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the Historical and Philosophical  
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# Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio

*Burnet Woods, Cincinnati, Ohio*

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**Quarterly Publication of the His-  
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**Vol. XIV, 1919, No. 1  
JANUARY-MARCH**

**Selections from the William Greene  
Papers, II**

**CINCINNATI  
THE ABINGDON PRESS**



The second selection from the William Greene manuscripts comprises several letters written by the Hon. Samuel F. Vinton of Gallipolis, Ohio. They are addressed to William Greene, an eminent lawyer of Cincinnati for many years, although he returned to his native State, Rhode Island, in the latter part of his life, and there served one term as Lieut. Governor of that State. A further account of Mr. Greene and, also, of the manuscripts referred to above, may be found in our *Quarterly*, XII, No. 4, p. 157.

Samuel Finley Vinton, so long a prominent figure in national political life, was a native of Massachusetts. After his graduation at Williams College he studied law in Middletown, Conn., where he was admitted to the bar in 1816. Shortly after he settled in Gallipolis, Ohio, where he was elected to Congress in 1822 and continuously re-elected for fourteen years when he withdrew from public life. However, he was induced in 1843 to return to Congress and there remained until 1849, at which time he declined re-election. Whilst in Congress he was Chairman of several important committees—during the war with Mexico was Chairman of the Ways and Means committee. Mr. Vinton was a staunch Whig, even consented to accept the candidacy for Governor of Ohio in 1854, when convinced that no Whig could possibly avoid defeat. He died May 11, 1862, in Washington, where he had resided as a private citizen since 1854. John Quincy Adams, is quoted, as saying that "very few men, if any, in Congress were his superiors." See *Hist. & Biog. Cyclopaedia of the State of Ohio*, 1883, p. 218.





## LETTERS OF SAMUEL F. VINTON TO WILLIAM GREENE, 1833-1861

### I

Ridgways' Tavern, (near Gallipolis), April 3d, 1833.

Dear Sir.

On my return home from Washington, I wrote to my friend, Mr. Charles Damarin<sup>1</sup> of your city to subscribe fifty shares for me in the Franklin<sup>2</sup> Bank of Cincinnati.

He informs me that he subscribed for 20 in my own name, 20 in his namé and 10 in the name of Antonius Damarin.<sup>1</sup> He has recently removed from your City to Portsmouth. I beg leave to trouble you to inform me by the return mail on what day the 1st instalment of 20 per cent will be required. I will also thank you to inform me whether, if, when the 2d instalment of 20 per cent falls due, I should, at that time, pay one or both of the remaining instalments of 25 per cent, they will allow me for it from the time of payment in making up the dividend. If so, I shall probably at that time pay one or both in advance.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles A. M. Damarin, born in France, 1797, came to America with his father, Antonius M. N. Damarin and a brother; settled first in Gallipolis, 1817. In 1831 Charles A. M. Damarin located in Cincinnati, but two years later removed to Portsmouth, Ohio, where he became a leading citizen. See *Hist. of Scioto Co., O.*, by N. W. Evans, p. 686.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin Bank of Cincinnati was incorporated Feb. 19, 1833; the President was John H. Groesbeck; Cashier was Augustus Moore; Directors were *William Greene*, Samuel Wiggins, Marcus Smith, John P. Foote, M. T. Williams, George Lucky, Josiah Lawrence, Edward King, James McGregor, William Disney and Daniel Corwin. Later, this Bank was one of the State Banks employed as depositories of the public Moneys. Vinton and his friends, the Damarins, appear to have been among the earliest stock holders of this Bank.

I want this stock to keep, and not for speculation. I want also the number of shares subscribed for and no more. If there is a probability of there being an excess of subscription beyond the stock, would you not subscribe for a few shares for me in some one's name so as to cover the shares that may be stricken from my present subscription? If you are a stockholder in the Bank, as I am sure you would be in favor of such an administration of its affairs as to keep it in good credit and sound health, I will make you my proxy to represent me at the meetings of the Stockholders, if you are willing to vote for me.

I am truly your friend

Sam<sup>l</sup> F. Vinton

P. S.

Please direct to Gallipolis, I write while on the road and waiting for my dinner.

[Mailed at Woods Mills, April 3d.]

## II

Washington City, Dec<sup>r</sup> 2d, 1833.

Dear Sir,

As I have not got the former receipts with me, you may for the present, simply take a receipt for the last instalment. I will at another time send you the former receipts, when the whole can be consolidated into a final certificate. I have also enclosed you a power of attorney to receive my dividend when one shall be declared.

I regret very much that I had not the pleasure of meeting with you in "the Land of steady habits." There are so many things to see in that interesting Country, that I was unable to pass over much of the country, which I intended to visit. I intend to make the residue of my trip next season, and should be much delighted, that you would add yourself to Mr. Ewing<sup>s</sup> and myself, so as in Executive language to make a *unit* of a *trio*.

We yesterday turned the old Clerk of the House out of doors, and I have no doubt it is the precursor of a general sweep

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<sup>s</sup> Thomas Ewing.

of everything that does not bow down the knee in loud and vociferous admiration. Today, we have received the President's Message,<sup>4</sup> remarkable perhaps for nothing but its furious assault on the Bank<sup>5</sup> of the United States. I send you an extra Globe containing a copy of it; you will no doubt see it before this comes to hand as the mail of today has gone. I see that the public prints in all parts of the Country, hold the language that the present is to be a Congress of unusual importance and interest in respect to the character and bearing of its measures. So far from this, it will, in my opinion, be a congress, which will be characterized for its petty squabbles in making arrangements for another Presidential Election, for little hand grenade explosions, and after staying here six months or more will go away without having passed one single important and general act, the benefits of which, will be felt either now or hereafter.

