine to Harrison, 1892.

This either speaks to the intended formality of the letters, or simply to the dominating convention of Type 1. Making a distinction between types of formulae is further complicated by the fact that elements from different types are sometimes merged, thereby making it hard to distinguish between a combination of formulae and a separate type. A good example of this is the closing in the earliest letter in my corpus:

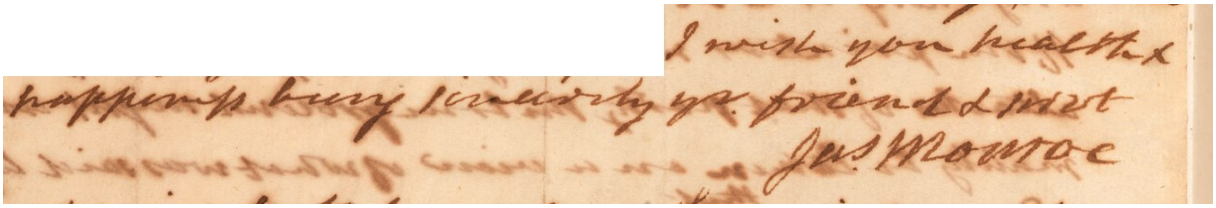


Fig. 13. “I wish you health & happineſs being sincerely y.ʳ friend & servt Jas Monroe” in a letter from Monroe to Jefferson, 1802.

In this example, we find elements from Type 1 formulae (servant); Type 2 formulae (sincerely); and a “blessing”, which is found in one other letter in the corpus. In fact, when compared to openings, closings are quite more variable. The observed closing phrases all seem to be at least minorly different from each other, yet they all also seem to draw upon the same set of variants. In the words of Shvanyukova (2017), “…these formulaic elements were carefully and meticulously considered and reconsidered by the encoders. In other words, the selection of the appropriate formula was not always a mechanical, routinised task of adhering to epistolary conventions.” (85). I argue that this is not solely a matter of coming across as formal or informal, but that it is perhaps also a matter of coming across as sincere. The goal is to oblige the rules, but at the same time not to be completely impersonal. Still, apart from the above-mentioned Types of closing formulae, there are also some usual phrases that are used to introduce the formulae. I distinguish three types of these introductions: (1) “I have…”; (2) “I am/remain (with)…”; (3) adverb. These are combined with other elements, while featuring either “respect,” “honor,” or both.

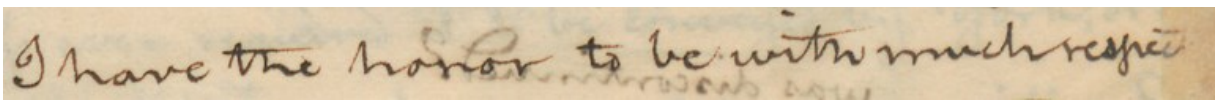


Fig. 14. “I have the honor to be with much respect” in a letter from Bradley to Jefferson, 1804.

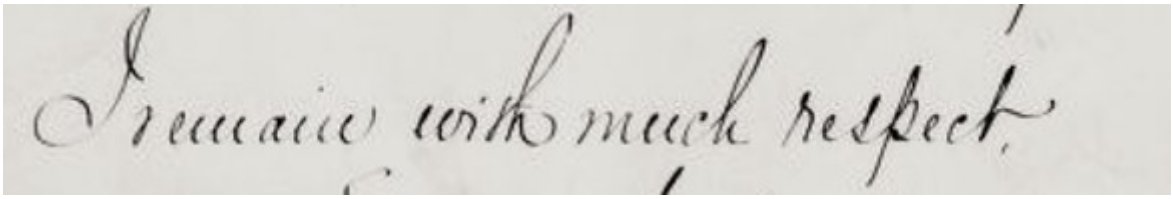


Fig. 15. “I remain with much respect” in a letter from Hutchins to Arthur, 1884.

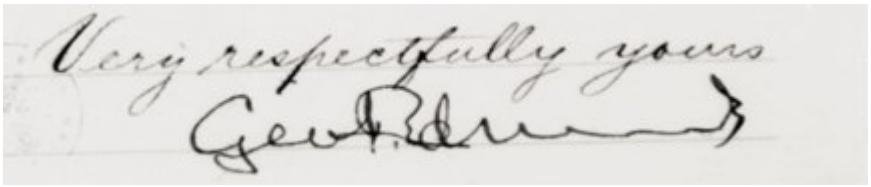


Fig. 16. “Very respectfully yours” in a letter from Edmunds to Harrison, 1890.

Although it is hard to categorize the patterns of the previously discussed closing formulae without it seeming arbitrary, the existence of closing formulae that are completely separate from these types gives them more credibility. For example, as previously mentioned, there are two early letters that feature blessings in the place of closing formulas.

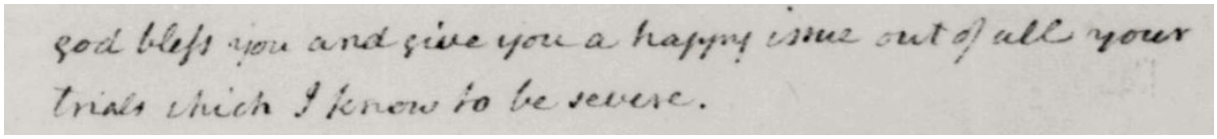


Fig. 17. “god bleſs you and give you a happy issue out of all your trials which I know to be severe.” in a letter from Jefferson to Madison, 1812.

Since this type of closing is only present in two letters from the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is presumably already a relic from the past at that point.

There are also three letters in the corpus which do not exhibit any kind of closing. One of them is the previously discussed telegram from Bingham to Grant, 1874. The second one is an anonymous letter sent to Grant in 1875, threatening his life. This one probably does not have a closing both because it is anonymous, so there is no overt “author” to sign off, and also because it is a threatening letter, so any courtesies such as closings are omitted. The third one (Chadbourne to Garfield, 1881) is a peculiar letter in itself, and it simply ends abruptly with the body of the text.

To sum up, closings are an integral part of most letters in general, and appear in all but three special cases in my corpus. This has apparently been the case since the beginning of the teachings of *Ars dictaminis*, as stated at the beginning of the section on addresses. The closings

in this corpus are quite variable, while still drawing upon a finite number of conventional phrases. This method which produces variety not by a total freedom of wording, but by finding a unique sequence "in-between" the given set of options, probably arose as a means of communicating sincerity, while staying formal at the same time. The most common formula is Type 1, i.e., "your (most) humble/obedient servant", which is almost always abbreviated in a unique way, and three common ways to introduce a closing section have been observed: "I am/remain", "I have", and adverb.

6. Abbreviations

This section is about abbreviations that appear in my corpus. In her article, Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2006) analysed the use of abbreviations in late eighteenth-century letters in connection to politeness. She checked the rules that are prescribed in the contemporary writing manuals, and found that abbreviations (and contractions) are to be avoided in order to seem respectful (2). This is in tune with what Sairio (2009) found for contractions: "for some writers, they spoke of impoliteness, vulgarity, and a lack of education" (216). Tieken-Boon van Ostade analysed letters of correspondence belonging to the authors of these manuals (especially Lowth), and found that, "Despite the fact that Lowth was the author of an authoritative English grammar, he was a relatively ordinary (if highly educated) speaker and writer of English" (14-15). This makes sense in accordance with Sairio's findings that there were two standards of spelling in use at the same time: one for private and another for public use. (213). Tieken-Boon van Ostade also found that the usage of abbreviations was higher in letters where "appearance is of less significance than contents" (14).

The abbreviations in my corpus are usually used in specific categories of words which are common in letter writing. These include months, position or occupation names, formulaic phrases, place names, pronouns, certain personal names, and other. This roughly corresponds to the categories that Tieken-Boon van Ostade found in her corpus, with the exception of the "y" words, which were "the remnant of a spelling convention found in manuscripts since the early fourteenth century in which modern <th> is spelled as <y>" (2). However, Haugland (1995) claims that such abbreviations were already excluded in the first printing manual (Moxon 1683-84) (167). Sairio (2009) quotes Osselton (1984) in saying that there is an expected time-lag of 50 to 100 years for the printers' spelling to be adopted by private writers (213). It would make sense, then, that this convention does not appear in my corpus of nineteenth-century letters.

All of the above-mentioned categories of abbreviations in my corpus exhibit a certain level of uniformity, although none are completely uniform except for personal names. The way in which they differ is in the combination of letters that are used as well as in punctuation. There are 116 detected instances of abbreviation in the corpus. Pertaining to punctuation, some abbreviations are marked by a dot or period sign (67), others by one or two commas (7), others by a dash or two (4), some by a colon (7), and many display no marker at all (32).[3] The position of the punctuation mark is also important here, as they do not always appear at the end of the word, as is the standard today, although this is the most common practice. In fact, there are 48 instances of the punctuation mark appearing in the last orthographic space of the word in question, with all the letters appearing at the same level. Interestingly though, the other popular way of writing abbreviations was to place the last one or two letters above the punctuation marker.

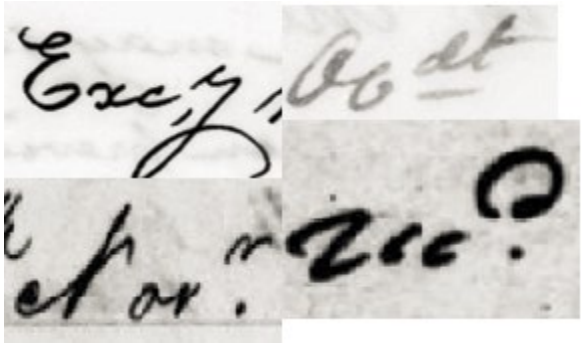


Fig. 18. Examples of superscripts in abbreviations: "Exc,^{y}" for "Excellency", "Ob$^{\underline{dt}}$" for "Obedient", "Nov.^{r}" for "November", and "rec.^{d}" for "received"

This method appears in 36 of the analysed letters and is called "superscription", and it is interesting that Sairio (2009) found far fewer instances of it in her corpus. She remarks that "Superscripted variants are not considered separately as these were very few; only the most curtailed spellings (*cd, shd, wd*) contain superscription" (286). She also says that superscripts were not discussed much (214), and that they probably carried informal implications (226). One might also note that they were far more popular in the first half of the nineteenth century in my corpus, the last instance appearing in 1865. This is particularly interesting since Sairio finds that they are already unpopular at the end of the eighteenth century. This difference can

[3] The sum of the instances of punctuation-marker types does not equal the overall number of abbreviations because one particular case has both a dash and two commas.

probably be attributed to the fact that she looked at English letters, and that the path and duration of conventions probably differed there when compared to America.

6.1. Months

Some of the most common abbreviations appear in writing the names of months. Although these are uniform to a large extent, there are some differences to be found.

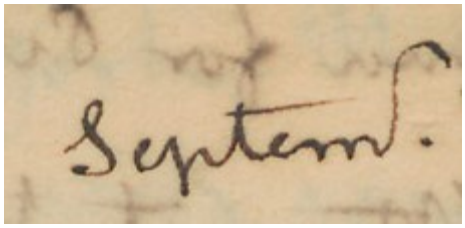


Fig. 19. “Septem.” in the opening of a letter from Bradley to Jefferson, 1804.

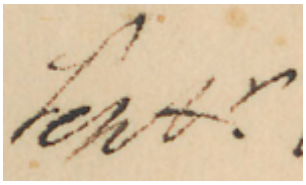


Fig. 20. “Sept.r” in a note attached to the above letter.

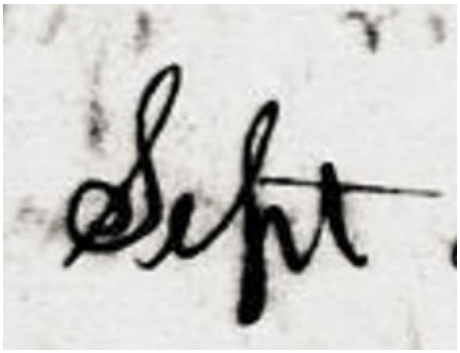


Fig. 21. “Sept” in a letter from Twichell to Taylor, 1849.

As can be seen from the images above, sometimes the form of an abbreviation varies even within a text written by one writer. Perhaps there was no convention in place which would dictate how one should abbreviate months, but rather each individual attempted to abbreviate them on their own, in a way which seemed most intelligible. The result is that the abbreviations are quite similar, but not identical. These first three images are examples which show the most difference between abbreviations of the same month. In other observed monthly abbreviations, December is always “Dec” with variation only seen in the punctuation marks; November is either “Novr” or “Nov”; August is always “Aug”, except in one questionable instance where

"Gust" might be the variant; February is usually "Feb", but "Feby" in one instance; and April is either "Apl" or "Apr".

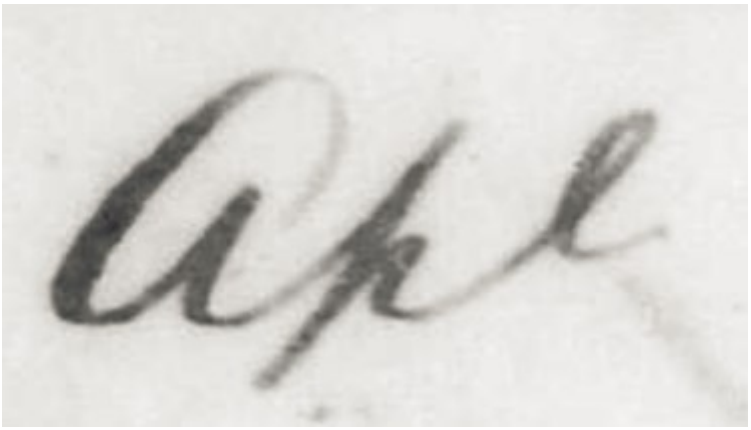


Fig. 22. "Apl" in a letter from Wells to John Quincy Adams, 1826.

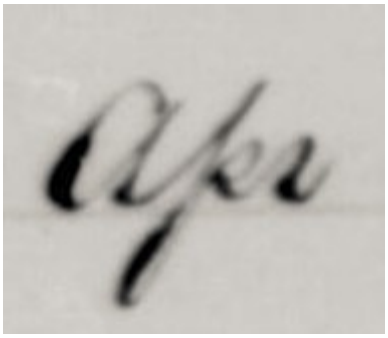


Fig. 23. "Apr" in a letter from Diffin to Cleveland, 1886.

6.2. Formulaic phrases

The next commonly abbreviated category consists of certain formulaic expressions, namely "obedient," "servant," and "honorable." As discussed in the closings section, "Your most obedient servant" is a very common expression used in the closings of letters, while "honorable" is commonly used either when referring to the recipient or when introducing a third party. It is of no surprise that these phrases often appear abbreviated since they are so commonly used in the epistolary discourse of the time, and the recipient would most certainly know what the abbreviations stand for. There was simply no need to write the whole word. The frequency of abbreviated vs. full forms of these words in the corpus best describes this state of affairs: for "servant", there are 8 instances of full words and 10 instances of abbreviations; for "obedient", the ratio is 2:11; while the ratio for "honourable" is 0:4. Also, the way in which these words are abbreviated is quite varied, especially with "servant", where variants (ignoring markers) include: "srt," "svt," "sert," and "servt".

Fig. 24. All abbreviated versions of the word “servant”

It is also noteworthy that these abbreviations are most usually written in a way that the individual letters are hard to decipher. This might be precisely because they are formulaic phrases that the writer writes in each of his or her letters, and because it is assumed that the recipient will know what the content here is through the knowledge of epistolary conventions. Because of this “messy” handwriting, it is hard for the researcher to say for certain whether an orthographic unit is an “r” or a “v”, for instance.

6.3. Occupation/rank

The next category of abbreviations which emerged in analysing the corpus are those which stand for occupation or military rank. These are present in reference to the recipient, in this case the president of the U.S., where the word *president* is abbreviated to “Presidt.”, “Presd.”, or “Prest.”.

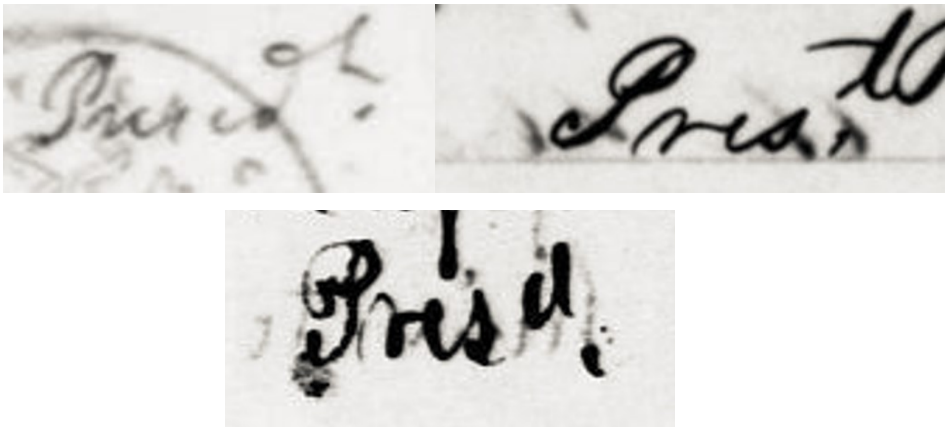


Fig. 25. “Presid.^{t}” in a letter from Madison to Adams, 1827; “Pres.^{t}” in a letter from Twichell to Taylor, 1849; “Pres.^{d}” in a letter from Kyle to Johnson, 1865.

Interestingly, presidents were also sometimes referred to by their military rank of General, abbreviated “Gen” or “Genl.”. All presidents are by constitution obligated to take the role of the Commander-in-chief of the U.S. army, but many of them actually achieved the military rank of General before becoming the president. In fact, the three presidents that are referred to as “Gen.” or “Genl.” in the corpus had been Major Generals before becoming president. These are Jackson, Harrison, and Taylor. “Gen.” is also used once accompanying a signature, and a few times when talking about a third party.

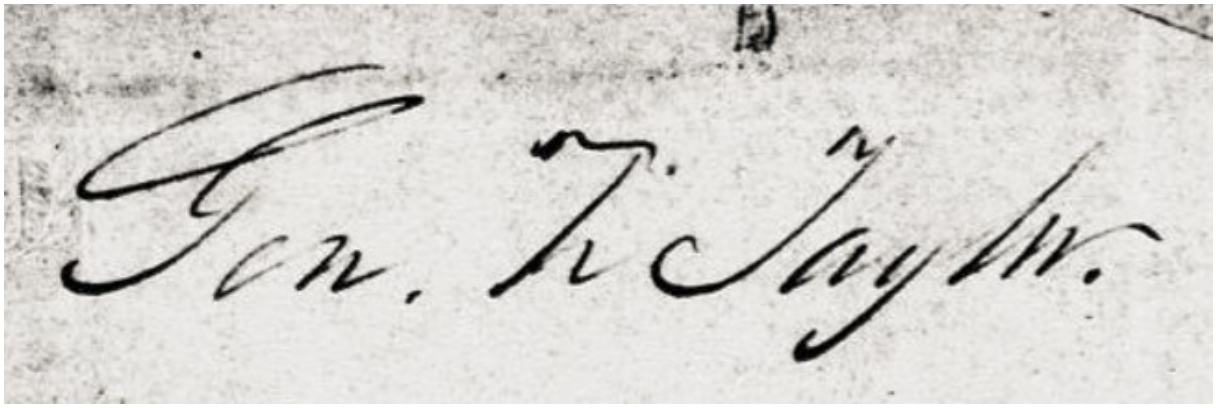


Fig. 26. “Gen. Z Taylor.” in a letter from McGehee to Taylor, 1850.

Other military rank abbreviations which occur in the corpus are: “Maj” for Major, “Col” for Colonel, and “Capt.” for Captain.

Fig. 27. “Col. WMullen” in a letter from Porter to Buchanan, 1857.

Occupations which are abbreviated are: *secretary* to “Sect”, “Secy”, or “Sec:”; *Assistant Postmaster General* to “aſsist. PostmGenl”; and *attorney* to “atty”.

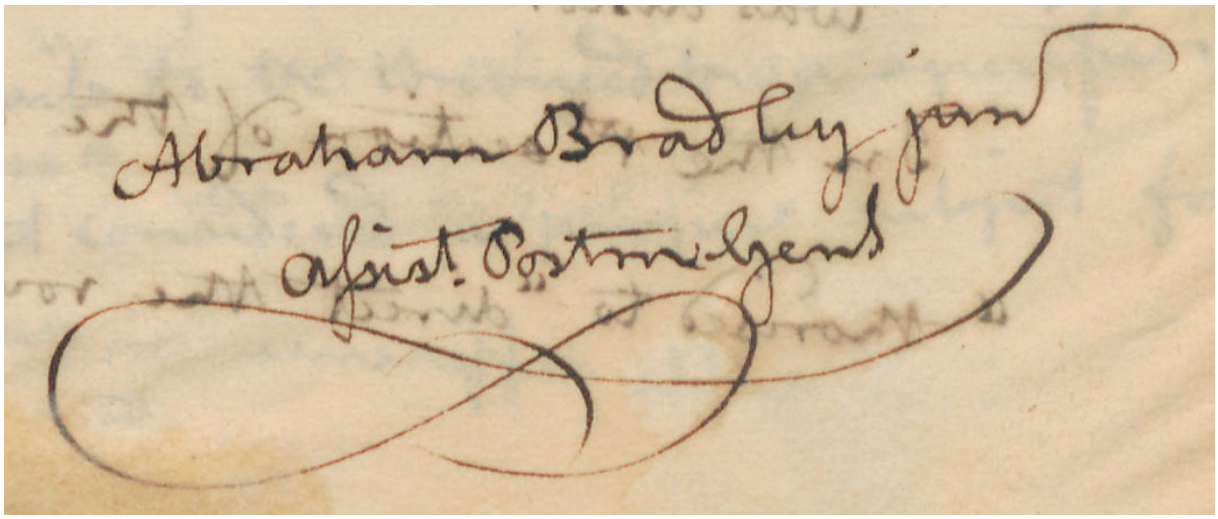


Fig. 28. “Abraham Bradley jun aſsis.t PostmGen.l” in a letter from Bradley to Jefferson, 1804.

6.4. Place names

Another frequent category of abbreviations that appear in this corpus are the ones which shorten the names of places. These are the names of either states or cities. Each of the place-name abbreviations appear only once in the corpus. In other words, there are no two instances of abbreviation for the same place. Therefore, a comparison between variants cannot be made on the selected letters alone. Still, the individual examples give an insight into the different methods used in abbreviating place names. For example, North Carolina appears as “No: Carolina”, and South Carolina appears as “S.o C.a”, while Tennessee appears as “Tenn.”.

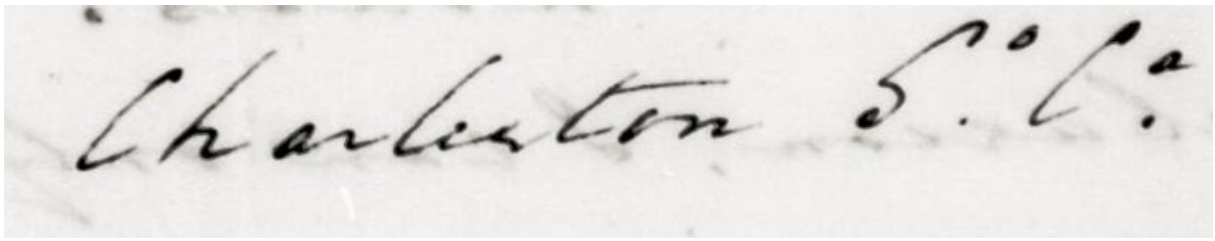


Fig. 29. “Charleston S.o C.a” in a letter from Hayne to Van Buren, 1838.

Fig. 30. “Nashville Tenn.” in a letter from Kyle to Johnson, 1865.

When it comes to names of cities, Montpelier is "Montp.ʳ", New York is "New Yrk", Philadelphia is "Phild", and Washington is "Washn".

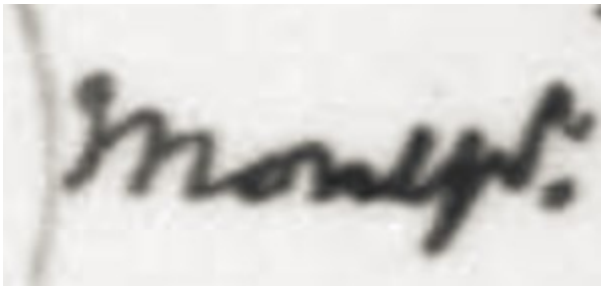


Fig. 31. "Montp.ʳ" in a letter from Madison to Adams, 1827.

Although no real patterns of convention can be deduced from these examples alone, the possibility of there being no strongly adhered-to convention can be assumed to be high. In all probability, writers would simply abbreviate the names of places in a way which left little chance for the reader to not be able to decipher them. In the two examples in Figs. 29 and 30, there is the name of a city accompanying the name of a state, so the state's name is only there to specify and is therefore deemed unimportant enough to be abbreviated. In Fig 31, Montpelier is abbreviated by the then ex-president Madison, whose famous residence was his plantation in Virginia called Montpelier. Whoever received a letter from Madison could easily understand which place is in question – especially someone like Adams, who was the president at the time.

6.5. Personal names

The last distinguishable category of abbreviations found in the corpus is that of personal names. Unlike most other categories that I have looked at, these appear entirely conventional. There are three instances of William being abbreviated to "Wm", two of "Jno" for John, two of "Saml" for Samuel, two of "Jas" for James, and one "Geo" for George.

Fig. 32. "Ja.ˢ Monroe" in a letter from Monroe to Jefferson, 1802.

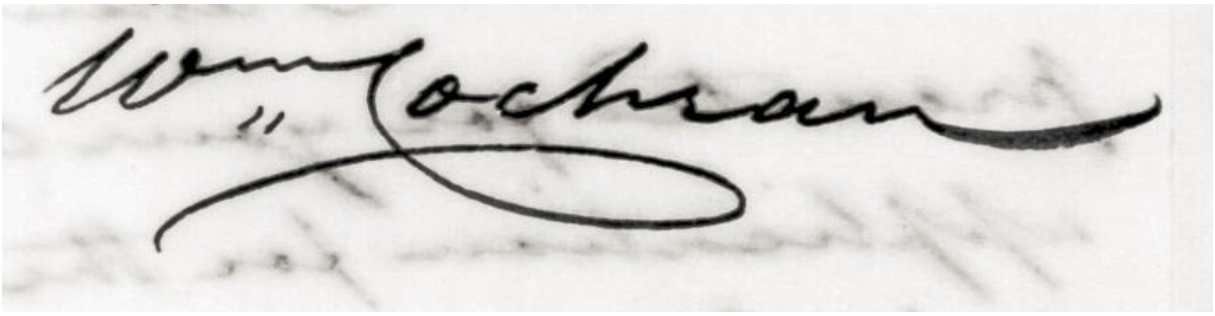


Fig. 33. “W,,^{m} Cochran” in a letter from Cochran to Van Buren, 1839.

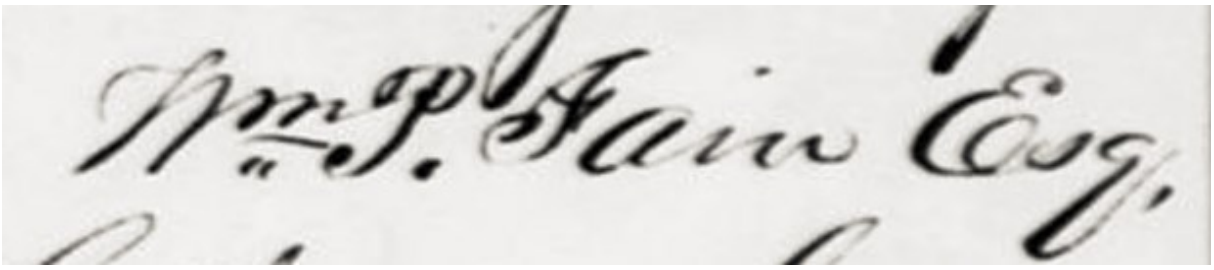


Fig. 34. “W,,$\underline{^{m}}$P. Fain Esq.” in a letter from Geary to Pierce, 1857.

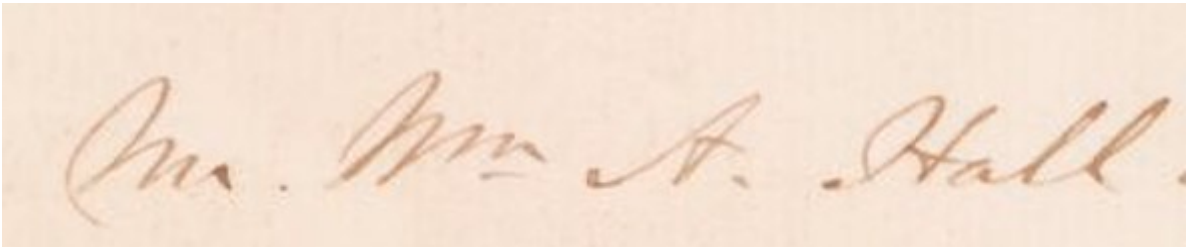


Fig. 35. “Mr. W$\underline{^{m}}$ A. Hall” in a letter from Opdyke to Lincoln, 1863.

It is not surprising that these most common personal names were abbreviated. Many people in the U.S. at the time had one of these common names, so it made sense to abbreviate them. The more important part was the surname, and the first name was mostly there to further specify the person.

7. Long-*s*

The orthographic unit “long-s”, written as “ſ” had, according to West (2006), been in use in Europe since Roman times. It was used in some places where we would use the now-normal short-s, and there were specific rules for different languages on how to use it. Therefore, it had been in use for far longer than not. But what caused the long-s to disappear? Zeeuw and Straaijer (2012) write that the change happened almost overnight: “In fact, the turn of the century is seen as such a clear demarcation point that book antiquarians use the presence or absence of <ſ> to date books to either pre- or post-1800.” (4). Nash (2001) says that the printers of the time

decided to remove long-s from their cases partly because it was easily confused with the letter "f", and by removing it, the text could be written more accurately, the process of correction could be easier, and the reader would find the text easier to read. Apart from this, it was used as a way to show innovation (8-9, 14). Yet, the history of long-s does not entirely end there, as it lingered in handwriting well after 1800, as Zeeuw and Straaijer demonstrate, and as can be seen from my corpus. What is interesting is that the way in which long-s was used in print differed from the way it was used in handwriting. Instead of complying to the many rules for writing long-s, writers would use it exclusively as the first part of a "double-s". "We have seen that in printed works <ſ> often appears in word-initial position, as for example in the word ſpeak. In Priestley's letters, <ſ> never appears there […] In his letters, <ſ> is used exclusively as the first part of double-*s* in word-medial or word-final position." (Zeeuw, Straajier 2012, 9-10). Interestingly, they continue, this digraph "ſs" most likely became conceptualized as one unit, similar to the German *Eszett* digraph (11). It is not surprising that long-s stayed in handwriting long after being absent from print, since many writers who were born before 1800 simply continued using it. (Nash, 18). Also, as Zeeuw and Straajier point out, children were still using spelling-manuals from the eighteenth century in the nineteenth, as they were expensive and rare (16).

Out of the forty-two letters in my corpus, long-s appears in seventeen. It is exclusively used in the double-s combination, i.e., interchangeably with "ss". "Ss" appears in twenty-two of the letters, while seven letters have neither. What is interesting is that there are two letters which feature both variants. One of these is a letter from Wells to John Quincy Adams, 1826; while the other one is from Jefferson to Madison, 1812. Wells only uses "ſs" in one instance: in the word "leſs"; while using "ss" in four other words: "trespass", "dissatisfaction", "expressed", and "messenger".

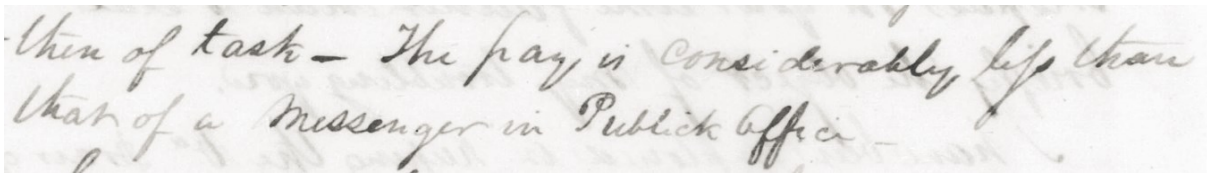


Fig. 36. "leſs" and "messenger" appearing in the same sentence in a letter from Wells to Adams, 1826.

In Jefferson's letter, on the other hand, the distribution of these two variants is equal. There are three instances of "ſs": "maſs", "fitneſs", and "bleſs"; and there are three words which feature "ss": "pressed", "possesses", and "issue".

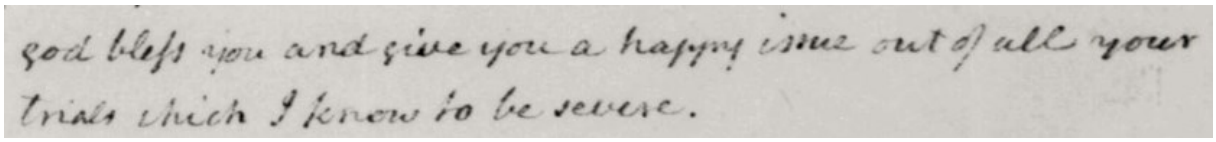
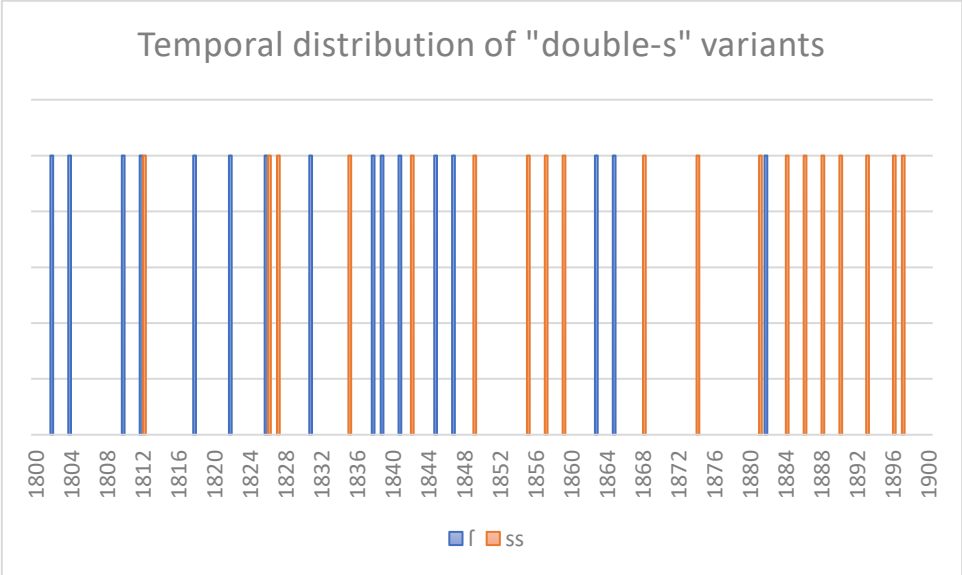


Fig. 37. “bleſs” and “issue” appearing in the closing of a letter from Jefferson to Madison, 1812.

Zeeuw and Straajier have also looked at letters written by Jefferson (although only from the first few years of the nineteenth century) and found the same phenomenon: “About half the time Jefferson used double short-*s*, even varying with the same word, *happiness*…” (15). They concluded that “his letters appear to be evidence of a transition phase from <ſ> to <s> in the double-*s* context.” (15).

