

## Documents

### THE LETTERS OF GODLOVE S. ORTH, HOOSIER WHIG

Edited by J. HERMAN SCHAUINGER

With the election of William Henry Harrison to the presidency in 1841, the Whig party took charge of national affairs. His nomination also helped the party in Indiana, but its triumph in the nation and the state was short-lived. Its connection in Indiana with internal improvements, which proved so disastrous after the panic of 1837, was to return to haunt its members during the forties. The death of Harrison left the national party without adequate leadership and it divided into its various factions. For it was a party of compromise, made up of diverse and incompatible elements, and so was destined to disintegrate and to disappear from the scene. The rise of the slavery issue and the appearance of the Liberty and Free Soil parties was to hasten this disintegration.

Much has been written about the Whig party in the national arena, but comparatively little about its activity in various states. Often national careers began in state politics, and some were terminated by the concurrence of leaders in the various states, who, although not known in national circles, were important political figures at home.

The letters of Godlove S. Orth in the period of the 1840's illustrate these points. The letter of August 16, 1845, contains an interesting description of the differences among Indiana Whigs. Other letters reveal the seriousness of the internal improvement issue. Orth's distrust of General Zachary Taylor is also clearly stated, and finally the discouragement caused by frequent defeat and the appearance of the Liberty party is evident. This correspondence is essential to any study of the Whigs of this state, for it reveals some of the backstage events of Hoosier politics of the period.

They are not without significance in understanding national events. With the approach of the presidential election of 1848, the attention of the state politicians was drawn in this direction and the virtues and deficiencies of Henry Clay, Zachary Taylor, Winfield Scott, and other leaders were discussed.

Godlove S. Orth was born on April 22, 1817, at Lebanon, Pennsylvania. In 1839 he came to Lafayette, Indiana, where

he was admitted to the bar. He was taken under the wing of Judge John Pettit, who made him his protégé and partner. Orth entered politics in 1840, stumping the state for Harrison. He was in the state senate from 1843 to 1848 and in 1845 was president of that body. His name was presented for the governorship in 1846, but he withdrew in favor of Joseph G. Marshall.

After the Compromise measures of 1850 he joined other parties, until finally he helped organize the Republican party in Indiana. The story of this phase of his career will be told in the second group of letters which will appear later. Orth was elected to the 38th Congress in 1862 and served continuously through the 41st Congress. He gradually joined the extreme Radicals and voted for the most stringent reconstruction bills. In March, 1875, he was appointed minister to Austria-Hungary, holding this position until May, 1876. He resigned to accept the nomination for governor, but again withdrew, this time in favor of Benjamin Harrison. He died December 16, 1882.

The recipient of most of these letters, Schuyler Colfax, was born in New York on March 23, 1823. He came to New Carlisle, Indiana, in 1836, and, in 1845, purchased an interest in the South Bend *Free Press*, changing its name to the *St. Joseph Valley Register*. It became the Whig organ for northern Indiana. He campaigned for Clay in 1844 and served as a delegate to the national Whig conventions of 1844 and 1848. He also took an active part in forming the Republican party in Indiana. He was in Congress from the 34th to the 40th session and in the last three was speaker of the house. He was nominated for the vice-presidency in 1868. He became involved in the scandals of the Grant administration, particularly in the Credit Mobilier scandal.

The letters to Colfax are in the Orth Collection at the Indiana State Library, Indianapolis. Those to Caleb B. Smith are in the Smith Collection at the Library of Congress.

Dear Colfax,

Lafayette, Aug 16, 1845

Well the election is over, and we are beaten, both branches of the Legislature are against us—and the congressional representation stands as in the last congress, with a mere transposition of districts. McGaughey's<sup>1</sup> majority is so small (about 130.) as to be equivalent to

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<sup>1</sup> Edward W. McGaughey (1817-1852) served in the state house of representatives, 1839-1840; in the state senate, 1842-1843; and later was a Whig representative in Congress, 1845-1847 and 1849-1851.

a defeat. I am sorry to know that so good a man as Sample<sup>2</sup> is beaten, and in a District that has the strength to support him.

My first prediction has been verified—and the result of this election, more than ever, strengthens my belief in my other prophecies. Indiana is a Whig State—and by proper and well directed effort, we shall be able to elect our candidate for Governor next summer.

To accomplish this much depends upon the course of the Whig's members of the Legislature next session, and of the Whig editors during the campaign. In the first place we want no "Legislative address". These addresses do no good whatever, and are pregnant with evil. They are used, in garbled extracts, by our opponents, to mislead and deceive the ignorant and unwary, the sentiments that may accord with one section of the State, are obnoxious in another.

In this State, we have various phases of public opinion; the enterprising Yankee of Northern Indiana, despises the sluggish and inaminate North Carolinian, Virginian, and Kentuckian in the Southern part of the State, while the latter in return, regarding the "patriarchal institution" as the direct gift of God to man, looks upon the freeman who toils with his own hands and proclaims a belief in the patriotic sentiments of his fathers, as a fanatic and a fool. So on the question of State policy, one section is Improvement, the other Anti—one portion is willing and able to submit to a taxation sufficient to redeem our ruined credit—another portion, who have no avenue to market for their produce, will not yet submit to anything of the kind. In fact they are unable to bear their present burthen. Again the Wabash & Erie—& Wabash & Ohio Canal questions, the different grants of land & their proper disposition, are intricate and troublesome questions, upon which Democracy must act—and on which they will stand.<sup>3</sup> These are a few instances of the diversity of opinion that cannot be reconciled by any *address*, and no one universal policy should be adopted by our party in the next campaign. Instead of drawing an elevated line, unbending and unchangeable, and battling to raise public opinion to its level, we must come down a little, slacken the stern rule when necessary, meet public opinion, even if only midway at the desired goal—in a word, we must "stoop to conquer". This, I confess, is not, high-strung Whig doctrine, but the rising generation of young & ardent Whigs, if ever they desire to participate in the honors and emoluments of their country, must deviate, for a time at least from the track, so often trod, and that so inevitably leads to defeat. Look at the campaign of '40, straight-laced Whiggery could not have excited a single throb of noble enthusiasm in the breasts of the people, but old things & old politicians were either laid aside, or compelled to follow in the wake of a new sect or species of tacticians. In our next campaign every district, County, and township must carry on the battle,

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel C. Sample (1796-1855) was born in Maryland. He came to Connersville in 1823, studied law with Oliver H. Smith, and later practiced law in South Bend. He was judge of the ninth judicial circuit court and a member of Congress, 1843-1845.

<sup>3</sup> The financial affairs of the state were in complete chaos. In attempting to build the canals, poor management, dishonest officials, and the panic of 1837 finally resulted in bankruptcy.

without reference to any other portion of the State, every local prejudice or sectional jealousy must be appeased and brought to operate in our favor, the minute details of organization must not be neglected—there, with a successful diversion with the Liberty party, which *I know* can be made, and my word on it success will crown our efforts.

I regard it as peculiarly fortunate for us, that the Democrats have the entire control of our State Government at present. It is a peculiar crisis in our history and will require more prudence & tact than they possess to give anything like satisfaction to the people. The valuation laws will be a—[?] question—and one they must meet—yet it bears no comparison to the question of State indebtedness—Whitcomb<sup>4</sup> is pledged to do something—what can he do? His party is afraid to act honestly and do what I humbly believe can be done, compromise with our creditors on the principle of Defrees' bill of last winter. But enough of this for the present.

I suppose West<sup>5</sup> has given you all the local news here in which you would be interested. Semans<sup>6</sup> still hangs on, unwilling to sell out, unless at an exorbitant price. A Mr. Owens from Cincinnati connected there with the "Atlas" is here, and failing to make a purchase of Semans, talks strongly of commencing a new Whig paper here—and it is very probable he will do so about the 1st of October. . . .

Dear Colfax,

8th Sept. '45

Your last has been received—and I answer it immediately—for the commencement of our fall courts will prevent me from being so punctual hereafter. You request a frank reply in reference to connecting my name with the next Gubernatorial campaign. I know that I am writing to a friend, who will receive, what I say in the right spirit, & attribute to it the proper motives.

I am young, my residence in the State (7 years) quite limited—my political experience in matters of State affairs confined to two Sessions of the Senate (and those rather unimportant), my acquaintance and intercourse with the people at large not as expansive as it should be, all these things considered—it does seem the height of presumption & vanity in me to suppose for a moment that my name should be thought of at all in connection with so important a station, as the

<sup>4</sup> Governor James Whitcomb (1795-1852) served in the state senate, 1830-1836; was the first governor elected by the Democrats in Indiana in 1843; and was rewarded with elevation to the United States Senate in 1849. See Oliver H. Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches* (Cincinnati, 1858), 351.

<sup>5</sup> The West spoken of here may have been the one who, in 1849, became part owner of the Lafayette, Indiana, *Journal*.

<sup>6</sup> Major John B. Semans established in 1829 the Lafayette, Indiana, *Free Press and Commercial Advertiser*, the first newspaper to be published in that town. After selling it in 1835, he returned in 1840 and acquired it again. After the death of Harrison, it was thought he favored Tyler; and a new paper, the *Tippecanoe Journal*, was brought out in opposition to him. Semans soon had to give up the fight, and the two papers were consolidated under the name of *Tippecanoe Journal and Lafayette Free Press*. See Richard P. De Hart (ed.), *Past and Present of Tippecanoe County, Indiana* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1909), I, 308-10.

acknowledged head or leader of our party in the next campaign. I don't know that I am much troubled with that thing called Modesty, yet I confess, your letter, with one or two others of similar import on my file, rather bring the blush to my cheek. I hardly know what reply to make, I fear that you, as well as some few others, in your friendship for me, have suffered your feelings to carry you beyond the goal of ordinary prudence. Think again. At a casual meeting at Indianapolis last winter composed (if I recollect aright) of Senators Bradbury, Coffin & Reyburn, and Messrs Grubbs, Conner, Parker & Nutter of the lower House, Fanguhan & perhaps some others, after looking over the State, came to the conclusion that it would be good policy for the Whigs to run me for Gov.<sup>7</sup> Upon being informed of their conclusion I made the same reply, in substance, that I have here to you.