In haste, I am truly yours,

### III

Washington City, Dec<sup>r</sup> 20th, 1833.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed I send you my certificate for the 1st, 2d, & 3d instalments on the stock owned by me in the Franklin Bank of Cincinnati.

I do this to avail myself of your kind offer to get a final certificate on the return to the Bank of the receipts for the several instalments. I believe you have in your possession the evidence of the payments of the two last instalments. Please enclose to me the final certificate of stock.

The Bank deposits<sup>6</sup> now engage the principal attention of Congress, and will continue for sometime to be a fruitful theme,

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<sup>4</sup> President Jackson's Fifth annual message, Dec. 3, 1833. See Richardson's *Messages & Papers of the Presidents*, Vol. III, pp. 30-32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Roger B. Taney, Sec. of Treas., had removed the deposits from the Bank of the United States and selected 23 private banks as places of deposit. President Jackson assumed the responsibility of the act in his annual message, Dec. 3, 1833. The question of the return of the public moneys to the Bank of the United States was under consideration.

declamation, both for and against the measure. I have not however the remotest idea that the Bank of United States will again be made the depository of the public money during this session of Congress, unless some one of the State Banks now having the Government agency should have the misfortune to explode.

Should such an event happen, the probability is, the panic in Congress could not be resisted. I do not mean to express any suspicion that such an event will happen.

The two Houses are balanced against each other—in the House Van Buren, or more properly speaking Jackson, has a majority, and in the Senate the opposition are in the majority. In that state of things nothing of any value to the country, in the way of legislation, can be expected to be done. The session will be occupied in harangues on popular themes, and in devising popularity traps.

I see by Hammon's<sup>7</sup> last paper a call for a Mc Lean<sup>8</sup> meeting in your city. Please tell me its history, success, and what is to grow out of it. I could not see in the list of names any one (except Caswell), whom I recognized as of our friends.

In haste truly yours, &c.

#### IV

Washington City, March 14th, 1834.

My Dear Sir,

I received by the mail that came a few minutes since, your letter of the 8th instant, and now enclose you a power to represent my shares at the April meeting of the Stockholders of the Franklin Bank.

A few days since I got time to drop you a line about matters and things in general.

You look to Congress for relief from the suffering and dis-

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Hammond, editor of the Cincinnati Daily Gazette at this time. For an account of Hammond see *Greve's Cent. Hist. of Cincinnati*, p. 805.

<sup>8</sup> In 1835 Judge John McLean was nominated as candidate for the Presidency by the Ohio Legislature, but he withdrew his name later.

tress which you describe in the most feeling terms; but it is with the utmost pain, that I am compelled to say in reply to your inquiry, that I cannot see the remotest prospect of relief from the action of Congress. That the act of the President is most heartily condemned by the great body of his friends in Congress, there cannot be any doubt. But they are urged on to act against their convictions and wishes by the *force of party discipline, the fear of Executive denunciation, and the hope of reward*, if they are cast off by the people. His friends all understand that if by sticking to the President right or wrong, they are displaced by the people, he has places for them on the *invalid pension* list where they are to live on the public treasury for wounds received in fighting his battles. Such are the materials, we have to contend with. There is but one hope of relief left, and that rests on the people. They must not rely on Congress, but on themselves for relief. If they cannot make their representatives hearken to cries of distress, then it is evident that all that argument, persuasion and entreaty can do to divert them from their mad career, will be in vain.

We were evidently gaining ground slowly but surely, and we felt great confidence that in the end there would be a majority in the House to disapprove of the act of the Secretary and to adopt some measure to restore confidence to credit, but the Message of Governor Wolf<sup>9</sup> came like a killing frost upon our budding hopes. If Pennsylvania sustains the President then victory can only be obtained over misrule by time and suffering.

I think from indications, within a day or two past, that Polk's<sup>10</sup> resolutions reported as chairman of the Ways and Means will all be adopted. The pressure of party is now put down upon the rank and file with more than hydraulic power.

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<sup>9</sup> Governor George Wolf and the party in power in Pennsylvania warmly approved the course pursued by the President regarding the opposition to the revenue in South Carolina. Wolf, however, disapproved of his action in crushing out the United States Bank and he urged the rechartering of the Bank.

<sup>10</sup> James K. Polk, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, reported against the restoration of the deposits to U. S. Bank and in favor of a continuance of the deposits in State Banks. The question was debated from March 4th to April 4th, when his recommendations were agreed to.

We must put ourselves upon the Country, and I hope that God will send us a safe deliverance. Do let me hear from you.

I am truly yours,

P. S. The certificate of stock came safe for which I thank you. I will draw for \$100 when I have occasion for it.

V

Washington City, April 13th, 1834.

My Dear Sir,

For the last two or three days we have, here, been much excited by the interesting character of the events transpiring in this District and of the great political contest in the city of New York.