With regard to temporal distribution, long-s was commonly used in my corpus up to 1847, when it was still more common than the “ss” variant. More specifically, at that point there were eleven letters which featured exclusively “ſs”, two which featured exclusively “ss”, and two which featured both. After that, “ss” became more common, with only three more appearances of “ſs”: in 1863, 1865, and notably the last one in 1882. This last instance is notable because it appears in the word “Miſs”. Zeeuw and Straajier quote Mosley (2008) in saying that “ſs” endured for significantly longer in the conventionalized formula “Miss” used in the addresses of letters (15). This is not surprising when considering how conventionalized formulae generally take longer to change than other elements. The graph below shows the two variants of “double-s” as they appear in my corpus through time.



Graph 2. “Temporal distribution of “double-*s*” variants”[4]

In sum, although there is a peculiarly narrow time-frame for when “long-*s*” was removed from printing (~1800), the orthographic convention lingered in handwritten texts throughout the nineteenth century. The probable reason is that writers who had learned to use “long-*s*” in writing continued to do so regardless of the change in printing. Most writers simply continued to write as they always did, while few accommodated to the new “fashion”. The most interesting writer here considered is Jefferson, who apparently chooses one of the given variants intuitively when a word calls for it. Also worth noting is the fact that “long-*s*” appears the latest in the word “Miſs”, which is a highly conventionalized epistolary formula, and is therefore a probable candidate for the longest conservation of the aging convention.

8. Conclusion

To conclude, the corpus that has been assembled and used for the purposes of this master’s thesis has yielded some findings on the language use of the past despite its limited, fragmentary, and unorthodox nature. From its most bare form - symbols written on paper by someone who lived in the nineteenth century, to the tentatively generalized findings that have become apparent through the process of analysis, some new knowledge has been found. It should be stressed that this knowledge was not easily acquired, as the preparatory stages proved to be slow and meticulous, albeit interesting. The process of compiling the corpus involved searching for the letters that fit the criteria, organising them, transcribing them, and observing and determining the patterns which appeared in the text in order to come up with the variables that would be studied. It was often hard to decipher the nineteenth-century handwritten text, and a number of words were still left untranscribed, which probably affected the study only minorly, if at all. Still, some of the strategies for deciphering difficult parts of the text included looking at them multiple times, and having “different sets of eyes” look at them - namely, my mentor and girlfriend.

Each of the four variables taken into consideration have yielded their own historical-sociolinguistic conclusions. The analysis of addresses has shown that careful consideration was needed in order to come across as appropriately polite through the means of choosing the right elements and their wording. Such careful consideration is a running theme throughout the letters since they were all sent to a superior, and the art of letter-writing was at the time seen as a

[4] The graph shows the temporal distribution of the two variants of writing “double-*s*”, with each blue bar marking a year when “ſs” occurred, and each orange line marking when “ss” occurred

normative skill which had certain rules that heavily depended on the power relationship between writer and recipient. This is evidenced by the many occurrences of honorifics, which were most commonly found around the middle of the century. Closings exhibit the same pattern when it comes to politeness, but have the added observed element of "sincerity" - the desire to come across as genuine instead of an automatized writer. Hence, the closing formulae exhibit more variety than openings, while still drawing upon a closed set of options.

The study of the abbreviations in this corpus has not provided much sociolinguistic knowledge. The consulted works by other authors merely suggest that the use of abbreviation was seen as impolite, but given the sheer number and frequency of abbreviation in the corpus, and the careful consideration of politeness-bearing elements elsewhere makes it unlikely. Then again, if Tieken-Boon van Ostade's claim that they were used in letters in which content was more important than appearance was correct, perhaps most writers wanted to give an impression of a lack of vanity. The use of "long-*s*" shows that conventions are slow to change in individuals even when an outside force commences the change, except in those few that actively make an effort to do so. It also shows that a conventionalized spelling lingers the longest in a conventionalized phrase, as in the word "Miſs". As mentioned before, these conclusions need to be taken with due caution as the limited scope of the corpus allows for limited generalizability.

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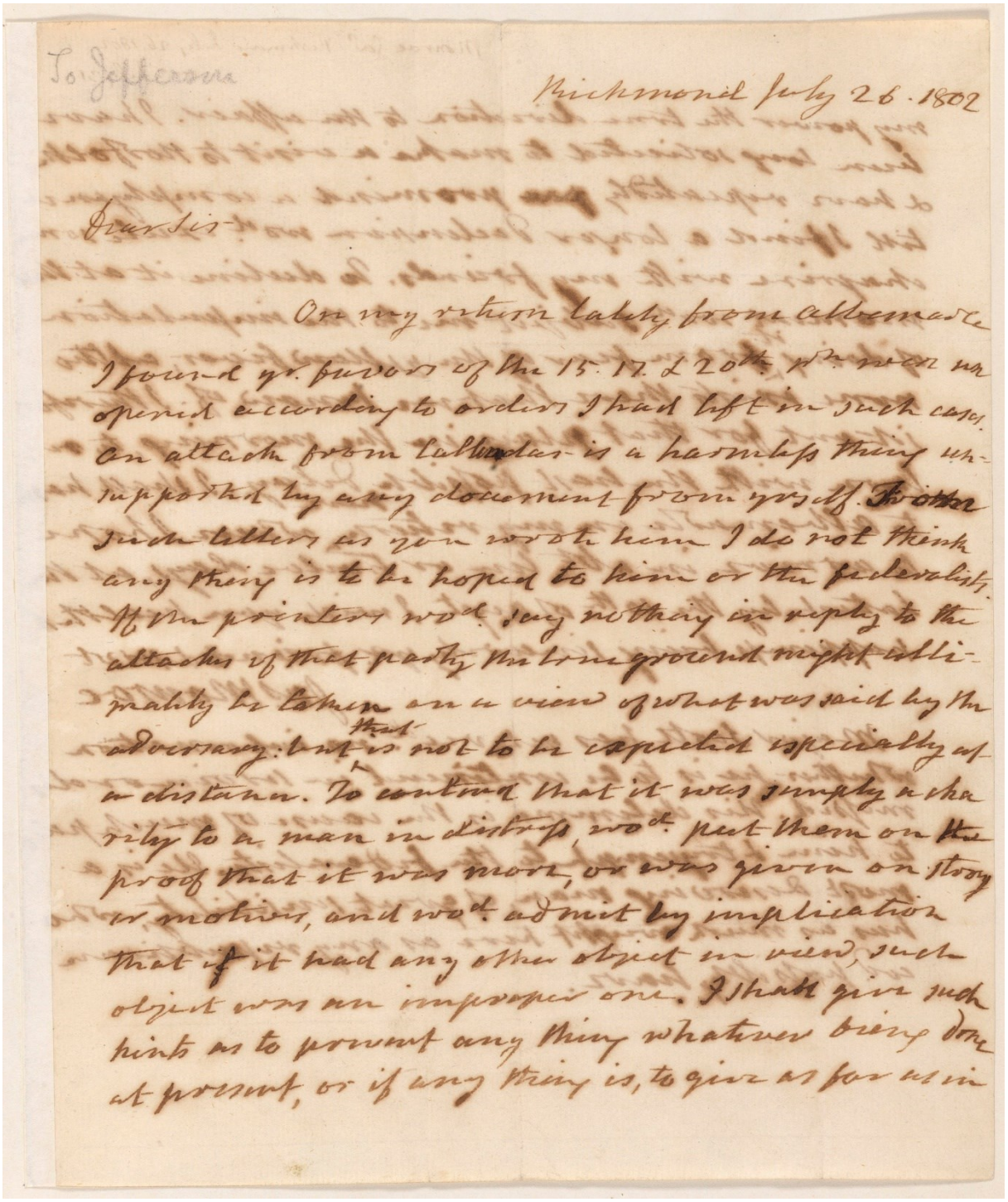
Appendix A

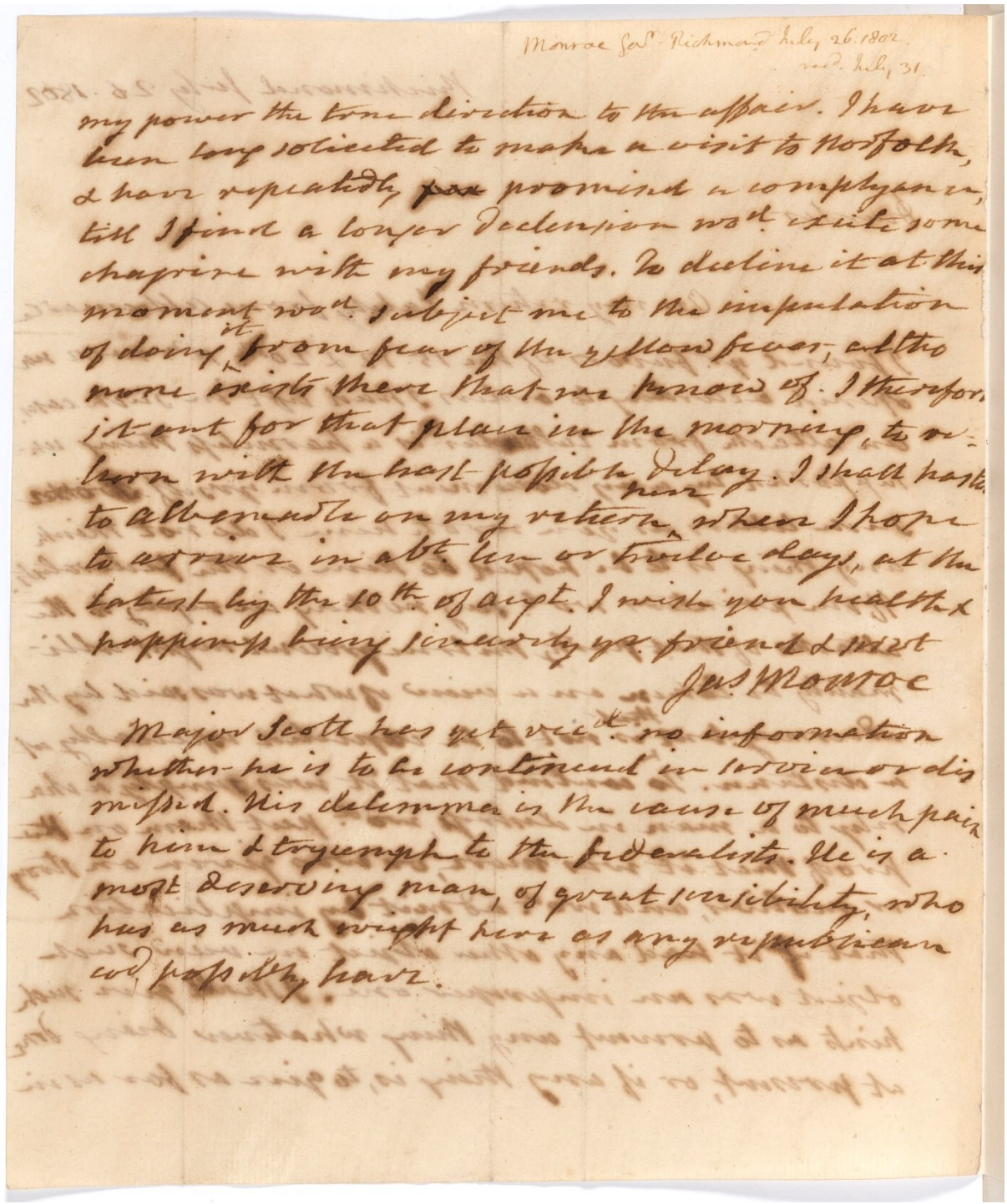
Images of letters comprising the corpus


To Jefferson

Richmond July 26. 1802

Dear Sir

On my return lately from Albemarle I found yr. favors of the 15. 17. & 20th. which were unopened according to orders I had left in such cases. An attack from Callender is a harmless thing unsupported by any document from yrself. From such letters as you wrote him I do not think any thing is to be hoped to him or the federalists. If the printer would say nothing in reply to the attacks of that party the true ground might ultimately be taken on a view of what was said by the adversary: but that is not to be expected especially at a distance. To contend that it was simply a charity to a man in distress, would put them on the proof that it was more, or was given on stronger motives, and would admit by implication that if it had any other object in view, such object was an improper one. I shall give such hints as to prevent any thing whatever being done at present, or if any thing is, to give as few as in



Monroe Sen. Richmond July 26. 1802
rec. July 31.

my power the true direction to the affair. I have
been long solicited to make a visit to Norfolk,
& have repeatedly promised a compliance,
till I find a longer detention wd. exile some
chagrin with my friends. To decline it at this
moment wd. subject me to the imputation
of doing it from fear of the yellow fever, altho
none exists there that we know of. I therefore
set out for that place in the morning, to re-
turn with the least possible delay. I shall hasten
to Albemarle on my return, where I hope
to arrive in abt. ten or twelve days, at the
latest by the 10th of Augt. I wish you health &
happiness being sincerely yr. friend & servt

Jas Monroe

Major Scott has yet rec'd. no information
whether he is to be continued in service or dis-
missed. His detainment is the cause of much pain
to him & triumph to the Federalists. He is a
most deserving man, of great sensibility, who
has as much weight here as any republican
cod. possibly have.

Monroe to Jefferson, 1802.

The President of the United States

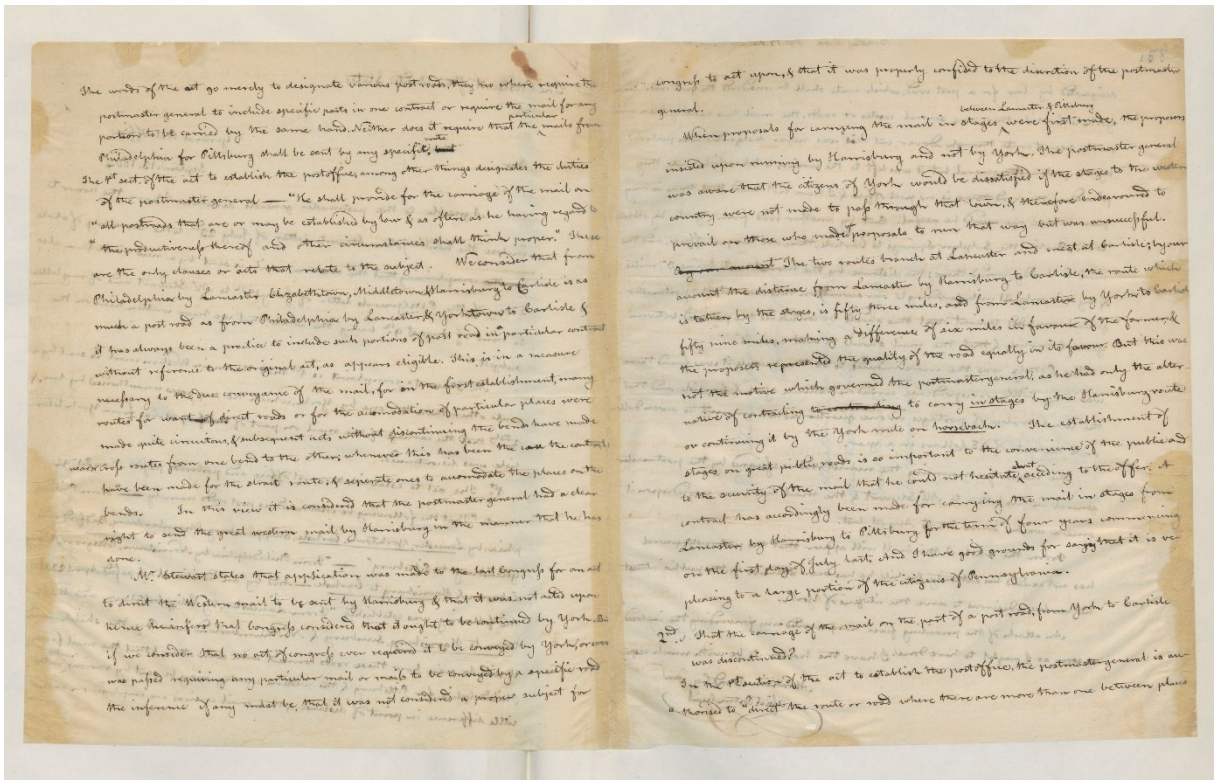
General Post Office
Septem. 13. 1804

Sir

Agreeable to the postmaster generals directions I have the honor to inclose the Honble John Stewarts letter of July 23d to the Secretary of state complaining that the western mail is sent by a new route &c.— also a copy of the P.M.Generals letter of July 13th to W. Stewart and of my letter to him of August 9th being the whole that we have written him on the subject.

W. Stewarts complaint is 1st that the main Western mail is sent by a route other than the one by York, which he supposes unauthorised by law, & 2ndly that the carriage of the mail on part of ~~a~~ post road from York to Carlisle was discontinued.

1st The act to establish the post Office and postroads passed May 8. 1794 enacts "That the following be established as post roads namely" — "from Philadelphia, by Lancaster, Yorktown, Carlisle, Shippensburg, Chambersburg, Bedford and Greensburg to Pittsburg" — "from Philadelphia by Norristown, Pottsgrove, Reading Lebanon, & Harrisburg to Carlisle" — And by an additional act passed April 23. 1800 the following was established "from Lancaster, by Elizabethtown and Middletown to Harrisburg, Sunbury & Northumberland" — By the sketch annexed it will be seen how these roads connect with each other, & that the mail from Philadelphia for Pittsburg & the western country may be sent by various routes with little difference in point of distance, & that mail carriers are employed on each



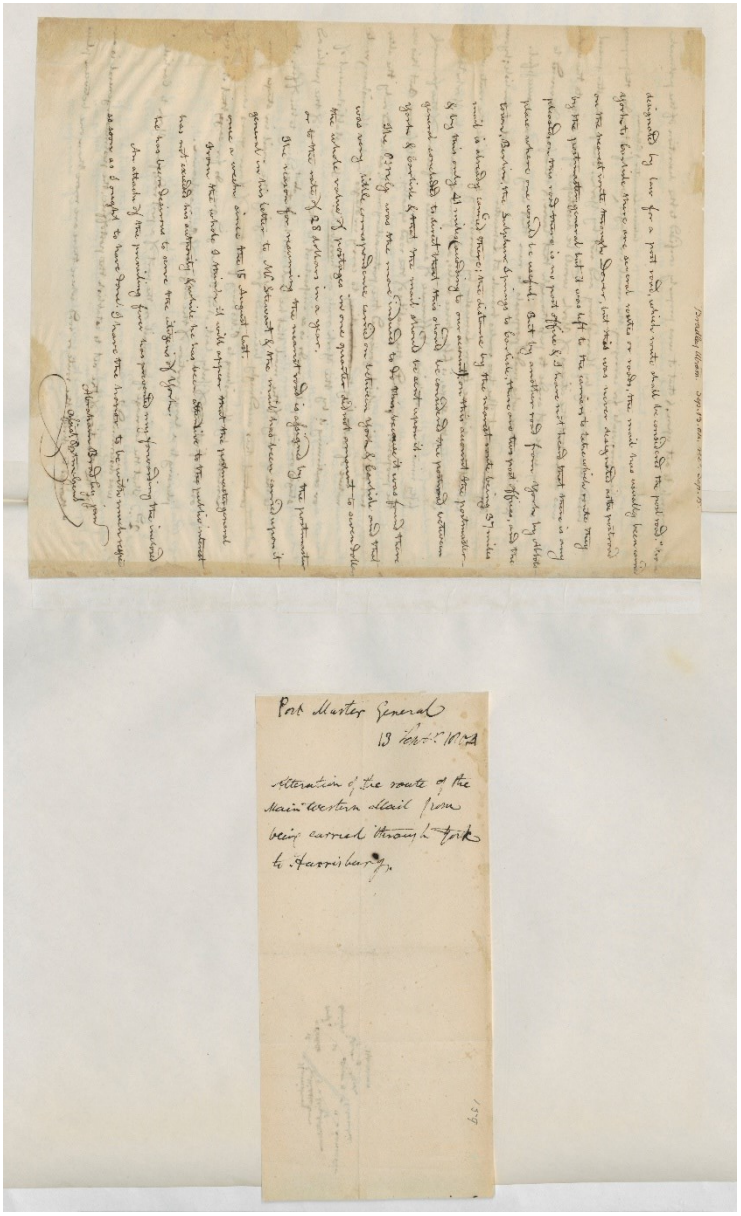
the words of the act go merely to designate various post roads, they no where require the postmaster general to include specific parts in one contract or require the mail for any particular portion to be carried by the same hand. Neither does it require that the mails from Philadelphia for Pittsburg shall be sent by any specific, [illegible] route. The 8th sect. of the act to establish the post office among other things designates the duties of the postmaster general — "he shall provide for the carriage of the mail on "all post roads that are or may be established by law & as often as he having regard to "the productiveness thereof, and other circumstances shall think proper." These are the only clauses or acts that relate to the subject. We consider that from Philadelphia by Lancaster, Elizabethtown, Middletown, Harrisburg to Carlisle is as much a post road as from Philadelphia by Lancaster, York Town to Carlisle & it has always been a practice to include such portions of post road in particular contract without reference to the original act, as appears eligible. This is in a measure necessary to the due conveyance of the mail, for on the first establishment, many routes for want of direct roads or for the accomodation of particular places were made quite circuitous, & subsequent acts, without discontinuing the roads have made many cross routes from one road to the other, wherever this has been the case the contract have been made for the direct route, & separate ones to accomodate the places on the by roads. In this view it is considered that the postmaster general had a clear right to send the great western mail by Harrisburg in the manner that he has done.

Mr Stewart states that application was made to the last Congress for an act to direct the Western mail to be sent by Harrisburg & that it was not acted upon because the friends of that Congress considered that it ought to be continued by York. If we consider that no act of congress ever required it to be conveyed by York, or even was passed requiring any particular mail or mails to be conveyed by a specific road the inference if any must be, that it was not considered a proper subject for congress to act upon, & that it was properly confided to the direction of the postmaster general.

When proposals for conveying the mail in stages were first made, the proposers insisted upon running by Harrisburg and not by York. The postmaster general was aware that the citizens of York would be dissatisfied if the stages to the western country were not made to pass through that town, & therefore endeavored to prevail on those who made proposals to run that way but was unsuccessful. [illegible] The two routes branch at Lancaster and meet at Carlisle, by your account the distance from Lancaster by Harrisburg to Carlisle, the route which is taken by the stages, is fifty three miles, and from Lancaster by York to Carlisle fifty nine miles, making a difference of six miles in favour of the former, & the proposals represented the quality of the road equally in its favour. But this was not the motive which governed the postmaster general, as he had only the alternative of contracting to carry in stages by the Harrisburg route or continuing it by the York route on horseback. The establishment of stages on great public roads is so important to the convenience of the public and to the security of the mail that he could not hesitate, according to the offers, to contract has accordingly been made for carrying the mail in stages from Lancaster by Harrisburg to Pittsburg for the term of four years commencing on the first day of July last. And I have good grounds for saying that it is very pleasing to a large portion of the citizens of Pennsylvania.

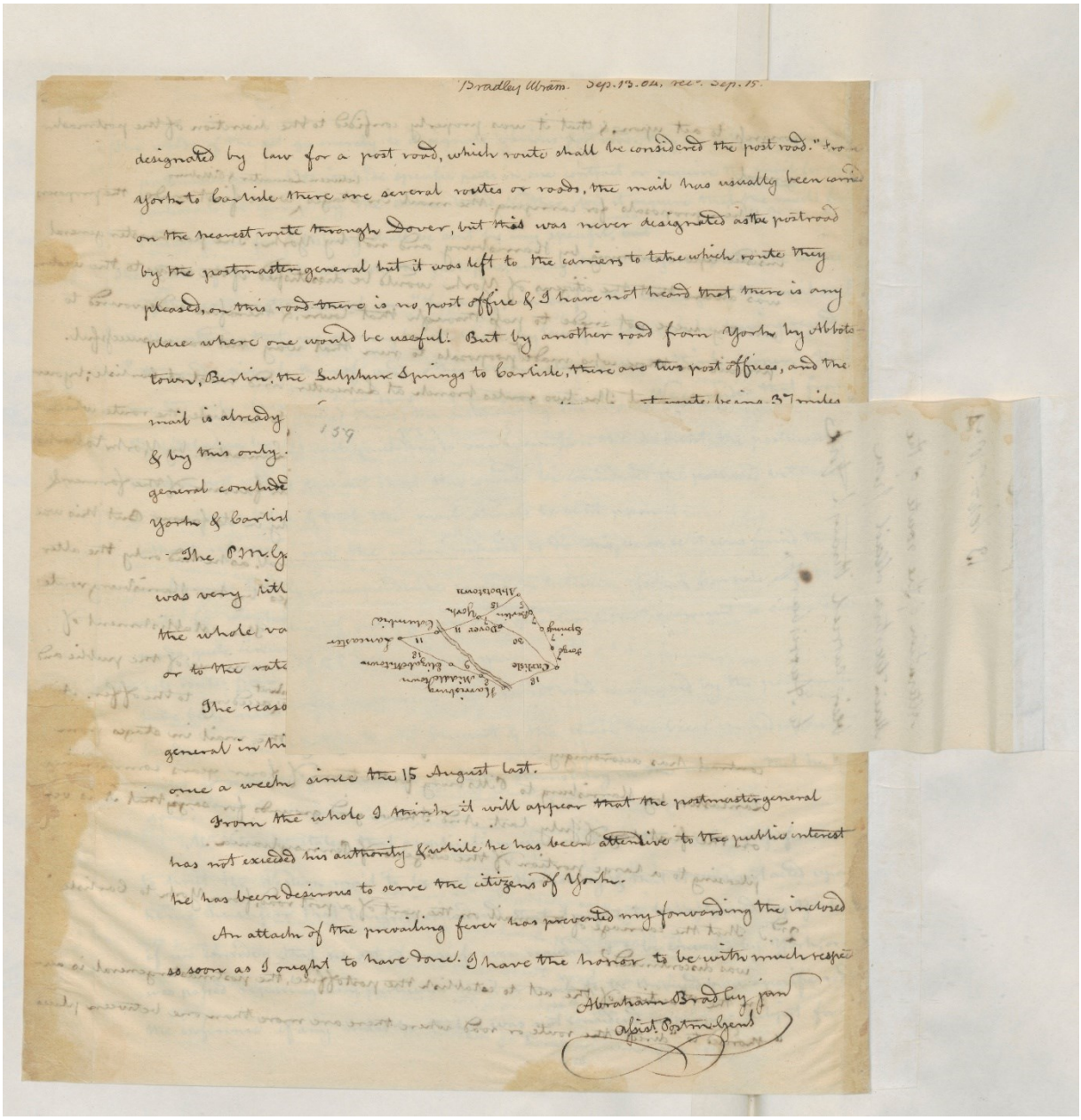
2d. What the carriage of the mail on the part of a post road from York to Carlisle was discontinued?

In the 9th section of the act to establish the post office, the postmaster general is authorized to "alter the route or road where there are more than one between places



Post Master General
13 Nov. 1828

alteration of the route of the
main western Mail from
being carried through York
to Harrisburg.



Bradley to Jefferson, 1804.

[1810. May 25]

Dear Sir

The Senate having rejected the nominations of Hickman & Wilkinson, I beg leave to submit the following in their stead viz.

Samuel Abbott of Michigan to be Collector of the District of Michillimakinac & Inspector of the revenue for the port of Michillimakinac

Denison Darling of Mississippi territory (whose nomination you had withdrawn & sent in its place that of Wilkinson) to be Collector of the district of Mobile and Inspector of the revenue for the port of Mobile.

The absolute incapacity of John Pooler Com.r of Loans for Georgia renders his removal necessary; and Charles Harris of Georgia is warmly recommended by the two Georgia Senators as a

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[1810. May 2]

proper succession.

2 May 1810

Respectfully
Your obed. Servt.
Albert Gallatin

May 2 1810

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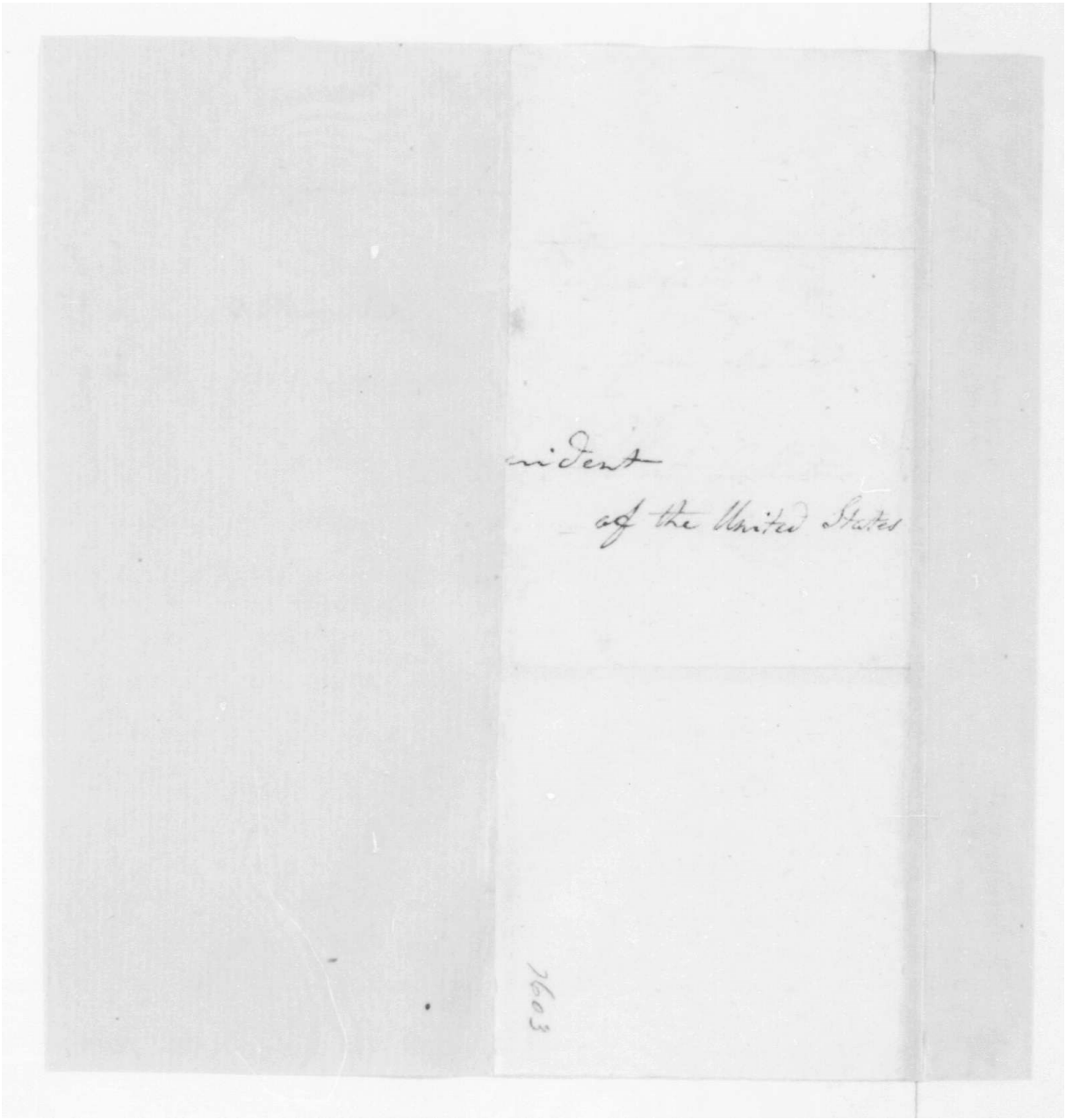
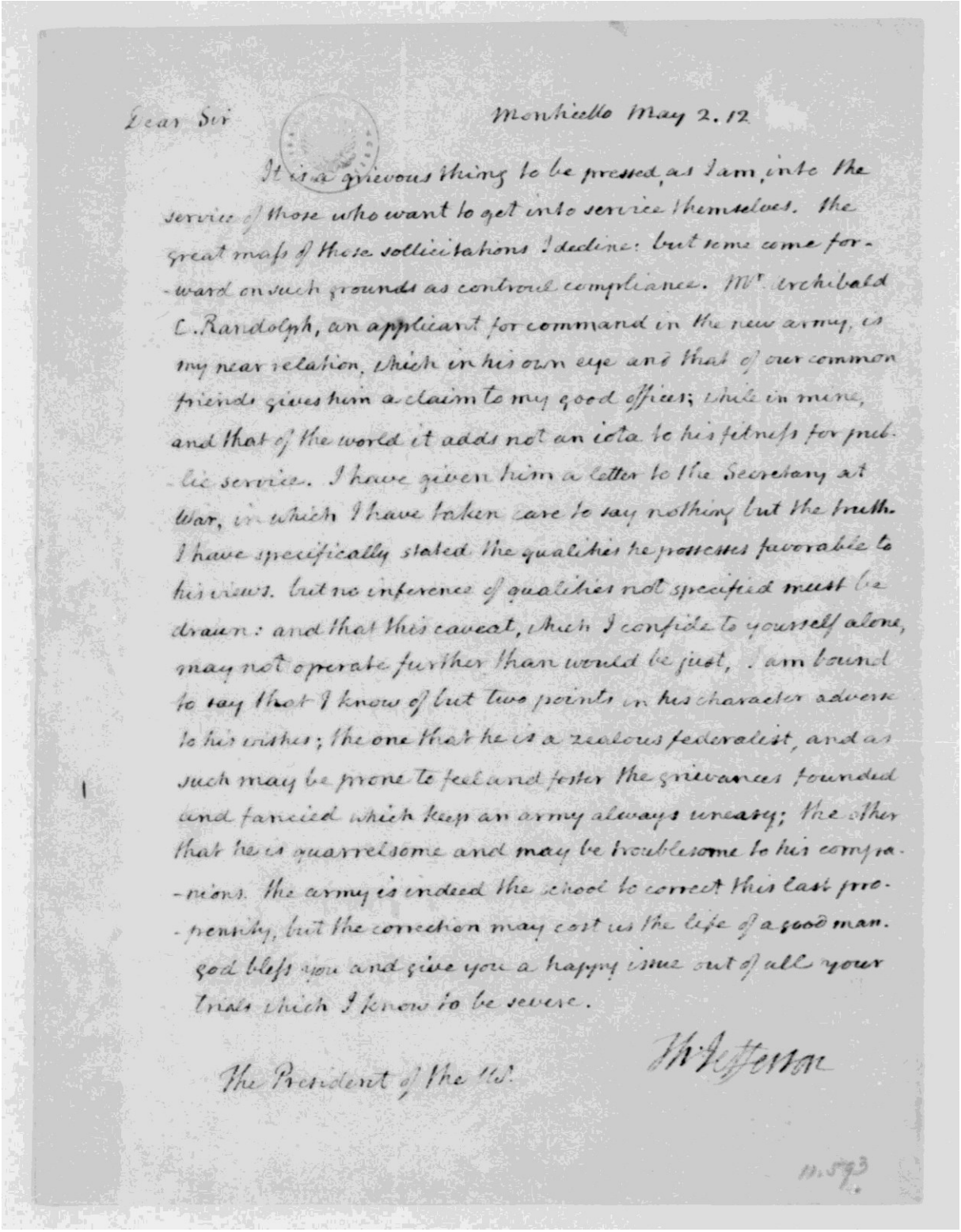


Gallatin to Madison, 1810.