If however, old partisan leaders could be appeased, and their *mere acquiescence* obtained I believe the next campaign could be made very interesting if not successful.

My location in the State is favorable, my character (although I say it myself, yet I feel a pride in being able to do so) is irreproachable—my votes on the very few important questions in the Legislature are right, no unpopular internal improvement or other subjects are fastened to my skirts. I could make a thorough campaign (dutch & english) and should devote much time, both in public & *private*, to the success of the ticket. If these & other considerations should balance or outweigh the objections I have urged, I shall abide the disposal of my friends. But in no event do I desire my name to be publicly mentioned in connection with the office until there is at least a fair & probable chance of obtaining the nomination. And I should not accept the nomination, if unfairly obtained, or at the hazard of exciting angry or unpleasant feelings among any portions of our friends, in a word I should desire it only by a concurrence amounting almost to unanimity.

Grubbs of the New-Castle Courier, Holloway of the Palladium, Clarkson of the American (Brookville) with three or four others, are either for me, or would be so, with very little effort.<sup>8</sup> How does Defrees feel?

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<sup>7</sup> These men, with the exception of John W. Grubbs, were minor state Whig politicians. Abner M. Bradbury of Wayne County served in both the Indiana house and senate, as did also William C. Coffin of Parke County. William M. Reyburn represented Cass, Miami, and Wabash counties in the state senate, 1843-1845. William W. Conner represented Hamilton and Tipton counties in the lower house at different periods. Charles Nutter of Union County was in the house at this time. There were two Parkers, Samuel of Fayette County, and Isaac of Henry County to whom Orth was probably referring as he was in the house at this time.

<sup>8</sup> These three editors were among the most talented in the state. Grubbs became part owner of the *Indiana Sun* in 1838 and sole owner in 1840. He moved it to New Castle and changed its name to the *Indiana Courier*. He was an ardent follower of Henry Clay and announced in 1841 that he would back him for the nomination in 1844. David P. Holloway (1809-1883) came to Richmond in 1823 and purchased the *Palladium* in 1832. He served in both houses of the assembly and was elected by the People's party to Congress in 1855. He

Of course some correspondence with friends immediately—and a few active spirits during the Session at Indianapolis (& no public demonstration as yet, if at all) could place the matter beyond doubt. But more anon.

Could you sound Defrees—His *position* at present, gives him influence.<sup>9</sup>

I have thus, as you desired, given you at some length, my views very frankly upon the subject. If after more mature reflection, and consultation with some of our prominent friends, you feel disposed to press the matter further, let me hear from you. At any rate let me hear from you very soon.

I have nothing of special interest to communicate. The Journal here, its selling out & the establishing of a new paper, are still in statu quo. . . .

My dear Colfax,

Lafayette, Oct 25, 1845

I was absent on the Circuit, when your last reached me here, which will account for my not answering sooner. As to the Greely letter, consult your own feelings about sending it, of course if received by me, I shall obey your directions.

It is true I am now in the field, but the nomination is far from being secured. I fear the old hunkers in our party, I fear the jealousy of such men as Lane, Dick Thompson, G. G. Dunn et al who no doubt feel that I am getting the start of them.<sup>10</sup> These men will not go cordially for my nomination, if they don't openly oppose me. An energetic appeal on the part of the Press may silence them or at least reduce them to submission—an instruction in my favor from County meetings to their delegates—if 6 or 8 counties could be brought to do this with the next month, it will place the matter on solid footing. This can be done. The time for those meetings is at hand. What can

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was also Commissioner of Patents, 1861-1865. Coker F. Clarkson (1811-1890) came to Indiana in 1820, where he edited this paper from 1833 to 1854. He moved to Iowa, founded the *Iowa State Register*, and became very influential with the agricultural class, organizing the Farmers' Protective Association. He also was an ardent follower of Clay.

<sup>9</sup> John D. Defrees' position, here referred to, was as editor of the Indianapolis *Indiana State Journal*. He and his brother, Joseph H., founded the *Northwest Pioneer* in South Bend about 1831. Both brothers were in the two houses at odd intervals, and Joseph was a Republican congressman, 1865-1867.

<sup>10</sup> There were several Lanes in state politics, but Orth probably meant Henry S. Lane (1811-1881), who practiced law in Crawfordsville. He was in both houses of the legislature and was elected as a Whig to Congress, where he served from 1840 to 1843. He was chairman of the first Republican National Convention at Philadelphia in 1856. He was elected governor of Indiana in 1860 but served only a few days as he resigned to become United States Senator. Richard W. Thompson (1809-1900) had the same kind of legislative career except the senatorship. He held many high offices, the highest being secretary of the navy under President Rutherford B. Hayes, 1877-1880. George G. Dunn (1812-1857) attended Indiana University and practiced law in Bedford. He was a Whig congressman, 1847-1849, and a Republican congressman, 1855-1857. In the meantime he served in the state senate, 1850-1852.

you do in this respect in St. Jo, Laporte, Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall etc?

Grubbs in his last paper opens out right: His articles will bear copying—the fact that I speak the *German* language should be kept prominently before the public. Grubbs in a late letter to me says—that I stand more prominent in the White Water Valley than any other man, for the nomination—this augurs well.

Bausman of the Peoples Press (Crawfordsville) promised to go for me decidedly, if Lane had no pretensions that way.<sup>11</sup> I see however by his paper to day—that he is out for Lane first and for me *second* and insinuates that I should be run for Lieut. I will not under any circumstances run for that—I consider it a very decent way of laying a politician on the shelf.

I received a letter from our mutual friend *Sands*—he will be at Indianapolis this winter & I need hardly say he will be right.<sup>12</sup>

Suppose I trouble you to drop a line to Reyburn & Bearss—I know they will be in my favor for several reasons (burnt records etc) but a line or two might stir them up and secure me that County. I should like to have the Laporte and Fort Wayne papers speak out boldly in my favor. How can this be done? I am satisfied it would do much to turn the tide in my favor—as it will bring the entire North in undivided phalanx. I believe I could now enter the Convention and dispute the field successfully, but that is not what I want. I need, and if a candidate, must have a unanimous preference. I believe by proper energy this can be effected.

Why is Defrees so silent? He has not written to me for two months—He must be watching the breeze. Perhaps his best course if he would only adopt it, would be to express no preference until about the first of December—and then go it strong. If you find him favorably inclined I should be pleased to see him adopt this course. Has he written to you yet—

I cannot see how I can get along without you at the Capitol this winter—at least not unless the prospect is more favorable than at present— I suppose one or two of my Pennsylvanian friends (Hapi[?] or Koehler) would consent to attend the Convention as delegates from your County. However faithful they would be, still they are unversed in party machinery—and you may still be needed there, in the event that I cannot by the 1st January assure you that “all’s well”—

I shall go to Inds about the 20th of next month—and shall to the utmost of my ingenuity, make every possible interest turn to my advantage. The *ruffles* you may rest assured will be “doffed” and to show folks that I am not a mere boy, I shall have my wife and son

<sup>11</sup> William H. Bausman of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, was induced by a friend to come to Crawfordsville for the sole purpose of establishing a new Whig paper, the *Peoples Press*, which he edited from 1844 to 1848. In 1849 he bought a half interest in the *Lafayette, Indiana, Journal*.

<sup>12</sup> There are three Sands to whom Orth could be referring: Samuel of Crawford County, Lewis H. of Putnam County, and Isaac of Crawford County who was in the lower house, 1835-1837, and in the state senate, 1841-1844.

accompany me. This in addition will give me an excuse to be very retired whenever occasion may demand it. . . .

Dear Schuyler,

Lafayette, 20 Nov. 45

I write in much haste, in the midst of professional and family engagements incident to my departure for the Capitol.

I shall leave in two or three days—and if anything can be gathered at that focus I shall apprise you of it fully.

The "Journal" there, acts a prudent part in not siding with any particular individual—tho' I learn, *sub rosa*, that J. D. D.<sup>13</sup> is in favor of Johnson Watts.<sup>14</sup> I think however there is nothing to fear in that quarter.

Judge McDonald was the most formidable man yet named—but his positive declination smooths matters there.<sup>15</sup>

H. S. Lane while attending Court here two weeks ago, assured both my friends & myself that he would go for me decidedly—A. S. White will not consent to the use of his name at all.<sup>16</sup> So that the field at present looks quite clear, if old Watts does not stir up better than I anticipate.

Barnett, in a recent letter, pledges himself to go for me all lengths, but advises me by no means to be a candidate—talks about defeat, broken down politicians etc etc—He is soured & disappointed & has some reason to feel so.

Col. Sands writes to me very encouragingly & says that my name takes well there and believes the whole *pocket* will go for me—promises to be active etc.

Looking over the whole pond I am inclined to believe every thing looks as fair as could be expected. The first act in the drama has thus far been well played—a favorable impression, without dictation, has been produced.

Now for the second—County Conventions are called in many of the Counties and what part should my friends take—Have delegates instructed?—or merely see that the right men are appointed. I prefer the latter and so advised Grubbs & others. Instructions may produce heartburnings and difficulties—two or three prominent Whig Counties should pass *complimentary* resolutions and might, perhaps, express a mere preference without positive instructions.

The adjoining Counties, so far as I have learned, including White Co. will go for me in the Convention.

<sup>13</sup> John D. Defrees.

<sup>14</sup> Col. Johnson Watts (1794-1871) was in the lower house, 1826-1827, and in the senate, 1837-1843. He was another admirer of Henry Clay.

<sup>15</sup> Judge David McDonald of Indianapolis (1803-1869) was a member of the legislature, 1833-1834; judge of the tenth circuit court of Indiana, 1838-1852; and first professor of law at Indiana University. See Flora M. Ketcham, "David McDonald," *Indiana Magazine of History* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1905- ), XXVIII (1932), 181.

<sup>16</sup> Senator Albert S. White (1803-1864) came to Lafayette in 1829. He held several minor offices; served in Congress, 1837-1839 and 1861-1863; and was United States senator, 1839-1845. In 1864 he was appointed judge of the United States District of Indiana.