A week ago Thursday, the \*\*\*\*\*<sup>11</sup> men got their orders from the White House, that they must put the screws to us on that day on the resolutions respecting the re-charter of the Bank and the restoration of the Deposits so that the result and shout of triumph might go into New York immediately before the opening of the Polls—it was done, in a word, to aid Van Buren. We were tauntingly told that we had *manufactured panic* long enough, that after the vote sealing the fate of the Bank everything would be calm and quiet in a single day, and business would resume its accustomed channels. Well, they put the previous question to us and carried their resolutions.<sup>11a</sup> What the effect has been upon the election in New York you will be able to judge when I inform you that our friends expected to have been beaten from 1500 to 2000, and have only lost their candidate for Mayor by a majority against them of 158 out of more than 36000 votes. We regard this as a victory, it to them is a Bunker Hill fight. We are sure the Regency, or “Tory party” as it is now called has got its death wound in that great State. Their majority at the last great trial in the City, the Presidential election, was about 6000. The Jacksonites here are chapfallen and cast down, they see that such another victory is ruin to them.

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<sup>11</sup> Word illegible.

<sup>11a</sup> See *Cong. Debates*, Vol. 10, pt. 3, p. 3601—

The vote of the House respecting the re-charter of the Bank seemed to put an end to the hopes, (which men giving credit to their wishes would indulge) of a re-charter during this Congress and at the same time rendered it certain that the war against the Bank was to be waged for another year at least. I am told the operation here was this, (how it may have been elsewhere I do not know) the depositors in the District Banks became alarmed, many of them for the safety of their deposits. They, naturally, began silently to withdraw their deposits, and put them where they would be safe, many of them I am told were transferred to the Bank of the United States. On Thursday, the Bank of Washington in this city stop<sup>d</sup> payment. That annunciation was immediately followed by a run of all the Banks in the District except the Branch. The result has been most disastrous—yesterday two Banks closed their doors, "The Bank of Alexandria," the oldest Bank in the Union south of the Potomac, and the Farmers and Mechanics Bank of George<sub>1</sub>Town.

It is fortunate for the other Banks that today is Sunday. It is to be feared that tomorrow the panic will rise so high as to sweep the residue of the local Banks away; it is said the "Metropolis" the Deposit Bank in this City could not stand an hour were it not for the Gov<sub>1</sub>ernmen<sub>1</sub>t funds.

The same tempest will rush over the Mountains and before long reach you in all probability. At all events it is important for you to be prepared for the worst. God only knows what desolation the folly, madness and obstinacy of the powers that be, will bring upon us before their downfall which surely is near at hand.

I am truly yours,

## VI

Washington City, April 17th, 1834.

Dear Sir,

Having occasion to remit a little money to the West, I have today drawn upon you for the amount of my January Dividend in favor of Mr. C. A. M. Damarin of Portsmouth, Ohio.

The President today sent an abusive and demagoging



message<sup>12</sup> to the Senate which that body will probably kick out of doors by refusing to receive it. It produced great excitement in the Senate and will open the debates of that body with more energy than ever. No other news today. In haste.

Yours truly,

## VII

Washington City, Feb<sup>y</sup> 16th, 1835.

My Dear Sir,

The bearer of this letter, Dr. Julius of Berlin brought to me a letter of introduction from Mr. Du Ponceau of Philadelphia.

He is a gentleman of the legal profession sent to this Country by H. M. the King of Prussia to enquire into the system of criminal Laws, and the administration of criminal justice in our Country with a view to the benefit of that from which he comes. Dr. Julius intends visiting Ohio, and you will oblige me much by giving him an introduction to such of our friends in Cincinnati, as may be able to forward his views. At the same time permit me to assure you that you will find great delight in that Gentleman's acquaintance.

I am very respectfully

Dear Sir,

Your most Obdt. Serv<sup>t</sup>.

## VIII

Washington City, Dec<sup>r</sup> 11th, 1835.

My Dear Sir,

Before this reaches you the President's Message<sup>13</sup> will have been received and read. It is probably but the precursor of

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<sup>12</sup> President's Protest against the resolution of censure by the Senate that "the President in the late Executive proceedings in relation to the public revenue, had assumed upon himself authority and power not conferred by the constitution and laws, but in derogation of both." See *McDonald's Jacksonian Democracy*, pp. 232-238. *Amer. Nation Ser.*

<sup>13</sup> Reference to President Jackson's Seventh annual message, Dec. 7, 1835. See *Richardson's Messages & Papers of Presidents*, Vol. III, p. 147.

another communication recommendatory of strong or retaliative measures. Whether we shall be pushed into a War with France or not to gratify the Executive, the coming events of the Session must determine.

Van Buren,<sup>14</sup> as you will have seen by the vote for Speaker<sup>14</sup> has a decided majority of the whole House. Whether any effectual stand can be made against him in Congress or out of it, would now appear very doubtful owing to the dissensions among our friends.

At present the friends of Webster<sup>15</sup> and Harrison<sup>16</sup> are carrying on a pretty spirited contest for the nomination at the convention to be held next week at Harrisburgh. It is doubtful which will be nominated although I am inclined to think it will be Harrison. We have sustained a very great loss in the Senate by the death of Mr. Smith.<sup>17</sup> Today a Member of the House from Connecticut died whose name was Wildman.<sup>18</sup> Senator Kane<sup>19</sup> of Illinois is also very sick and recovery doubtful.

How comes on the Trust Company? What will be its January Dividend and what will be the dividend of the Franklin Bank of Cincinnati? I ask you this that I may check for my dividend after they are declared.