Dear Sir Monticello May 2. 12

It is a grievous thing to be pressed, as I am, into the service of those who want to get into service themselves. the great mass of these sollicitations I decline: but some come forward on such grounds as controul compliance. Mr. Archibald C. Randolph, an applicant for command in the new army, is my near relation, which in his own eye and that of our common friends gives him a claim to my good offices; while in mine, and that of the world it adds not an iota to his fitness for public service. I have given him a letter to the Secretary at War, in which I have taken care to say nothing but the truth. I have specifically stated the qualities he possesses favorable to his views. but no inference of qualities not specified must be drawn: and that this caveat, which I confide to yourself alone, may not operate further than would be just, I am bound to say that I know of but two points in his character adverse to his wishes; the one that he is a zealous federalist, and as such may be prone to feel and foster the grievances founded and fancied which keep an army always uneasy; the other that he is quarrelsome and may be troublesome to his companions. the army is indeed the school to correct this last propensity, but the correction may cost us the life of a good man. god bless you and give you a happy issue out of all your trials which I know to be severe.

Th: Jefferson

The President of the U.S.

M.593.

Jefferson to Madison, 1812.

Vol 26

A Sincere Friend — to the President — Punishment of Death —

Baltimore, June 26 1818

Dear Sir

Believing that your mind is already made up as to the fate of the men condemned to death for robbing the mail — yet lest the enclosed should not meet your eye, I take the liberty of enclosing it to you, as the decided opinion of a majority of the citizens of this place — it is from the Patriot of this city. I assure you sir I am unknown to any of the parties — yet I agree with Thomas B, and I believe with yourself, that life should be forfeited only where life has been taken

I can truly say I am

A Sincere Friend

For Jas Monroe

A friend to Monroe, 1818.

London June 5. 1822.

Dear Sir.

There are no subjects on which I am more anxious for information, as occasions offer to me whilst here, than naval subjects.

My thoughts run rather upon some of the uses to which our navy may be put at a future day, than upon its form and construction, on which branches I can necessarily be but a very crude judge. Nevertheless I have, on these, ventured to send you on the enclosed sheets a few extracts from my memorandum book, that they may, if deemed worth while, be brought under the private inspection of the secretary or commissioners of the navy.

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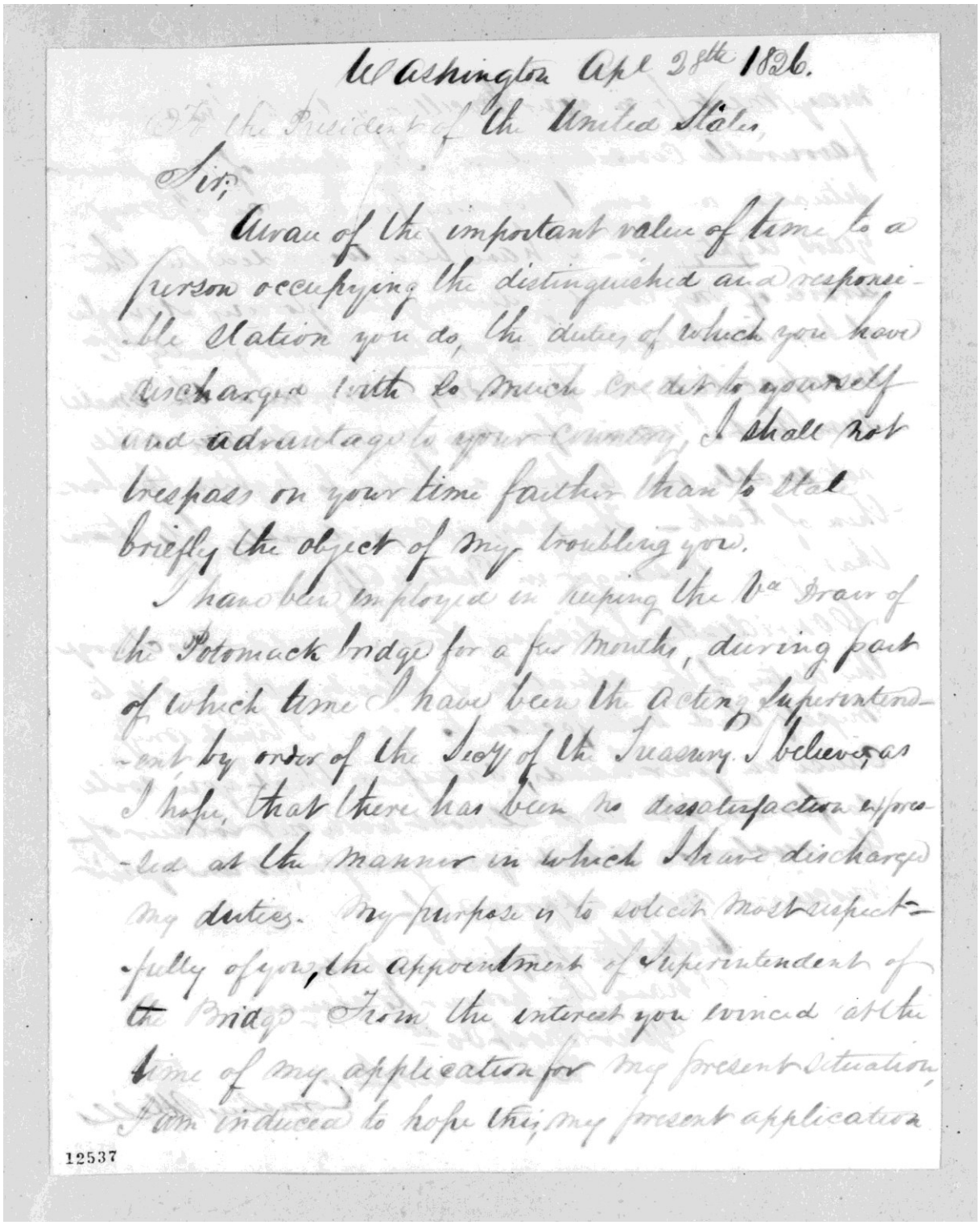
I can of course have no tenacity to any of the suggestions contained in these extracts, all of which, it may be, have heretofore been considered and exploded by persons better informed; or would be justly exploded when mentioned to them. But the bare possibility of this not being the case, and of what has struck my mind, under the mere instigations of a constant and warm zeal for our naval service, starting a single thought that may prove useful in the minds of others, leads me to commit them to your hands.

I remain, with the
highest respect,
your faithful
& obt. Sert
Richard Rush

Resident Minister.

1822
R. Rush

Rush to Monroe, 1822.



Washington Apl 28th 1826.

To the President of the United States

Sir;

Aware of the important value of time to a person occupying the distinguished and responsible station you do, the duties of which you have discharged with so much credit to yourself and advantage to your country, I shall not trespass on your time further than to state briefly the object of my troubling you.

I have been employed in raising the Va Draw of the Potomack bridge for a few months, during part of which time I have been the acting Superintendent by order of the Secy of the Treasury. I believe, as I hope, that there has been no dissatisfaction expressed at the manner in which I have discharged my duties. My purpose is to solicit most respectfully of you, the appointment of Superintendent of the Bridge. From the interest you evinced at the time of my application for my present situation, I am induced to hope this my present application

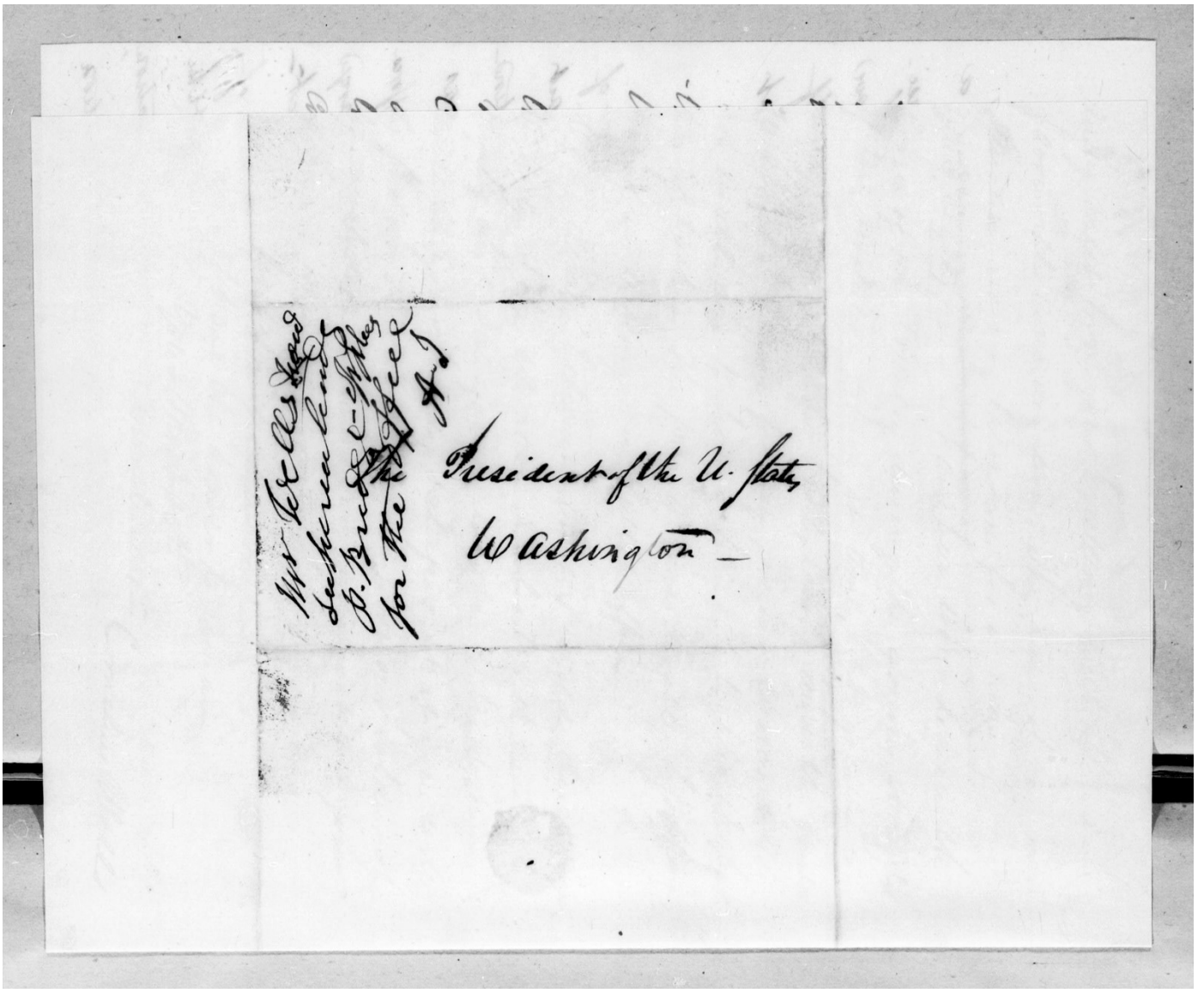
12537

may meet from your Excellency with the same favourable Consideration. The duties of my present situation are very laborious for a man of my years, Eighty five — I have been wounded in the Service of my Country during the glorious struggle of her Revolution which at times, tends greatly to incapacitate me for bodily labour, and the small sum that I receive for my present Service will not enable me to hire a hand to lighten the burthen of task — The pay is Considerably less than that of a Messenger in Publick Office —

Confidently believing that I could discharge the duties of the situation I solicit with credit to myself and satisfaction to you, I trust my Cause in your hands, satisfied that you will do for an old and almost worn out Soldier of the revolution what your judgment and your Conscience may approve of —

With the highest respect
I have the honour to remain —
Your Most Obt
Humble Servt
Cornelius Wells

12538



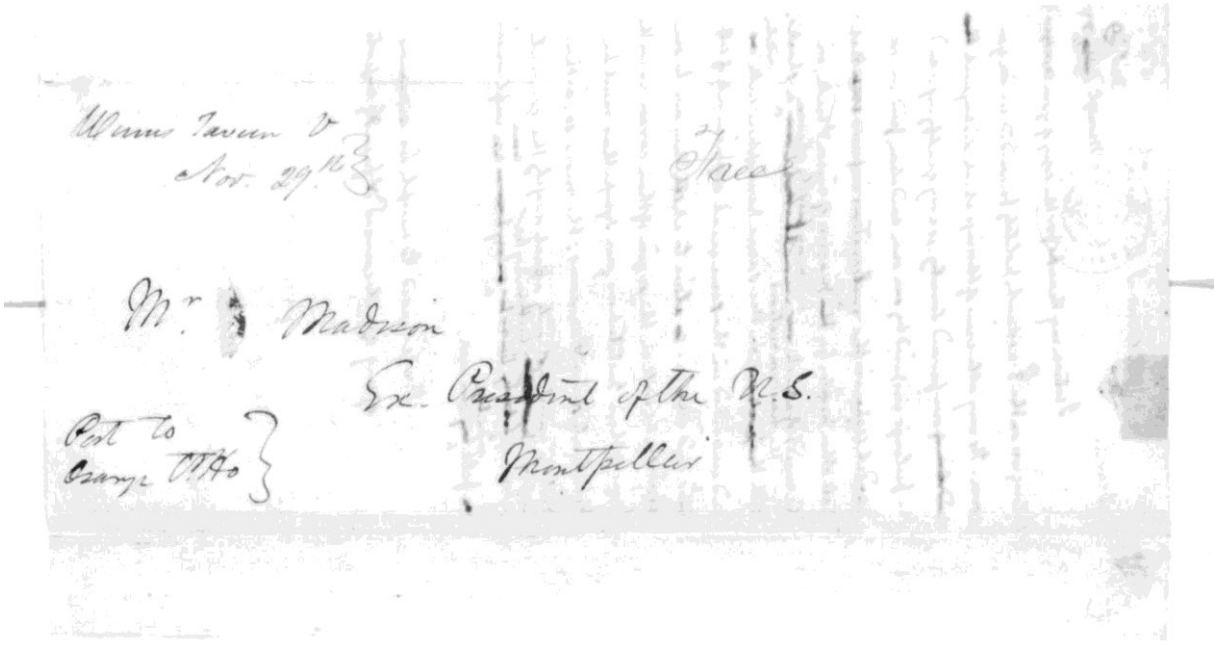
Wells to Adams, 1826.

Adams J. Q. Pres. U.S. Copd.

Dear Sir Dec. 29
Monte. Decbr. 18[illegible]

I return my thanks for the copy of your message to Congress on the 3d. instant, politely forwarded under your cover. Its very able view of blessings which distinguish our favd country, is very gratifying: and the feelings inspired by our own condition, find an extended scope, in the meliorations infused into that of all other peoples, by the progress of reason & truth, in the merit of which we may justly claim a share. With the newborn nations on the same hemisphere with ourselves and embarked in the same great experiment of self Govt. and who are so alive to what they owe to our example, as well in the origin of their career as in the forms of their institutions, our sympathies must be peculiarly strong & anxious: the more so, as their destiny must not only affect deeply the general liberty but may be some cause of liberty, limits to be as influences on felt by our own.

I be pleased to accept Sir assurances of my great consid.n & friendly respects



Madison to Adams, 1827.

Washington, Apl. 9th. 1831

Dear Sir,

As I am about leaving the City, I conceive it a duty which I owe you as a personal friend, and a supporter of your Administration, to lay before you a synopsis of a conversation which I held with the Hon Saml. D. Ingham on the 29th ultimo. The views contained in this conversation may possibly be unknown to you; and for your satisfaction only are they communicated, with liberty to make such use of them as your discretion may dictate, in case any future contingencies should require them for your own justification.

I have the honor to be,
With sentiments of high consideration,
Your mo Obdt. Servt.

J. D. Gardiner

Gen. Andrew Jackson.

15039

Gardiner to Jackson, 1831.

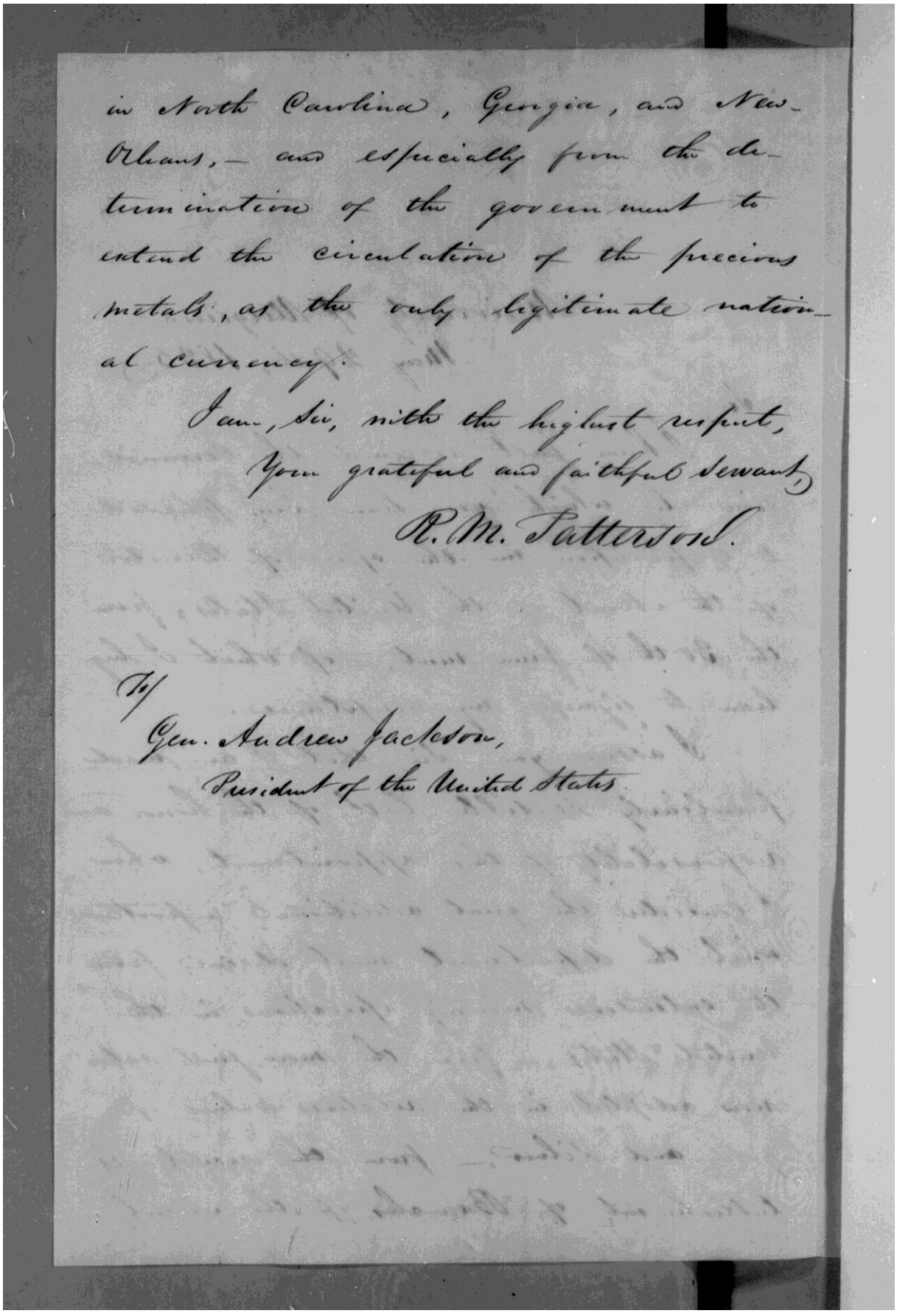
University of Virginia.
May 29th, 1835.

Sir,

I have just received the Commission by which you have been pleased to confer upon me the office of Director of the Mint of the United States, from the 30th of June next, — of which I beg leave to signify my acceptance.

I assure you, Sir, that I am made peculiarly sensible both of the honor and responsibility of this appointment, when I consider the great additional importance which the department must derive from the extensive mining operations in the United States, — from the more just ratio now adopted in the relative values of gold and silver, — from the recent establishment of Branches of the Mint

18694



in North Carolina, Georgia, and New-Orleans, — and especially from the determination of the government to extend the circulation of the precious metals, as the only legitimate national currency.

I am, Sir, with the highest respect,
Your grateful and faithful Servant,
R. M. Patterson.

To
Gen. Andrew Jackson,
President of the United States

Patterson to Jackson, 1835.

Copy.

Private.

Charleston S.C.a 7.th Feb.y 1838.

Dear Sir:

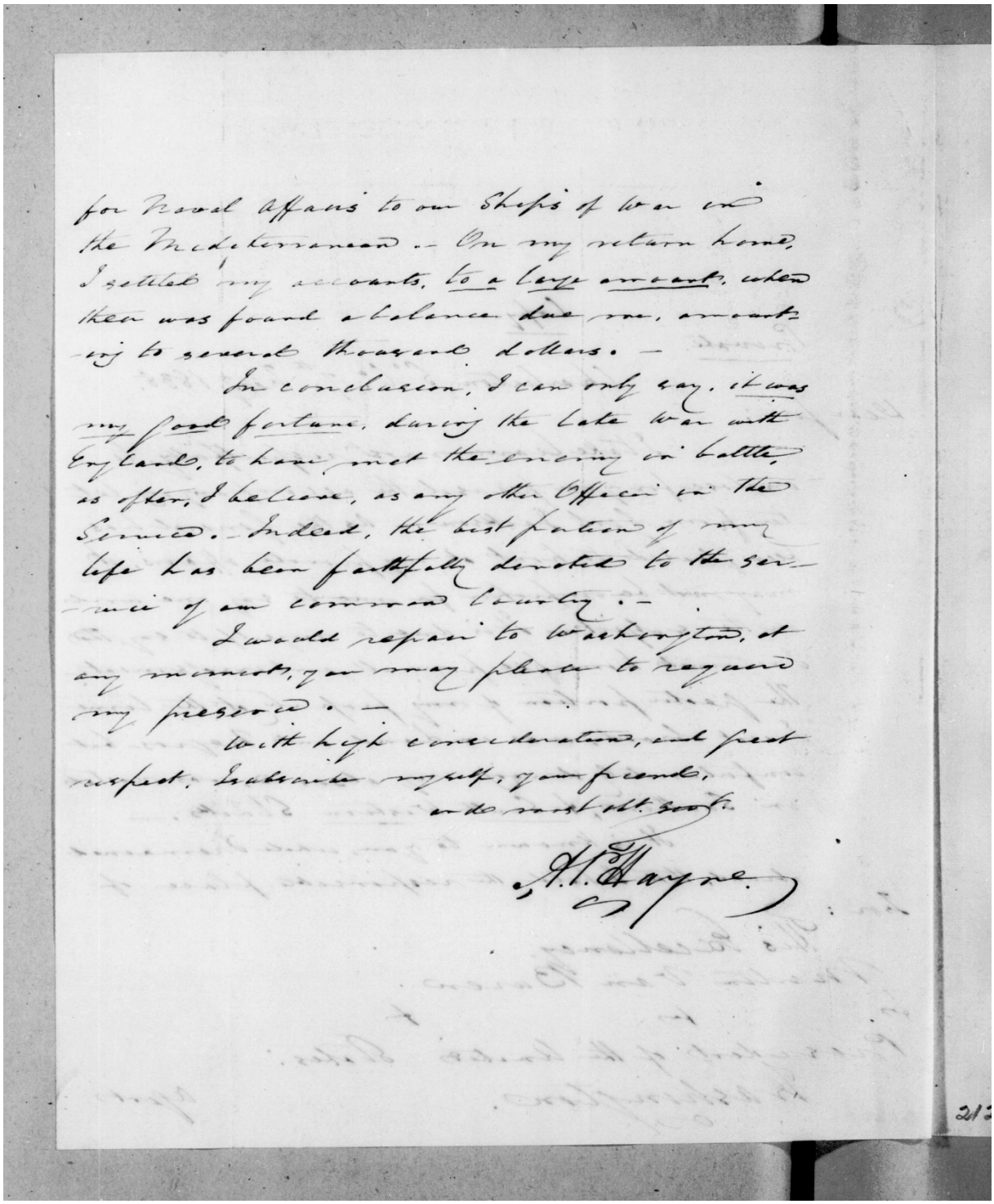
I take leave most respectfully, to enclose for your perusal, the accompanying letter from Genl. Jackson. — As the General has been pleased to hint at my private affairs, it may not be improper for me to say one word on the subject. — It is due to myself to say, that I returned home full from all embarrassments. — The greater portion of my property at the time I went abroad, was in land and Negros — but unfortunately during my absence, was vested in Southern, & South Western Stocks. —

It is known to you, while I remained abroad, that I held the responsible place of

Hon:
His Excellency,
Martin Van Buren.
&c. &c. &c.
President of the United States.
Washington.

Agent

21208



for Naval Affairs to our Ships of War in the Mediterranean. — On my return home, I settled my accounts, to a large amount, when there was found a balance due me, amounting to several thousand dollars. —

In conclusion, I can only say, it was my good fortune, during the late War with England, to have met the enemy in battle, as often, I believe, as any other Officer in the Service. — Indeed, the best portion of my life has been faithfully devoted to the service of our common country. —

I would repair to Washington, at any moment, you may please to request my presence. —

With high consideration, and great respect, I subscribe myself, your friend, and obt. servt.

J. L. Hayne

Hayne to Van Buren, 1838.

a Copy to the president

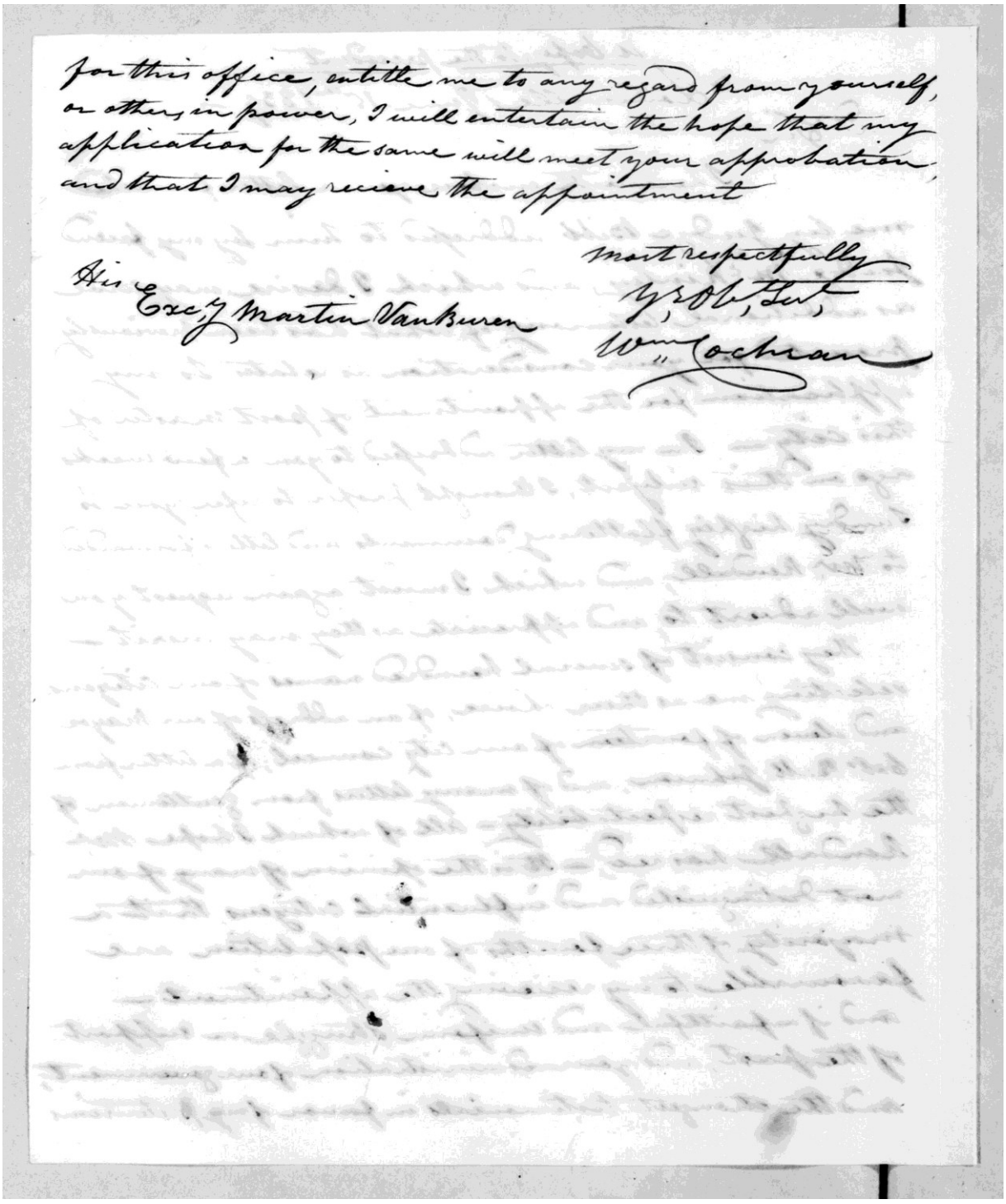
Louisville June 15th 1839 —

Dr Sir

I herewith enclose you a letter furnished me by Judge Bibb addressed to him by my friend Judge McKinley; and which I desire may serve as additional testimony of what has been previously presented for your consideration as relates to my application for the appointment of post master of this city — In my letter addressed to you a few weeks ago on this subject, I thought proper to refer you to sundry highly flattering documents and letters forwarded to Mr Kendall, and which I must again request you will advert to, and appreciate as they may merit —

They consist of several hundred names of our citizens selecting me as their choice, of an address of our Mayor and eleven of fourteen of our city council; of a letter from Col R. M. Johnson, and of many letters from gentlemen of the highest respectability — all of which I hope Mr Kendall has rec'd — It is the opinion of many of our most distinguished and influential citizens, that a majority of three fourths of our population are favourable to my receiving the appointment — and if a faithful and uniform struggle in support of the past, and your administration of our government, and the strongest testimonials in favor of my pretensions

21854

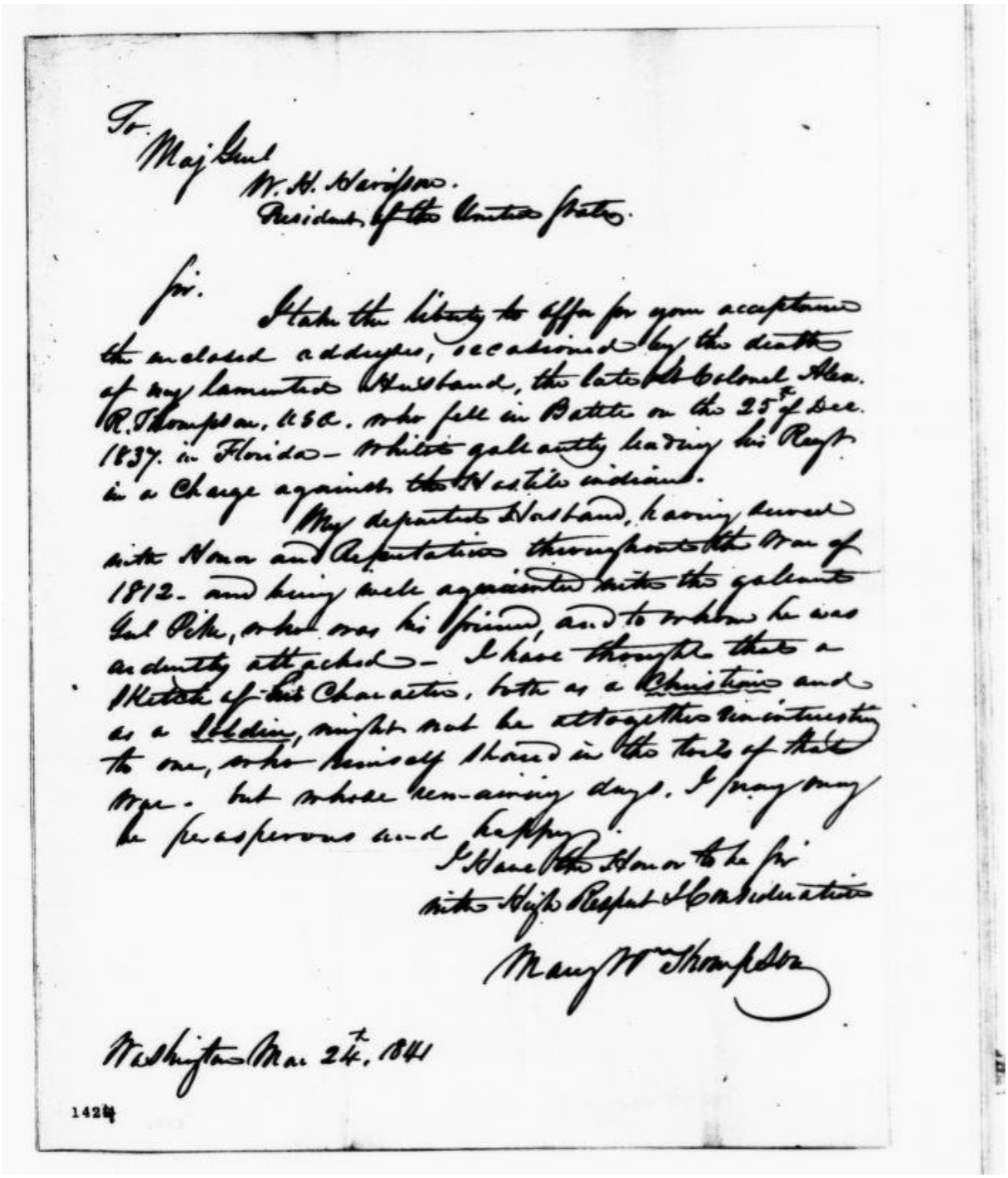


for this office, entitle me to any regard from yourself, or others in power, I will entertain the hope that my application for the same will meet your approbation, and that I may recieve the appointment

most respectfully
Yr Ob, Svt,
Wm Cochran

His Excy Martin Vanburen

Cochran to Van Buren, 1839.



To
Maj Genl
W. H. Harrison.
President of the United States.

Sir. I take the liberty to offer for your acceptance the enclosed address, occasioned by the death of my lamented Husband, the late Lt Colonel Alex. R. Thompson, U.S.A. who fell in Battle on the 25th of Dec. 1837. in Florida - whilst gallantly leading his Regt. in a Charge against the Seminole Indians.