The "Lieut" must reside on, or near the Ohio river, in the vicinity of the Pocket— Do you know of anybody there? You may think we have our hands full, to manage the first office, *very likely*, but then it is somewhat important to have both matters properly attended to, if possible. Semans here is still "offish," but public opinion will drive him into the fracas. I could secure him in five minutes if I felt inclined to do so—but I shall not, because *it is not essential* at present. After the nomination I will fix it *quicker*, you may rely on this. . . .

(Colfax) My Dear Sir, Indianapolis, Nov. 29, 1845,

Friend Grant handed me your welcome letter this morning. He arrived here in good health, though the prospects of his election are rather gloomy. I am sorry it is so. He is a fine young man and I shall do all in my power to elect him.

I arrived here five or six days since and am intently engaged in surveying the political world as exhibited in this metropolis. The Locos<sup>17</sup> are in trouble—domestic dissensions are rife and threaten to make serious inroads upon the hitherto untterrified Democracy. It seems to be admitted that Whitcomb cannot be elected U.S.S. without the aid of Whig votes—which God forbid! By prudence we may profit by their follies.

The "old hunkers"<sup>18</sup> among the Whigs are in a perfect quandary—their announcement of old Col Watts, has failed to meet with the response they fondly anticipated—the truth is, every sensible man cannot but regard his nomination as the precursor of certain defeat—his own friends admit that he cannot canvass the State, and a silent campaign will produce nothing but disaster. On this subject the Whig press should speak out at once, boldly and fearlessly—there is no time to lose—and my word on it the people will sanction your course. It is admitted here now that the contest lies between the Col & myself—and much of course will depend upon the prompt and energetic action of my friends.

You mention Watts connection with the order of Masons as likely to injure his election. You must mention this matter carefully. Their ramifications extend to all portions of community and they are jealous of the peculiar rights and privileges of their "*ancient fraternity*". Inter nos, I fear that influence in the nomination. I may be wrong yet still I fear.

Defrees has as yet spoken to me but twice—he appears cool & distant, and no doubt "ill at ease". A highminded impartial paper here, would desire to do ample justice between all the rival candidates, yet he has had scarcely the magnamity to notice my name in his columns and he no doubt feels he has done me wrong. Your letter to Farquhan has done some good—the idea that Watts cannot carry St. Joe—troubles them awfully. *But F is for me*. Clarkson is here and

<sup>17</sup> The Locos refer to the Locofocos, the radical or Equal Rights wing of the Democratic party. The term was also used loosely by some to refer to any Democrat.

<sup>18</sup> In writing of the "Old Hunkers," Orth means the conservatives. The term at this time generally referred to the conservative New York Democrats. The Hunkers were opposed by the so-called "Barnburners."

I expect to be able to pull a string (by the assistance of F & a few other young Whigs) that will bring him to my support. Cooper from Henry is first in & brings gratifying intelligence from that quarter.<sup>19</sup>

McGuire is for me here,<sup>20</sup> but most of the old hunkers cannot brook the idea of a young man who has only resided in the State some 7 or 8 years, gaining on them in the race of political preferment. But they will learn some time (if not soon) that the young, the active & the ardent portion of the Whig party will take matters into their own hands and drive the Whig team with a greater velocity.

Judge Otto wrote me today.<sup>21</sup> He is for me & says if nominated the Whigs of his Circuit will give me "a united & vigorous support." He promises to be at our Convention.

Geo. G. Dunn is the very man for Lieut. and I should not be surprised if Watts friends should drop him & go for Dunn. How would an article in favor of me & Dunn take from the Register? You know how to temper it. At all events a *leader* on the subject of the Next Campaign, showing how it ought to be conducted etc. etc. seems to me as very requisite at this time. It will be well received by your contemporaries and will also *lay W cold*.

I shall try & put in the speech as alluded to &c. . . .

My dear Colfax—

Indianapolis, Dec 21—1845,

I should long since have answered your last—and censure myself for this seeming negligence on my part. But the excitement incident to the election of U.S. Senator<sup>22</sup> and the subsequent unlooked excitement attendant upon the election of President of the Senate entirely unhinged my mind & rendered it almost unfit for anything like epistolary correspondence. You have learned the result of both elections. In the latter the Whigs did wrong—we ought never to have submitted to any compromise whatever. the Locos had voluntarily vacated the Chair & we were under no obligation to fill it for them. I advised, entreated, and urged the Whig Senators to stand firm, if need be, until the first Monday in August next. 23 good & true men stood by my side, under *written pledge* to that effect, but *one* faltered, Henry of Switzerland, who ought to have been the last man to falter, if he had suffered his memory to go back a year or two.<sup>23</sup>

Thus situated we were compelled in order to avoid ineffable disgrace, to effect a compromise by which I am to retain the chair until the last week of the Session and then to vacate in favor of a Loco. This is mortifying, but after the stand we had taken it is perhaps better than to have permitted the election of a Loco.

<sup>19</sup> Robert M. Cooper of Henry County was in the lower house, 1838-1842.

<sup>20</sup> Probably Douglas Maguire. Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, 366, describes him as tall and slim, with a wide mouth and high forehead, bearing a marked resemblance to Henry Clay, whose personal and political friend he was.

<sup>21</sup> Judge W. T. Otto. See William Wesley Woollen, *Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1883), 438, for an amusing account of a courtroom fight involving Otto.

<sup>22</sup> Jesse D. Bright of Madison, a Democrat, was elected.

<sup>23</sup> David Henry, who was in the state senate, 1843-1846.

The position thus assigned me will be no detriment, as I imagine, to my prospects in Convention & the campaign.

The time is drawing rapidly towards the 9th and when I contemplate the great responsibility which I must assume in the event of my nomination—my heart fails within me. I fear I have not the experience, ability and force of character sufficient to carry me through the canvass, and if I fail the party may be stranded for years in this state, and myself (which however is comparatively a small consideration) doomed to a political death—beyond the hope of a resurrection—but things have gone too far and it would be more difficult now to retract my steps than to press forward to the goal.

In my intercourse I am very reserved on the question of nomination—though my name is hourly—and frequently in my hearing named in such connection—I never speak of it unless it is broached by others and then I treat the matter with indifference, except among my personal friends.

Defrees called on me a day or two since and requested a conference on the subject of Gov etc. as soon as it takes place I will inform you of the result. Watts stock is decidedly on the decline. And their only hope now is (I think) to persuade Joe Marshall to accept of the nomination.<sup>24</sup>

Should Marshall be here & agree to accept of the nomination I will not suffer my name to go before the Convention—it would be presumption in me to do so. In the event of his nomination they will insist on me taking the *Lieut.* Write & advise me fully on this subject.

Albt S. White is here now—and in my favor—Judge Otto is also here, warmly enlisted in my favor as he has reason to be (for *inter nos*, I elected him Judge & he knows it,) he is sounding the members for me. That staid old Senator Morgan of Decatur is for me.<sup>25</sup> Senator Ellis, of Knox, is warmly for me—and to sum up briefly the prospects are very flattering.<sup>26</sup> Semans & his "tri-weekly" are reconciled. . . .

My dear Colfax, Inds Wednesday morning 3 o'clock,

Mrs. O has just left for home—and having my slumbers broken I shall devote the time between now & breakfast to *scribbling* to you on several scraps of paper lying about the table.

As the Convention draws nigh the "Politicians" are canvassing the merits & demerits of the several candidates with increased warmth & zeal. Strangers or rather delegates are coming in—and should the weather & roads continue favorable we anticipate a large crowd on the 8th and 9th. Your friend Mr. Mathews called on me last night

<sup>24</sup> Joseph G. Marshall (1800-1855) was one of the most colorful figures in the history of Indiana. He was called the "Sleeping Lion" and "the Webster of Indiana." In 1828 he came to Madison, where he soon became the leader of the bar. He was in the state legislature several times and ran for governor and senator but was defeated. See Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, 166, and Woollen, *Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana*, 432-48.

<sup>25</sup> James Morgan was in the state senate, 1837-1846 and 1849-1851.

<sup>26</sup> Abner T. Ellis was in the state senate, 1845-1851.

and I was over-rejoiced when he told me there was a probability of your being with us. If you can conveniently, by all means, come. But you wish to know how the land lies. In the first place the conference between Defrees & myself did not amount to much—the first offer was to run on the ticket with Watts, which I promptly & positively rejected—the second was that I should go on the ticket with Dunn—to which I replied that Dunn might with *more propriety* go on the ticket with me—the third offer was to go on the ticket with Marshall, to which I assented on condition that it would be unanimous & that Marshall would pledge himself to canvass the state. I told him (D) that I would not canvass the State for any man but myself at least not without assistance.

To all of which actings & doings on my part my friends here, when informed, most cordially assented, and thus ended the conference.

The truth is, D. is against me—but thank God—he is powerless—even his position, which ought to give him a great influence, is being regarded here by many good Whigs, as an unfortunate one for the party.

Dunn has been here, *taking items*, (He is a fine young man & good Whig) and for some cause or other on his return to Bedford wrote to Jon S. Davis, which letter I saw, requesting that his name should not be used in connection with *either* station. So that one more stumbling block is removed.

Defrees has written to Watts to come here. *I am glad of this*. It will lay him aside certain. "Distance lends enchantment" &c. Defrees is no manager and I believe I would as soon have him against me as for me.

I received a letter last night informing me that Warren Co. had a large meeting. Bigger,<sup>27</sup> Marshall, White Thompson & myself were put in nomination, and I got more votes than all put together. This opens rich! My *friends* here (and they are increasing daily among the members) feel much encouraged by the present aspect of affairs, and it seems pretty generally admitted that if Marshall refuses to lend his name to the Convention—that I will undoubtedly be nominated.

To all of which I assent & believe to be true, always saving & excepting that no *triggers* are set, no under working & scheming—which like a hidden mine may suddenly explode upon us.

And now about Barnetts Immortal Clay letter—In August 1844 or perhaps Sept. at the request of many Whigs I wrote to Mr Clay<sup>28</sup>—this letter has *never* seen day light, and if it did I unhesitatingly say there is nothing in it which I would not at any time advocate. The purpose of it was that we in the North were fearful from his "*celebrated*" *Alabama letters*," that he had changed his position on the

<sup>27</sup> Governor Samuel Bigger (1802-1845) came to Liberty, Indiana, from Ohio in 1829. He was in the lower house, 1834-1835; judge of the judicial circuit, 1836-1840; and Whig governor, 1840-1843. See Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, 349, and Woollen, *Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana*, 77.