What dividend will the Trust Co. be able to make in future? I ask you this question, as I have an idea of buying some more of the stock, and should be glad to know what are the real prospects of the Company. . . . .

Truly yours &c.

## IX

House of Rep<sup>s</sup>, Jan<sup>y</sup> 19th, 1836.

My Dear Sir,

Your note of the 12th instant requesting me to forward to you a Report & Map respecting the improvement of the Harbor

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<sup>14</sup> Martin Van Buren, then Pres<sup>t</sup> of the Senate; James K. Polk Speaker of Ho. of Reps.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Webster.

<sup>16</sup> William Henry Harrison.

<sup>17</sup> Nathan Smith, 1770-1836, of Connecticut; U. S. Sen. 1833-35.

<sup>18</sup> Zalmon Wildman of Conn., elected to Cong. 1835; died Dec. 10, 1835.

<sup>19</sup> Elias K. Kane, 1795-1835, of Illinois; U. S. Sen. 1825-35.

at Michigan City came to hand yesterday. I have called upon the Secretary of the Senate & Clerk of the House, and now inclose you all the information to be found here. In respect to the Map, I could not procure it, as Maps and drawings are not lithographed without the special order of the House.

I shall look with interest for the letter you promised me on Matters and things in general, and hope it will come soon. I think on the whole, that our Hero is getting on better, than his most sanguine friends anticipated.

Our advices from Pennsylvania, the opposition of the dissenters to the Harrisburgh nomination to the contrary, notwithstanding are very cheering, and there is certainly a well grounded hope for belief that Gen<sup>l</sup> Harrison will receive the electoral vote of the State.

Our friends in Maryland, Delaware and New York give us promise of a good fight. An impression seems to prevail here very generally that Jackson is desirous of running again, and that, if a French War should spring up, he would take the field again as a candidate. I have never been able to trace this impression to any definite or responsible source, and do not therefore know how much credence should be given to it. Very many of our friends believe he wants to incite a war as a means of making himself President again. The French Message which he yesterday sent us, is thought here to make our chance of a speedy adjustment of our difficulties more doubtful than before.

I am writing in the midst of the confusion of the House and do not know very well what I am saying.

Do you intend to make us a visit this session? You know we shall be very glad to see you.

I am truly your friend,

P. S. Please tell me in your reply what dividend the Ohio Life Ins. & Trust Co. made on the 1st instant.

X

Washington City, July 3d, 1836.

My Dear Sir,

I send you by this mail, a copy of the Commercial report for the last year, which is a document you will always take

pleasure in looking at, as it shows at one view the whole state of our foreign commerce.

We were in session all night and came out of the House this morning after sunrise. I need not tell you I am too dull to attempt to write you a letter. Besides I am very busy packing up for a start tomorrow.

Though the session did not promise much till lately, yet its conclusion has been full of events of the deepest moment to the Country. When I get home and can command a little time, I will try and write you some of the closing acts of the Session.

Will you have the goodness to drop me a line and tell me what is the dividend that will be declared tomorrow in the Trust Co., and also in the Franklin Bank of Cincinnati? I should also like to know what is the true political condition of Ohio at this time. The vote of Ohio will have a most decided influence on Gen<sup>l</sup> Harrison's prospects. If we can give confidence abroad that Gen<sup>l</sup> Harrison is safe in Ohio the power of that belief will be very great indeed. The question as to the certainty of his prospects is put to me every day and sometimes many times a day. I want some authority to hold a confident language. In haste.

With sincere regard  
Truly your friend

## XI

Gallipolis, May 12th,<sup>20</sup> 1841.

My Dear Sir,

Your two letters have been received, the first from Washington City on the eve of your departure, some days ago, the latter by the last mail. I was in your city on Friday, and had it not been for the deluge of rain, should have gone to see you as I was told you had returned. I came down in a boat that morning and having done a little business that took me to the City, returned the same evening. I am exceedingly sorry that

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<sup>20</sup> Letters of May 12 & 27 relate to Mr. Greene's desire to hold public office. He had taken an active part in the William Henry Harrison campaign and had Gen. Harrison lived longer, would doubtless have been appointed to some lucrative public office.

you have been unsuccessful; I had almost said I am as sorry as you could be, but I still cannot but think you will be provided for yet. As for writing to Mr. Webster<sup>21</sup>, I would do it with much pleasure, but do not think, indeed I know, I can be of no use to you in that quarter. I have not been in his good graces since I happened to take up an idea that a Western candidate would [be] more available than himself, about the time you made the same discovery. I know Mr. Tyler,<sup>22</sup> but never had any particular intimacy with him, and any letter I might write him would go into the unfathomable gulph, where the ten thousand other letters of application and solicitation are sunk never more to rise or be remembered. As to Mr. Ewing,<sup>23</sup> though I receive many letters asking me to write him, yet I have in all instances declined to do so lest he might think me troublesome, or disposed to set up claims upon him in consequence of our business connexion and old and intimate acquaintance and friendship. Your case I have made a solitary exception to my resolution. I have written to him and told him he must keep you in remembrance and provide for you when an opportunity should offer. I have told him *he must do it*, and that there was no two ways about it. I also said to him that when applied to, I had declined to trouble him, and did not intend to give him trouble in future—that you are an old friend of his and mine and that I deemed yours an excepted case. If he should forget what I have said to him I will give it a retouching at the salt well when he comes out in the fall, when we shall be by ourselves and when he will have time to listen and to talk.