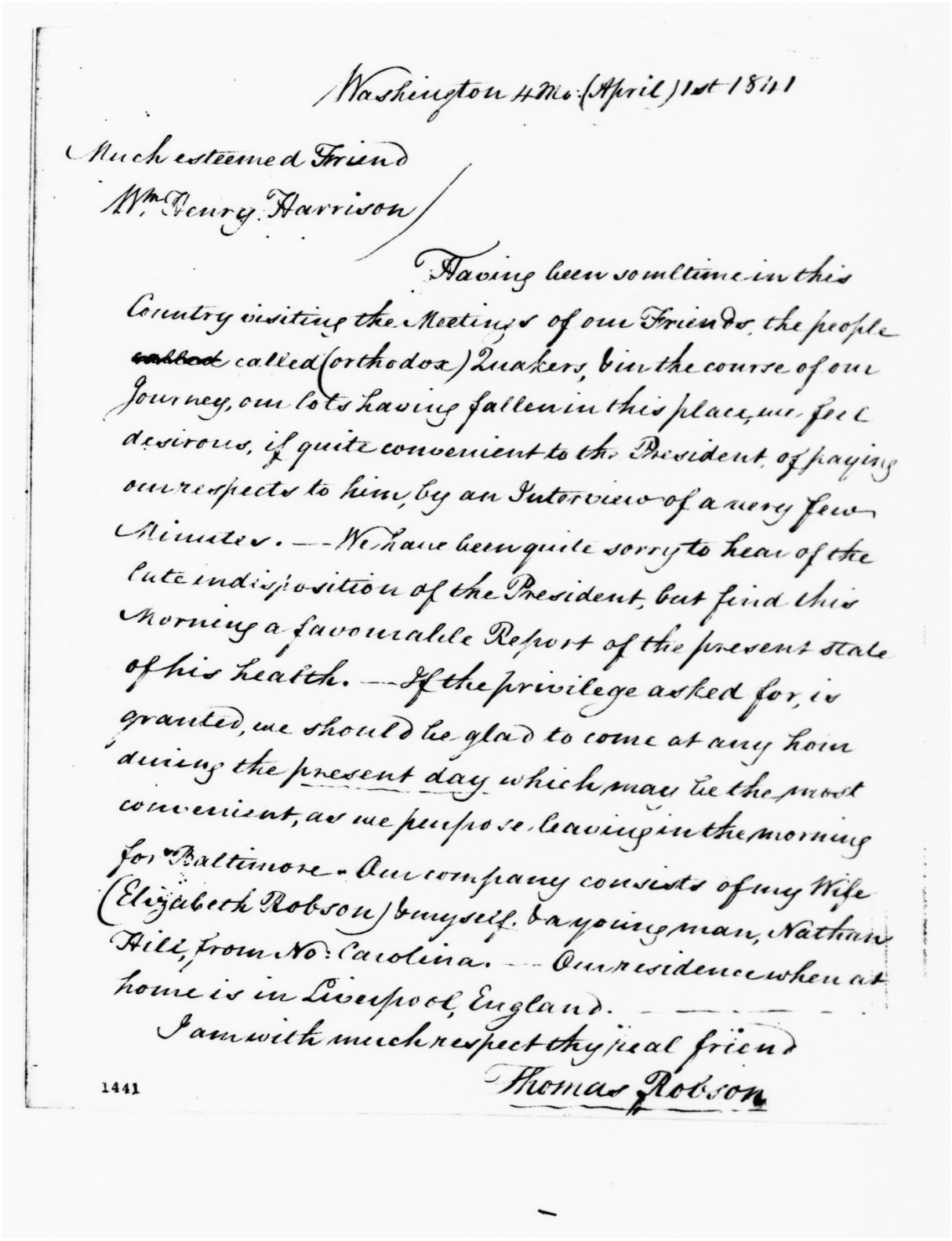
My departed Husband, having served with Honor and Reputation throughout the War of 1812. and being made acquainted with the gallant Genl Pike, whose was his friend, and to whom he was ardently attached - I have thought that a Sketch of his Character, both as a Christian and as a Soldier, might not be altogether uninteresting to one, who himself shared in the toils of that age. but whose remaining days, I pray may be free as persons and happy.

I have the Honor to be Sir
with High Respect & Consideration
Mary W. Thompson

Washington Mar 24th 1841

1424

Thompson to William Henry Harrison, 1841/03/24



Washington 4Mo. (April) 1st 1841

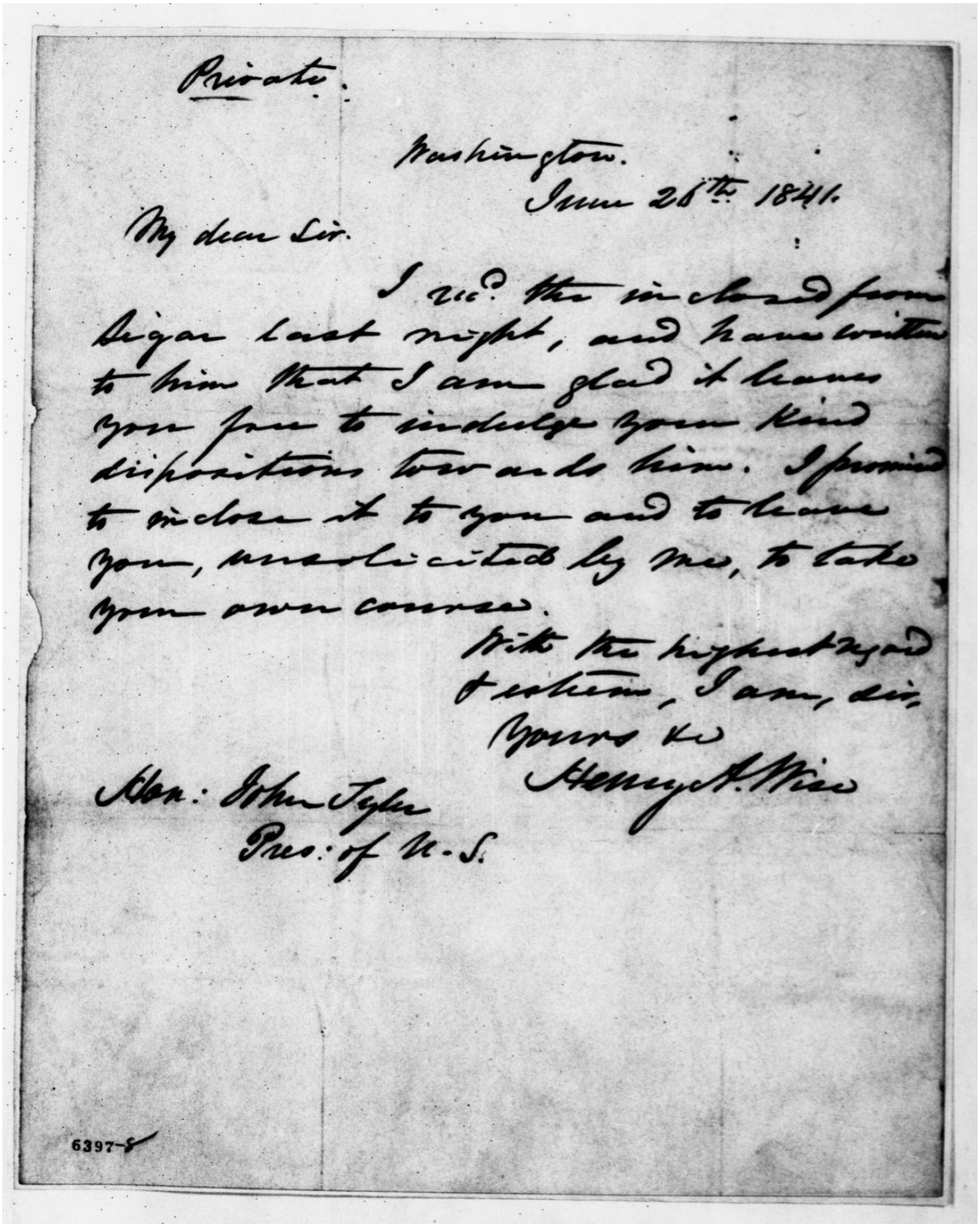
Much esteemed Friend
Wm. Henry Harrison

Having been some time in this Country visiting the Meetings of our Friends, the people ~~called~~ called (orthodox) Quakers, & in the course of our Journey, our lots having fallen in this place, we feel desirous, if quite convenient to the President, of paying our respects to him, by an Interview of a very few Minutes. — We have been quite sorry to hear of the late indisposition of the President, but find this Morning a favourable Report of the present state of his health. — If the privilege asked for, is granted, we should be glad to come at any hour during the present day which may be the most convenient, as we purpose leaving in the morning for Baltimore. Our company consists of my Wife (Elizabeth Robson) & myself, & a young man, Nathan Hill, from No: Carolina. — Our residence when at home is in Liverpool, England.

I am with much respect thy real friend
Thomas Robson

1441

Robinson to William Henry Harrison, 1841/04/01



Private.

Washington.
June 26th 1841.

My dear Sir.

I rec'd the inclosed from Legaré last night, and have written to him that I am glad it leaves you free to indulge your kind dispositions towards him. I promised to inclose it to you and to leave you, unsolicited by me, to take your own courses.

With the highest regard & esteem, I am, dear Sir,
Yours &c
Henry A. Wise

Hon: John Tyler
Pres: of U. S.

6397-8

Wise to Tyler, 1841/06/26

Private

St. Louis
Oct. 1. 1842

President Tyler
My Dear Sir

Since I left here three weeks ago, the offices of Collector (Surveyor) of the Port and Register of the Land Office have both been vacated, the one by death the other by resignation. In case I had visited Washington as I set out to do, I should have urged the removal of both these men forthwith - but it has not become necessary. They were both miserable appointments, as I had informed Robert last Winter - but I suppose they were ~~both~~ of Mr. Ewing's selection. The late Collector is a defaulter for four or five thousand dollars, by placing the money in the hands of one of his Securities, who appropriated it to his own use, and could not replace it.

The Securities are good, & will pay the Government in a reasonable time, I apprehend.

There are numerous applicants for the place. and several of them being my warm personal friends, I have declined writing you in behalf of any one. It is my duty,

JT: Vol 2
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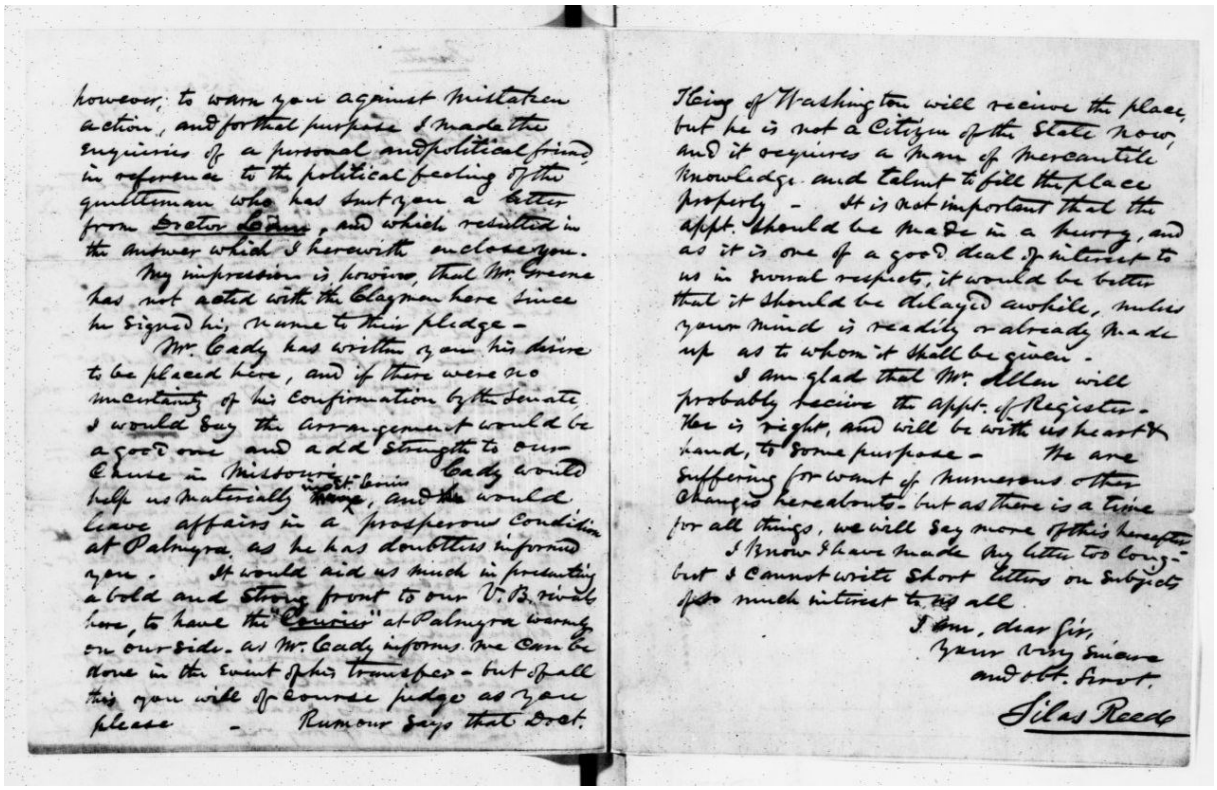


however, to warn you against mistaken action, and for that purpose I made the enquiries of a personal and political friend in reference to the political feeling of the gentleman who has sent you a letter from Doctor Evans, and which resulted in the answer which I herewith enclose you.

My impression is growing, that Mr. Greene has not acted with the Clayman here since he signed his name to this pledge -

Mr. Cady has written you on his desire to be placed here, and if there were no uncertainty of his confirmation by the Senate I would say the arrangement would be a good one and add strength to our Cause in Missouri. Mr. Cady would help us materially here, and he would leave affairs in a prosperous condition at Palmyra, as he has doubtless informed you. It would aid us much in presenting a bold and strong front to our V. B. rivals here, to have the "Courier" at Palmyra warmly on our side. as Mr. Cady informs me can be done in the event of his transfer - but of all this you will of course judge as you please - Rumour says that Govt.

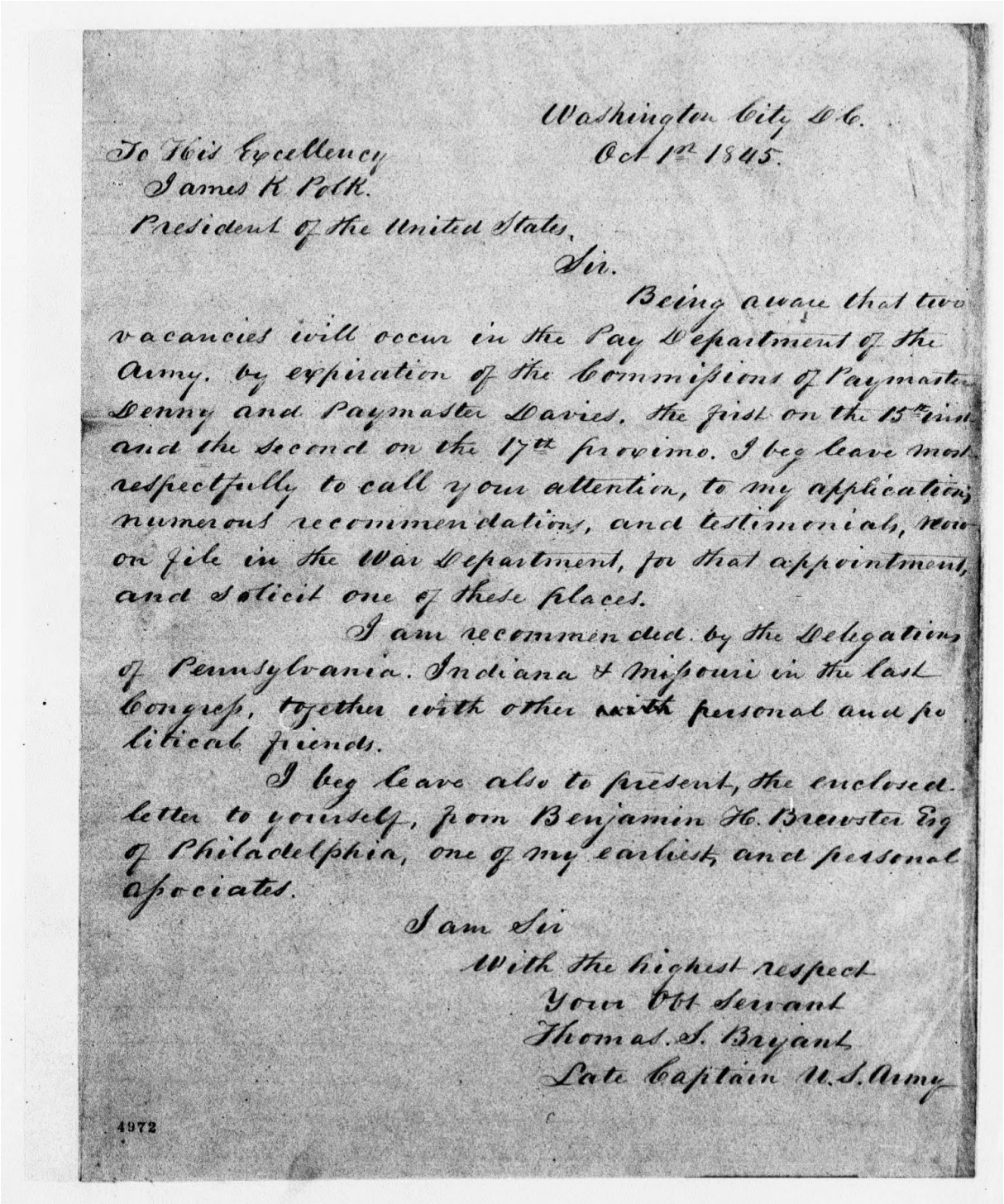
King of Washington will receive the place, but he is not a Citizen of the State now, and it requires a man of mercantile knowledge and talent to fill the place properly - It is not important that the appt. should be made in a hurry, and as it is one of a good deal of interest to us in moral respects, it would be better that it should be delayed awhile, unless your mind is readily or already made up as to whom it shall be given.

I am glad that Mr. Allen will probably receive the appt. of Register. He is right, and will be with us heart & hand, to some purpose - We are suffering for want of numerous other changes hereabouts - but as there is a time for all things, we will say more of this hereafter.

I know I have made my letter too long - but I cannot write short letters on subjects of so much interest to us all.

I am, dear Sir,
Your very sincere
and obt. Servt.
Silas Reed

Reed to Tyler, 1842.



Washington City D.C.
Oct 1st 1845.

To His Excellency
James K Polk.
President of the United States.

Sir.

Being aware that two vacancies will occur in the Pay Department of the Army, by expiration of the Commissions of Paymaster Denny and Paymaster Davies, the first on the 15th inst and the second on the 17th proximo. I beg leave most respectfully to call your attention, to my application, numerous recommendations, and testimonials, now on file in the War Department, for that appointment, and solicit one of these places.

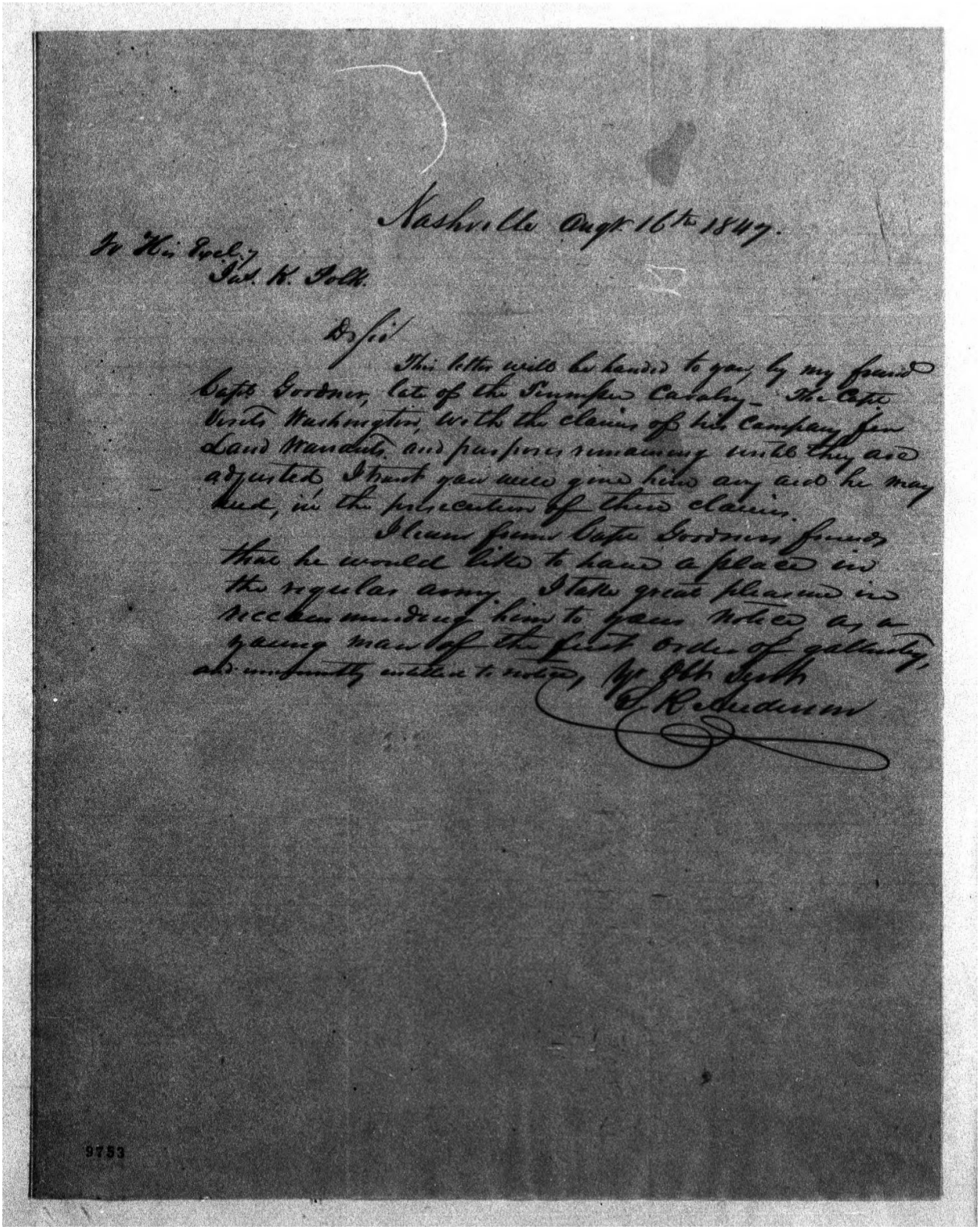
I am recommended by the Delegations of Pennsylvania. Indiana & Missouri in the last Congress, together with other ~~with~~ personal and political friends.

I beg leave also to present, the enclosed letter to yourself, from Benjamin H. Brewster Esq of Philadelphia, one of my earliest, and personal associates.

I am Sir
With the highest respect
Your Obt Servant
Thomas A. Bryant
Late Captain U.S. Army

4972

Bryant to Polk, 1845.



Nashville Augt 16th 1847.

To His Excy
Jas K. Polk.

Dr Sir

This letter will be handed to you by my friend Capt Gordner late of the Tennessee Cavalry. The Capt visits Washington, on the claims of his Company for Land Warrants, and purposes remaining until they are adjusted. I trust you will give him any aid he may need, in the prosecution of their claims.

I learn from Capt Gordner, that he would like to have a place in the regular army. I take great pleasure in recommending him to you, as a young man of the first order of gallantry, and unsullied character, Yr Obt Servt

A. R. Anderson

9753

Someone to Polk, 1847.

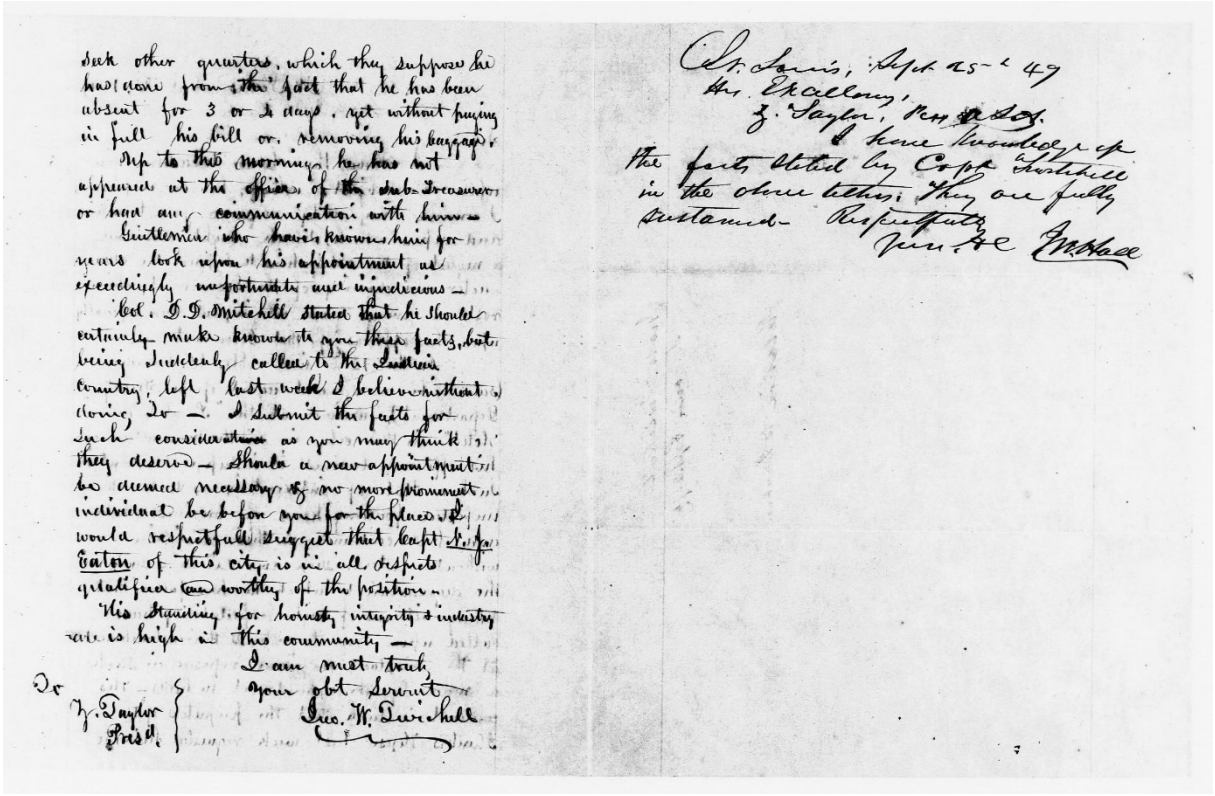
St Louis Sept 25. 1819

Sir

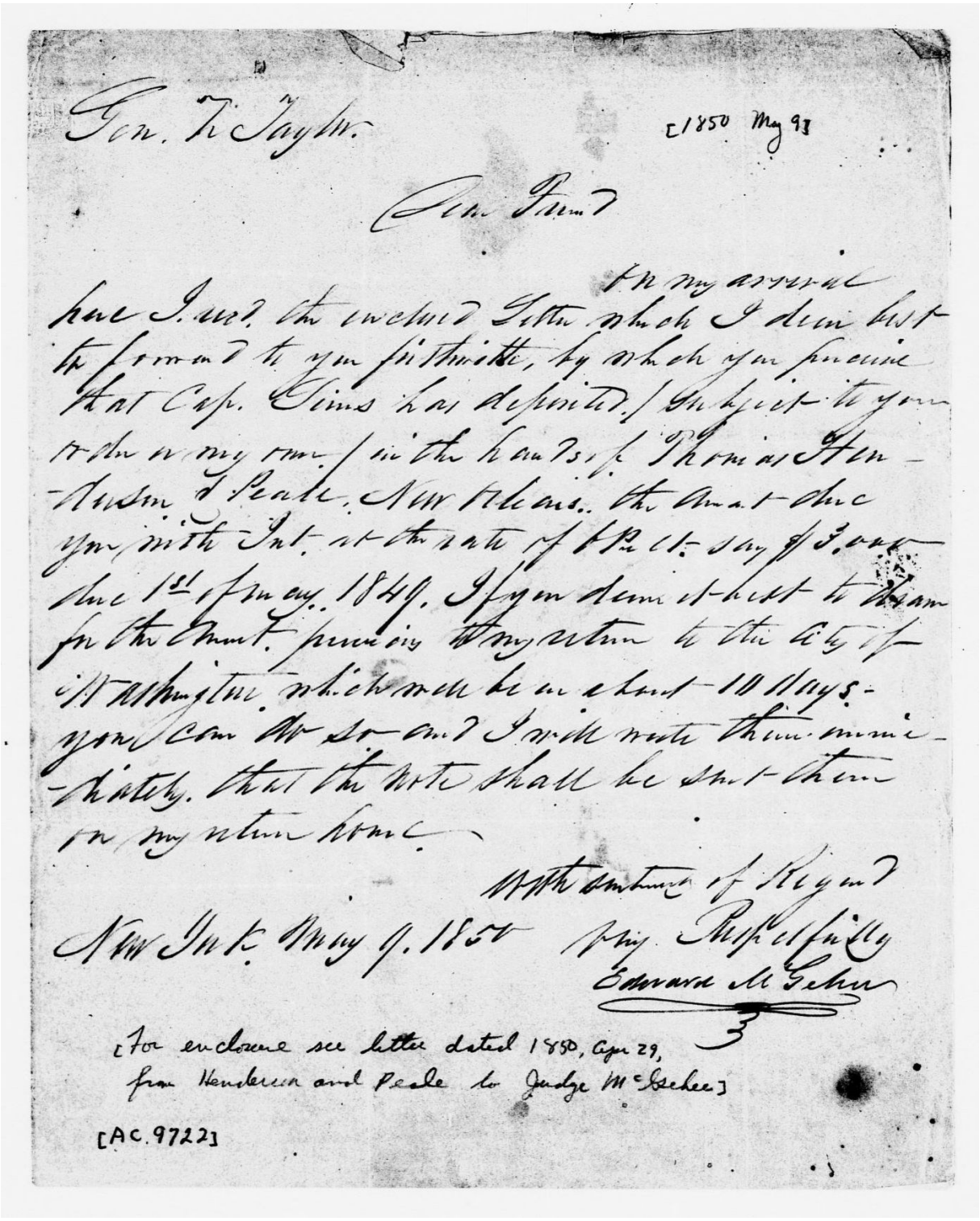
I have the honor to address you upon a subject, which, however unpleasant, I conceive my duty requires me to notice, and upon which, silence might be considered a neglect of the obligations to support the character and dignity of the Government, which rests on every good citizen, but more especially upon the officers of that Government —

On the 12th inst Mr. W. Grandin (said to be a special agent of the Treasy. Department), arrived at the "Planter's House" Hotel" in this city in the prosecution of his official business it is supposed, but in such a state of intoxication as to be entirely unfitted for any kind of business whatever and has continued in this condition without intermission ever since — such is the degradation to which he has fallen that many citizens of high respectability have called upon me to express their astonishment at the misplaced confidence reposed in such a man by his appointment to holes — this conduct, it is said, that the proprietors of the Planters House last week requested him to

[AC 9722]



Twichell to Taylor, 1849.



Gen. Z. Taylor. [1850 May 9]

Dear Genl

In my arrival here I rec'd the enclosed letter which I deem best to forward to you forthwith, by which you perceive that Capt. Sims has deposited / Subject to your order in my name / in the hands of Thomas Henderson & Peale, New Orleans, the amt due you with Int. at the rate of 6 Pr Ct. say $ 3,000 from 1st of May 1849. If you deem it best to draw for the amt. previous to my return to the City of Washington, which may be in about 10 days, you can do so and I will write them immediately, that the note shall be sent them on my return home.

With sentiments of Regard

I am Dear Sir Very Respectfully

New York May 9. 1850 Your Edwards McGehee

3

[For enclosure see letter dated 1850, Apr 29, from Henderson and Peale to Judge McGehee]

[AC.9722]

McGehee to Taylor, 1850.

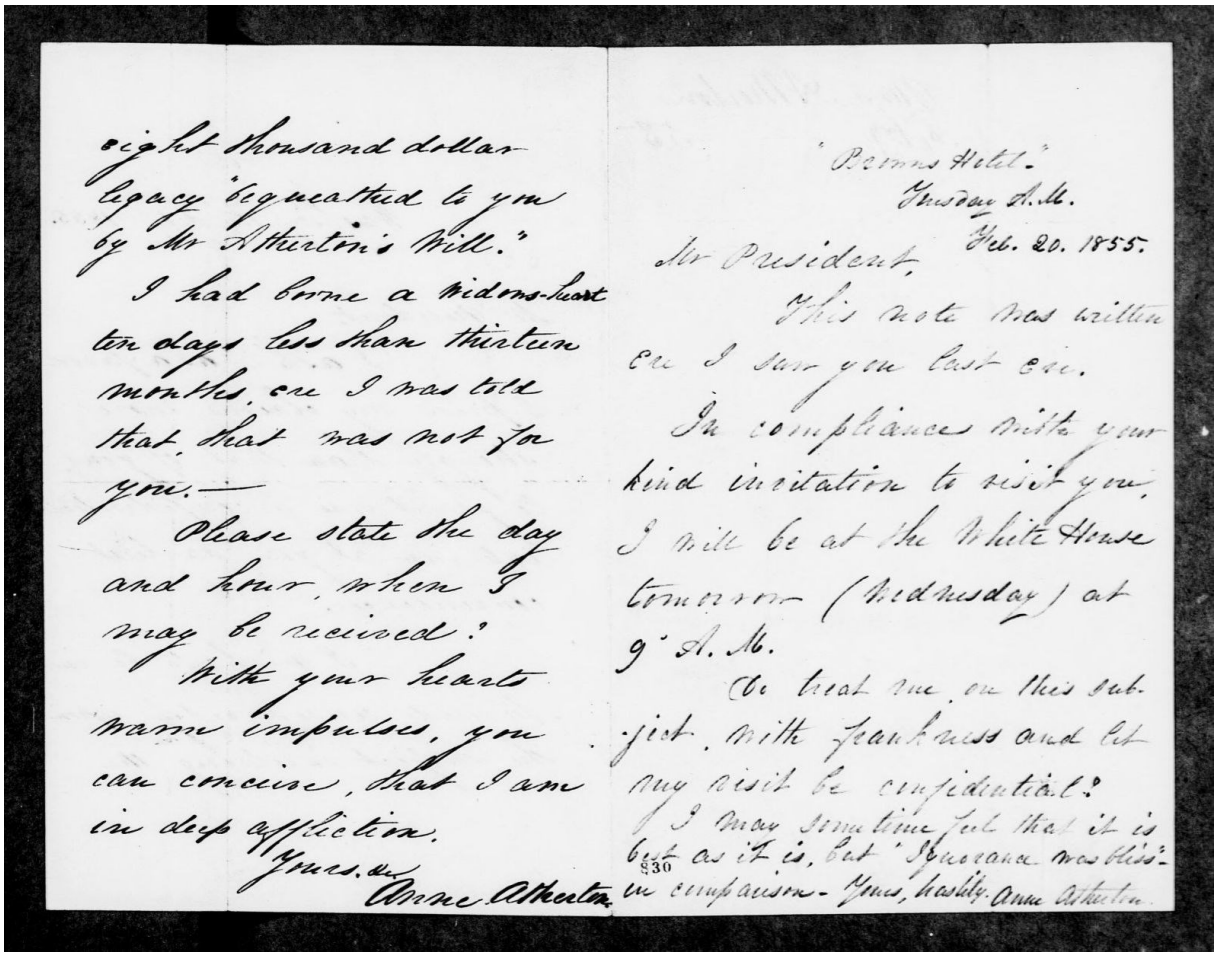
Washington Feb. [20] 1855.

Mr President.

I ask it as a favor—
I press my claim more
strongly than that—of you.
to grant me a confidential
interview at your earliest
convenience.

I wish to be in-
formed, unreservedly, upon
the subject involving the

829



eight thousand dollar legacy bequeathed to you by Mr Atherton's Will."

I had borne a widows heart ten days less than thirteen months, ere I was told that that was not for you.—

Please state the day and hour, when I may be received."

With your heart warm impulses, you can conceive, that I am in deep affliction.

Yours &c
Anne Atherton

"Brooms Hotel."
Tuesday A.M.
Feb. 20. 1855.

Mr President,

This note was written ere I saw you last eve.

In compliance with your kind invitation to visit you, I will be at the White House tomorrow (Wednesday) at 9° A.M.

Do treat me, on this subject, with frankness and let my visit be confidential.

I may sometime feel that it is but as it is, but "Ignorance was bliss" in comparison. Yours, hastily. Anne Atherton.