<sup>28</sup> A search among the various depositories of Clay letters has failed to reveal this letter. Professor Bernard J. Mayo, who is writing a trilogy on Clay, has not seen it. A copy may be in the Schuyler Colfax papers at the Library of Congress.

Texas question—different from the Raleigh letter—and wished to know how we should *interpret* those letters. (For you know what a chilling effect those letters had upon the free, unfettered North.) Mr. C replied to my letter, re-iterating in the strongest terms the sentiments of his Raleigh letter, but his letter, at the urgent request of our leading friends in Tippe. was published in our *Journal* & scattered broadcast through New York & New England. You must remember this letter—it went the rounds of the Press about the middle of Oct. and this is the sum & substance of my abolitionism as founded on the Clay letter. If you desire it when I return home I will send you copies of *both* letters for I retained a copy of mine, but I have no idea it will be used against me.

This cry of abolition, if raised in the Canvass, I am inclined to believe will not hurt, and ought not to be too strongly contradicted in the Northern or *infected* portions of Indiana. Noble County will be represented by W C Taylor (whom you know) he is for me certain. Otto, Ellis Murphy Morgan Dr. Montgomery (Senator from Warren) and Rousseau—Parker of Allen, Reyburn, Osborn of LaPorte & others are making impressions in my favor all around.

Personally I converse with no one & when the subject is named manifest the utmost indifference until I find the enquirer in my interest. Jno H. Bradley & Judge Finch in a conversation with me two or three days since, urged me by all means to accept the nomination.<sup>29</sup> I find that a little affected coolness on my part frequently increases the warmth in others.

Whitcomb will be nominated, though some intrigues are on foot to beat him, but they cannot succeed, unless he voluntarily retires from the Field. Joe Chapman is dead among the Locos, and his rallying cry, once so effective, falls with deathlike stillness on the ears of the faithful. His course in favor of the Judges (which certainly was laudable) & against Whitcomb for U.S.S. is mainly the cause.<sup>30</sup> He can in no event receive the nomination. He has no hold on the affections of the subterranean portion of Democracy—he spends too much time at the “toilet” to suit their agrarian & leveling notions. Dr. Ritchey is spoken of as is also a son of Amos Lane, for the purpose no doubt of healing a wound now existing in that portion of the Locofoco family. Buell (Senator from Dearborn) and a son in law of old Arnas, will *openly* oppose the election of Whitcomb if he is

<sup>29</sup> Judge Fabius M. Finch of Connersville and Indianapolis.

<sup>30</sup> Possibly the Joe Chapman who was concerned in the story of the origin of the rooster as the Democratic party emblem; he was a Democrat from Hancock County and a member of the house, 1838-1839, 1841-1844. There was another Chapman (Joe W.) who represented Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties in the state senate at this time. Governor Whitcomb, for political reasons, did not reappoint Judge Jeremiah C. Sullivan and Judge Charles Dewey to the Supreme Court when their terms expired. This, being severely criticized throughout the state, made an ideal issue for use in the campaign. For the reaction of one of the judges see Joseph H. Schauinger, “Jeremiah C. Sullivan, Hoosier Jurist,” *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXXVII (1941), 222-26.

nominated and promises me to furnish whenever called on, many interesting items in the Gubernation life of "*Insidius Cutswell, Esq*"

Buell assures me, if I am a candidate, that I will carry old Dearborn against W but I think his personal feeling sways his judgment. I nurse him by placing him frequently in the chair.

All men are accessible

In the way of legislation—Butler (who is a Wall Street broker & represents that interest *only*) has submitted his last proposition which is about the same as the first—its acceptance is *doubtful*. B. is a pet of Whitcomb, imported doubtless for the purpose of helping the Gov. out of his dilemmas—and to aid in the completion of the canal to Evansville.<sup>31</sup>

I am as yet—"hands off"—tho' B makes frequent calls on his friend *General* Orth. When nominated I wish to correspond with you freely on the subject of public indebtedness.

Defrees, as might be expected, is wonderfully tickled with the "plan" of Butler—he cannot see 3 inches beyond his nose and the Governors friends (& especially the Canal interest) are well pleased & But more of this anon—

I can find no other scraps of paper or I would continue my lucubrations. Hail lovely morn is breaking the portals of the East & I must close.

After the nomination you shall hear again from your friend and fellow citizen. . . .

My dear Colfax—

Lafayette Jany 27—'46

Sickness & the turmoil incident to an adjournment of the Legislature have prevented me writing to you as soon as I had promised.

I reached home a few days since and am now in the bosom of my family enjoying a felicity that is broken only by the thought that I must ere long leave Home & its endearments to mingle in the angry and exciting scenes of a heated political canvass.

I heartily wish myself out of it, and to remain a private Citizen but destiny seems to point to a different course of life and I must obey. You may regard this as merely moralizing, but these thoughts I assure are prompted by the circumstances that now surround me. Wife, boy, & all the endearments of the Family fire-side. But enough of this—we must prepare for a vigorous contest—our policy is to effect an indifference in the presence of the enemy and to prevent an undue excitement, while at the same time it becomes us to watch well the work of organization. County, township, & school district organization *must be attended to*.

A list of voters must be prepared by an active committee & on the day of election they must have every Whig at the polls—our township

<sup>31</sup> Charles Butler, a New York attorney, was hired by the bondholders to look after their interests. He made certain proposals to the General Assembly which were turned down by that body. The final action of the Assembly was not very creditable, as it tried to evade the question. After a struggle, a bill was passed, but it was carelessly drawn and impossible to execute. No bonds were surrendered under the new law. See Logan Esarey, *A History of Indiana* (2 vols., Fort Wayne, 1924), I, 431-34.

election law, will facilitate this much. This will require labor, but the result will amply repay us. For we cannot disguise the fact that a majority of the voters of Ind are against us, especially on general policy. And this brings me to say that we must avoid as much as possible all merely national politics. Whitcomb's course on the Judiciary—his neglect of the interests of education—his noncommittal course on all questions of importance, &c &c must be rung loud & long throughout the campaign.

The *Butler Bill*, will enter somewhat into the canvass & especially along the line of the W. & E. Canal—and I fear it will enure to Whitcomb's benefit. I voted against the bill for various reasons, but mainly because it does not provide sufficiently for the adjustment of our indebtedness. But should the people take it into their heads (and Whit. will use his utmost endeavors) to believe that it is a "plan" for the payment of our debt, it must strengthen him—for he claims all the credit of the paternity of the measure. Write to me fully on the subject. I feared this—and so told the Whigs in the Leg., but the advice was not heeded. If nothing had been done this winter, what an awful reckoning had there been against W. I may be wrong, but I should like to know how to *tack* on this question. We dare not oppose the bill now because 1st it is the law of the land—and 2nd a majority of the votes in favor of the bill are Whigs!

If anything beats us, it will be this measure, though it may possibly turn out differently & doom to oblivion the prime movers of the plan. These people—are queer sort of folks—At all events I think the Whig papers had better not laud the measure too highly.

I shall canvass the State generally & shall spend the last 3 weeks of the Campaign in the North.

Joe Marshall is a strong team and he goes into the canvass with strong hopes and a determination to *deserve* success at least.

On the Oregon question we can [?] as long and as loud as they—in fact I shall insist among the *liberty* voters especially, that we are entitled to Oregon and must have it to regain the political ascendancy of the Free States—and by the by this is a strong argument with every sensible man who views the relative situation of matters & things in their proper light.

As this Butler Bill is to go into operation & the people are to commence paying the interest on their debt—it will be a very *tangible* argument to them that the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands will somewhat alleviate their burdens.

We must not let the Locos outhumbug us and on the subject of reduction of public lands go as far as the farthest, which will be another argument in favor of distribution. For the reduction in the price will increase the revenue.

Congress may kick up some deviltry out of which we can make something to put in our pipes.

I shall attend to my German friends and shall visit them in my travels and wherever necessary give them a speech. But one of my principal "works" will be to effect a thorough organization. This

is all important and I trust you will see it carried out in your region of the State.

Something considerable can be made in those counties where the majority is largely against us, as in Elkhart—by not running a ticket for the Legislature—and inducing rival loco candidates which can easily be done. Last year in Carroll Co Holmes made 175 votes by this management.

Another thing I wish you to impress upon the Whigs through the State & that is to bring our County tickets out as early as possible. It will save much hard feeling & the people now readily acquiesce in the nominations—it will also prevent so many aspirants, &c but you can at a moment see this advantage.

An editorial on this subject might do good. It is best to say but little about Whitcomb until June or July—& then to open rich—the materials will be furnished. It might not be amiss after a while to tell the folks that Joe Marshall had a considerable patrimony in *slaves* left him—all of whom he has emancipated & provided for in this State. But I have scribbled about enough.

The State Convention went off very well & had Joe M. refused the nomination friend Watts & myself would have had the field alone & the result you can easily guess. But it is better as it is—and if successful now an apprenticeship of 3 years will convince the people that I am the very man they want after Joe. . . .

To Hon. David Wallace, Chairman, Whig State Central Committee<sup>32</sup>

Dear Sir.

Lafayette, 4th May, 1846

I herewith decline a canvass for the office of Lieut. Governor.

The success of our principles, in which I feel a deep and abiding interest, as well as justice to myself, demand of me the step I have taken.

My sincere regret for the course that circumstances have compelled me to adopt, is much alleviated by the reflection, that the Party may find an abler man to fill my place, and one who will concentrate upon himself its ENTIRE strength. . . .

Dear Colfax

Lafayette Aug 17—'46.

Your welcome letter has this moment been received.

I claim the credit for having *first thought* of your name in connection with the office of State Auditor.

So soon as it was known here how the Legislature stood I fixed upon you in my minds eye as the man to fill that place—for many very many reasons.

I know you are sufficiently qualified—you are deserving of the station, and we want a good & prudent Whig at the Capitol—to watch—to plan—to mature and to execute the purposes of the Whig party.