Truly yours,

## XII

Chauncey, Athens Co., Ohio.

May 27th,<sup>20</sup> 1841.

Dear Green,

I today received a letter from our old friend Ewing an extract from which is in these words, "since I wrote you today I

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel Webster was then Sec. of State.

<sup>22</sup> President John Tyler.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Ewing then Sec. of Treasury.

received yours concerning our friend Green. I assure you I sympathize with him most sincerely, and will, if it be in my power, do something to relieve him."

I know, my Dear Sir, that Mr. Ewing entertains for you sentiments of real friendship and of high respect. I have heard him speak of you in terms of friendship and of the kindest feelings a thousand times, and I am sure nothing will give him more pleasure than to provide for you to the extent of his power. When I received your letter, I perceived that though you had been long acquainted with him, you did not exactly understand the man. In all his letters to me, he speaks of the labors of his office as most oppressive, and of this matter of distributing patronage as involving the most distressing perplexity. The Country looks to his department for aid and relief, and to understand its true condition and present it with such recommendations as the state of the country requires, and public opinion demands of him, is all but impossible in the little time that intervenes between his occupancy of the Office and the coming together of Congress—to say nothing of the exciting circumstances, and new adjustment of position arising from the death of Gen<sup>l</sup> Harrison, which must have occupied no little of the time, care and anxiety of the Cabinet. Though I have often written to, I have never except in your case written a word to him about appointments as he knows that I know how he is perplexed, and would feel it to be unkind in me to add to his troubles. You must, my Dear Sir, be patient as you can, but I am sure he will not forget you, and will when in his power, provide for you.

Truly your friend,

### XIII

Washington City, Feby. 13th, 1844.

My Dear Sir,

I am in receipt by yesterday's mail of your very acceptable letter, and I am much gratified to learn from you what we now daily hear from all parts of the Country, that the right spirit is at last reviving again among the Whig party in every part

of the Union. Virginia has just held her Convention, and from all accounts the people of that State are now more excited than they were in the glorious 1840. I think we may put down as certain for Mr. Clay,<sup>24</sup> south of the Potomac and the Ohio, Virginia, N. Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, with a good prospect for Louisiana, and some well informed Gentlemen say Mississippi also. Mr. Webster, you know, has fallen back again fully and heartily into our ranks, and we look upon Massachusetts, Vermont, & Rhode Island as safe for Clay. For Maine and Connecticut we must do battle with at least an equal chance of victory. Our friends in New York and Pennsylvania are full of confidence and nerved up for the struggle. And at last, it is by no means sure, that the vote of Ohio is not to be the turning vote in the contest, and it is on that account of the same importance that it was in 1840, that we should succeed in carrying our ticket at the October election. We must therefore have an effective candidate<sup>25</sup> for Governor, a man around whom the respectable portion of the community will cheerfully rally along with the Mass of the people. And considering the importance of the crisis, and the influence his success or defeat may have on the Country at large, I cannot but believe that the Convention will find such a candidate. As to myself, if I thought myself at all qualified to occupy so responsible a position, it would not be possible for me to do it. I have many letters on the subject from different parts of the State and have been very strongly solicited by our Whig delegation in Congress to consent to stand a poll, and with every desire to do and submit to anything that patriotism might require of me, I have after full reflection come to the *definite conclusion*, that I cannot and ought not to be a candidate. It would be worse than useless to trouble you with my reasons for this which are numerous and weighty.

I shall be very glad, my Dear Sir, to hear from you whenever your inclination prompts you to give me the benefit of a leisure moment.

I remain, very truly,  
Your sincere friend,

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<sup>24</sup> Nominees were Henry Clay, the Whig Candidate; Martin Van Buren, the Democratic candidate in the election of 1844 for President, but James K. Polk the "dark horse" of the Democratic party was elected.

<sup>25</sup> Mordecai Bartley was elected Governor of Ohio, 1844.

#### XIV

Washington City, Decr. 15th, 1844.

My Dear Sir,

Your esteemed letter was duly received, and ought to have received an earlier answer; but up to this evening, I have been engaged about almost innumerable little things incident to getting everything fixed and comfortably arranged for the session so that I have been obliged to pass you by till now. I entirely agree with you that the annexation<sup>26</sup> of Texas, which is now formally before both branches of Congress will be, if accomplished, one of the greatest calamities that could befall the Country. As yet nothing has occurred to demonstrate the real state of opinion in Congress on that subject. I am however inclined to think that Texas will not be admitted this Session, and if we can put them off a twelve month, there are many chances, that in the meantime, something may happen to give a new turn to the policy of those who are coming into power. At all events, let what may come, I am for holding on upon the Union— even with Texas will be far better than any seceding portions of it can be. When the work of disunion once begins no one can foresee where the boundaries will be, or where the divisions will end, or what constitution we could get under a new confederation. The present constitution would be at an end of course, on breaking up the present union of the States. Our first duty, as I think, is to keep off Texas as long as we can, and when she does get admission, it will be time enough to consult and consider what we will do.