Atherton to Pierce, 1855.

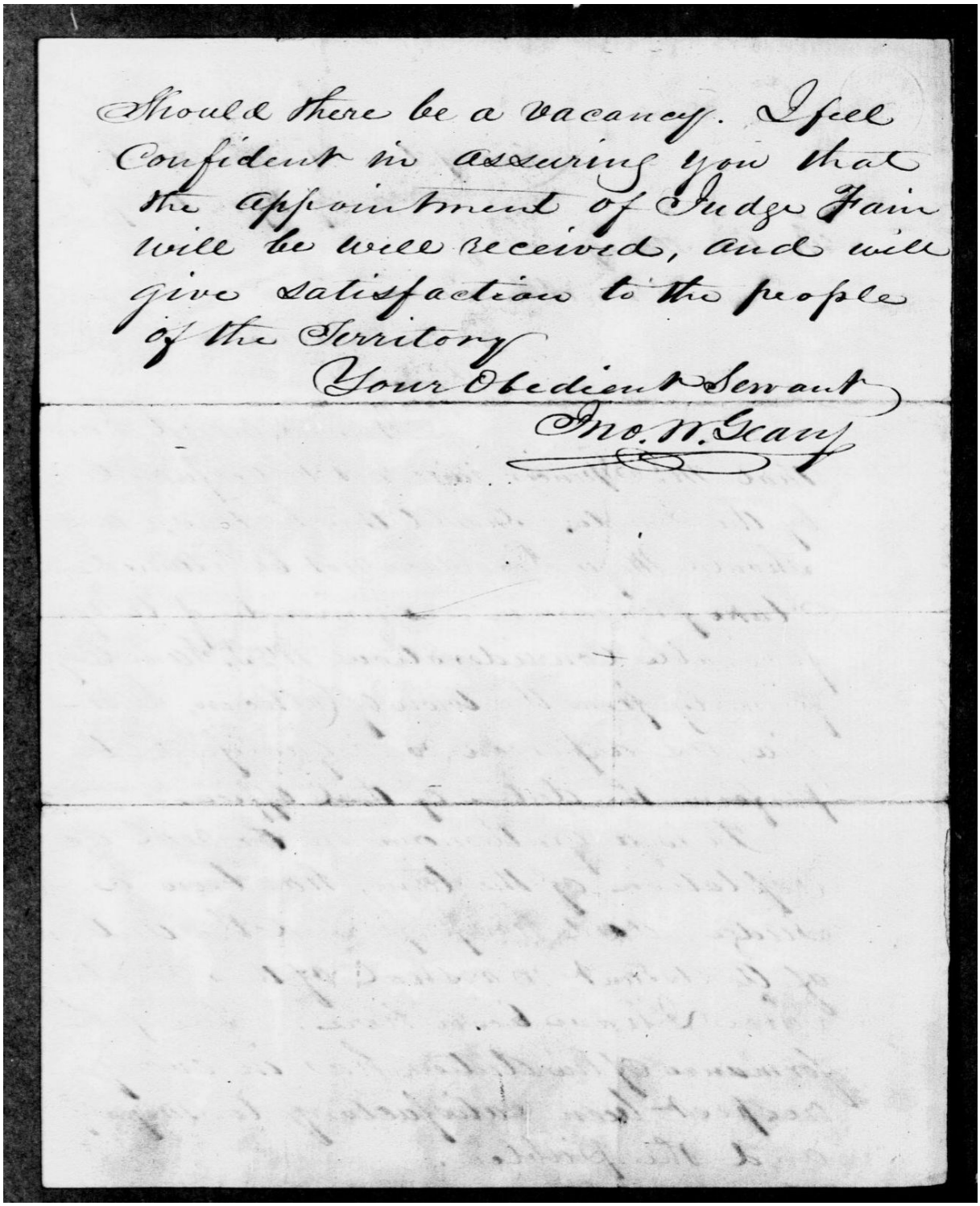
Lecompton Kansas Territory
Janry 19th 1855.

His Excellency
Franklin Pierce
President U.S.
Dr. Sir.

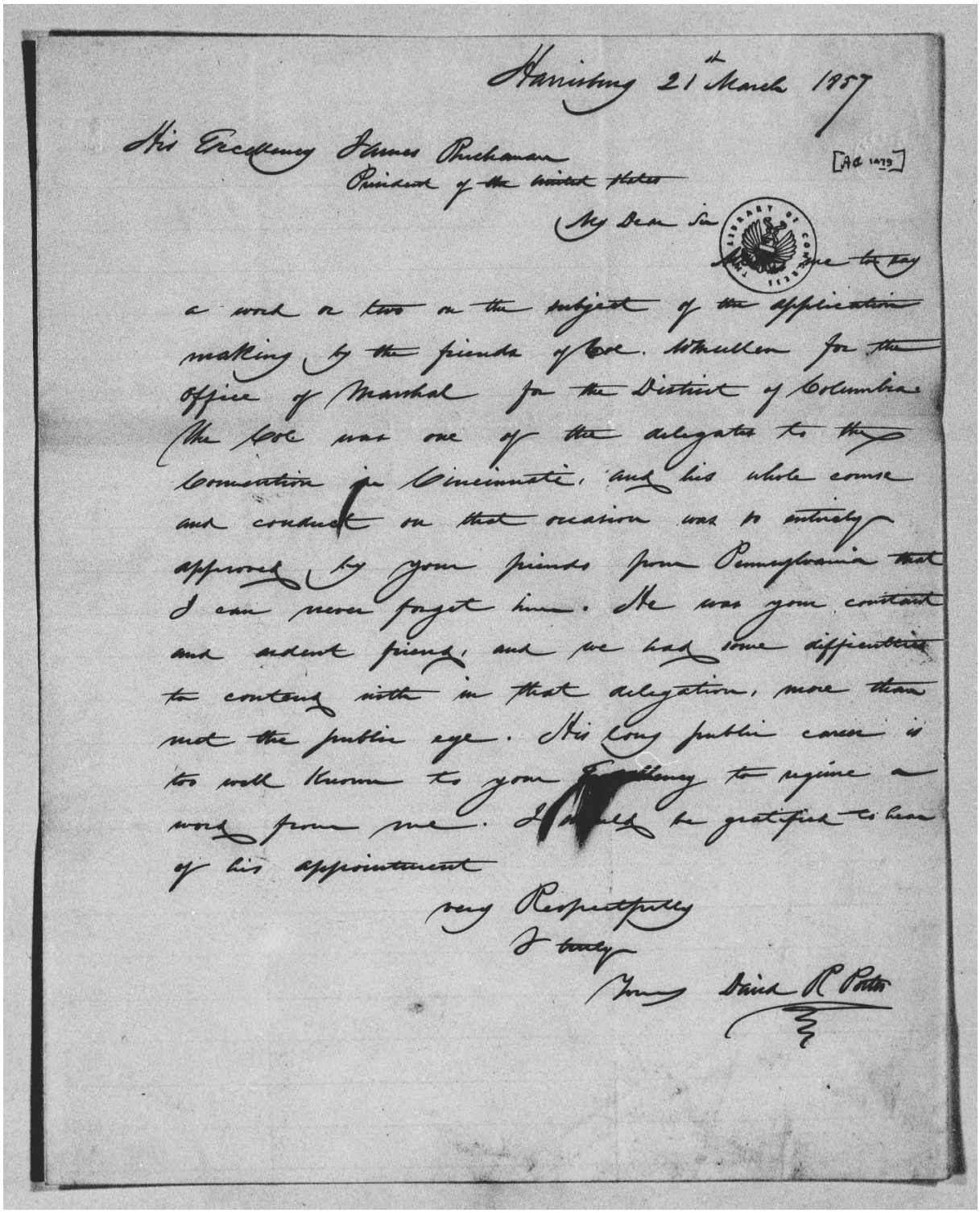
It is rumored here that Mr. Spencer will not be confirmed by the Senate. Should this be true, and should Major Donaldson not be retained, I take pleasure in recommending to your favorable consideration Wm. P. Fain Esq. formerly from the town of Calhoun, Georgia, as a person well qualified to perform the duties of that office.

He is a gentleman in the real acceptation of the term, has been a Judge, and has performed the duties of Assistant Marshal of this Territory since I have been here. The performance of his duties, has in every respect been satisfactory to myself and the public.

858


Should there be a vacancy. I feel
Confident in assuring you that
the appointment of Judge Fair
will be well received, and will
give satisfaction to the people
of the Territory
Your Obedient Servant
Jno. W. Geary

Geary to Pierce, 1857.



Harrisburg 21st March 1857

His Excellency James Buchanan
President of the United States

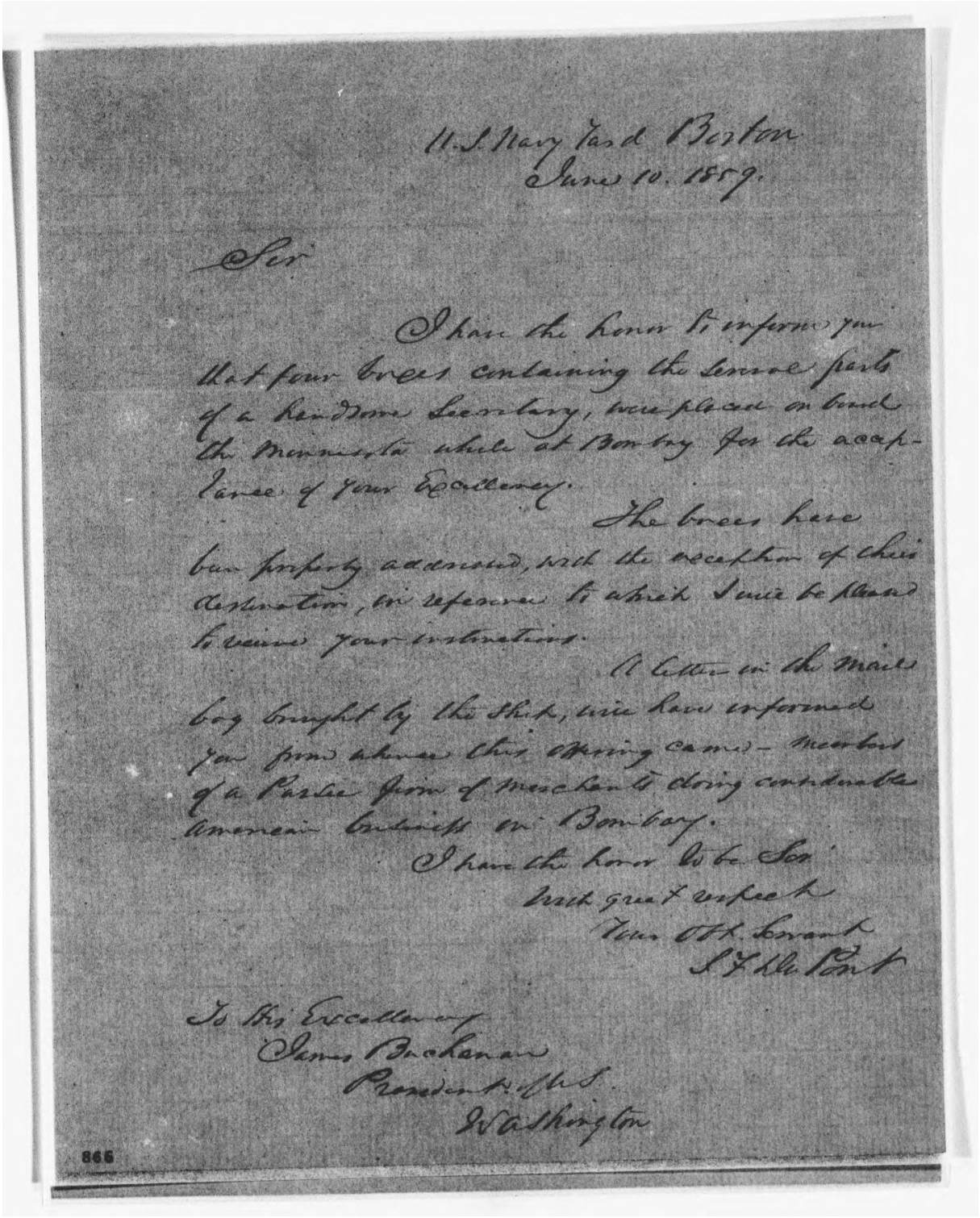
[AC 1479]

My Dear Sir

I take the liberty to say a word or two on the subject of the application making by the friends of Col. Wheeler for the Office of Marshal for the District of Columbia. The Col was one of the delegates to the Convention in Cincinnati, and his whole course and conduct on that occasion was so entirely approved by your friends from Pennsylvania that I can never forget him. He was your constant and ardent friend, and we had some difficulties to contend with in that delegation, more than met the public eye. His long public career is too well known to you Excellency to require a word from me. I should be gratified to hear of his appointment

very Respectfully
I truly
Yours David R Porter

Porter to Buchanan, 1857.



U.S. Navy Yard Boston
June 10. 1859.

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that four boxes containing the several parts of a Rendome Lecentary, were placed on board the Minnesota while at Bombay for the acceptance of your Excellency.

The boxes have been properly addressed, with the exception of their destination, in reference to which I am to beg to receive your instructions.

A letter in the mail bag brought by the Ship, will have informed you from whence this offering came - members of a Parsee firm of merchants doing considerable American business in Bombay.

I have the honor to be Sir
with great respect
Your Ob. Servant
S. F. du Pont

To His Excellency
James Buchanan
President U.S.
Washington

866

Du Pont to Buchanan, 1859.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Executive Department.

Boston, Nov. 25th 1861.

To the President of the United States.

Sir:

My interview with you did not afford me opportunity to urge as Earnestly as I feel the importance of an Exchange of prisoners.-

I have urged it in some quarters in Washington; and am confident that the justice and Expediency of the case, and the feelings of the people all concur in this measure which is both so convenient and humane.-

The reasons suggest themselves, and as well as the answers to the objections made, so that I will not tire you by this repetition; but will simply record my poor judgment, in order that, so far as it may be worth anything, it

13086

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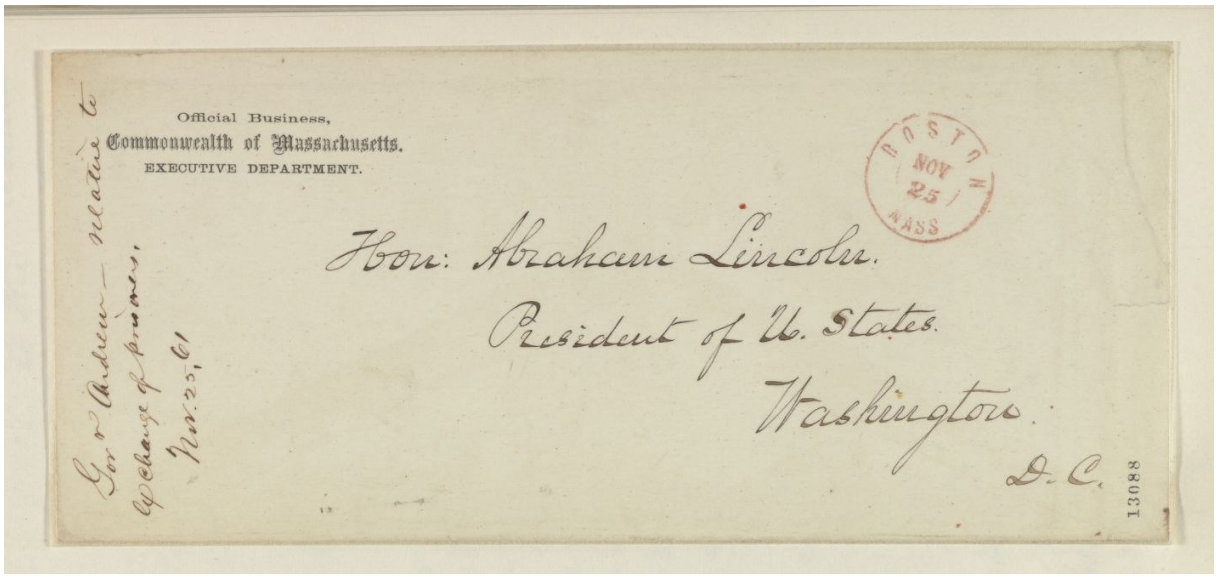
may weigh for the benefit of the right side of the question.-

I Earnestly hope that immediate measures may be taken to Effect Exchanges and that the hearts of the people may not be Sickened by Hope deferred.-

I am with great respect
Your friend & Servant.

J Blackburn

13087



Andrews to Lincoln, 1861.

Mayor's Office

New York, Jan. 6. 1863

His Excellency

Abraham Lincoln,

President,

Dear Sir:

I inclose a note just received by me from Mr. Wm A. Hall of this city. Both himself and Mr. Bell his informant are personally known to me, and are gentlemen of high character, loyal and reliable. I transmit the note in the hope that you will have a prompt and thorough investigation instituted, and if the information proves to be correct that you will have the

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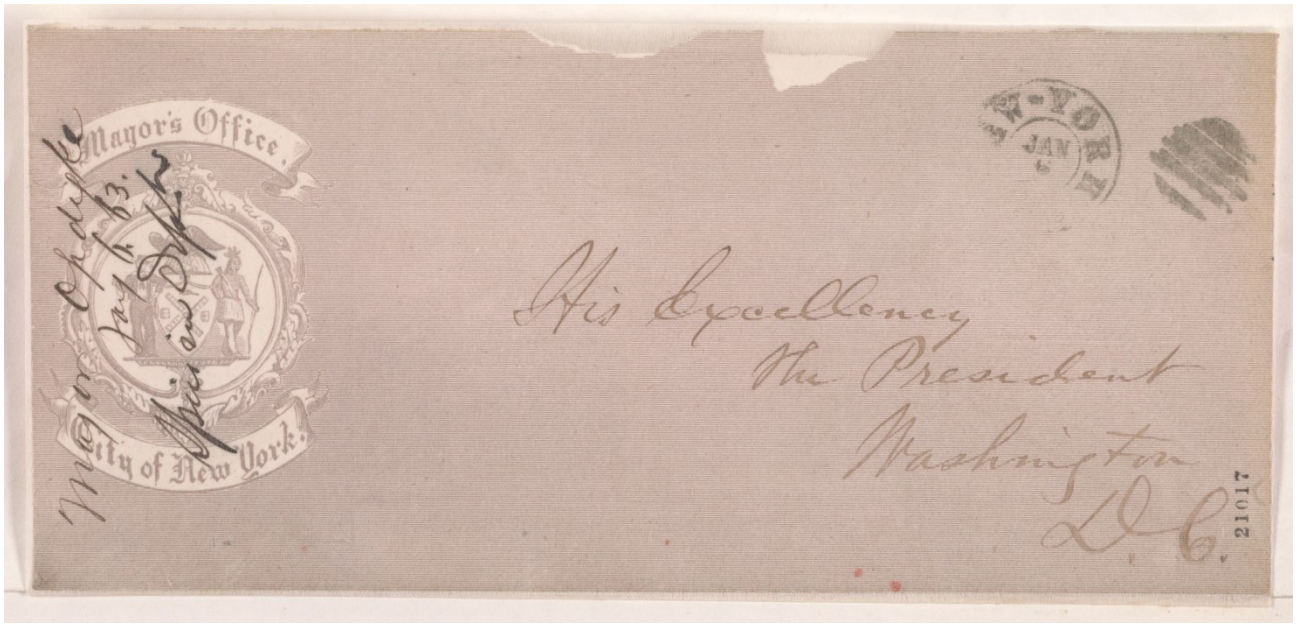
spies exposed and punished –

I have the honor to be

Very truly Yours,

Geo. Opdyke

Mayor.



Opdyke to Lincoln, 1863.

Office U. S. Direct Tax Commissioners,

District of Tennessee, 12th

Nashville, 13th Nov. 1865.

To His Excellency

Andrew Johnson

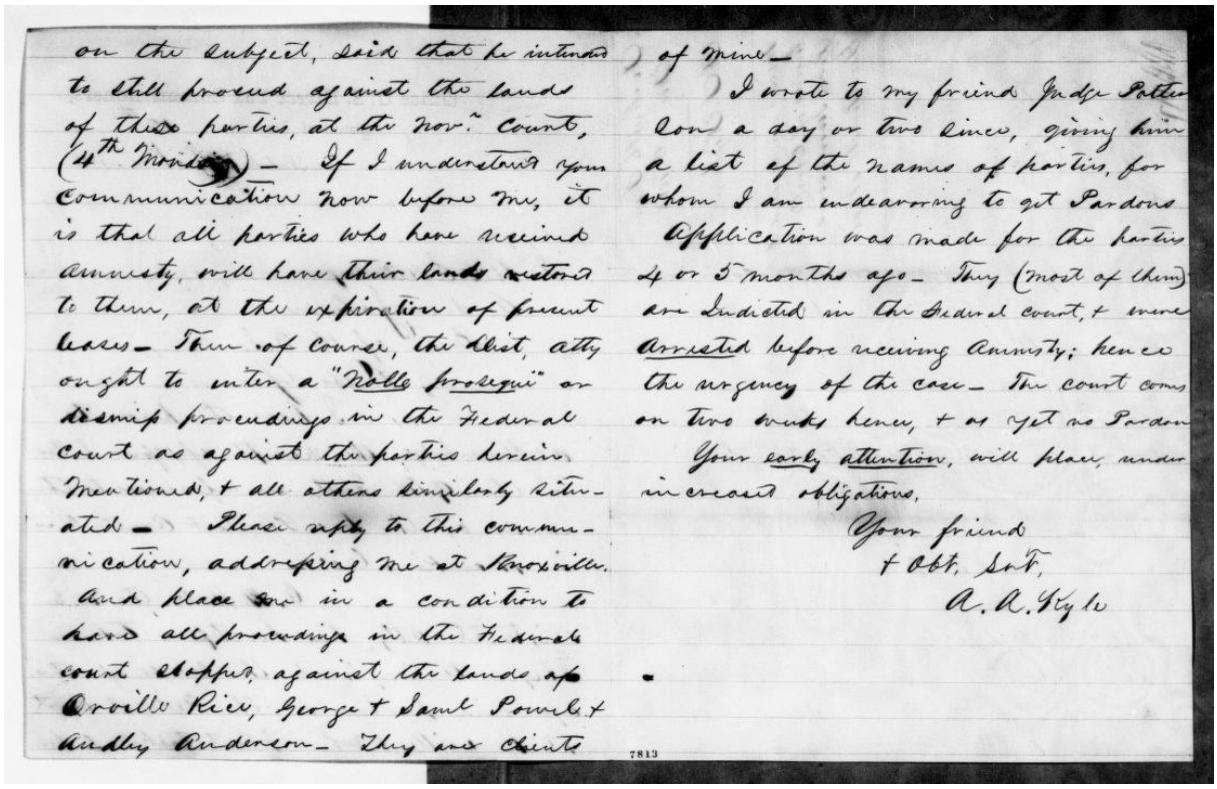
Pres. of the U. S.

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th Inst. in reference to the lands of the two Powels + Cradle Rivers in Hawkins Co's. -

C. W. Hall, the U. S. district atty, has heretofore taken steps to confiscate the lands of the aforesaid parties, in the Federal Court at Knoxville + when I last talked to him

7812



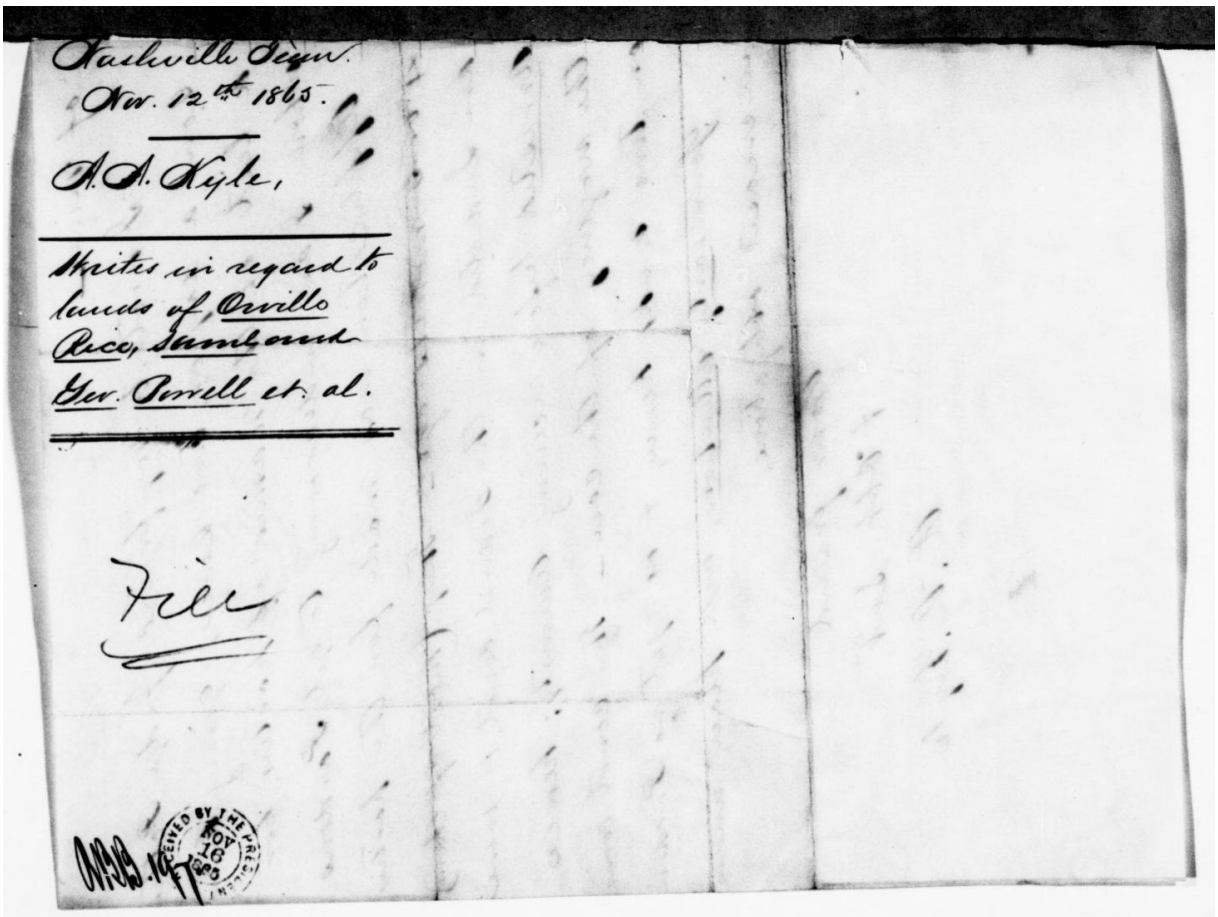
on the subject, said that he intended to still proceed against the lands of these parties, at the Nov.r Court, (4th Monday) — If I understood your communication now before me, it is that all parties who have received amnesty, will have their lands restored to them, at the expiration of present leases — Then of course, the Dist. Atty ought to enter a "Nolle prosequi" or dismiss proceedings in the Federal court as against the parties herein Mentioned, & all others similarly situated — Please reply to this communication, addressing me at Knoxville. And place me in a condition to have all proceedings in the Federal court stopped, against the lands of Orville Rice, George & Saml Powell & Dudley Anderson — They are clients of mine —

I wrote to my friend Judge Patterson a day or two since, giving him a list of the names of parties, for whom I am endeavoring to get Pardons Application was made for the parties 4 or 5 months ago — They (most of them) are Indicted in the State court, & were Arrested before receiving Amnesty; hence the urgency of the case — The court comes on two weeks hence, & as yet no Pardon

Your early attention, will place, under increased obligations,

Your friend
& Obt. Svt,
A. A. Kyle

7813



Nashville Tenn.
Nov. 12th 1865.

A. A. Kyle,

Writes in regard to lands of Orville Rice, Samuel Gov. Powell et. al.

File

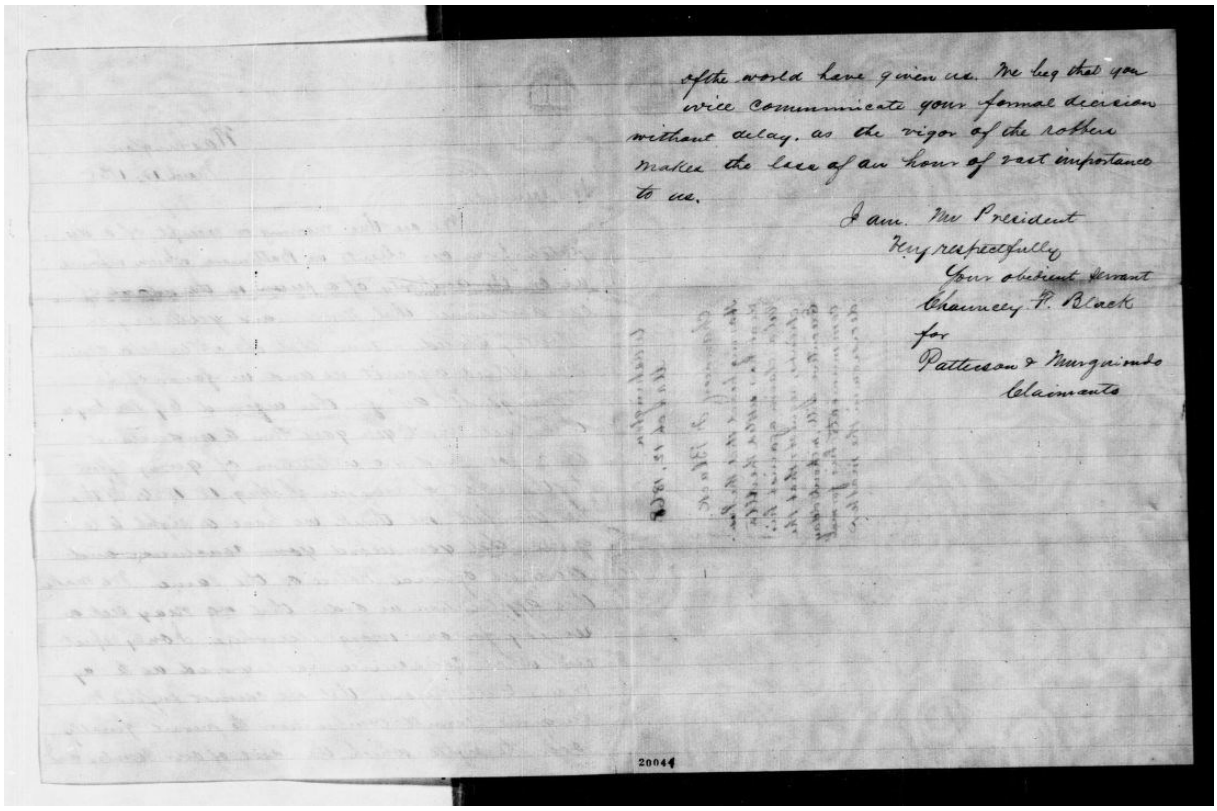
Kyle to Johnson, 1865.

Washington
March 12. 1866.

Mr President.

We are this morning in receipt of a despatch from our clients in Baltimore which informs us on the authority of a person in the interest of our adversaries that Mr Seward yesterday explicitly stated to him that the Alta Vela claim was settled against us and in favor of St Domingo. We are further informed by Mr Coyle that last night you gave him to understand that you had no intention of giving effect to the Act of Congress of Aug. 18. 1856. If this be the fact we think we have a right to request that you record your conclusion and give us official notice of the same. We make this application in order that we may seek a remedy for our wrongs elsewhere. I only repeat now what conscience has required us to say many times before, that we cannot suffer Mr Seward's corrupt combination to prevail finally over the rights which the laws of our country and

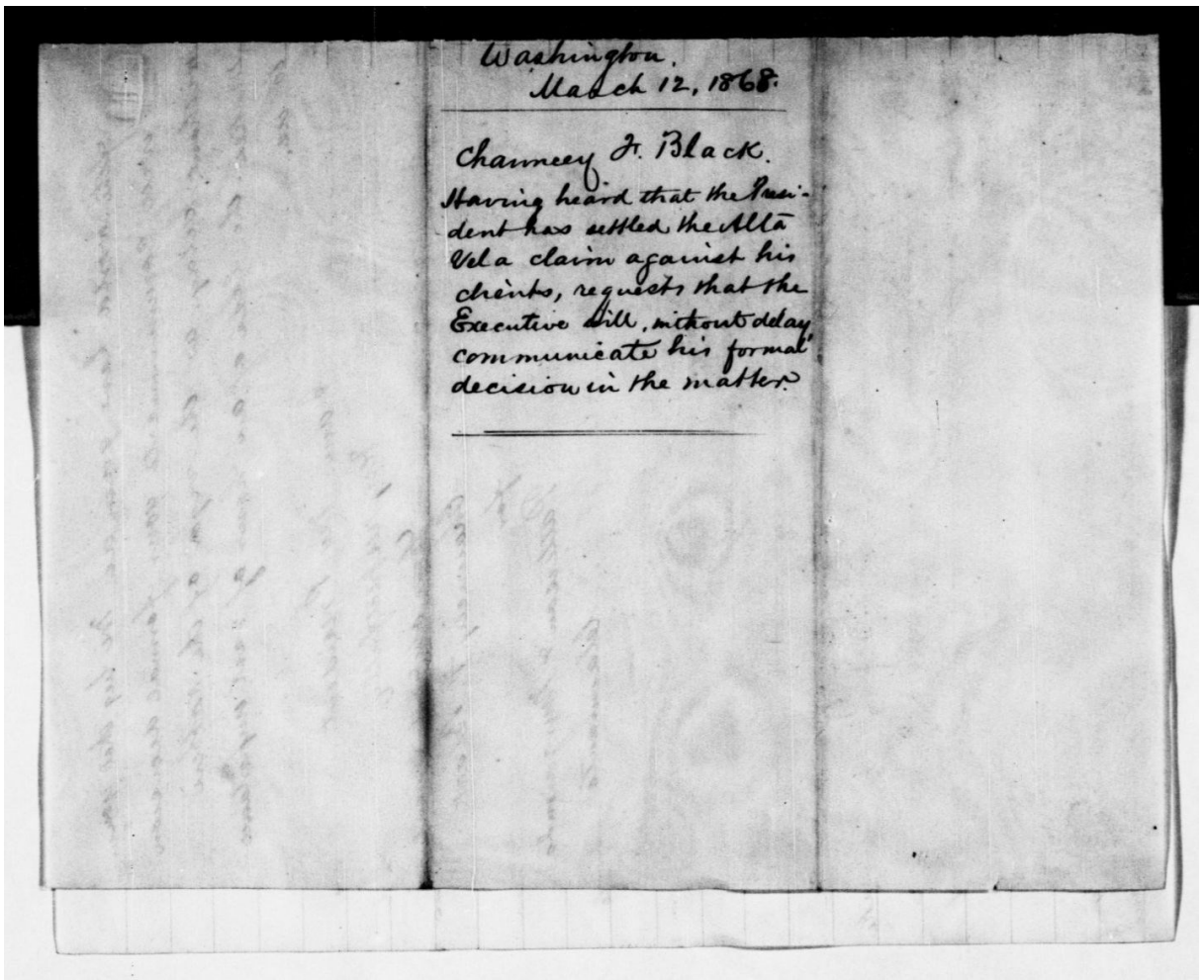
20043



of the world have given us. We beg that you will communicate your formal decision without delay, as the vigor of the rebellion makes the loss of an hour of vast importance to us.