I go for you with all my might & soul & shall spare no exertions between this & the meeting of the Legislature to accomplish so desirable a result to me as your election. Correspond freely with your friends. I shall do the same. I shall write to Judge Ellis of Vin-

<sup>32</sup> Indianapolis *Indiana State Journal*, May 13, 1846.



cennes, Davis of Floyd, Simpson of Fayette, Winchel of Grant, Holloway of Wayne, Murphy of Henry &c.<sup>33</sup>

I shall from time to time give you the results of my *soundings*.

If you give me the names of any friends to whom a letter from me will do any good it shall be cheerfully written.

*I never desert my friends!*

I recd a letter from D Maguire this morning stating that he was a candidate for the same office, but he is no go.

I can safely promise you two from old Tip

But you must not urge Stanfield too strongly, better not at all<sup>34</sup>—his election might & no doubt would prove fatal to you.

It would be used against you. But Stanfield cannot be elected Speaker.

He is much of a gentleman & very clever. But his Knowledge of parliamentary rules is too limited as well as his acquaintance with the members & throughout the State generally—to ensure success.

But this Auditor matter I am right after & shall use what little influence I may possess in your favor. . . .

My dear Colfax—

Lafayette Oct 3, 1846—

I am almost ashamed to appear before you for my long silence indicates neglect & almost utter forgetfulness. I can only say “strike but hear!” The truth is, the full terms of our Court—and an office full of neglected business, the result of my late campaign—have pressed and still press so heavily upon me—that I am compelled to postpone the claim of private friendship to the more urgent call of professional duty. I have however not neglected your interests if I have been remiss in answering your ever welcome letters. I have written to Holloway, Ellis, Davis, Montgomery (of Warren) Ferguson et al urging your claims, the reasons, &c &c. I also wrote a long letter to Collins of New Albany (in reply). He is a candidate for Treasurer, and I think is likely to be a successful one. I pressed upon him the advantage of a Union between the North & South in the election of Treasurer & Auditor, told him if his forces were united with yours they would be formidable—and by harmonious action might prove successful.

But the battle is to be fought at the Capitol. Members do not like to pledge themselves by letter. When once on the ground I can tell in two days how the land lies. I shall be at Indianapolis some ten days before the meeting of the Legislature—and keeping aloof from cliques & bargains, shall do all in my power to secure your election. But if the signs are unpropitious and there is no possibility of your election my advice to you will be not to suffer your name to be

<sup>33</sup> All these men (as those in the next letter), although not too important in state politics, were key men in their counties and, of course, important in securing the desired result.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas S. Stanfield was a member of the state house of representatives from St. Joseph County for four terms, the first being 1845-1846. He came to St. Joseph County in 1830 and to South Bend in 1831. He was to become one of the most prominent citizens of that city. See Timothy E. Howard, *History of St. Joseph County, Indiana* (2 vols., Chicago, 1907), II, 712.

used for a defeat on the records may prove injurious to your future prospects.

I fear disunion in our ranks in consequence of the Dowlings. John is out openly for Harris, and I believe the arrangement is to form a coalition in favor of Harris for Auditor & Tom Dowling for State Printer.<sup>35</sup> Four disaffected Whigs may do much mischief.

Inter nos.—I go for Chapman—much as I lothe & despise the animal, to prevent the success of so unholy an alliance.

Harris was here a few days since—and told me positively that he had three Whigs pledged to go for him & if he got another he could be elected. Palmer is the only Loco, he cant get.

I go to Delphi in the mornning & shall see if possible how Waters the independent Loco feels about voting for Whigs. I expect nothing from him, for I find these Kicking Locos always work well in the traces again—in order to repair their treason— But his election was a triumph! It beat a red mouthed Loco—elected a Whig Sheriff in Carroll & a Whig Rept & Treasurer in Clinton and has created a division in those two counties that will not soon be healed. These counties are in our Congressional district & these dissensions may hereafter operate in our favor.

My friends (Whigs & Locos) insist on my running for Congress next summer—and were I not in the Senate I should take the field with strong assurance of success. But this thing of resigning is bad business & I shall not risk it. Ned McGaughey has not yet outlived his imprudent course in this respect. . . .

My dear Colfax,

Senate Chamber, Dec 28—1846—

I would have written to you two weeks since but after so long silence & so much neglect on my part I could not, until the present moment, command moral courage sufficient to introduce myself in your presence. Before I left home I was engaged upwards of two months in attending our Courts & therefore deferred writing until I should reach the Capitol. When I got here a press of business in the Supreme Court made me again defer until the meeting of the Legislature when another postponement took place. All of which actings and doings have fully convinced me of the truth of the apothegm that "delays are dangerous." Although negligent in my correspondence I had not forgotten you & stood ready at any moment in connection with your friend Stanfield, to urge your name & claims to the office of State Auditor. Tom no doubt has written you fully on this subject. At your request we did not present your name to the Whig caucus, but determined among ourselves & a few other choice friends—to await the result of the caucus—and if the party could not rally on their candidate, in joint convention, to throw out your name, roll up our sleeves, engage in the general melee—and trust to Providence for the result.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Dowling (1810-1879) was a member of the house from Vigo County for six terms. He came from Ireland to America in 1818, moved to Terre Haute in 1832, where he started the *Wabash Courier*. He was editor and owner of the *Express*, a Whig paper, 1842-1845. See W. S. Haymond (ed.), *Illustrated History of the State of Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1879), 674.

This I found upon a calm and careful examination, to be the only safe course and for these reasons—

1st Douglas Maguire (who is a whole souled faithful soldier in our course, and who tho' often defeated, has never thrown away his musket or deserted our colors) had, by the exertions of self & friends, secured to himself a pledge from about 45 members, being a majority of the Whigs—the other Whigs were either in favor of G. P. R. Wilson or else indifferent. The result was that Maguire could not be defeated in caucus.

2nd The friends of Hamick of Wayne, for Treasurer, had "joined teams" with Maguire—& nothing could be done with them & in consequence the friends of Collins of New Albany for fear of incurring the displeasure of Maguire's friends dare not form any coalition, and their desire to keep Wilson's friends from going against him preventing any coalition in that quarter.

3rd I was so situated personally, as to be compelled to go for Biddle my full length.<sup>36</sup> Biddle is my warm personal friend—and soon after the August election made an appeal to me which I dare not resist—and on the other hand Wright was supported by my most bitter enemies and his election would have interfered very sensibly with my practice in White, Jasper, & Carroll Counties which are in his circuit. If any other person, but Biddle, had been a candidate against Wright I could have made a heavy draught on his friends. So you see there was no earthly chance of doing anything only in the event of breaking up the caucus arrangement, and that was a very hazardous attempt—as it might have elected all the Locos, a result that would have been fraught with incalculable mischief to our party. As it is—we present to our constituents an undivided front, besides electing most excellent men.

I should have preferred the election of Collins to that of Haman. Collins would have been an active & efficient aid at the Capital.

Defrees is in danger. The Locos are determined to put the printing to the lowest bidder & a few *soft* Whigs are going with them.

Semans is also a candidate & *strange to say*, will not submit his claims to a Whig caucus. He holds out because the Locos have promised to go for him in case they cannot elect Chapman.

It would be a severe blow to Defrees personally as well as to the party to have the printing confined to Loco hands.

In the way of legislation there is as yet nothing of special importance. The Butler Bill will be before us in a few days. I am (as usual) opposed to its provisions—believing it to be a fraud on the State—concocted by the Wall Street interest—who control our fraudulent bonds—and if ever it becomes a law will deprive the state from even paying the *honest* portion of our bond holders—and drive her to repudiating all those who are unable to *subscribe money* to dig

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<sup>36</sup> Probably Horace Biddle who practiced law in Logansport and came there from Cincinnati. In 1846 he was elected, by joint ballot of the legislature, president-judge of the eighth circuit for a term of seven years. In 1874 he was elected to the Indiana Supreme Court. See *Biographical History of Eminent and Self-Made Men of the State of Indiana* (2 vols., Cincinnati, 1880), II, District 10, pp. 4-7.

a worse, than useless ditch, for the aggrandizement of a few speculators who own town lots on the line of the canal.

I know you think differently about this matter, but I fear your zeal for doing "something" in relation to our debt misleads your judgment in reference to the provisions of this Bill. I may make a speech on the measure & if so shall endeavor to place myself right before the people of Indiana—right soon.

P. S. Enclosed I send you a few lines for the Register.

Dear Colfax—

Lafayette Feb 11—1847.

The Dispenser of all Good no doubt punishes all transgressions. Since my return from the Capitol and indeed while there I most shamefully neglected my friends. I have not written a letter for two weeks, except on business, but today, having the hand of sickness heavily upon me—in the shape of a severe cold—I snatch a few hours, from the taking of medicine &c to devote to my friends—and consequently shall be able to scrawl some half dozen of letters.

The session this winter was very exciting and to me very unpleasant—parties were not only divided according to the old landmarks of Whigs & Locofoco—but to this was added, in increased bitterness and asperity the line of "Butler & Anti-Butler."

So far as our duty as Whigs devolved upon us, we discharged it faithfully, honestly and efficiently, electing Whigs, good and true, to every office—thus giving an earnest to the Whigs of the State that union, harmony and perserverance will always enable us to accomplish much if not, an entire revolution—while to our brethen throughout the Union it speaks in a voice of encouragement and comfort preparatory to the great contest of 1848.

The Presidential Election of 1848 is destined in my estimation to be one of exceeding interest and will be fought with an energy bordering on desperation. I hope to God it will be the last struggle of Locofocoism for ascendancy in this Government. And upon a calm survey of the issues that must necessarily enter largely—yes almost exclusively into that campaign—I cannot but come to the conclusion that the result will be crowned with victory to the Whigs. Victory once obtained—a good man placed at the head of government—our principles diffused into the operation of every department of that government—and that victory will secure a permanent establishment of the Whig policy. By that victory we satisfy the great mass of the people & we destroy the charm of our opponents which gives them so much power, the "cohesive power of public plunder." That charm once broken the scattered remnants of Locofocoism can never be gathered and mustered into a respectable minority—much less a party that with the advocacy of their present principles can ever hope to attain power.