In respect to the next Presidential campaign, it is the opinion of our friends here, that the most politic course will be to remain inactive for the present, at least, till the new administration is formed, and the loaves and fishes are divided among the hungry crew. There will be a great contest between the Calhoun and old Van Buren factions of the party. There is now a bad feeling between them, and the question of party ascendancy in the new administration, is already agitating them very much. If Calhoun<sup>27</sup> is retained in the new Cabinet, Mr. Polk will have

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<sup>26</sup> Congress voted for the annexation of Texas in 1845, and President Tyler signed the bill March 1st just previous to the expiration of the term of his office. See *Schouler's Hist. of U. S. Vol. IV, p. 486; McMaster's Hist. of the American People, Vol. VII, p. 406.*

<sup>27</sup> John C. Calhoun.



difficulty enough with Benton<sup>28</sup> & Co., if he is put aside, he & the whole clique of nullifiers will probably raise the standard of opposition. There is a possibility that their dissensions will give a new turn to things, so that we may save the Tariff and keep out Texas. If we were now to make a demonstration on any candidate, would it not be an outward pressure that would keep them from going apart?

As yet we have got along very quietly in both Houses, but Oregon and Texas are in the incipient stages of an explosion, as both are before both branches.

I do not think anything will be done with the Tariff this Session. It however, will be the great and agitating measure of the next, and that with the Texas question, if we can keep the latter off this winter, will make it a Session of unusual importance.

Very truly your friend & Ob<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>.

## XV

Washington City, Decr. 21st, 1845.

My Dear Sir,

..... You have by this time read the President's<sup>29</sup> Message; and the reports of the secretaries.

I fear we have opened upon an eventful session that will long be remembered in the history of the Country. There are four great and leading measures all of which will be likely to pass into laws. They are the Oregon Bill, The Subtreasury Bill, a new Tariff or rather anti-tariff Bill, and a Bill to break up the public land system. There are other mischievous measures of less moment in contemplation. The passage of the Oregon Bill will, as I think, inevitably involve us in War. But I believe most persons here think we shall escape such a calamity; but after all, that opinion rests upon the idea that the good sense of the Country will, in the end, be brought to bear on the question, and show a disinclination to enter into a contest, where there is so little to quarrel about. There would be no

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas Benton.

<sup>29</sup> First annual message of President Polk's, Dec. 2, 1845. See *Richardson's Messages & Papers of Presidents, Vol. IV, pp. 385-416.*

danger of War were it not for the bullying spirit of the Executive and of Congress.

I hold it to be all but certain, that the Whig party at the next election can elect to the next Presidency any candidate who is not already broken down; provided the Country remains at peace. I believe that the Administration are of the same opinion, and that they regard the election of Polk as a chance shot, a mere piece of good luck. And I am very much afraid on this account, they want a war; and when in a war brought on by themselves, they would endeavor to impress upon the minds of the people, the belief that the Whig candidate was the anti-war alias British candidate. The Texas question kept them from sinking before, as that is over with, they must have some other bold hand to play. And I am afraid the restless demagogues who rule the President and the Country are of opinion that war is their game now. They would absorb into their own hands all the appointments and high commands in the army, and calculate upon coming out of the war with a new crop of heroes that would last them for another quarter of a century. These are considerations that, with them, will rise above all patriotism or regard for the welfare of the Country. The New England Gentlemen think we can save the Tariff; but I must confess that I fear they are mistaken. As to the subtreasury we are sure to have it saddled upon us again. . . .

I am Dr. Sir, very truly yours,

## XVI

Gallipolis, Oct. 9th, 1846.

My Dear Sir,

I have read with great satisfaction and much profit to myself your most excellent essays in "The Atlas" on the subject of the tariff. I do not know that they will make any salutary impression upon your wrong headed, ignorant, incorrigible and heterogenous suburban population. They are highly creditable to you both in matter and manner and prove very conclusively that whether they will consent to let you go to Congress or not, you deserve to be there. I wish you all success in the canvass.

As to myself, I have been now for a month laid up with a fever, and am now just able to ride out a mile or two. During

this time this District has been, and still is in a very distracted state. Getting assurances of support from the locos against the Whig nomination, two professing Whigs (Calvary Morris one of them) came out as independent Whig candidates, and have spent their time chiefly in counting the locos, who have very deeply committed themselves to them, especially to Morris, who has a clique of Whig friends who will go any where with him or for him. By bargain the locos with the aid of this corps of personal friends are to elect him to Congress, and by way of compensation, they are to elect a loco to the Legislature in Meigs and Athens, and perhaps in the Ross district also, a part of which (Hocking Co.) vote with Ross for the Legislature. And now at last to perfect the complication, a loco candidate is announced and brought forward, so that we stand 3 Whigs and 1 Loco candidate.

There is however, in all this mixture, a Spartan Band of true hearted Whigs in the District, who, I think, will scatter their ill assorted hosts, and bring me out victorious.

Very truly your friend,

## XVII

Washington City, March 11th, 1850.

My Dear Sir,

. . . . I concur in opinion with you, that the disunionists will not be able to accomplish their purposes; but there is undoubtedly, at this moment a broader and deeper dissatisfaction in the slave holding States, than has existed at any other time, and great efforts are being made by those who intend mischief to foment it into a passion and excitement, that will not stop to count consequences.