I am, Mr President
Very respectfully
Your obedient Servant
Chauncey F. Black
for
Patterson & Murgaindo
Claimants

20044

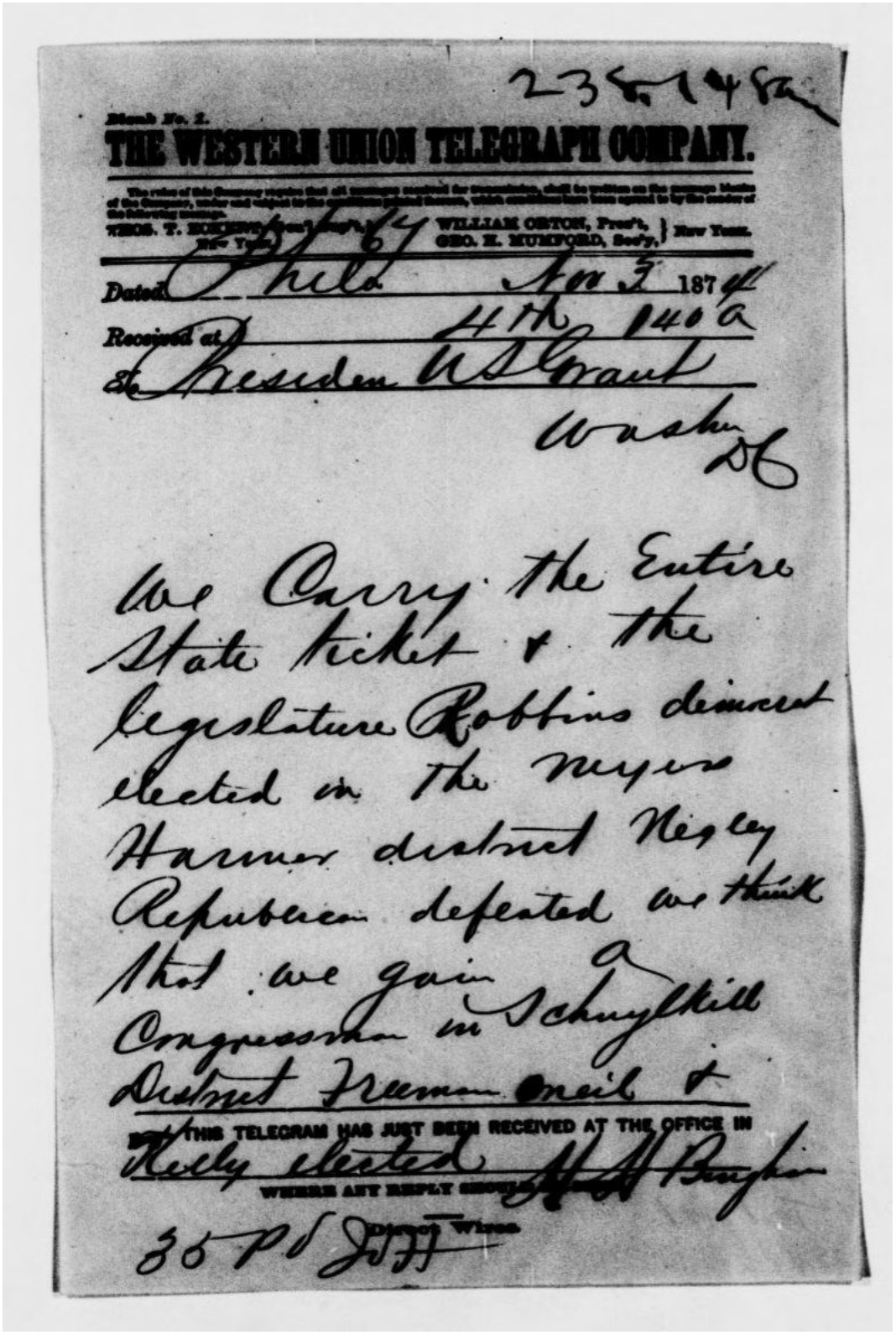


Washington.
March 12, 1868.

Chauncey F. Black.

Having heard that the President has settled the Alla Vela claim against his clients, requests that the Executive will, without delay, communicate his formal decision in the matter.

Black to Johnson, 1868.



THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

WILLIAM ORTON, Pres't, GEO. H. HUMFORD, Sec'y, } New York.

Dated Phila Nov 3 1874

Received at 4th 140a

To President U S Grant

Washn DC

We Carry the Entire State ticket & the legislature Robbins elected in the Meyers Harmer district Negley Republican defeated we think that we gain a Congressman in Schuylkill District Freeman O'neil &

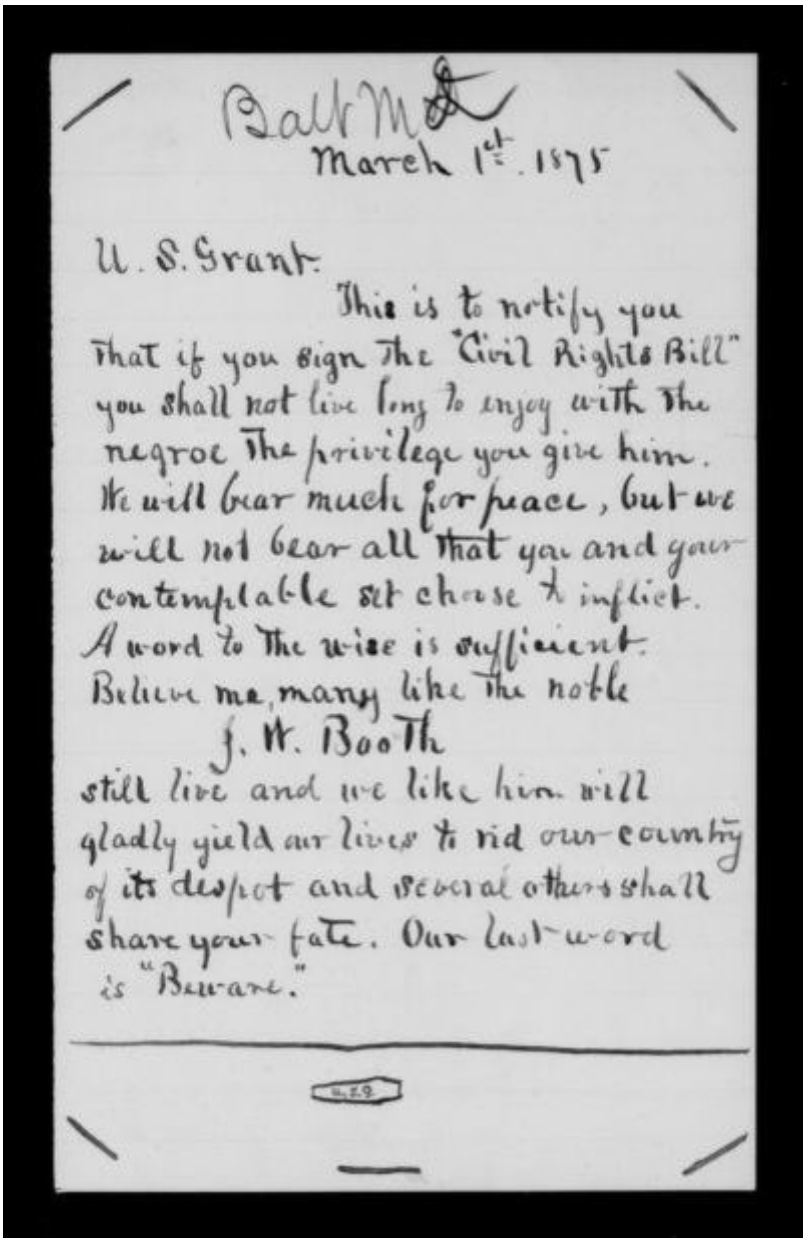
THIS TELEGRAM HAS JUST BEEN RECEIVED AT THE OFFICE IN

Kelly elected H H Bingham

WHERE ANY REPLY SHOULD BE SENT

Direct Wires

Bingham to Grant, 1874.



Balt Md
March 1st. 1875

U. S. Grant.

This is to notify you that if you sign the "Civil Rights Bill" you shall not live long to enjoy with the negroe the privilege you give him. We will bear much for peace, but we will not bear all that you and your contemptable set chose to inflict. A word to the wise is sufficient. Believe me, many like the noble

J. W. Booth

still live and we like him will gladly yield our lives to rid our country of its despot and several others shall share your fate. Our last word is "Beware."

Anonymous to Grant, 1875

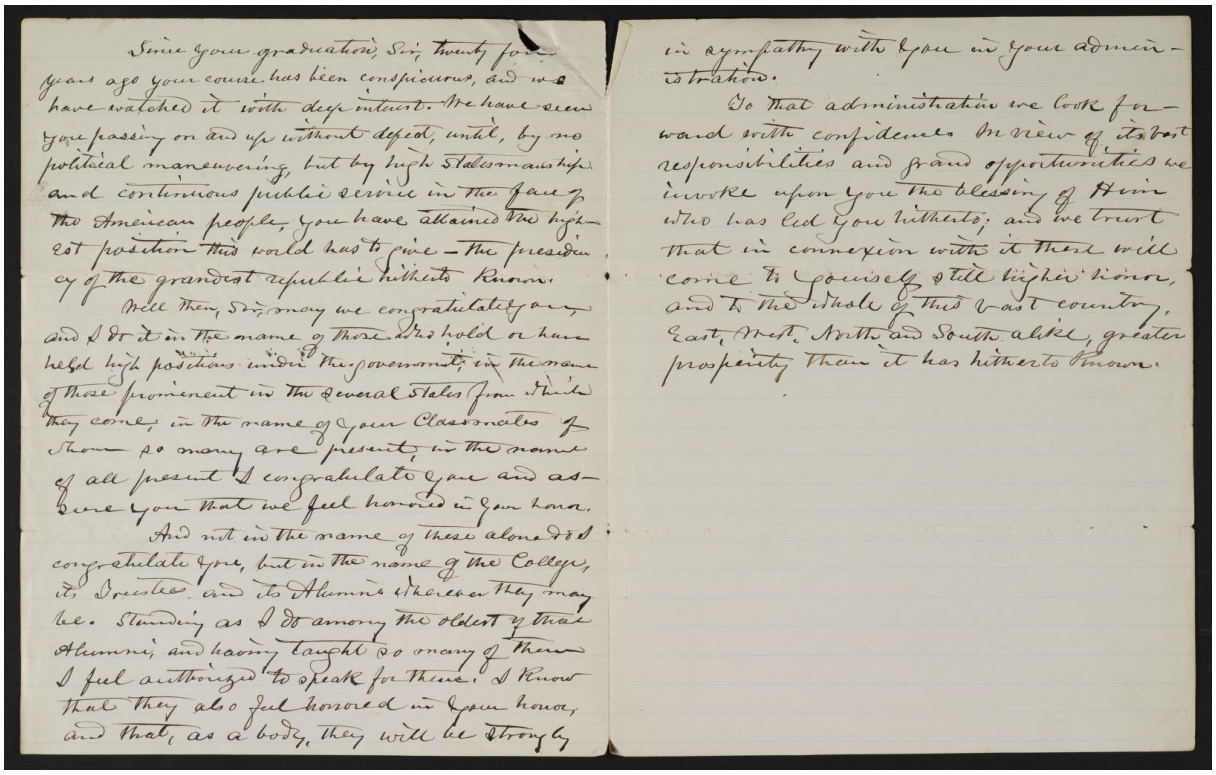
1881

President Garfield,

The Alumni of Williams College here gathered esteem it an honor that they are permitted to be the first to congratulate you in this house, now to be your home, on your accession this day to your great office as President of the United States; and they have deputed me to say a few words in their behalf.

But before doing this I must be permitted to greet and congratulate you personally and on my own behalf. This I venture to do, if for no other reason, because I have been told, and I suppose truly, that I am the only president of a College who has lived to see one who graduated during his administration attain to this high honor. This I am now permitted to see, and for it I give thanks to God. In this, with the exception of your honored mother and your more immediate family, there is no one who rejoices more than I do, and from the bottom of my heart I congratulate you.

Having thus ventured to say a word for myself, I now speak for the Alumni.



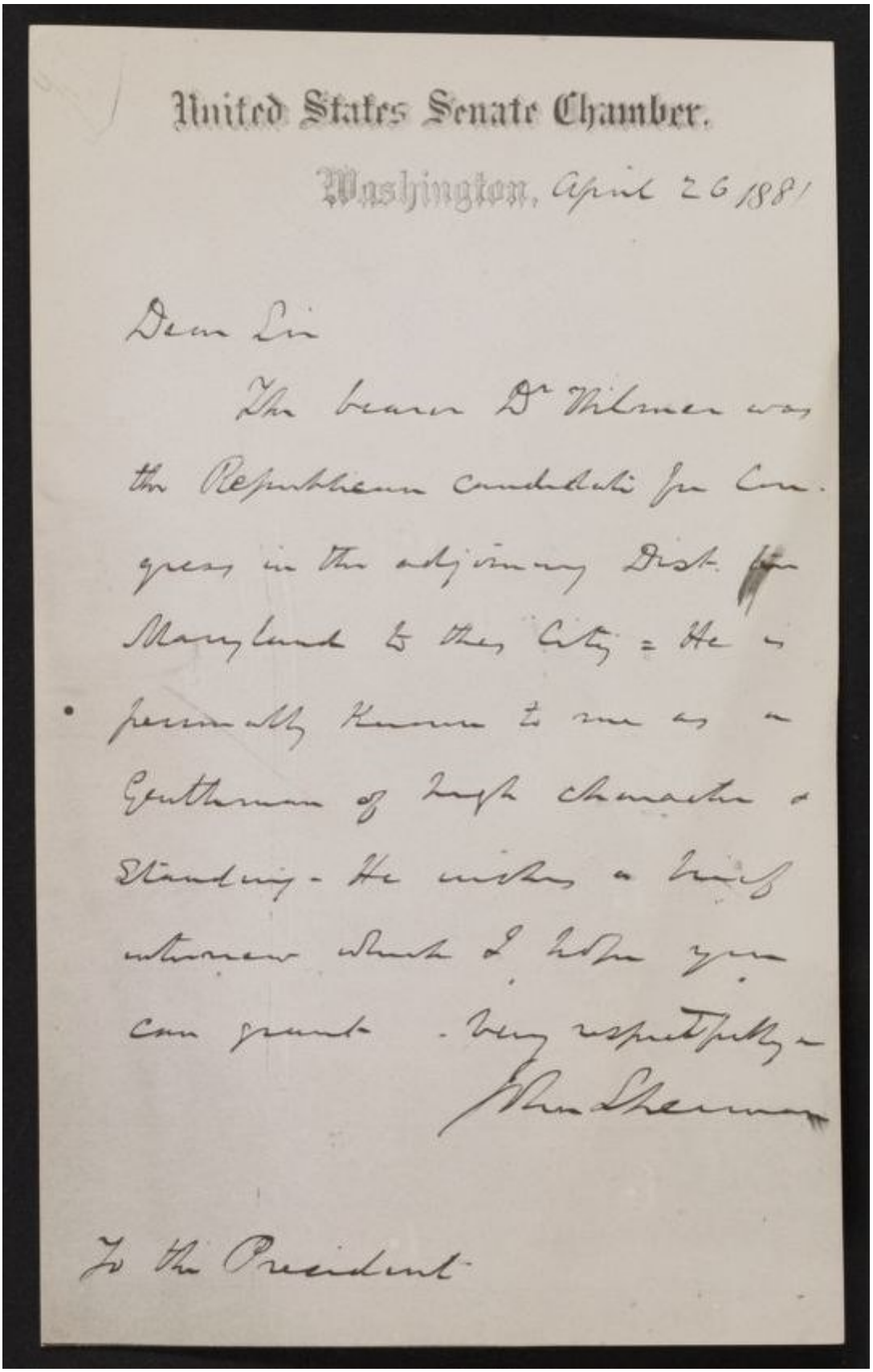
Since your graduation, Sir, twenty four years ago your course has been conspicuous, and we have watched it with deep interest. We have seen you passing on and up without defeat, until, by no political maneuvering, but by high statesmanship and continuous public service in the face of the American people, you have attained the highest position this world has to give — The presidency of the grandest republic hitherto known.

Well then, Sir, may we congratulate, and I do it in the name of those who hold or have held high positions under the government, in the name of those prominent in the several States from which they come, in the name of your Classmates of whom so many are present, in the name of all present I congratulate you and assure you that we feel honored in your honor.

And not in the name of these alone do I congratulate you, but in the name of the College, its Trustees and its Alumni wherever they may be. Standing as I do among the oldest of the Alumni, and having taught so many of them I feel authorized to speak for them. I know that they also feel honored in your honor, and that, as a body, they will be strongly in sympathy with you in your administration.

So that administration we look forward with confidence. In view of its vast responsibilities and grand opportunities we invoke upon you the blessing of Him who has led you hitherto; and we trust that in connexion with it there will come to yourself still higher honor, and to the whole of this vast country, East, West, North and South alike, greater prosperity than it has hitherto known.

Chadbourne to Garfield, 1881.



United States Senate Chamber.

Washington, April 26 1881

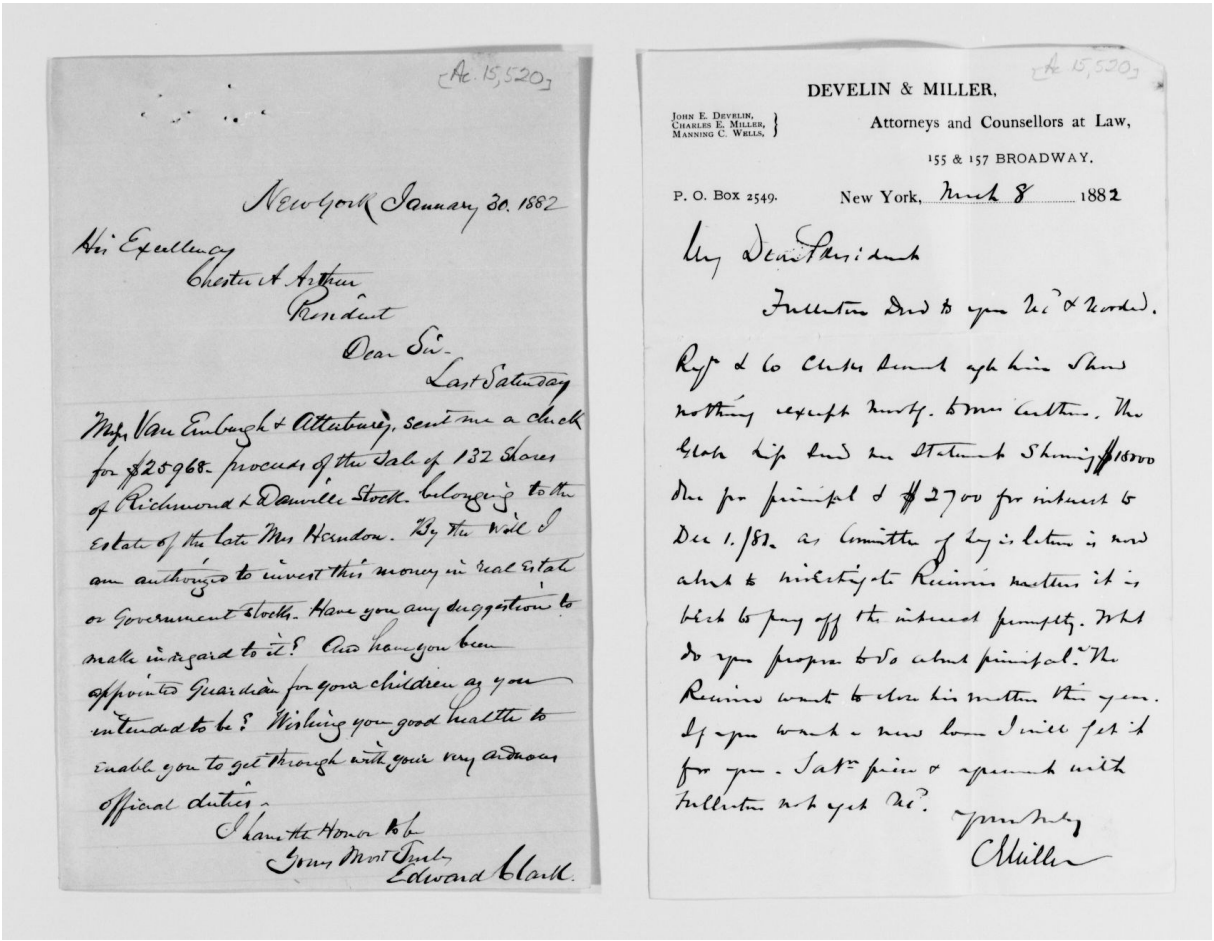
Dear Sir

The bearer Dr Wilmer was the Republican candidate for Congress in the adjoining Dist. of Maryland to this City = He is personally known to me as a Gentleman of high character & standing - He wishes a brief interview which I hope you can grant - Very respectfully -

J Sherman

To the President -

Sherman to Garfield, 1881/04/26



New York January 30. 1882

His Excellency
Chester A. Arthur
President

Dear Sir-

Last Saturday Messrs Van Emburgh & Atterbury, sent me a check for $25968- proceeds of the Sale of 132 Shares of Richmond & Danville Stock belonging to the Estate of the late Mrs Herndon. By the will I am authorized to invest this money in real Estate or Government stocks. Have you any suggestions to make in regard to it? Also have you been appointed Guardian for your children as you intended to be? Wishing you good health to enable you to get through with your very arduous official duties-

I have the Honor to be
Yours Most Truly
Edward Black.

DEVELIN & MILLER,

JOHN E. DEVELIN,
CHARLES E. MILLER,
MANNING C. WELLS,

Attorneys and Counsellors at Law,

155 & 157 BROADWAY.

P. O. Box 2549. New York, March 8 1882

My Dear President

Inclosed find to you Rec'd & receipted.

Rep'd to Clerk Senate upholding Shows nothing except Mortg. & Mem Certificate. The Clerk Sup'd me Statement Showing $18000 Due for principal & $2700 for interest to Dec 1. 82. as Committee of Judge's letter is read about to investigate Reuniers matters it is best to pay off the interest promptly. What do you propose to do about principal? The Reuniers want to close his matters this year. If you want a new loan I will get it for you. Sat'd prices & agreement with Inclosed not yet Rec'd.

Yours truly
C Miller

Black to Arthur, 1882.

[Ac. 15,520]

Sm

My dear Mr. President:

When Mr. Hutchins brought me home the other afternoon the compliment of your messages I decided to send you the inclosure. I had often thought of showing it to you in some way but not recording I had any special identity in your memory. I hesitated to appear intrusive.

This is, I think, the last letter Mrs. Arthur wrote — merely a little more of courtesy such as any woman as thoughtful as she was would often write, but-like all she did, informed with kindness and sincerity. You will see that it is the acknowledgment of the soaps, which I came to send her in reminder of a bright little chat we had

about foreign hotels and boats the days I sailed for Europe in June 1879. She wrote the afternoon of the day she was taken ill and left the letter in her desk to await a stamp. During her sickness she asked Mrs. Rossa to mail it, but it was not done at the time and afterwards Mrs. Rossa found it and sent it home with so touching and sad an account of those few days that I have always kept both letter together as they came.

I have another little souvenir of her, a small leather purse which she gave me that same summer day. I carried it and no other all through my journey — not having a great deal to put in a purse, — and thus I kept it, and I have it now, because there was something so gracious and sweet in her way of giving it that it would have seemed disloyal to part with the little thing.

Although my actual intercourse with Mrs. Arthur was limited to the time I spoke of, she was one of those who are known by their works, and moreover her unaffected cordiality made me feel at once, and most agreeably, that we were not strangers. I have always wanted you to know how much admiration and even affection I felt for her because it is a proof that her influence extended beyond the immediate sphere of her presence. I think of her as one of the pleasantest memories of my life, and when I reflect on the exalted position that awaited her it seems true loss it not yours alone but touched the many who might have known her and been the happier

and better for it.

I beg to present my compliments to Mrs. McElroy whom I regret not having seen, and requesting you to return Mrs. Arthur's letter at your convenience

I remain with much respect

Sarita W. Kirkland

March 8, 1884.

Note by CAA III
Mrs Hutchins, see Sarita Brady

[A. 15,520]

March 25

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
1884 WASHINGTON.

My dear Alan:

I have paid both the bills which you sent me.

I thank you for your letter & feel quite sure that you will do what you say. With much love

Your affectionate father
Chester A Arthur

C.A. Arthur Jr Esq.

Hutchins to Arthur, 1884.

File

Albany Apr 20th 86

Pres: Grover Cleveland

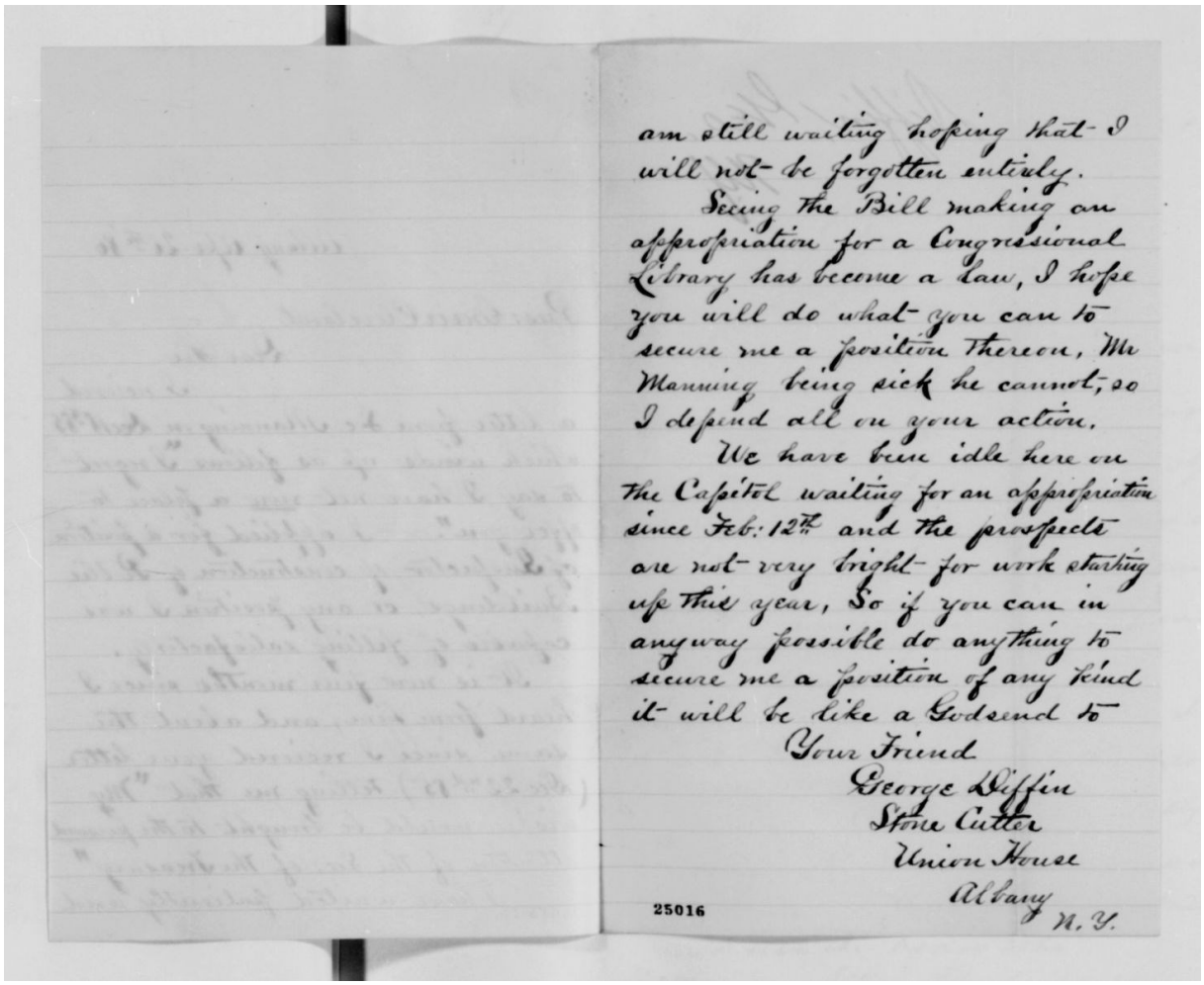
Dear Sir

I recieved a letter from Sec: Manning on Dec 18th 85 which winds up as follows "I regret to say I have not now a place to offer you". — I applied for a position of Inspector of construction of Public Buildings, or any position I was capable of filling satisfactorly.

It is now four months since I heard from him, and about the same since I recieved your letter (Dec 22nd 85) telling me that "My wishes would be brought to the personal attention of the Sec: of the Treasury"

I have waited patiently and

25015



am still waiting hoping that I will not be forgotten entirely.

Seeing the Bill making an appropriation for a Congressional Library has become a law, I hope you will do what you can to secure me a position thereon, Mr Manning being sick he cannot, so I depend all on your action.

We have been idle here on the Capitol waiting for an appropriation since Feb: 12th and the prospects are not very bright for work starting up this year, So if you can in anyway possible do anything to secure me a position of any kind it will be like a Godsend to

Your Friend

George Diffin

Stone Cutter

Union House

Albany N. Y.

25016

Diffin to Cleveland, 1886.

7 Wall St
New York May 10/88

My Dear Mr President

I call by the
morning papers that
you have sent my name
to the Senate to fill
the Mission to Holland -
I have received no official
notice but do not think
you will consider it prema-
ture on my part to thank
you. I hope to have the
pleasure of doing this
in person in case the

3033

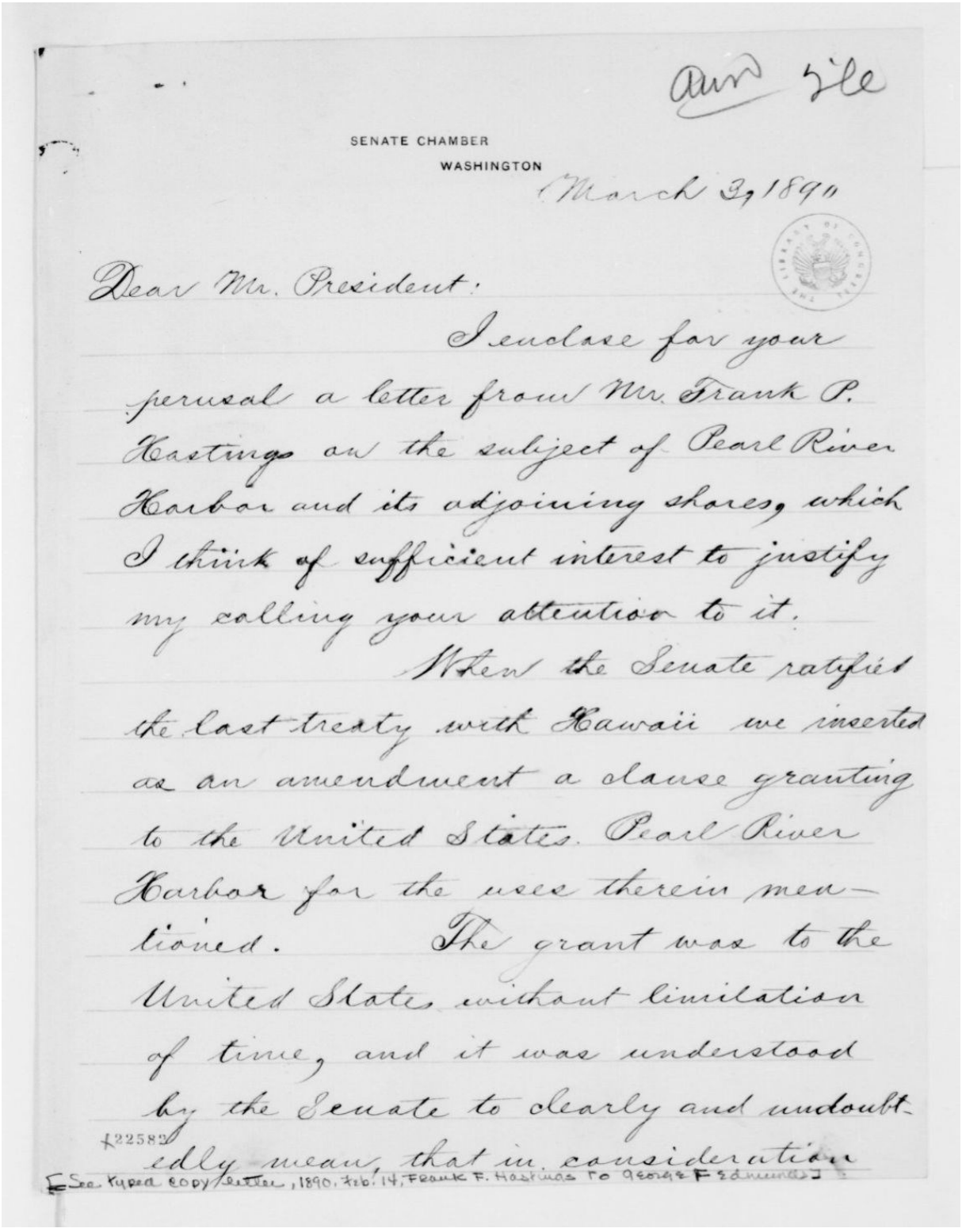
Senate shall take
a favorable view of the
nomination and until
then beg to subscribe
myself

I am very sincerely

Yours

Theo Roosevelt

Roosevelt to Cleveland, 1888.



Ans file

SENATE CHAMBER
WASHINGTON

March 3, 1890

Dear Mr. President:

I enclose for your perusal a letter from Mr. Frank P. Hastings on the subject of Pearl River Harbor and its adjoining shores, which I think of sufficient interest to justify my calling your attention to it.

When the Senate ratified the last treaty with Hawaii we inserted as an amendment a clause granting to the United States Pearl River Harbor for the uses therein mentioned. The grant was to the United States without limitation of time, and it was understood by the Senate to clearly and undoubtedly mean that in consideration

22582

See typed copy letter, 1890, Feb. 14, Frank F. Hastings to George F. Edmunds

SENATE CHAMBER
WASHINGTON

of the reciprocity part of the treaty, which could not pass without the amendment, Hawaii should convey to us Pearl River Harbor.

Mr. Bayard, on the exchange of the ratifications, was asked whether that was or not intended to be a grant of the right to have a naval station, &c., there, after the ten years for which free sugar was provided, had expired; to which Mr. Bayard replied, first, that he had no authority or power to express any opinion, but, that he personally supposed it was simply a ten years lease. That was the substance of the communication.

22583

Of course, construed as a

SENATE CHAMBER
WASHINGTON

ten years lease, it was utterly worthless, but it is impossible to torture or to restrain language into any such meaning,—as a grant from a Government differing from one to an individual, does not require words of succession to make it one of perpetuity.

If the United States are to have any interests in that harbor, it is of course extremely desirable to secure sufficient land on the shores for our purposes, and it may be that a little diplomatic persuasion would induce the Legislature of Hawaii to provide for our getting such titles of private owners as may be deemed necessary.

+22584

P.4

SENATE CHAMBER
WASHINGTON

When you have considered the letter will you kindly return it to me?

You are at liberty to take a copy of it, if you desire, as it is purely on a public subject, but is of course confidential as regards our Government.

Very respectfully yours
Geo. F. Edmunds

The President.

Enclosure.

+22585

~~State~~ Edmunds

~~Foreign Relations~~

PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE FILES.

WRITER.

Edmunds Geo F

Residence, Dendas

Date, 3/3/90

SUBJECT.