This matter is well Known to their leaders, and they dread a discomfiture in the Presidential Election.

They may lose State after State—but until this opposition is properly concentrated and brought to bear upon the general election of the whole country—the immense patronage of the Gov. will give them strength & energy. To combine this local and scattered strength of

the Whigs, we must lay aside local prejudices—overcome local influences and unite upon some distinguished individual to whom every part & portion of our extended Country can point with confidence & exclaim “This is our man!” With such a feeling, cheered on by an enthusiasm the legitimate result of the advocacy of a good cause—we must & will succeed. But I shall tire you.

The Butler Bill caused much excitement, more than necessary. Its *peculiar* friends exhibited more feeling than is usual on mere occasions of patriotism. I will not talk about this new bill. I regard it as even worse, far worse than the old. The grand objection to all this Butler arrangement, with me is this—that it contemplates only a *partial* settlement of our debt—and cripples us as to the balance. This new Bill however obviates that difficulty by *repudiating* in plain language all the bonds that cannot or do not come into this arrangement. *This is most infamous!* The “poor widow & orphan, the aged & retired persons, whose support is on the income of our bonds” (and whom Butler fraudulently pretended to represent) who cannot loan us more money to dig a worthless ditch—have no part or lot in this Bill. No *priorities* for them—they are told, you are poor & hence we wont pay you! Most contemptible!

You have no doubt observed the furious attacks of Maj Semans—on me, since my return. To an unsuspecting individual who had not a peep behind the curtain, it would seem that the valiant major’s rantings were the spontaneous outbursts of pure patriotism. The contrary is the truth and if he persists in his course much longer I shall pull the veil of sanctified hypocrisy from him & expose his naked deformities to public gaze. Here, where we are both known his assaults fall harmless to the ground. At a distance the effect is doubtless otherwise.

He has hated me for several years—and this winter a new cause of dislike was created. He was a candidate for State Printer. Knowing that a majority (yes nearly all) of the Whigs preferred Defrees, he refused to go into caucus—but threw himself into the arms of the Locofoco’s and wished to use my colleague & myself as tools in his hands to distract the Whig party & consummate his corrupt intrigues. I refused and hence his course. Again, if the Bondholders accept the law, they will have a snug little office (the Receiver of tolls at Lafayette worth \$800.00 per annum) to bestow & this I am told, has been promised the Major for his “Patriotic” exertions in their behalf. How does Bro: Stanfield like to be branded as a deserter because forsooth he happened (along with some dozen of us) to leave the Capital a few days prior to adjournment. A thing as common an occurrence as the annual session.

Will Standfield be a candidate for re-election? He makes a useful member. And is one of the most clever and social men with whom I have ever been acquainted. I likewise formed a favorable opinion of Capt Day your Senator. Bating his Locofocoism he has much of the milk of human kindness in his composition.

I want you to remember me to Stanfield Day & all my South Bend friends. I should much like to visit that section of the State again

—and if the great north western convention comes off next June at Chicago I shall take South Bend in my tour. I don't know when I shall be able to write again—our Courts commence on next Monday and continue almost without intermission until May. But if it should so happen that I will have no time (for a month or two) to write again—you must not then conclude that I have no time to *read*—and I shall therefore be happy at any & all times to hear from you. . . .

Dear Colfax—

Lafayette May 9 1847

I was pleased to receive your last and shall cheerfully comply with your request. First, as to Maj. Semans—His ravings have not disturbed me, nor have they produced the least ruffling in the smooth waters of Tippecanoe. Here he is known and duly appreciated—and his Quixotic assaults are perfectly harmless. I make no effort whatever to conciliate his good will, because I do not need it—when I do, I can, as on former occasions either buy, or drive, him to my support. His paper is just on the verge, the mere outskirts of the Whig party, and in this County and Congressional District he has no influence to wield either for or against us and our principles. With none of the intellect or shrewdness of Greely, he is devotedly attached to all his (Greely's) crotchets and believes that Fourierism, Magnetism, Witchcraft, etc. etc. are the acme of social and intellectual attainment.

As to the new Whig paper, we are determined to have one ere long. A Mr. Hull of Louisville is here now and negotiating for the purchase of the Journal office. If he fails in this I think he will receive sufficient assurances to enable him to commence a newspaper.

You ask my opinion of the Hero of Buena Vista.<sup>37</sup> I regard him as a very clever good sort of a man, without any of that pre-eminent talent called Genius, but possessed of strong common sense—an iron will that “scoffs at the yoke of rule,” and a heart fearless and brave. I have somewhat studied and compared his military movements (tho' I do not profess to be as well versed in Military matters as the *late* Genl Cray of Michigan) and while they exhibit great prowess and indomitable heroism—I think they lack that finished and exquisite touch of science to which the profession of arms has attained at the present day. He is fighting an enemy greatly our inferior—the miserable remnant of a once proud and valiant people—priest ridden and every tie of patriotism torn asunder and extinguished by domestic broils and dissensions.

The Mexican of the 19th Century exhibits none of the peculiar traits of the powerful Aztec or the chivalric Castilian.

An hundred causes have produced national degeneracy and they are far behind the present nations of the earth in every department of the arts and sciences. A people thus situated can offer but little resistance to the advancement of the vigorous Saxon, especially when their army is not furnished with the necessary subsistence to support life itself. I need not be told that numbers ought to supply these deficiencies—they will not do it—but rather add others—for the best contested field by the Mexicans was at Palo Alto.

<sup>37</sup> Zachary Taylor.

This is the enemy that Taylor has met and of course conquered.

He deserves much of his country for his services and so do the officers and men under his command for the sacrifices they have made and the perils they have suffered in this most unholy war.

You say that Taylor is a Statesman and a Scholar and a fit man for the Presidency and that he should be the candidate of the Whig party in 1848—for that elevated office. I will not take issue with you on these points—for if he possesses those qualifications—his personal history has escaped my notice. I have always understood that he entered the army at the early age of 19 and has remained there ever since. That he has never filled any civil office or conducted any national negotiation. If he be a Statesman it has come to him in an easy manner, by instinct, and not by the usual mode of twenty years public services and laborious investigation. Clay & Webster & Calhoun are Statesmen—but their knowledge was acquired by long and arduous public service, in spheres that called for the exercise of the highest and most cultivated intellect and the most thorough researches into the political and social history of the world. Washington, was no Statesman; he was a goodman—Jefferson was more of a philosophic dreamer than anything else. The elder Adams stands out in American History as the foremost of those spirits that are entitled to that ennobling appellation. The Statesman and the soldier are never combined. Caesar had some pretension to that combination. Napoleon knew not how to govern man, but on the battle field when the fierce storm of war raged most fearful. Wellington, a great military Captain, able to sustain himself in the Peninsular War and to overthrow at Waterloo (by the timely aid of Blucher) the mighty cohorts of Bonaparte and his old guard with the Bravest of the Brave at their head—but follow Wellington to the House of Lords and he is a perfect cipher—commanding respect only for his military career.

Taylor I think is no Statesman, such an one as should be placed at the Head of the most powerful nation on Earth, but he may be a scholar. On this head I am ashamed to say I must also confess my ignorance, because none of his effusions [*sic*] have ever reached my eyes, saving a letter or two, for his official dispatches are prepared by the person whose duty it is to prepare them, Adjutant Bliss a most finished belles letters [*sic*] scholar, well versed in French Spanish and German Literature. As to his being the candidate of the Whig party—I want a man whom I know to be a Whig, who by a long life has shown his devotion to, and his appreciation of, our principles. The contest for President should be regarded as a contest of principle—and its object, their triumph.

The principles of the Whig party are well known and settled and defined—unlike those of our progressive neighbors stable and fixed and not subject to be moulded at the will or caprice of any individual to suit his wishes or to meet the peculiar circumstances that may surround such individual.

Taylor may be the steadfast advocate of those principles. But having been in the Army ever since his eligibility as a Citizen I presume he has never exercised the elective franchise in his life.

The United States Gazette says Taylor is a "Clay Whig" while the Whig papers in New Orleans say he is opposed to a National Bank and to the revival of a Protective Tariff. He himself has not yet seen fit to settle this family difficulty or to enlighten us as to the principles of National policy that find favor with him.

But it is said he will permit the Whigs to use his name, and that in the excitement (enthusiasm if you please) of his victories we can elect him. Most gracious condescension. *I go for no man "blind."*

I have come to a different conclusion as to his availability, admitting we as Whigs should support him simply on that ground.

A mere military man is not the man for the Whig party—nor for the Country at large. In reply to this I may be referred to Jackson & Harrison. I cheerfully accept the reference—and am willing to test his availability by a comparison with both those worthies.

Jackson achieved a brilliant victory, one which made every heart throb with patriotic ardor and raised him high in the affections of the people. He was not thought of for President by either politicians or people until 1822 & 3. In 1824 he was a candidate, his military career was before the people, he was urged by his friends as a military man and met with defeat. After that contest his friends shifted the scene, the Hero of New Orleans was somewhat merged in the politician—he became the personification of new doctrines and new ideas of national policy and he succeeded.

Harrison rendered important services to the Government in suppressing Indian incursions upon our frontiers and in repelling British aggression. He received for this at the time the welcomed plaudits of a grateful people and sunk into the retiracy of a mere county clerkship. In the spring of 1835, his friends brought his name to the notice of the American people for the Presidency. The victories of the Thames, of Miesgs, and of Tippecanoe were brought vividly before us, his battles were fought over again, and after the labors of 18 months campaign his friends were doomed to witness a defeat. He was again forgotten, until the meeting of the Harrisburg Convention—when Scott & Clay came in contact, Scott supported by the states of New York, Penn, & New Jersey—Clay by the South. Clay's friends, jealous of Scott, united with the West for Harrison and thus he was nominated.

The true history of the campaign of 1840 is not yet written, but it was more than Harrison's military fame that elected him. The corruptions of Van Buren's administration, the feeling of frontier life and frontier settlement, represented as it was in that campaign by the National Emblem of the Log Cabin (for all our people East West North & South were once Log Cabin men) did much to elect Harrison. Besides he was somewhat of a Statesman and a finished scholar. Do you not know that we as triumphantly pointed to his Bolivar letter as we did to the campaign of Tippecanoe.