Those who want a new confederacy south, and have for a long time, and ever since nullification<sup>30</sup> was put down by Gen<sup>l</sup> Jackson, been waiting for an occasion to strike a blow against the Union, do not intend to let the present opportunity pass over. They clamor for conciliation and compromise, but they do not want either. They think, if the excitement now dies

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<sup>30</sup> Reference to President Jackson's Proclamation of Dec. 10, against the nullifiers and their construction of the constitution. See *McDonald's Jacksonian Democracy, Ch. IX. American Nation Ser.*

out, the best subject for agitation will be lost, and their schemes must be indefinitely postponed. Shortly after the opening of the session of Congress, they regarded their success as all but certain. They flattered themselves with the idea, that they would be permitted peaceably to secede and have things in their own way, but they are now convinced of their error in that respect. They now know to a certainty that the West will give them a fight, and that the North will follow the lead of the West, while there will be much less unanimity at the south than they had calculated upon. A knowledge of all this, has, I think, cooled off their resolution somewhat; and I think we shall get through this second bitter fruit of the Texas annexation in some way, without domestic violence.

But how the complicated difficulties which surround the questions of government and boundaries connected with California, New Mexico and Texas, will be finally disposed of, I cannot form any satisfactory opinion. One thing only, and that too a great matter, I regard as certain, viz, that the State of California will be admitted without any change of boundaries. Beyond that all is dark and uncertain. If the Whig party would unanimously pursue the line of policy laid down by Gen<sup>l</sup> Taylor by bringing California into the Union, giving New Mexico effective military protection and leaving the people to live under the laws that have always governed them, till they saw fit to form a government and ask for admission, I think, it could be carried into full execution—the result of all would be that California would issue in this session as a free State, and New Mexico would follow her next winter, and then the whole difficulty would be settled. After which the people would return back to their old issues, and Gen<sup>l</sup> Taylor would, I think be re-elected.

Clay and Webster both see this, and hence their counter and utterly impracticable schemes. You have no doubt seen Webster's speech. It is a big bid for the South, and has given new hopes to those in that section who were before despondent. Without doubt, if some new slave states could be carved out of Texas, and the whole country east of the limits of the State of California could be left open to the introduction of slaves with no other law than nature to oppose it, the south would be pacified for the present, and till they could involve the Country in a new war against Mexico for the acquisition of further slave

territory. But it appears to me, that no one having any sagacity as a statesman can fail to foresee, that if a positive instead of a passive policy as recommended by Gen<sup>l</sup> Taylor, is adopted, that so far from allaying agitation, it will increase it tenfold. For example, if a territorial Bill for New Mexico be passed into a law, with a restriction of slavery, the agitators at the south, will work up the public feeling to a state of fearful excitement. On the other hand, if the Representatives of the North shall follow Mr. Webster, and vote against excluding slavery, and leave the door open so far as law is concerned, it does not require to be a prophet to foretell, that instead of settling the question, the cry of repeal would be raised by the abolitionists before the ink on the bill was dry. They would go against us, with that issue into every district in every free State of the Union, and in all probability this so called free soil party would come into the next House of Representatives with a hundred members instead of 8 or 10, as now. And thus the Country North and South would be divided into two great geographical parties, and what would come of it, God only knows. This is what the Nullifiers and the abolitionists, both of which are bent on mischief, most ardently desire. And thus would be accomplished that sectional organization towards which there is now a strong and alarming tendency both at the North and South, and the nationality of the old parties would be at an end. . . . .

I am, very truly your friend,

XVIII

Washington City, Feb<sup>y</sup> 19th, 1858.

My Dear Sir,

. . . . .  
I would write you a word about public affairs; but in respect to what is doing here, you will see in the newspapers all that is true and a good deal that is false.

As to the admission of Kansas<sup>21</sup> under the Lecompton constitution which for the time being excites more interest here,

<sup>21</sup> Struggle over the admission of Kansas as a slave-holding State. The pro-slavery party held a convention at Lecompton, agreed upon a constitution allowing slavery, and applied for admission as a State. See *Smith's Parties and Slavery*, p. 215. *Amer. Nation Ser.*

and I presume in the Country at large, than all other public questions, my opinion is about this:

If members were left free to act according to their own feelings and convictions of duty there would be a decided majority in the House against the admission, and yet in my opinion, the power, appliances and patronage of the Executive will carry the measure. Its defeat is not altogether hopeless; but I think it is nearly so. Whether when done it will break down the democratic party time will decide. Be that as it may, it will in my opinion do more to widen the already fearful breach between the North and South, than anything that has preceded it, not because it is worse than the repeal of the Missouri compromise on the Dred Scott decision, but because its iniquity can be brought home more directly to the popular mind and pulse. The people cannot be easily made to comprehend judicial decisions on questions of constitutional law, and the repeal of the Missouri compromise was sugared over with the humbug of popular sovereignty, but the refusal to let the people have a fair vote on the constitution, and the frauds in the election are wrongs which all can understand, and they who make themselves parties to them will be held accountable.

I am truly your friend,

## XIX

Washington City, March 3d, 1858.

My Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your favor of the 24th of last month, . . . .

In the Senate they have this week taken up the question of the admission of Kansas in good earnest. Mr. Collamer<sup>22</sup> yesterday and Governor Seward<sup>23</sup> today, have made able and readable speeches against the bill. As I stated in my former letter, I am of opinion the Administration will force the measure through. And then Mr. Calhoun will give certificates of election to the pro-slavery candidates for the legislature and members of Congress. After all that is done, nothing can save the administration and democratic party from defeat at the next

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<sup>22</sup> Jacob Collamer of Vermont, in the U. S. Senate at this time.