Enclosing a letter from Frank D Hastings on the subject of Pearl River Harbor and giving his idea of the matter

V-100-225 85

Edmunds to Benjamin Harrison, 1890.

File

17 MADISON PLACE.
WASHINGTON.

March 30, 1892.

My dear Mr. President:

I did not get through with Sir Julian until I presumed that you had gone riding. I can make nothing of him.

To-morrow morning at ten o'clock I will bring him to see you. He is either very stupid or I am, or both of us, which is probably the case.

Very sincerely yours,

James G. Blaine

30769

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Blaine to Benjamin Harrison, 1892.

LAW OFFICE
JOHN R. ABNEY,
UNION TRUST BUILDING,
80 BROADWAY.

S.C.U.S.P.7

New York, Aug. 30 [31] 1893.

Hon. Grover Cleveland
President of the United States
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I am informed that Mr. William C. Clapton of this bar has been suggested to you as a suitable person for the position on the U.S. Supreme Court bench made vacant by the death of Mr. Justice Blatchford; and I beg to add my opinion to that of his friends suggesting him that he possesses the requisite mental power of examining and correctly deciding questions of law and of expressing his decisions clearly; and he has the health and physical strength necessary to the labours of an Associate Justice. I therefore take pleasure in recommending him for the place, and have the honour to remain your obt. servt.

John R. Abney

19910

Abney to Cleveland, 1893.

FIFTY-FOURTH CONGRESS.

SETH L. MILLIKEN, Chairman.
Elijah A. Morse. Samuel C. Hyde.
David H. Mercer. Charles L. Henry.
Josiah D. Hicks. John H. Bankhead.
Samuel G. Hilborn. Jo Abbott.
Andrew R. Kiefer. Harry Skinner.
Charles W. Gillet. Stephen M. Sparkman.
George E. White. John S. Little.

Willis H. Wing, Clerk.

Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds,

House of Representatives U. S.,

Washington, D. C., 12/24, 1896

Mr. President:-

I am aware that the President heretofore has only issued proclamations in the case of New Orleans & Chicago but I had hopes that you would also first think it the same way although no such provision was in force in the act appropriating money on the part of the Government for buildings & facilities at the Trans. Mississippi & International Exposition. This Exposition is to be International in its character, is to receive support & recognition

35971

FIFTY-FOURTH CONGRESS.

SETH L. MILLIKEN, Chairman.

Elijah A. Morse.	Samuel C. Hyde.
David H. Mercer.	Charles L. Henry.
Josiah D. Hicks.	John H. Bankhead.
Samuel G. Hilborn.	Jo Abbott.
Andrew R. Kiefer.	Harry Skinner.
Charles W. Gillet.	Stephen M. Sparkman.
George E. White.	John S. Little.

Willis H. Wing, Clerk.

Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds,

House of Representatives U. S.,

Washington, D. C., _____, 189

directly from 24 states & territories comprising the whole trans-Mississippi country, while many of the remaining states will be represented by exhibits. This exposition will be of no mean proportions & I think it will reflect credit upon this Republic & as our people are very anxious for you to dignify it by issuing a proclamation I trust you will decide to do so even if you are establishing a precedent.

Resp

J. H. Millikin M.C.

35972

Someone to Cleveland, 1896.

Billerica House
OPP. ST OFFICE
Steam Heat & Gas
JOHN A. WOODMAN, Proprietor

I

Manchester, N. H., March 8th 1897.

Hon. William McKinly
President
Honored Sir
I Desire to Suggest the
Name of Gen. O. O Howard
as Secretary of the Interior,
in the Event of the Retirement
of Our Bliss Gen Howard is
an Able man, a Christian
Gentleman, His Treatment
of the Indian Proved to be
Marked in Comparison with
Administration of the Past
I am Seeking no office but Only
Wish that Your Administration be a
Wise one a Soldier is the one to Deal
with the Indian Question

1041

Billerica House

OPP. ST OFFICE

Steam Heat & Gas

JOHN A. WOODMAN, Proprietor

11 Manchester, N. H., 1837.

Especially So Good a Soldier as Gen Harrison has been the Indian matters Can best be Treated by a Christian Gentleman

Yours Most Respectfully

John D Adams

1042

Congrat. Ackd. Mch. 13/97

New Bern N.C.
March 10/97

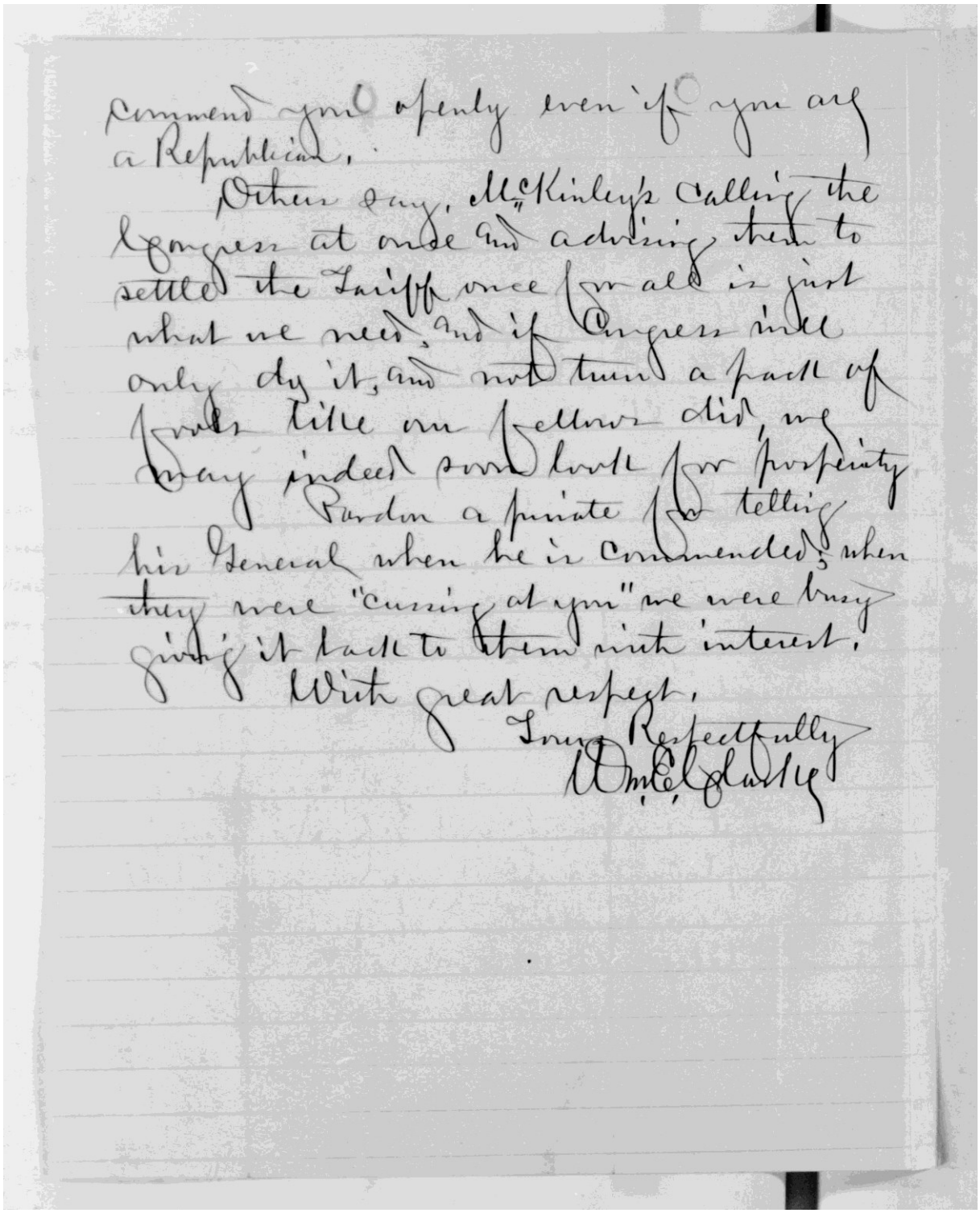
Hon. William McKinley
President of the United States
Washington D.C.

Dear Sir:

I think it is always pleasant to a speaker to think that his words fleet "straight as an arrow to the mark".

Your inaugural address met with the enthusiastic endorsement of all of the Republicans of our section, and the Democrats, who are not apt to praise anything "that cometh out of Nazareth," said "it is plain straight common sense talk and we can understand it, not high-flown words like old Cleveland's". A large number of them are openly expressing their delight at a change and hundreds more are secretly glad and ready to

1053



commend you openly even if you are a Republican.

Others say, McKinley's calling the Congress at once and advising them to settled the Tariff once for all is just what we need, and if Congress will only do it, and not turn a pack of fools like an fellows did, we may indeed soon look for prosperity

Pardon a private for telling his General when he is commended; when they were "cussing at you" we were busy giving it back to them with interest.

With great respect,

Very Respectfully

W. McKinley

Someone to McKinley, 1897/03/01.

Appendix B

Transcriptions of the letters with notes

Monroe to Jefferson, 1802

<P 0>

<P 1>

Richmond, July 26, 1802

Dear Sir

On my return lately from Albemarle
I found yr. favors of the 15. 17. & 20th. wh. were un
opened according to orders I had left in such cases.
An attack from Callender is a harmleſs thing un=
supported by any document from yrself. From
such letters as you wrote him I do not think
any thing is to be hoped to him or the federalists.
If the printers wod. say nothing in reply to the
attacks of that party the true ground might ulti=
mately be taken on a view of what was said by the
adversary: but that is not to be expected especially at

a distance. To contend that it was simply a cha

rity to a man in distreſs, wod. put them on the

proof that it was more, or was given on strong

er motives, and wod. admit by implication

that if it had any other object in view, such

object was an improper one. I shall give such

hints as to prevent any thing whatever being done

at present, or if any thing is, to give as far as in

<P 2>

my power the true direction to the affair. I have

been long solicited to make a visit to Norfolk,

& have repeatedly promised a complyance,

till I find a longer declension wod. excite some

chagrine with my friends. To decline it at this

moment wod. subject me to the imputation

of doing it from fear of the yellow fever, altho

none exists there that we know of. I therefore

set out for that place in the morning, to re=

turn with the least poſsible delay. I shall haste(n)

to Albemarle on my return here where I hope

to arrive in abt. ten or twelve days, at the

latest by the 10th. of Augt. I wish you health &

happineſs being sincerely yr. friend & servt

Jas. Monroe

Major Scott has yet recd. no information

whether he is to be continued in service or dis

miſsed. His delemma is the cause of much pain

to him & tryumph to the federalists. He is a

most deserving man, of great sensibility, who

has as much weight here as any republican

cod. poſsibly have.

Description:

James Monroe writes Thomas Jefferson to tell him that the political attack from Callendar is not very serious.

Notes:

-use of long ‘s’

-addressee is not mentioned by name (Thomas Jefferson), nor by occupation (president)

-use of formula ‘Dear Sir’

-words that continue in the next line are marked by '=' in the first line

-certain words, especially those containing 'ou', are abbreviated ('wod.', 'yrself.', 'yr.', 'abt.')

-place sent from and date on upper right corner

Bradley to Jefferson, 1804

<P 0>

<P 1>

The President of the United States

General Post Office

Sir

Septem. 13. 1804.

Agreeable to the postmaster generals directions I have the honor to

inclose the hon.ble John Stewarts letter of July 23rd to the Secretary of state

--- complaining that the western mail is sent by a new route & .- also

a copy of the PMGeneral's letter of July 13th to W. Sturart and of my letter

to him of August 9th being the whole that we have written him on the

subject.

W. Stewarts complaint is 1st that the main Western mail is sent by a

route other than the one by York, which he supposes unauthorised by law, &
2nd by that the carriage of the mail on part of a post road from York to Carlisle was dis continued.

1st The act to establish the post office and postroads paſsed May 8. 1794 enacts "That the following be established as post roads namely "___" From Philadelphia, by Lancaster, Yorktown, Carlisle, Shippensburg, Chambersburg, Bedford and Greensburg to Pittsburg" --- "From Philadelphia by Norristown, Pittsgrove, Reading Lebanon & Harrisburg to Carlisle"--- And by an additional act paſsed April 23. 1800 the following was established "From Lancaster, by Elizabethtown and Middletown to Harrisburg, Sunbury & Northumberland"--- By the sketch (annesa?) it will be seen how these roads connect with each other. & that the mail from Philadelphia for Pittsburg & the western country may be sent by various routes with little difference in point of distance, & that mail carriers are employed on each.

<P 2>

The words of the act go merely to designate various post roads, they no where require the postmaster general to include specific posts in one contract or require the mail for any portion to be carried by the same hand. Neither does it require that the particular mails from Philadelphia for Pittsburg shall be sent by any specific. route

The 1st sect. of the act to establish the post office among other things designates the duties

of the postmaster general --- "He shall provide for the carriage of the mail on
"all postroads that are or may be established by hour & as often as he having regard
" the productiveneſs thereof and other circumstances shall think proper." These
are the only chanses or acts that relate to the subject. We consider that from
Philadelphia by Lancaster Elizabethtown, Middletown,&Harrisburg to Carlisle is as
much a post road as from Philadelphia by Lancaster,& Yorktown to Carlisle &
it has always been a practice to include such portions of post road in a particular contract
without reference to the original act, as appears eligible. This is in a measure
neceſsary to the due (conc.eyanie?) of the mail, for in the first establishment, many
routes for want of direct roads or for the accomodation of particular places were
made quite circuitous, & subsequent acts without discontinuing the bends have made
near or croſs routes from one bend to the other; whenever this has been the case the contracts
have been made for the strait route, & seperate ones to accomodate the places on the
bends. In this view it is considered that the postmaster general had a clear
right to send the great western mail by Harrisburg in the manner that he has
done.
W. Stuart states that application was made to the last Congreſs for an act
to direct the Western mail to be sent by Harrisburg & that it was not acted upon
hence he infers that Congreſs considered that it ought to be continued by York. (But?)
if we consider that no act of congreſs ever required it to be conveyed by York, or ever

was paſsed requiring any particular mail or mails to be conveyed by a specific road

the inference if any must be that it was not considered a proper subject for

<P 3>

congreſs to act upon,& that it was properly confided to the discretion of the postmaster

general.

When proposals for carrying the mail in stages between Lancaster & Pittsburg were first made, the proposers

insisted upon running by Harrisburg and not by York. The postmaster general

was aware that the citizens of York would be diſsatisfied if the stages to the western

country were not made to paſs through that town, & therefore endeavoured to

prevail on those who made the proposals to run that way but was unsucceſsful.

(By our account (crossed out)) The two routes branch at Lancaster and meet at Carlisle; by our

account the distance from Lancaster by Harrisburg to Carlisle, the route which

is taken by the stages, is fifty three miles, and from Lancaster by York to Carlisle

fifty nine miles, making a difference of six miles in favour of the former &

proposers represented the quality of the road equally in its favour. But this was

not the motive which governed the postmastergeneral. as he had only the alter-

native of contracting ---- to carry in stages by the Harrisburg route

or continuing it by the York route on horseback. The establishment of

stages on great public roads is so important to the convenience of the public and

to the security of the mail that he could not hesitate about acceding to the offer. A contract has accordingly been made for carrying the mail in stages from Lancaster by Harrisburg to Pittsburg for the term of four years commencing on the first day of July last. And I have good grounds for saying that it is very pleasing to a large portion of the citizens of Pennsylvania.

2nd that the carriage of the mail on the part of a post road. from York to Carlisle was discontinued?

In the 1st section of the act to establish the post office, the postmastergeneral is au-"thorised to "direct the route or road where there are more than one between places

<P4>

Bradley Abram. Sep.13.04, rec . Sep. 15.

designated by law for a post road, which route shall be considered the post road." From York to Carlisle there are several routes or roads, the mail has usually been carried on the nearest route through Dover, but this was never designated as the postroad by the postmaster general but it was left to the carriers to take which route they pleased, on this road there is no post office & I have not heard that there is any place where one would be useful. But by another road from York by Abbots-town, Berlin, the Sulphure Springs to Carlisle, there are two post offices, and the

mail is already carried there; the distance by the nearest route being 37 miles & by this only 41 miles (according to our account): on this account the postmaster-general concluded to direct that this should be considered the postroad between York & P.M.G. was the more induced to do this, because it was found there was very little correspondence carried on between York & Carlisle and that the whole value of postages in one quarter did not amount to seven dollars or to the rate of 28 dollars in a year.

The reason for resuming the nearest road is aſsigned by the postmaster general in his letter to W. Stewart & the mail has been carried upon it once a week since the 15 August last.

From the whole I think it will appear that the postmastergeneral has not exseded his authority & while he has been attentive to the public interest he has been desirous to serve the citizens of York.

An attack of the prevailing fever has prevented my forwarding the inclosed so soon as I ought to have done. I have the honor to be with much respect

Abraham Bradly jun

aſsist. PostmGenl

<P 5>

Post Master General

13 Septr. ????

Alterutim of the route of the

Main Western Mail from

being carried through York

to Harrisburg.

Description:

Abraham Bradley writes Thomas Jefferson in order to propose an improved route for carrying post.

Notes:

-opening: 1. Recipient (‘The President of the United States’)

2. Author (‘General Post Office’)

3. ‘Sir’

4. Date

-recipient not mentioned by name

-‘hon.ble’

-long ‘s’

Gallatin to Madison, 1810

<P 0>

[Pre]sident

of the United States

<P 1>

Dear Sir

The Senate having rejected the nominations

of Hickman & Wilkman, I beg leave to submit

the following in (??)

Samuel Abbott of Michigan to be Collector of

the district of Michillimakinac & Impactor of the

revenue for the fort of Michillimakinac

Denison Darling of Miſsiſsippi territory (whose

nomination you had withdrawn & sent in its place that of

Wilkman) to be Collector of the district of Mobile

and Impactor of the revenue for the post of Mobile.

The absolute incapacity of John Pooler Com.

of (Loan) for Georgia renders his removal neceſsary;

and Charles Harris of Georgia is warmly

recommended by the two Georgia Senators as a

<P 2>

proper succeſsor.

Respectfully

2 May 1810

Yours obediently

Abbot Gallatin

Description: Gallatin writes Madison in order to submit certain people for certain government positions.

Notes:

-use of long ‘s’ (Miſsiſsippi)

-only ‘dear sir’

-closing:

1. Respectfully

2. Date

3. Yours obediently

4. signature

Jefferson to Madison, 1812

<P 0>

<P 1>

Dear Sir Monticello May 2.12

It is a previous thing to be pressed, as I am into the service of those who want to get into service themselves. the great maſs of those sollicitations I decline: but some come for--ward on such grounds as controul compliance. Mr. Archibald C. Randolph, an applicant for command in the new army, is my near relation, which in his own eye and that of our common friends gives him a claim to my good offices; while in mine, and that of the world it adds not an iota to his fitneſs for pub--lic service. I have taken care to say nothing but the truth. I have specifically stated the qualities he possesses favorable to his views. but no inference of qualities not specified must be drawn: and that this caveat, which I confide to yourself alone, may not operate further than would be just, I am bound to say that I know of but two points in his character adverse to his wishes; the one that he is a zealous federalist, and as such may be prone to feel and foster the grievances founded and fancied which keep an army always uneasy; the other

that he is quarrelsome and may be troublesome to his compa-

-nions. the army is indeed the school to correct his last pro-

-pensity, but the correction may cost us the life of a good man.

god bleſs you and give you a happy issue out of all your

trials which I know to be severe.

Th.Jefferson

The President of the US.

Description:

Thomas Jefferson writes to James Madison informing him of some faults of Archibald C. Randolph, an applicant for the command of the new army.

Notes:

-Opens only with “Dear Sir”, does not mention the recipient’s name (James Madison).

-the recipient is mentioned at the end of the letter as “The president of the US.”

-long ‘s’ sometimes used (mass), sometimes not (pressed)

-words that continue in the next line are marked by a dash in both lines

Friend to Monroe, 1818

<P 1>

A Serviced Friend- to the President - Punishment of Death -

Baltimore, June 26- (1818)

Dear Sir

Believing that your mind is already made up as to the fate of the men con dem- ned to death for cobbing the mail- yet lest the enclosed should not meet your eye, I take the liberty of enclosing it to you and the decided opinion of a majority of the citizens of this place- it is from the Patriot of this city. I aſsure you sir I am unknown to any of the parties -yet I agree with thousands, and I believe with yourself that life should be for feited only where life has been taken

I can truly say I am

A Serviced Friend

For Jas Monroe

Description: 'A serviced friend' writes James Monroe trying to pursuade him to change his mind about giving some men the death penalty.

Notes:

-clear orthography and language

-use of long s (aſsure)

-the part on the very top of the page: author- recipient- theme. Maybe this was added later

Rush to Monroe, 1822

<P 1>

London June 5. 1822.

Dear Sir.

There are no subjects on which
I am more anxious for information, as occa=
sions offer to me whilst here, than naval
subjects.

My thoughts run rather upon
some of the uses to which our navy may be
put at a future day, than upon its form
and constitution, on which branches I can
neceſsarily be but a very crude judge.
Nevertheleſs I have, on these, ventured to
rend you on the encoded sheets a few

extracts from my memorandum book, that
they may, if deemed worth while, be brought
under the private inspection of the secretary
or commiſsioners of the navy.

<P 2>

I can of course have no tenacity to any
of the suggestions contained in these extracts,
all of which, it may be, have heretofore been
considered and exploded by persons better
informed; or would be justly exploded
when mentioned to them. But the bare
poſsibility of this not being the case, and
of what has struck my mind, under the
mere instigations of a constant and warm
zeal for our naval service, starting a
single thought that may prove useful
in the minds of others, leads me to com=
mit them to your hands.

I remain, with the

highest respect,

your faithful

& obt. svt

Richard Rush

President Monroe.

Description: Richard Rush (US Minister to the United Kingdom) writes to James Monroe to tell him that he sent him some suggestions on what the navy could be doing in the future.

Notes:

-found out on wikipedia that Rush was responsible for ending naval armaments in the Great Lakes

-very convoluted language

-very long sentences

-paragraph summeries:

1. i need more info on naval matters

2. i don't know much about the navy itself, but i have some ideas on what it might do in the future. if they are good, show them to someone who knows more

3. i'm not an authority on this, but i thought i'd give it a shot

-opening:

1. date

2. dear sir

-closing:

(through 4 lines): 'I remain, with the highest respect, your faithful & obt. svt'

2. signature

3. recipient (occupation+ surname) (president Monroe)

Wells to Adams, 1826

<P 0>

Mr Wells (?)

(???)

President of the U. States

Washington-

<P 1>

Washington Apl 28th 1826.

To the President of the United States

Sir;

Aware of the important value of time to a person occupying the distinguished and responci-ble station you do, the duty of which you have discharged with so much credit to yourself and advantage to your country, I shall not trespass on your time further than to state briefly the object of my troubling you.

I have been employed in helping the (ba?) draw of the Potomack bridge a full month, during part of which time I have been the acting superintend--ent by order of the (Seoy?) of the Treasury. I believe, as I hope, that there has been no dissatisfaction expres--sed as the manner in which I have discharged my duties. My purpose is to solicit most respect--fully of you, the appointment of sperintendant of the Bridge From the interest you (?) at the time of my application for my present situation I am induced to hope this; my present application

<P 2>

may meet from your Excellency with the same favourable consideration. The duties of my present situation are very labourious for a man of my years, eighty five- I have been wounded in the service of my country during the glorious struggle of her revolution which at times, tends greatly to incapacitate me for bodily labour, and the small sum that I recieve for my present service will not enable me to hire a hand to lighten the bur--then of task- The pay is considerably leſs than that of a messenger in Public Office-

Confidently believing that I could discharge the duties of the situation I solicit with credit to myself and satisfaction to you, I trust my cause in your hands, satisfied that you will do for an old and almost worn out soldur of the revolution what your judgement and your conscience may approve of-

With the highest respect

I have the honour to remain

Your most obdt

Humble Servt

Cornelius Wells

Description: Wells writes Quincy Adams in order to ask him if he could discharge from his duties.

Notes:

-intricate language, large amount of text to express a simple message - the entire first paragraph is dedicated to saying that the author will not waste the recipient's time

-ſ in only one instance (leſs)

-opening:

1. Place (of writing?) + Date

2. 'to the president of the united states'

3. 'sir;'

-closing:

1. With the highest respedt

2. I have the honour to remain

3. Your most obdt

4. Humble Servt

5. Signature

Madison to Adams, 1827

<P 0>

Mr. Madison

(?) President of the U.S.

Post to }

(??) } Montpellier

<P 1>

Adams J. Q. Presidt.

Cop.a

Dec 9

Montp. 1827

Dear Sir

I return my thanks for the copy of your message

to Congress on the 3rd. (?), politely forwarded under your

cover. It's very able view of blessings which distinguish

our forward country, is very gratifying; and

the feelings inspired by our own condition, find an ex-

-panded scope, in the meliorations inforced that

of all other people, by a (progress?) of reason & that, in

the merit of which we may justly claim a share.

With the newborn nations on the same hemisphere with ourselves

and embarked in the same great (?) out of self

(?)? and who are slave to what they are to one

example, as well in the origin of their career as in the

forms of their Institutions, our sympathies must be

peculiarly strong & americans: the more so, as their

destiny must not only affect deeply the general

cause of liberty; but may be influenced

to (?) felt our own,

Be pleased to accept (?) assurances

of my great (?) & friends (?)

Description: Madison writes to Quincy Adams. Despite being able to transcribe most words, the message is not clear to me.

Notes:

-i wonder if people were better at reading messy handwriting in the past

-convoluted language

-no real closing

Gardiner to Jackson, 1831

<P 1>

Washington, Apl. 2d. 1831

Dear Sir,

As I am about leaving the city, I concieve
it a duty which I owe you as a personal friend, and
a supporter of your Administration, to lay before
you a synopsis of a conversation which I held with,
the Hon Saml. D. Ingham on the 22d ultimo. The
views contained in this conversation may poſsibly
be unknown to you; and for your satisfaction
only are they communicated, with liberty to make
such use of them as your discretion may dic-
tate, in case any future contingencies should

require them for your own justification.

I have the honor to be,

with sentiments of high generation,

Your Mo Obdt. Servt.

J. B. Gardiner

Gen. Andrew Jackson.

Description: Gardiner writes to Andrew Jackson (1831) to tell him that he is sending him a summary of a conversation that he had with Ingham. Ingham is the Secretary of Treasury.

Notes:

-'ultimo' means 'last month'

-opening:

1. date

2. dear sir

-closing:

1. i have the honor to be,

2. with sentiments of high generation --> unusual, probably used to make the closing more personal than the automatized phrases

3. Your Mo Obdt. Srvt.

4. signature

5. recipient (military rank?(gen.)+ full name)

Patterson to Jackson, 1835

<P 1>

University of Virginia

May 29th, 1835.

Sir,

I have just recieved the commis-

sion by which you have been pleased

to confer upon in the office of Director

of the Mint of the United States, from

the 30 th of June (secret?),- of which I beg

leave to signify my acceptance.

I assure you, Sir, that I am made

peculiarly sensible both of the honor and

responsibility of this appointment, when

I (?) the great additional importance

which the department must derive from the extensive mining operations in the United States,- from the more just ratio now adopted in the relative values of gold and silver, - from the recent establishment of Branches of the Unit

<P 2>

in North Carolina, Georgia, and New - Orleans, - and especially from the determination of the government to extend the circulation of the precious metals, as the only legitimate material currency.

I am, Sir, with the highest respect

Your grateful and faithful Servant

R.M. Patterson

To/

Gen. Andrew Jackson

President of the United States

Description: Patterson writes to Jackson to beg leave to show his acceptance for his new appointment.

Notes:

-place sent from is 'university of Virginia' -maybe he is sending 'on behalf' of them

-convoluted language

-in closing, there is a unique syntactic structure: (I am, Sir, with the highest respect...)

Hayne to Van Buren, 1838

<P 1>

Copy.

Private.

Charleston So. Ca. 7.th Feb.y 1838.

Dear Sir:

I take leave most expectfully. to

enclose for your perusal, the accompanying let-

-ter from Genl. Jackson .- as the General has

been pleased to hint at my private affairs,

it may not be improper for me to say one word

on the subjects. - It is due to myself to say, that

I returned home free from all embarraſsment.-

The greater portion of my (?) at the time

I went abroad, was in (?) and (?)- but

unfortunately during my absence. was nested

in Southern, & South Western States. -

It is known to you, while I remained

abroad, that I held the responsible place of

For:

His Excellency

Martin Van Buren.

for. for. for.

President of the United States:

Washington.

<P 2>

for Naval affairs to our Ships of war in

the Mediterranean .- On my return home,

I settled my accounts. to a large amount. when

there was found a balance due me, amount-
-ing to several thousand dollars. -

In conclusion, I can only say. it was
my good fortune. during the late war with
England. to have met the enemy in battle,
as often. I believe, as any other Officer in the
Service. Indeed, the best portion of my
life has been faithfully devoted to the ser-
-vice of our common Country.-

I would repair to Washington, at
any moment, you may (?) to regard
my presence.

With high considerations, and great
respect. I subscribe myself, your friend,

and most obt. Sert.

A.P. Hayne.

Description: Hayne writes to Van Buren to tell him that he has enclosed a letter from Jackson which contains some hints at his (Hayne's) private affairs. He also says that he has settled most of his accounts and that he now has several thousadnd dollars

Notes:

-there seems to be a word missing between the first and second pages

-'send to'-part is at the bottom of the first page

-it says 'copy' and 'private' on the top of the first page

-perculiar formatting of place sent from and date

-many unnecessary periods (or commas), especially on the second page

-'perusal' means 'the act of reading through something'

-'to repair to somewhere' means to go to another place

-long 's'

-closing may be unique 'With high considerations, and great respect. I subscribe myself, your friend'

Cochran to Van Buren, 1839

<P 1>

A Copy, to the president

Louisville June 15th 1839-

DrSir

I herewith enclose you a letter furnished me by Judge Bill addreſsed to him by my friend Judge McKinley; and which I desire may serve as additional testimony of what has been previously presented for your consideration as relates to my application for the appointment of post master of this city- In my letter addreſsed to you a few weeks ago on this subject, I thought proper to refer you to sundry highly flattering documents and letters forwarded to Mr. Kendall, and which I must again request you will advert to, and appreciate as they may merit-

They consist of several hundred names of our citizens selecting me as their choice, of an addreſs of our Mayor and eleven of fourteen of our city council; of a letter from (?) B:M: Johnson; and of many letters from gentlemen of the highest respectability - all of which I hope Mr Kendall has recd. - It is the opinion of many of our

most distinguished and influential citizens, that a

majority of three fourths of our population are

favourable to my recieving the appointment-

and if a faithful and uniform struggle in suppost

of the past, and your administration of our government,

and the strangest testimonials in favour of my pretensions

<P 2>

for this office, entitle me to any regard from yourself,

or others in power, I will entertain the hope that my

application for the same will meet your approbation;

and that I may recieve the appointment

Most respectfully

Sir Yr,obt,Sert,

Exc,y Martin VanBuren Wm,,Cochran

Description: William Cochran writes to Martin Van Buren asking to be appointed the new post master his city (probably Louisville).

Notes:

-suppost means 'A person. A subordinate; a supporter, follower, adherent.'

-sundry means 'an indeterminate number' or 'various'

-ſ

-interesting abbreviations of closing fomulas

-generally interesting abbreviations

-easy-to-decipher orthography

Thompson to William Henry Harrison, 1841/03/24

<P 1>

To.

Maj Genl

W.H.Hariſson.

President of the United States.

Sir.

I take the liberty to offer for your acceptnce

the enclosed addreſses, (?) by the death

of my lamented Husband, the late Colonel Alex.

R. Thompson, USA. who fell in Battle on the 25th of Dec.

1837. in Florida- whilst gallantly leading his Regt.

in a Charge against the Hostile indians.

My departed Husband, having served

with Honor and Reputation throughout the War of

1812, and (?) well (?) with the gallant

Gnl. Pike, who was his friend, and to whom he was

ardently attatched- I have thought that a

(IHitch?) of his Character, both as a Christian and

as a Soldier, might not be altogether uninteresting

to one, who himself shared in the toils of that

War. but (where?) (ren-away?) days. I pray may

he (per as perons?) and happy.

I Have the Honor to be Sir

with High Respect & Considerations

MaryMThompson

Washington Mar 24th. 1841

Description: Mary Thompson writes to Harrison, enclosing addresses to her husband. She writes about her husband's gallantry in war.

Notes:

-regt.- regiment

-ardently- Expressing or characterized by warmth of feeling

-ſ

-certain words are hard to decipher

-the recipient's name is Harrison, yet Thompson writes it as Hariſson

Robson to William Henry Harrison, 1841/04/01

<P 1>

Washington 4Mo (April) 1st 1841

Much esteemed Friend

Mr. Henry Harrison/

Having been sometime in this

Country visiting the Meetings of our Friends, the people

called (orthodox) Quakers, & in the course of our

Journey, our lots having fallen in this place , we feel

desirous, if quite convenient to the President of paying

our respects to him, by an Interview of a very few

Minutes. - We have been quite sorry to hear of the

late indisposition of the President, but find this

Morning a favourable Report of the present state

of his health. - If the privilege asked for, is

granted, we should be glad to come at any hour

during the present day which may be the most

convenient, as we purpose, leaving in the morning

for Baltimore. Our company consists of my Wife

(Elizabeth Robson) & myself. & a young man, Nathan

Hill, from No: Carolina. -- Our residence when at

home is in Liverpool, England.

I am with much respect thy real friend

Thomas Robson

Description: Robson writes to Harrison asking him for an interview on behalf of the Quaker comunity.

Notes:

-Robson is an Englishman, so some of the conventions are different than in letters written by Americans

-date: '4Mo' meaning fourth month

-closing: 'I am with much respect thy real friend'

-writing about the addressee in the third person (perhaps they were aware that someone else would read the letter first, especially since the president was ill at the time)

-quite clear orthography

Wise to Tyler, 1841

<P 1>

Private:

Washington.

June 26th 1841.

My dear Sir.

I recd. the in closed from

(Digar?) last night, and have written

to him that I am glad it leaves

you free to indulge your Kind

dispositions towards him. I promised

to inclose it to you and to leave

you, unsolicited by me, to take

your own course.

With the highest regard

& esteem, I am, Sir,

Yours KO

Henry A. Wise

Hon: John Tyler

Pres: of U.S.

Description: Wise writes to Tyler saying that he inclosed something with this letter.

Notes:

-private

-abbreviations (recd., KO, Hon:, Pres:)

-'with the highest regard & esteem'

Reed to Tyler, 1842

<P 1>

Private

St. Louis

Oct. 1. 1842.

President Tyler

My Dear Sir

Since I left here three

weeks ago, the offices of collector (Surveyor) of

the Post and Register of the Land office

have both been vacanted, the one by death,

the other by resignation. In case I

have visited Washington as I set out to do,

I should have urged the removal of

both these men forthwith- but it has not

become necessary. They were both miserable

appointments, as I had informed Robert last

Winter- but I suppose they were of Mr.

Erwing's Selection. The late Collector

is a defaulter from four or five thousand

dollars, by placing the mony in the hands of

one of his securities, who appropriated it
to his own use, and could not replace it-

The securities are good & will pay
the Government in a reasonable time, &
apprehend.

There are numerous applicants for
the place, and several of them being my warm
personal friends, I have declined writing
you in behalf of my one. It is my duty

<P 2>

however, to warn you against mistaken
action, and forthat purpose I made the
inquiries of a personal and political friend,
in reference to the political feeling of the
gentleman who has sent you a letter
from Doctor (?), and which resulted in
the answer which I herewith inclose you.