Again—The Mexican war is not yet closed—other & fiercer—and more scientific battles are yet to be fought and fought too by other heroes. The glory of this Mexican War will be divided—and the blaze of all may be acquired in the very city of the Montezumas. The victory at New Orleans eclipsed the achievements of Chippewa, of Lake Erie—and of the Ocean and the victory that will "conquer a



peace" at the walls of Mexico may also eclipse the affairs at Monterey, Buena Vista, and Vera Cruz.

But I have spun out my letter to too great a length. I have spoken as I always do candidly, not hastily but after mature and deliberate and impartial reflection.

I think my dear Sir—it is all idle to think of making a Whig President out of Taylor. He deserves well of his country. Let him have the united thanks of that country. Do not divide it by arraying in partisan warfare one half of it against him.

We have good Whigs, able men, acknowledged Statesmen, the pride of our Country & the ornament of the World—men who deserve well of us as a party and equally well of the Nation as patriots. Do not put them aside for a man of yesterday—whose very name was unknown until it was revealed to us by the camp fires and battle fields of Mexico.

As Whigs as Americans we owe it to ourselves to the nation and to the World to select good men & true for so responsible a station—and should we fail, we will still exhibit to the universe that spectacle on which Angels & Deity love to look, the spectacle of the good man struggling against fate.

Forgive the freedom with which I have spoken for if you are a Taylor man you may not like the "roughness and readiness" of my pen on this occasion. . . .

Dear Colfax—

Gettysburg Penna Sept 9—1847,

You will doubtless be surprised to receive a letter from the hills of the old Keystone. I am on a visit to my friends. I left Lafayette about the middle of August—and your letter of the 27th was forwarded and reached me last evening.

I never received your answer to my Anti-Taylor letter & hence the *stoppage* in my correspondence. I anxiously awaited a reply to that letter and when West was in Lafayette enquired of him what could be the reason of your silence. The mystery is now solved. I trust in future no such remisness will occur.

A remark in your letter I want you to take back, as we Hoosiers say—it is this, "if your old feelings of friendship toward me still exist" &c. Is there anything in my conduct towards you that for a moment warrant a doubt of my sincere attachment to you? If so, I regret it exceedingly. You are among the few I have always regarded as my truest friends and whose good opinion I would under no circumstances have forfeited. Receive this as evidence of renewed & continued friendship, attachment & regard.

I shall return to Indiana in the course of 10 or 15 days—and shall of course go for you with all my might. You may safely calculate on at least one vote from Tippecanoe—and I think I can do something in Warren & Carroll—and I know I can do something at the Capitol—and it shall be most cheerfully done. But we will hereafter correspond more in reference to this matter.

I am confirmed by my visit through New York, New Jersey & Penna—in reference to my opinion of Genl Taylor—the feeling against slavery & its further extension is too deeply rooted among the masses for Politicians to run with success any ultra slavite. When we meet

at Inds I trust we can counsel freely & with safety. I still regard Taylor's nomination as an utter abandonment of all our principles & the prostration of our party. . . .

[To Caleb B. Smith]

Senate Chamber, Jan 30, 1848

Your favor of the 14th inst. has been duly received but in the confusion consequent to an adjournment of a Hoosier legislation—I have thus far been unable to answer it.

You have doubtless received the action of the Whig State Convention. It strikes me the proceedings were characterized by the proper feeling. Everything was harmonious. The Taylorites attempted to obtain an expression in his favor, but they found the feeling to be averse to any expression.

I am truly glad to learn that the Whigs of the North take the noble stand of requiring Taylor to pass the ordeal of a National Convention & to require an expression of his political opinions. These opinions must accord with the well known principles of the Whig party.

But this Mexican war and its probable termination and the consequences of such termination will all have a important bearing upon our candidate.

If peace is declared and that peace brings with it a portion of Mexican territory as indemnity we must have a Northern man for our candidate—as the question of slavery will then be presented to the people of this Union in a shape that cannot be avoided.

The recall of Scott—unparalleled as it is in the history of the World—that a victorious general should be arrested and tried in the heart of the enemies Country is creating such excitement here—and will give him many new friends.

P. S. Will you please send me a copy of the President's messages & documents to me at La Fayette.

My dear Colfax—

Lafayette April 29—1848—

I have a few moments leisure to drop you a few lines. I suppose you are making preparations to start for Phila, if not, it is true you should for you must by all means attend the National Convention. It will be an important Convention to the Whig party of the Union—and requires all the prudence & moderation & wise councils that can be commanded throughout the country. I take it for granted then you will attend.

It is entirely out of my power to go, even were I a delegate—as our Circuit Court sits in June. I shall take the liberty however of giving you a few suggestions in relation to the situation of the Party & the proper course to be pursued—Knowing that the suggestions will be kindly received—and due allowance made for any imperfections they contain.

Genl Taylor's name cannot be presented to the Convention, or if presented, cannot be acted on, unless that mass of intelligent Whigs are willing to stultify themselves—discard all their cherished principles—and forsake the faith of their fathers—What! shall this party combining as it does the moral force & intellectual pride of the Union,

professing a set of conservative & liberal principles—that have stood the test of severe scrutiny—this party that is at this moment stronger than at any prior period of its history—shall this party disband & follow the wake of one who disdains a nomination at their hands and who is unwilling to pledge himself to a support of a single one of their principles. Never, Never—I was not mistaken when I wrote you on this subject a year ago and the lapse of that period has but confirmed my impressions—and demonstrated that the party never would rally around him. *Even Defrees has deserted him!* and the action of the Whigs of Ohio Penna & N. York places the seal upon his pretensions. Who then should be nominated? A firm, decided, *available* Whig! Clay has presented his *petition*, and claims a hearing. This distinguished citizen deserves well of his country, and of the party who proudly claim him as the “embodiment” of their measures. But the splendor of his genius and the brilliance of his life ought not to dazzle us or lure us by false lights from our duty. While we owe much to Clay, we must not forget that we owe more to ourselves. And in canvassing for a candidate we should act as fearlessly as though he had not entered the lists, our love for him ought not cause us to place ourselves as well as himself in a false position. In a word, ought Clay to be nominated. If he can be elected he ought by all means to be the candidate.

But can he be elected? He is getting old and age brings upon him, as upon all mankind, its infirmities. His last letter exhibits a melancholy evidence that his gigantic intellect is beginning to be shrouded by the curtains of declining years. This to many of his friends would be a serious objection. Add 3 or 4 years to his age—and he will present the appearance of *an old man*, with all the imperfections of age clustering thick around him.

Again, what has transpired to make him *personally* stronger than he was in 1844. My acquaintance & experiences proves to me that he has not gained a single vote to my knowledge, while I know of many he has lost. The Whig Party, I grant you, is stronger than it was then, or rather I should say there are portions of the opposition detached from the main body—which could be brought to unite with us—but that union can only be effected by the power of attraction. Is it reasonable to suppose that men who have voted against Clay for twenty years will now vote for him? Opposition to Clay is a part of their nature—and however much they dislike the measures of the administration, their hostility to Clay is still greater. Men whose first votes were against Clay and who have always voted against will not change—but if a new man is presented they may be brought to co-operate with us.

Again, with Clay our candidate, we enter the contest dispirited & disheartened. We regard his chances of success, at best, but problematical. This state of feeling is tantamount to defeat. Those states that voted against Clay in 44 will do so again, except perhaps N. York. This is admitted by his most devoted friends. Take Indiana then for instance, and how would the matter stand. We enter the contest with certain defeat awaiting us here—and can we under these circumstances make the necessary efforts to maintain even our present position in our state politics. The Legislature of next winter has

many important offices to fill, US Senator—Prest. of State Bank—Secretary of State &c &c. We can secure the Legislature if we have the right man as our candidate for Prest. but even then it will require the utmost exertions. With Clay I am sorry to confess it, we would be in a hopeless minority. Shall we then risk our state elections & ascendancy for the slight hope of carrying N. Y. Can we carry N. York—I don't know. Greeley says we can, but so he thought in 1844. One thing is certain, the foreign vote has increased very largely and Clay can never receive this vote. Nor will the Barnburners go for him. There is no reason why they should.

Again—There are many persons aspiring to the Presidency—each of whom carries in his train a long list of *expectants*—these will all feel mortified & disappointed in the event of Clays nomination. Again, the younger portion of the Whigs regard the peculiar friends of Clay as the old Hunkers, who are to share all the “spoils of office”—and thus they are deprived of one great incentive to action—and their action, young, vigorous, & enthusiastic, gives to a campaign much of its spirit & eclat. All these things combined, and many others might be named, force me reluctantly to the conclusion that Clay is not the man for the crisis.

Next as to Corwin.<sup>38</sup> I admire him much, but it is useless to deny the fact that there is at present too much war feeling in the Country, to try his fortunes.

McLean is a good man but too far removed from the “B'hoys.” There is no *music* in him.<sup>39</sup> Crittenden, Badger, Clayton, Seward &c are about par—Not the men upon whom the Whigs of the Nation could be expected to rally.<sup>40</sup>

Now my dear Sir, I have no doubt you are ready to exclaim, “Orth disposes of all these men rather summarily, who does he say is *the man?*” I say emphatically Winfield Scott!!

First—because he is a good, substantial & reliable Whig.

Second—because not being actively engaged in politics he has not that

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Corwin (1794-1865), governor of Ohio, senator, and secretary of the treasury under President Millard Fillmore, feeling as most Whigs felt, or pretended to feel, that the war was waged for territorial acquisition, made an active stand in the Senate against its continuance. He left the Whig party later and was elected to the house as a Republican in 1858.

<sup>39</sup> John McLean (1785-1861), judge of the Supreme Court of Ohio, 1816-1822; Postmaster General, 1823-1829; Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, 1830-1861; for many years was considered (especially by himself) a possible candidate for the presidential nomination.