<sup>23</sup> William H. Seward of New York, U. S. Senator.

Presidential Election, except the violence and indiscretion of its opponents.

I am truly your friend,

XX

Washington City, Decr. 21st, 1860.

My Dear Sir,

The last mail brought me your letter of the 19th instant. . . . Perhaps the present political storm may blow over without fatal damage to the republic, but I greatly fear, and indeed, it is my opinion, the end of it will be the breaking off of the entire body of the slave holding States.

The controversy about slavery has been carried on until the people of the North and of the South have come to hate each other worse than the hatred between any two nations in the world. In a word the moral basis on which the government is founded is all destroyed. And add to this, the people of the south have been made to believe, that the union is a source of great prosperity to the North and of positive injury and a burthen to them. Sectional dislike and what they imagine to be their interest both combine to make the people desire to put an end to the present government, and to have one of their own. Our probable future is too horrible for calm contemplation.

Truly your friend,

XXI

Washington City, Jany. 19th, 1861.

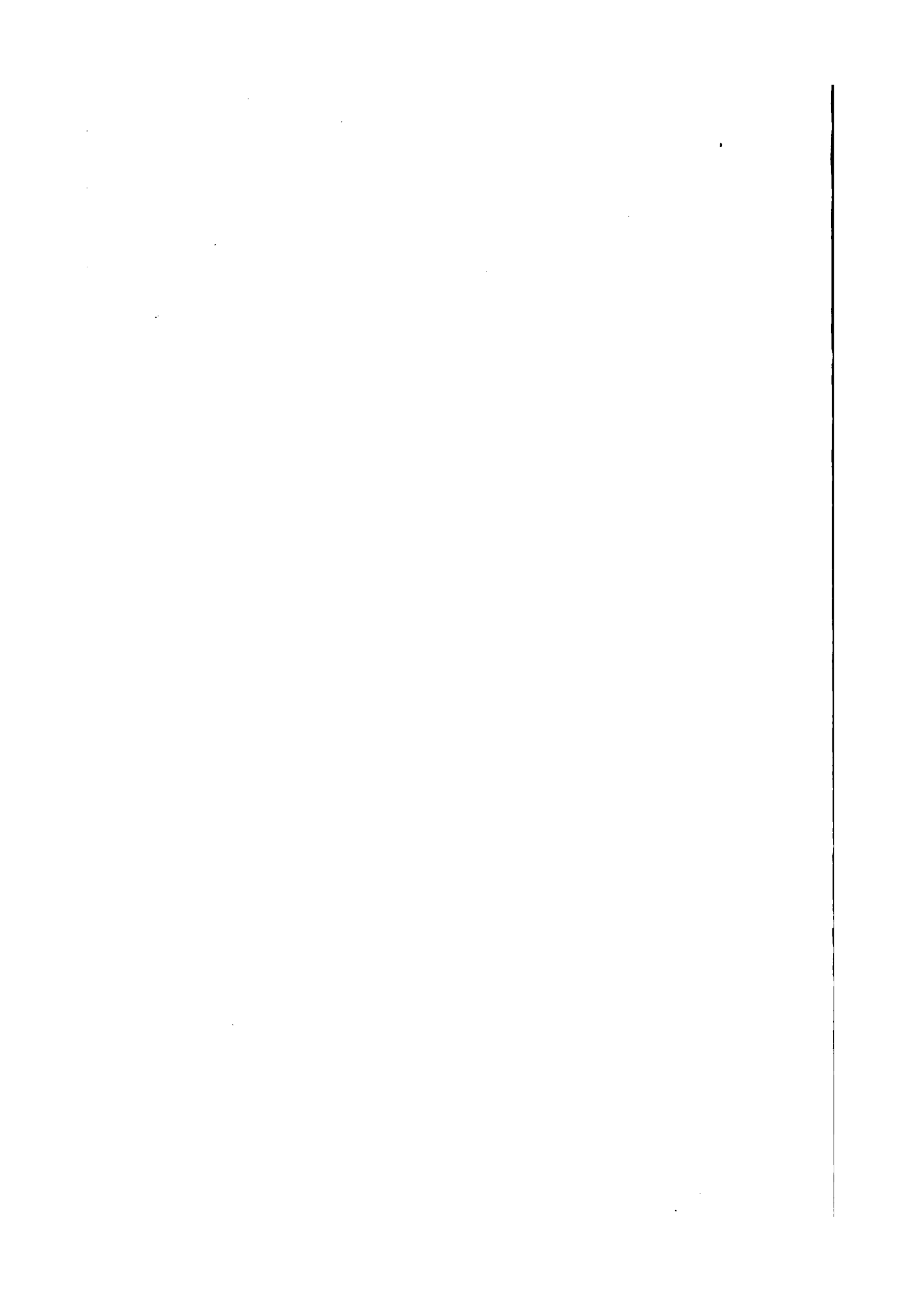
My Dear Sir,

It appears to me there is but little ground for hope that Congress will do anything to heal our unhappy political dissensions, and the final disruption of all the slave States is almost certain to come. I hope for the best, but I have but little doubt that Virginia Convention which is to be elected on the 4th and meet on the 13th of next month will secede when all the other border States will follow her. What is to come of all this, no man can tell, nor have I the heart to attempt to speculate about it.

Truly your friend,











Stanford University  
Stanford, California

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