My impression is ,however , that Mr. Greene
has not acted with the (Clayman?) here since

he signed his name to their pledge-

Mr. Cady has written you his desire
to be placed here, and if there were no
uncertainty of his confirmation by the Senate,
I would say the arrangement would be
a good one and add strenght to our
Cause in Missouri. Cady would
help us materially in St Louis, and would
leave affairs in a prosperous condition
at Palmyra as he has doubtless informed
you. It would aid us much in presenting
a bold and strong front to our V.B. rivals
here, to have the "Courier" at Palmyra warmly
on our side. as Mr. Cady informs we can be
done in the event of this transfer- but of all
this you will of course judge as you
please. - Rumour says that Doct.

<P 3>

(Keing?) of Washington will recieve the place,

but if he is not a Citizen of the State now,
and it requires a man of mercantile
knowledge and talent to fill the place
properly - It is not important that the
appt. should be made in a hurry, and
as it is one of a good deal of interest to
us in several respects, it would be better
that it should be delayed awhile, unless
your mind is readily or already made
up as to whom it shall be given.

I am glad that Mr. (Allen?) will
probably recieve the appt. of Register-
He is right, and will be with us heart &
hand, to some purpose- We are
suffering for want of numerous other
changes hereabouts- but as there is a time
for all things, we will say more of this hereafter.

I know I have made my letter too long-
but I cannot write short letters on subjects
of so much interest to us all.

I am, dear Sir,

Your very sincere

and obt. Srvt.

Silas Reed

Description: Reed writes to Tyler in order to suggest some applicants for the position of 'collector (Surveyor) of

the Post and Register of the Land office'.

Notes:

-in the last paragraph, the author ackgnowledges that this is a long letter

-private

-no long 's'

Bryant to Polk, 1845

<P 1>

Washington City D.C.

Oct 1st 1845

To His Excellency

James K. Polk.

President of the United States

Sir.

Being aware that two vacancies will occur in the Pay Department of the Army. by expiration of the Commiſsions of Paymaster Denny and Paymaster Davies. the first on the 15th inst and the second on the 17th proximo. I beg leave most respectfully to call your attention, to my applications numerous recommendations, and testimonials, now on file in the War Department, for that appointment, and solicit one of these places.

I am recommended by the Deligations of Pennsylvania. Indiana & Miſsouri in the last Congreſs, together with other personal and po litical friends.

I beg leave also to present, the enclosed letter to yourself, from Benjamin H. Brenster Esq of Philadelphia, one of my earliest and personal aſsociates.

I am Sir

With the highest respect

Your Obt Servant

Thomas. S. Bryant

Late Captain U.S.Army

Description: Bryant writes Polk begging leave in order to present his application to the position of Commissions of Paymaster.

Someone to Polk, 1847

<P 1>

Notes:

-clear orthography

-a very by-the-book letter

-'inst' means date of the current month

Nashville Augt. 16th 1847.

To His Excly

Jas. K. Polk.

DrSir/

This letter will be handed to you, by my friend

Capt. Gardner, (lut.?) of the Tenniſsee Cavalry- The Capt

Visits Washington, with the claims of his Company for

Land warrants. and (?) remaining until they are

adjusted, I trust you will give him any aid he may

need, in the (?) of these claims.

I learn from Capt. Gardners friends

that he would like to have a place in

the regular army. I take great pleasure in

reccommending him to your notice as a

young man of the first order of gallantry,

and (?) entitled to notice, Yr Obt Servt

D.R. (?)

Description: Someone writes to Polk sayint that Captain Gardner is coming to Washington with his company in order to collect Land warrants. He also reccommends Gardner for a place in the regular army.

-long 's' 'Tenniſsee'

-it would be interesting to explore how the level of effort varies when writing closing and opening formulas (abbreviations, orthography...)

Twichell to Taylor, 1849

<P 1>

St Louis Sept 25. 1849

Sir

I have the honor to address you

upon a subject, which, however unpleasant,

I concieve my duty requires me to notice,

and upon which, silence might be considered

a neglect of the obligatons to support the char=

=acter and dignity of the Govrnment, which

rests on every good citizen, but more especially

upon the officers of that Government-

On the 12th (night?) Mr. W. Grandini

(said to be a special agent of the Treasury.

Department), arrived at the "Planter's House"

Hotel" in this city in the prosecutions of

his official business it is supposed, but in

such a state of intoxication as to be entirely

unfitted for any kind of business whatever
and has continued in this condition
without intermission ever since - such is
the degradation to which he has fallen that
(..ing?) citizens of high respectability have
called upon me to express their astonishment
at the (misplaced?)(confirmal?) refused in such
a mad (?) the appointment he holds - His
conduct is such that the proprietors of the
Planters House last week requested him to

<P 2>

seek other quarters, which they suppose he
has done from the fact that he has been
absent for 3 or 4 days. yet without paying
in full his bill or, removing his baggage.

Up to this morning he has not
appeared at the office of the Sub=Treasurer
or had any communication with him-

Gentlemen who have known him for

years look upon his appointment as
exceedingly unfortunate and injudicious-

Col. D.D. Mitchell stated that he should
continuly make known to you these factz, but
being suddenly called to the (Louisiana?)
Country, left last week & believe without
doing so - I submit the facts for
such consideration as you may think
they deserve - should a new appointment
be deemed necessary of no more prominent
individual to be before you for the place. I
would respectfull suggest that (?) N.J.
Eaton of this city is in all respects
qualified and worthy of the position.

His standing for honesty integrity & industry
is high in this community -

I am most truly
your obt servant

Jno W. Twichell

To

Z. Taylor

Presd.

<P 3>

St. Louis, Sept 25- 49

His Excellancy,

Z. Taylor, Prst. U.S.A.

I have knowledge of

the facts stated by Capt. Twichell

in the (?) letters. They are fully

sustained- Respectfully

Gen. (?) (?)

Description: (probably) Twichell writes to Taylor in order to tell him that Mr. Grandini is not suitable to be a treasurer because of his frequent intoxications

Notes:

-very indirect language (a whole paragraph to communicate a simple message)

-opening:

1. date

2. Sir

-closing:

1. I am most truly

2. your obt servant

3. signature

-on the last page, there is a short message written by another person, validating the letter

McGehee to Taylor, 1850

<P 1>

Gen. Z Taylor

[1850 May 9]

Dear Friend

On my arrival

have I. read the unopened letter which I (?) (?)

to forward to you (?), by which you (proclaim?)

that Cap. Tims has (?)./ Subject to you-

r (?) (?) my (?)./ in the (?) from Hen-

derson & Peale. New Orleans. the (?)

you with Int. of the rate of 1 Perct. say of 3.000

due 1st of may 1849. If you deem it best to (?)

(?) the amount (prior?) to my return to the City of

Washington which was (?) (?) III days.-

you can do so and I will wait there (?)

(?). that the rate shall be (?) than

on my return home.

With (Sentiments?) of (Regard?)

New Yrk. May 9. 1850 (?) Respectfully

Edward McGehee

Description: Judge McGehee writes to Taylor seemingly to talk about a loan.

Notes: barely legible

-Taylor is addressed as a general and not president

-McGehee addresses him as 'Dear Friend'

Atherton to Pierce, 1855

<P 1>

Washington Feb. [20] 1855.

Mr President.

I ask it as a favor-

I press my claim more

strongly than that of you.

to grant me a confidential

interview at your earliest

convenience.

I wish to be in-

-formed (?). upon

the subject involving the

<P 2>

eight thousand dollar

legacy "bequethed to you

by Mr Atherton's Will."

I hade borne a Widows-heart

ten days less than thirteen

months, ere I was told

that, that was not for

you.-

Please state the day

and hour, when I

may be recieved!

With your hearts

warm impulses, you

can concice, that I am

in deep affliction.

Yours, (?)

Anne Atherton

<P 3>

"Browns Hotel."

Tuesday A.M.

Feb. 20. 1855.

Mr President,

This note was written

ere I saw you last ere.

In complience with your

kind invitation to visit you,

I will be at the White House

tomorrow (Wednesday) at

9' A.M.

Do treat me on this sub-

-ject. With frankness and let

my visit be confidential!

I may some time feel that it is

best as it is, but "Ignorance was bliss"-

in comparison- Yours, hastily.

Anne Atherton

Description: Anne Atherton writes Pierce concerning her husband's will.

notes:

-ere means before

-a separate message was added onto the same paper as the first one

Geary to Pierce, 1857

<P 1>

Lecompton Kansas Territory

Janry 19th 1857.

His Excellency

Franklin Pierce

President U.S.

Dr.Sir.

It is roumored here that Mr. Spencer will not be confirmed by the Senate. Should this be true, and should Major Donaldson not be detained, I take pleasure in recommending to your fovorable consideration Wm P. Fain Esq. formerly from the town of Calhoun, Georgia, as a person well qualified to perform the duties of that office.

He is a gentleman in the real acceptation of the term, has been a Judge, and hasperformed the duties

of assistant marshal of this Territory

Since I have been here. The per-

formance of his duties, has in every

respect been satisfactory to myself

and the public.

<P 2>

Should there be a vacancy. I feel

Confident in assuring you that

the appointment of Judge Fain

will be well recieved, and will

give satisfaction to the people

of the Territory

Your Obedient Servant,

Jno. W. Geary

Description: Geary writes to Pierce recommending William Fain for a vancant office place. It is not clear from the letter which particular place it is.

Notes:

-clear orthography

-Geary seems to be a skilled writer

Porter to Buchanan, 1857

<P 1>

Harrisburg 21st March 1857

His Excellency James Buchanan

President of the United States

My Dear Sir

Allow me to say

a word or two on the subject of the application

making by the friends ofCol. WMullen for the

office of Marshal for the District of Columbia.

The Col. was one of the delegates to the

(Commission?) in Cincinnati, and his whole course

and conduct on that occasion was so entirely

apprased by your friends from Pennsylvania that

I can never forget him. He was your constant

and ardent friend, and we had some difficulties

to contend with in that obligation, more than

met the public eye. His long public career is

too well known to your Excellency to require a

word from me. I would be gratified to hear

of his appointment

very Respectfully

& truly

Yours David R Porter

Description: Porter writes to Buchanan in order to comment on the potential appointment of Colonel W. Mullen for the office of Marshal for the District of Colombia.

Notes:

-some people write capital 'C' as '6'

Du Pont to Buchanan, 1859

<P 1>

U.S. Navy Yard Boston

June 10. 1859.

Sir

I have the honor to inform you
that four trees containing the Several parts
of a handsome Secretary, were placed on board
the Minnesota while at Bombay for the accep-
tance of your Excellency.

The trees have
been properly addressed, with the exception of (?)
destination, in reference to which I will be pleased
to recieve your instructions.

A letter in the mail
box brought by the ship, will have informed
you from where this offering came- merchants
of a ParSee firm of merchants doing considerable
(?) buſineſs in Bombay.

I have the honor to be Sir

With great respect

Your Obt. Servant

I. F. Du Pont

To his Excellancy

James Buchanan

President US

Washington

Description: Du Pont writes Buchanan informing him that four trees (as far as I can tell) have been sent to him as a gift from Parsee merchants in Bombay.

Notes:

-'trees' could be 'brees'

potentially relevant meanings:

-'bree' in Scots can mean 'juice, essence (of a liquid or flower)', according to Wictionary.org

-'bree' in Scotish can mean 'stock', according to dictionary.com

Andrews to Lincoln, 1861

<P 0>

Hon: Abraham Lincoln

President of U. States.

Washington.

D.C.

<P 1>

[Commonwealth of Massachusetts]

[Executive Department]

[Boston,] Nov. 25th [186]1.

To the President of the United States.

Sir:

My interviews with you
did not afford me opportunity to urge as
Earnestly as I feel the importance of an
Exchange of prisoners.-

I have urged it in Some
quarters in Washington; and am Confi=
dent that the justice and Expediency of
the case, and the feelings of the people
all concur in this Measure which is both
so convenient and humane.-

The reasons suggest them=

selves, and as well as the answers to the

objections made, so that I will not tire

you by their repetition; but will Simply

record my poor judgement, in order that,

so far as it may be worth anything, it

<P 2>

may weigh for the benefit of the right

side of the question.-

I Earnestly hope that im=

mediate measures may be taken to

Effect Exchanges and that the hearts

of the people may not be Sickened by

hope deferred.-

I am with great respect

Your friend & Servant

JohnAAndrews

Description: John Andrews writes Lincoln in order to negotiate an exchange of prisoners.

Notes:

-extremely clear orthography

-the executive department in Massachusets obviously has their own block of paper with print saying where it came from and the decade, more common in later letters

Opdyke to Lincoln, 1863

<P 0>

Mayor Opdyke

Jan 6.63.

(?) in (?)

His Excellency

The President

Washington

D.C.

<P 1>

[Mayor's Office]

[New York,] Jan. 6. [186]3

His Excellency

Abraham Lincoln

President

Dear Sir:

I inclose a note just recieved

by me from Mr. Wm. A. Hall of this city.

Both himself and Mr. Bell his informant

are personally known to me, and are

gentlemen of high charach., loyal

and reliable. I transit the note

in the hope that you will have a prompt

and thorough investigation instituted, and

if the information proves to be cor-

rect that you will have the

<P 2>

spies exposed and punished-

I have the honor to be

Very truly yours,

George Opdyke

Mayor

Description: Opdyke writes Lincoln saying that he enclosed a letter which he recieved, probably regarding the identities of some spies.

Notes:

-papers, pens, and even 'clarity' of orthography from the Lincoln collection all seem to be similar - yellow papers, thin pen (almost pencil-like), and quite clear orthography

-paper has print which shows origin (Mayor's office), this seems to have come into fashion around Lincoln's time

-I realised this already has a transcription included on the website, but the orthography is so clear that I read everything right

-'character' abbreviating

Kyle to Johnson, 1865

<P 0>

Nashville Tenn.

Nov. 12th 1865.

A.A. Kyle,

(?) in regard to

lands of Orville

Rice, Saml and

Ger. Powell et. al.

(Fill?)

<P 1>

[Office U.S. Direct Tax Commissioners,

District of Tennessee,] 12th

[Nashville,] th Novr. [1865.]

To His Excellency

Andrew Johnson

Prest. of the U.S.

Dear sir,

I have the honor to

acknowledge the receipt of your letter

of the 9th (Gust?) in reference to the

lands of the two Powels & Orville Rice

in Hawkins les:-

C. W. Hall, the U.S.

district athy. has heretofore taken

steps to confiscate the lands of the

aforesaid parties, in the Federal court

at Knoxville & when I last talked to him

<P 2>

on the subject, said that he intended

to still proceed against the lands

of these parties, at the Novr. Court,

(4th Monday)- If I understand your

communication now before me, it

is that all parties who have recieved

amnesty, will have their lands restored

to them, at the expiration of present

leases- Then of course, the Dist. atty
ought to enter a "Nolle prosequi" or
dismiſs proceedings in the Federal
court as against the parties herein
mentioned, & all others similarly situ-
ated- Please reply to this commu-
nication, addreſsing me at Knoxville.
And place me in a condition to
have all proceedings in the Federal
court stopped against the lands of
Orville Rice, George & Saml Powel &
Audley Anderson- These are clients

<P 3>

of mine-

I wrote to my friend (?) Patter
Son a day or two since, giving him
a list of the names of parties, for
whom I am endeavoring to get Pardons
Application was made for the parties

4 or 5 months ago- They (most of them)

are Indicated in the Federal court, & were

arrested before recieving Amnesty; hence

the urgency of the case- The court comes

on two weeks hence, & as yet no Pardon.

Your early attention, will place, under

increased obligations.

Your friend

& obt. srt.

A.A.Kyle

Description: Kyle writes Johnson in order to pressure him into giving pardons to some of his clients. If the president gives them pardons, they will not lose their lands.

Notes:

-nolle prosequi- "to be unwilling to pursue"

-heretofore, aforsaid

-paper has print indicating origin

-use of abbreviations

Black to Johnson, 1868

<P 0>

Washington,

March 12, 1868.

Chauncey F. Black.

Having heard that the Presi-

dent has settled the Alta

Vela claim against his

clients, requests that the

Executive will, without delay,

communicate his formal

decision in the matter.

<P 1>

Washington

March 12. 1868.

Mr President.

We are this morning in receipt of a des-

patch from our clients in Baltimore, which informe

us on the authority of a person in the interest of
our adversaries that Mr Servard yesterday ex-
plicitly stated to him that the Alta Vela claim
was settled against us and in favor of St
Domingo. We are further informed by Mr Coyle
that last night you gave him to understand
that you had no intention of giving effect
to the Act of Congress of Aug. 16. 1856. If this
be the fact we think we have a right to re-
quest that you record your conclusion and
give us official notice of the same. We make
this application in order that we may seek a
remedy for our wrongs elswhere. I only repeat
now what conscience has required us to say
many times before, that we cannot suffer Mr
Seward's (carmpt?) combination to prevail finally
over the rights which the laws of our Country and

<P 2>

ofthe world have given us. We beg that you

will communicate your formal decision

without delay, as the vigor of the robbers

makes the (?) of an hour of vast importance

to us.

I am. Mr President

Very respectfully

Your obedient Servant

Chauncey. F. Black

for

Patterson & Murgniondo

Claimants

Description: Black writes to Johnson requesting that he make a formal decision on the matter of the Alta Vela claim.

Notes:

-Alta Vela is an island south of The Dominican Republic

-'gave him to understand'

-'Mr. President'

Bingham to Grant, 1874

<P 1>

[THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY.]

64

[Dated] Phild Nov 3 [187]4

[Recieved at] 4th 140 a

[To] Presiden USGrant

Washn

DC

We Carry the Entire

State ticket & the

legislature Robbins democrat

elected in the Myer

Harmer district (?)

Republican defeated we think

that we gain a

Congressman in Schuylkill

District (Human?) Oneil &

Newly elected H.H. Bingham

Description: Bingham writes to Grant telling him that they should gain a congressman in Schuylkill district

Notes:

-telegraph paper

-peculiarly simplified constructions

-no opening or closing

Anonymous to Grant, 1875

<P 1>

March 1st 1875

U.S.Grant,

This is to notify you

that if you sign the "Civil Rights Bill"

you shall not live long to enjoy with the

negroe the privilege you give him.

We will bear much for peace, but we

will not bear all that you and your

contemplable set choose to inflict.

A word to the wise is sufficient.

Believe me many like the notble

J.W. Booth

still live and we like him will

gladly yield our lives to rid our country

of its despot and several others shall

share your fate. Our last word

is "Beware."

Description: Anonimous writer writes a letter to Grant, threatening him with his life.

Notes:

-this is the most legible letter I have seen so far

-the writer probably wanted to make sure that their message was readable

-opening:

1. date

2. recipient's name

Chadbourne to Garfield, 1881

<P 1>

President Garfield,

The Alumni of Williams College here gathered Esteem it an honor that they are permitted to be the first to congratulate you in this house, now to be your home, on your acession this day to your great office as President of the United States; an they have deputed me to say a few words in their behalf.

But before doing this I must be permitted to greet and congratulate you personally and on my own behalf. This I venture to do, if for no other reason, because I have been told, and I suppose truly, that I am the only president of a College who has (?) to see one who graduates during his administration attain to this high honor. This I am now permitted to see, and for it I give thanks to God. In this, with the exception of your honored mother and more

immediate family there is no one who rejoices
more than I do, and from the bottom of my heart
I congratulate you.

Having this ventured to say a word for
myself, I now speak for the Alumni.

<P 2>

Since your graduation, Sir, twenty four
years ago your course has been conspicuous, and we
have watched it with deep interest. We have seen
you passing on and up without defeat, until, by no
political maneuvering, but by high Statesmanship
and continuous public service in the face of
the American people, you have attained the high-
est position this world has to give- the presiden-
cy of the grandest republic hitherto Known.

Well then, Sir, may we congradelate you,
and I do it in the name of those who hold or have
held high positions under the government, in the name
of those prominent in the several States from which

they came, in the name of your Classmates of whome so many are present, in the name of all present I congratulate you and assure you that we feel honored in your honor.

And not in the name of these alone do I congratulate you, but in the name of the College, its trustees and its Alumna wherever they may be. Standing as I do among the older of these Alumni, and having taught so many of them I feel authorized to speak for them. I Know that they also feel honored in your honor, and that, as a body, they will be strongly

<P 3>

in sympathy with you in your administration.

To that administration we look forward with confidence. In view of its vast responsibilities and grand opportunities we invoke upon you the blessing of Him

who has led you witherto; and we trust

that in connexion with it these will

come to yourself still higher honor,

and to the whole of this vast country.

East, West, North, and South alike, greater

prosperity than it has hitherto Known.

Description: Paul A. Chadbourne writes Garfield in order to congratulate him on his presidency on behalf of himself and his college's alumni

Notes:

-perculiar letter:

-no date ('1881' was probably written by an archivist)

-no intro or outro

-no signature

-found out that it was probably Chadbourne because he was the president of Williams College in 1881. He actually resigned that year, so it could have been his successor, Franklin Carter, but being that he writes as though he had been filling that position for a long time, I find it more probable that it was Chadbourne.

-long sentences with some perculiar constructions: 'we feel honored in your honor'

Sherman to Garfield, 1881/04/26

<P 1>

[United States Senate Chamber.]

[Washington,] April 26 1881

Dear Sir

The (?) Dr (Wilmer?) was
the Republican candidate for Con-
gress in the adjoining Dist. in
Maryland to the City = He is
personally known to me as a
Gentleman of high character &
Standing - He (seeks?) a (?)
interview which I hope you
can grant - Very respectfully-

(?) Sherman

To the President

Description: Sherman writes to Garfield recommending someone (maybe Wilmer) for a palace in Congress in the District of Maryland.

Notes:

-print showing origin

-orthography is hard to decipher

Black to Arthur, 1882

<P 1>

NewYork January 30. 1882

His Excellency

Cherster A Arthur

President

Dear Sir-

Last Saturday

Miſs Van Einburgh & Attribuary, sent me a check

for $25968- proceeds of the Job of 132 shares

of Richmond & Danville Stock. belonging to the

estate of the late Mrs Handon. By the Will I

am authorized to invest this money in real Estate

or Government stocks. Have you any suggestion to

make in regard to it? And have you been

appointed Guardian for your children as you

intended to be? Wishing you good health to

enable you to get through with your very arduous

official duties.

I have the Honor to be

Yours Most Truly

Edward Black

Description: Black writes Arthur asking for advice in investing. He also asks if the president was appointed guardien of his children.

Notes:

-long 's' still in use in 'Miſs', perhaps it remained as the convention for longer in formulized constructions like this one

-'yours most truly' seems to be a newer type of closing remark

-some writers use a period after the day in the date '30.' instead of '30th' - this is also a newer thing

-the image of this letter contains another perhaps related letter, which I will not be transcribing because I cannot decipher a lot of elements

Hutchins to Arthur, 1884

<P 1>

My dear Mr. President:

When Mr. Hutchins brought

me home the other afternoon the compliment of your

messages I decided to send you the inclosure.

I have often thought of showing it to you in some

(?) but not knowing I had any special identity

in your memory I hesitated to appear (intrusion?).

This is, I think the last letter Mrs. Arthur

wrote,- merely a little word of courtesy such as any

woman as thoughtful as she was would often write,

but still, like all she did, informed with kindness

and sincerity. You will see that it is the

acknowledgment of the soap, which I came to Send

her in reminder of a bright little chat we had

<P 2>

about foreign hotels and soap the day I sailed for

Europe in June 1879. She wrote the afternoon of the

day she was taken ill and left the letter in her

desk to await a stamp. During her sickness she

asked Mrs. Roosa to mail it, but it was not done

at the time and afterwards Mrs. Roosa forwed it

and sentit tome with so touching and sad an account

of those few days that I have always kept both letters

together as they came.

I have another little souvenir of her.- a small leather

purse which she gave me that same Summer day.

I carried it and no other all through my journey-

not having a great deal to put in a purse.- and then

I keptit, and I have it now, because there was some

thing so gracious and sweetin her way of giving it

<P 3>

that it would have seemed disloyal to part with the little

thing.

Although my actual intercourse with Mrs. Arthur was limited to the time I spoke of, she was one of those who are known by their works, and moreover her unaffected cordiality made me feel at once and most agreeable that we were not strangers. I have always wanted you to know how much admiration and even affection I felt for her because it is a proof that her influence extended beyond the immediate sphere of her presence. I think of her as one of the pleasantest memories of any life, and when I reflect on the exalted position that awaited her it seems to me her loss is not yours alone but touched the many who might have known her and been the happier

<P 4>

and better for it.

I beg to present any compliments to Mrs. McElroy whom I regret not having seen, and requesting you to return her. Arthur's letter atyour convenience

I remain with much respect,

Sarita, W Hutchins

March 8. 1884.

Description: Hutchins writes Arthur reminiscing about his late wife.

Notes:

-first letter that I have transcribed that is written by a woman

-closest opening to the title of my thesis 'My dear Mr. President'

Diffin to Cleveland, 1886

<P 1>

Albany Apr 20th '86

Pres: Grover Cleveland

Dear Sir

I recieved

a letter from Sec: Manning on Dec18th'85

which winds up as follows "I regret

to say I have not- now a place to

offer you". --- I applied for a position

of Inspector of construction of Public

Buildings, or any position I was

capable of filling satisfactorly.

It s now four months since I

heard from him, and about the

same since I recieved your letter

(Dec 22nd 85) telling me that "My

wishes would be brought to the personal

attention of the Sec: of the Treasury"

I have waited patiently and

<P 2>

am still waiting hoping that I

will not be forgotten entirely.

Seeing the Bill making an

appropriation for a Congressional

Library has become a law, I hope

you will do what you can to

secure me a position thereon, Mr

Manning being sick he cannot, so

I depend all on your action.

We have been idle here on

The Capitol waiting for an appropriation

since Feb: 12th and the prospects

are not very bright for work starting

up this year, So if you can in

any way possible do any thing to

secure me a position of any kind

it will be like a Godsend to

Your Friend

George Diffin

Stone Cutter

Union House

Albany

N.Y.

Description: Diffin writes Arthur asking for information about his job application. He was promised that the application would be attended to by the Secretary of Treasury personally, but there had been no reply in five months.

Notes:

-very clear orthography

-the lines made by the pen are thick, which I find is typical of letters from the end of the century, perhaps a new kind of pen became popular at this time

-abbreviations for 'president' and 'secretary'

Roosevelt to Cleveland, 1888

<P 1>

7 Wall St

New York May 10/88

My dear Mr President

I see by the

morning papers that

you have sent my name

to the Senate to fill

the Mission to Holland-

I have recieved no official

notice but do not think

you will consider it prema-

ture on my part to thank

you. I hope to have the

pleasure of doing this

in person in case the

<P 2>

Senate shall takeaa

a fairable view of the

nomination and until

then beg to subscribe

myself

Yours very sincerely

ArnRoosevelt

Description: Roosevelt writes Cleveland thanking him for the fact that he is nominated for a mission to Holland

Notes:

-readable, but many letters are ambiguous (u, n, r, i, s often look similar)

-'my dear mr president'

Edmunds to Benjamin Harrison, 1890

<P 0>

Edmunds

[PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE FILES.]

[--------]

[WRITER.]

Edmunds Geo F

[Residence,] Senator

[Date,] 3/3/90

[SUBJECT.]

Enclosing a letter from

Frank P Hastings

on the Subject of

Pearl River Harbor

and giving his idea of

the matter

<P 1>

[SENATE CHAMBER]

[WASHINGTON]

March 3, 1890

Dear Mr. President:

I enclose for your

perusal a letter from Mr. Frank P.

Heastings on the subject of Pearl River

Harbor and its adjoining shores, which

I think of sufficient interest to justify

my calling your attention to it:

When the Senate ratified

the last treaty with Hawaii we inserted

as an amendment a clause granting

to the United States Pearl River

Harbour for the uses therein men-

tioned. The grant was to the
United States without limitation
of time, and it was understood
by the Senate to clearly and undoubt-
edly mean, that in consideration

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of the reciprocity part of the treaty
which could not pass without the
amendment, Hawaii should (?)
to us Pearl River Harbor.

Mr. Bayard, on the
exchange of the ratifications, was
asked whether that was or not in-
-tended to be a grant of the right to
have a naval station, (?), there, after
the ten years for which free sugar was
provided, had expired; to which Mr.
Bayard replied, first, that he had no
authority or power to express any opinion,

but that he personally supposed it was simply a ten years lease. That was the substance of the communication.

Of course, construed as a

<P 3>

ten years lease, it was utterly worthless, but it is impossible to torture or to re--strain language into any such meaning,-as a grant from a Government differing from one to an individual, does not require words of succession to make it one of perpetuity.

If the United States are to have any interest in that harbor, it is of course extremely desirable to secure sufficient land on the shores for our purposes, and it may be that a little diplomatic persuasion would induce the

Legislature of Hawaii to provide
for our getting such titles of private
owners as may be deemed necessary.

<P 4>

When you have considered
the letter will you kindly return it
to me!

You are at liberty to take
a copy of it, if you desire, as it is
purely on a public subject, but is
of course confidential as regards
our Government.

Very respectfully yours

GeoFEdmunds

The President.

Description: Edmunds writes to Harrison regarding the building of a naval station on the shores of the Pearl river in Hawaii.

Notes:

-interesting linguistic take: "Of course, construed as a ten years lease, it was utterly worthless, but it is impossible to torture or to restrain language into any such meaning,-as a grant from a Government differing from one to an individual, does not require words of succession to make it one of perpetuity." ----> I'm not sure what the point is, but obviously the Hawaiian government has taken this grant to last ten years, while the U.S. considers it perpetual

-'Dear Mr. President'

-no double 's'

-clear orthography

Blaine to Benjamin Harrison, 1892

<P 1>

[17 MADISON PLACE.]

[WASHINGTON.]

March 30, 1892.

My dear Mr. President:

I did not get

through with Sir Julian

until I presumed that you

had gone riding. I can

make nothing of him.

Tomorrow morning at ten

o'clock I will bring him

to see you. He is either

very stupid or I am, or

both of us, which is proba-

bly the case.

Very sincerely yours,

James G. Blaine

Description: Blaine writes Harrison informing him that Sir Julian came to see him and that he will come back the next day at ten. Blaine was Harrison's secretary and Sir Julian Pauncefote was a British diplomat.

Notes:

-'My dear Mr. President'

-interesting remark: "He is either very stupid or I am, or both of us, which is probably the case."
--> quite informal

Abney to Cleveland, 1893

<P 0>

<P 1>

[LAW OFFICE

JOHN R. ABNEY,

UNION TRUST BUILDING,

80 BROADWAY]

[New York,] Aug. 31, 1893.

Hon. Grover Cleveland

President ofthe United States

Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I am informed that Mr. Wil-

liam C. Clopton of this bar has been

suggested to you as a suitable person

for the position on the N.Y. Supreme

Court bench made vacant by the

death of Mr. Justias Blackford; and

I beg to add my opinion to that of

his friends suggesting him that he

possesed the requisite mental power

of examining and correctly deciding

questions of law and of expressing

his decisions clearly; and he has

the health and physical strenght nec-

essary to the labour of an Associate

Justice. I therefore take pleasure in

recommending him for the place and

have the honour to remain your obt servt.

John R. Abney.

Description:

John R. Abney writes to Cleveland in order to suggest William C. Clopton for the position of Supreme Court Justice.

Notes:

-clear orthography and language

-opening formula:

1. Hon. + name

2. occupation (president)

3. place sent to

4. sir:

-closing:

1. (within the last sentence) have the honour to remain your obt. servt.

2. signature

Someone to Cleveland, 1896

<P 0>

<P 1>

[Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds,

House of Representatives U.S.,

Washington, D.C.,] 12/24 [,189]6

Mr. President :-

I am aware that the

President (heset??) has only
issued proclamations in
the case of New Orleans &
Chicago but (?) had hopes
that you moved also (treat?)
Omaha in the (?) (?) al-
though no such provision
was in (?) in the (?) ap-
propriating money on the
part of the Government
for buildings & 4 (?) of
the Trans-Mississippi & (?
?) 4 position. This 4-
position is to be International
in its character, is to (?
?) safford & (?)

<P 2>
quickly (?) 14 (?) (?
?) (?) (?)

trans-Mississippi county,

while many of the remain-

ing states will be (?)

by 4 (?). This 4 position

will be of no new pro-

(?) & (?) it will

reflect credit (?) this Re-

public and as our people are

very anxious for you to

dignify it by issuing

a procamation I think

You will decide to do

So even if you are es-

tablishing a precedent.

(Rufy?)

(?)

Adams to McKinley, 1897/03/08

<P 0>

<P 1>

I

[Manchester, N. H.,] March 8th [1897.]

Hon. William McKinley

President

Honored Sir,

I Desire to suggest the

Name of Gen. O O Howard

As Secretary of the Interior,

in the Event of the Retirement

of Mr Bliss, Gen. Howard is

an Able man, a Christian

Gentleman, His Treatment

of the Indian (Women?) (?)

Worked in comparison with

Administrations of the past,

I am seeking no office, but only

Wish that your administration (do?) a

(Make?) one a Soilder is the one to Treat

With the Indian Situation

<P 2>

II

Especially So good a

Solider as Gen Howard

has been. the Indian matters

Can (?) (?) treated by a

Christian Gentleman

Yours Most Respectfully

John B Adams

Description:

John B Adams writes William McKinley in order to suggest General Howard as the next Secretary of the Interior.

Notes:

-written on a notepad which has the place and year pre-printed (‘[Manchester, N.H. …… 1897.]’

-opening formula:

1. Adresee by name + abbreviated honorific (‘Hon. William McKinley’)

2. Occupation (‘President’)

3. Honoured Sir

-closing formula:

1. ‘Yours Most Respectfully’

2. Author by name (‘John B Adams’)

-page sequence is marked

-seemingly no interest in saving space on the paper in comparison to older letters

-elements are relatively uniform in form, but differ in scale

Someone to McKinley, 1897/03/01

<P 0>

<P 1>

NewBerne N.C.

March 1 of 97

Hon William McKinley

President of the United States

Washington D.C.

DearSir:

I think it is always pleasant to

A speaker to find that his words flew

“straight as an arrow to the mark”.

Your inaugural address met with the

enthusiastic endorsement of all of the Re-
-publicans of our section, and the Dem-
-ocrats, who are not apt to praise any-
-thing,“that Cometh out of Nazareth,” said
“it is plain straight common sense talk
and we can understand it, not high-flown
words like old Cleveland’s,” A large
number of them are openly expressing
their delight at a change and hundred
more are secretly glad, and ready to
<P 2>
commend you openly even if you are
a Republican.

Others say, McKlinely’s Calling the
Congress at once and advising them to
settle the Tariff once for all is just
what we need, and if Congress will
only do it, and not turn a pack of
fools like our fellows did, we
may indeed soon look for prosperity.

Pardon a private for telling

his General when he is Commended; when

they were “cursing at you” we were busy

giving it back to them with interest.

With great respect,

Yours Respectfully,

??

Description:

? writes to William McKinley commending him on his inaugural address.

Notes:

-notepad

-opening formula:

1. Place sent from (‘New Berne N.C.’)

2. Date

3. Hon. + recipient’s name (‘Hon. William McKinley’)

4. Occupation (‘President of the United States’)

5. Place sent to

6. ‘DearSir:’

-closing formula:

1. ‘With great respect,’

2. ‘Yours respectfully,’

3. signature

-no long ‘s’