<sup>40</sup> John J. Crittenden (1787-1863), whose political influence was very strong, was a lawyer and statesman of Kentucky who served his state and country in many public capacities. George E. Badger (1795-1866) of North Carolina was an able jurist, senator, and secretary of the navy under President Harrison. John M. Clayton (1796-1856) of Delaware became nationally famous as a lawyer. As secretary of state under President Harrison, he concluded the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. William H. Seward (1801-1872) was a younger member of the Whig party at this time, but his reputation and place in history was made in the Republican party in the Civil War and Reconstruction times.

host of bitter partisan opponents that usually attach to a distinguished & prominent man.

Third, because he is a Northern man, without being in the least identified with the anti-slavery movement so as to make him obnoxious to the South.

Fourth, because his whole career, diplomatic & military shows that he possesses talents of a high order—in other words appears to have been born to command.

Fifth, because his military exploits in several wars present a tangible form, which the mind of the masses is able to grasp & comprehend.

Sixth, because he has been persecuted slandered & reviled by the minions of power & the panderers of executive favor.

But I will not enlarge. The great body of the Whigs in this vicinity prefer Scott & I think the delegates from our District will support him. While on the circuit this spring in the South part of your District I heard a good deal on the subject. Pratt & Biddle are both warmly for him & I think will both attend the Convention. . . .

Dear Colfax—

Lafayette July 3, 1848

I have but a moments leisure to write you. Our Court is in session and I am very busy. I write you at the request of the Central Committee & several of our citizens White, Clark, Gregory &—

Semans you know is out against the nominations & we want to get the right kind of a man to become the permanent editor of a Whig paper here. We have come to the conclusion to prevail on you to come here and either buy out Semans or else start a new paper. The former would be preferable. Semans asks \$2500—Cash \$1000—& the residue in payments. We would undertake to raise at least \$500 of the first payment & perhaps more. I am satisfied if you come at this junction of affairs you can make a fortune here. This is the *best point* in the state for a good paper.

I should like if you could come down immediately on receipt of this. I think satisfactory arrangements could be entered into without much trouble. . . .

Dear Colfax

Lafayette July 11th 1848

Yours of the 6th inst has been duly received. I trust ere this you are packing up your *duds* preparatory to a permanent location in this flourishing city, where I promise you a hearty welcome & a fair prospect of pecuniary independence.

It will be out of my power to visit the North prior to the August election, as my engagements here, professional & political, will demand all the intervening time. I promise myself however, the pleasure of a visit to the North, sometime in September.

I regard the nomination of Taylor as most unfortunate for the Whig Party. His nomination is in utter disregard of that strong and rapidly increasing feeling of hostility to human slavery, so prevalent among the great body of Northern Whigs, and a abandonment, partial at least, of those principles which have heretofore graced our banner.

Does he stand pledged to carry out the doctrines of the party that are thus authoritatively called upon to yield him their support? and

where does he stand on the important question of the extension of slave territory? All these things considered force me to the belief that his nomination is most unfortunate for the Party and equally so whether the contest ends in defeat or victory. If it ends in defeat the party will be scattered to the four winds of heaven, and will not in our day, if ever, be rallied again as the once proud & powerful Whig party of the nation. If we succeed, it will not be a *Whig triumph*, based upon Whig principles, but will be a triumph obtained by the aid of disaffected Democrats, who will leave us so soon as a favorable opportunity presents itself of re-uniting with their former associates.

Whether defeated or victorious we drive from us many, yea, hundreds of the *very best portion of the party*, who disgusted at our inconsistency will never return, for they feel as though the broad platform upon which they have heretofore battled has been abandoned for the bare prospect of availability.

And is Taylor's nomination a sure harbinger of victory. I do not so regard by any means. Look at the state of things as at present existing, with every appearance of their continued & increased existence up to the November election. The independent movement loses us certainly the following states, Ohio, Maine, N. Hampshire X X X but I will proceed no farther in these treasonable designs.

I trust Old Zack will be elected and that his election will rebound to the honor and welfare of our common Country and the permanent ascendancy of Whig principles.

I shall be pleased to hear from you more frequently. I shall be in St. Js about the 20th of September & expect to spend a day or two among my old and valued friends.

Tippecanoe is entirely disorganized. A complete union exists between the liberty men and disaffected Whigs & Locos who will present a County ticket for the August election. The result of this will be the inevitable defeat of our Representatives. Carroll County which for the last 3 years has given evidences of true conversion and would this year send a Whig to the Legislature is about returning to her idols on account of *two* Whig candidates in the field. I go to Carroll on Saturday & shall endeavor to reconcile matters but have little hopes of being able to succeed. . . .

Friend Colfax:—

Lafayette Augt. 29th 1848,

Contrary to the advice of my Physician I have determined to attempt a canvass in Northern Indiana. For the last three months I have been severely afflicted with Bronchitis, so as to forbid public speaking, but for the last few days I feel somewhat better, and desirous of doing my part in the canvass—I shall try and fill the appointments herewith enclosed. I start tomorrow for Fort Harrison and vicinity. The Whigs here are dispirited and go into the contest very reluctantly. The result will be a falling off of the Whig vote. The God's truth is Old Zack is not the right kind of Whig for this meridian, still we shall attempt to do our duty.

See that these notices are circulated in Goshen, Mishawaka, LaPorte, Plymouth & Rochester. . . .

P. S. Will you meet me at Mishawaka.

My dear Colfax—

Lafayette Wednesday night—

I snatch a few moments from the press of professional engagements to reply to your kind letter, which reached me a day after my arrival home.

I was exceedingly gratified with my Northern trip, and am only sorry I cannot visit Southern Indiana. I met many warm & devoted friends who by their kind attentions have laid me under renewed obligations, while at the same time I formed many new & desirable acquaintances, and if I have been the humble instrument in converting a single Whig from the errors of Van Burenism or an honest Democrat from the dangers of Progressive Locofocoism I shall feel fully repaid for all my loss of time and personal inconvenience. At Laporte I found the Whigs ready to enter the contest with proper zeal—had a good audience and a refreshing season. Laporte contains good Whigs & I doubt not they will give a good account of themselves. I went to Plymouth rather discouraged. I felt unwell and secretly hoped there might be no audience to hear me, but shortly after my arrival our friends called on me and by the enthusiasm they manifested, & the *lies* that the barnburners had circulated against me I was “warmed up” and entered the Court House and made *them* the best speech of my tour, decidedly. By the way, I felt awkward and embarrassed while speaking at South Bend and really fear I did not do as well as I should under other circumstances have done. However, at some future time I may visit you again and make amends. At Rochester I had a small audience but left the Whigs in fine spirits.

At Logansport the Whigs are all right and promise an increased vote of 40 or 50 over the vote of Clay. Friend Lasselle has given *an impartial* account of my effort there.<sup>41</sup> Really had the Judge known I was so modest a man he would not have put it on so thick, as the saying is. I am sorry he eulogized me so undeservedly. Comparing me to Corwin, Pshaw!! What folly! I arrived home safely and found my dear little family in good health and anxious for my return. Sweet Home! How many endearments cluster around these words.

As to political matters at home I am gratified to inform you from personal observation that Van Burenism is decidedly on the wane & Old Zack decidedly on the increase. On Saturday they had their grand-rally (the Barnburners) and strange to say in this their stronghold they had, men & boys, Whigs, Locos & Freesoilers 126 & all told, and not a single speaker from a distance. The God's truth is they have made a perfect fizzle of it, and from this meeting we date their downfall. I assert confidentially that V. B. will not get 400 votes, and many who ought to know dont allow them over 300. While the meeting was progressing 5 Whigs came to my office & told me although they voted the freesoil ticket in August they were now against V. B. 3 of them are openly for Zack & 2 yet on the stand. We are operating finely here now. The last Allison letter, Websters speech, & Greeleys present position are working admirable. The truth is, hundreds of doubting Whigs all over the Country are fast coming to the

<sup>41</sup> Probably Hyacinth Lasselle, Jr., who conducted the Logansport, Indiana, *Telegraph* until March, 1849.

sensible conclusion that their duty is clear, that the country demands of them their vote for the old Patriot.

Since Monday morning I have been busily engaged in Court, have tried six jury cases & been successful in each.

Friend Semans is about cheating me out of the opportunity of giving him the *skinning* I promised and which he so richly deserves. He has agreed to dismiss his suit if we would pay the costs which is a mere trifle, and I suppose my client will agree to it. But he shall not escape—the shallow hearted hypocrite will catch it on every stump in this county.

But I must close—& why? Because Mrs. O calls to me it is time to go to bed—and you know we must obey the demands of those sweet angels, who rule in these matters, with undisputed sway. Remember me Kindly to Mrs. C.—as also to the Harpers, Koeler, Stanfield, Heaton, &c &c and especially Dr. Henricks. Tell the Dr I have obtained much relief from his prescription and thankful for it. . . . P. S. Tomorrow the Whig Rally comes off, with fair prospects.

Friend Colfax—

Senate Chamber Dec 23, 1848.

Your favor of the 4th inst strange to say only reached me two days since.

Of course you have received all the Legislative news of importance ere this, and the only thing pertaining to this Department of Government, that you have not heard, consists of local bills &c &c and I shall not trouble you in enumerating them.

Whitcomb's election has caused some bitter feelings between the several branches of the democracy, but this of course is only temporary. I believe the Whigs took a prudent course in voting for Smith on the first ballot. Our intention was to go for Judge Law on the second ballot and had Whitcomb failed on the 1st I believe Law would have been chosen on the 3rd or 4th ballot certain.

I am sorry the Whigs selected the 3rd of January for the meeting of our Convention. The bad roads & inclement weather will keep many of our *distant* friends from attending. Quite a number believe it to be prudent to adjourn the Convention until May.

As yet there is no one prominently mentioned for Gov. or Lieut. Elder Wood, Quanly, McCarty, Sullivan & Beard are spoken of. Among the Locos—Chamberlin, Joe Wright & Col. Lane (of Dearborn) are most prominent.

There are many applicants here for office under the President Elect. I am sorry to see this as it must be very embarrassing to the new administration. There is a strong feeling here in favor of Caleb B. Smith for P. M. General. . . .

[To John J. Crittenden]<sup>42</sup>

Indianapolis, Dec 26, 1848

The undersigned, members of the General Assembly, and other citizens of Indiana, now at the Capitol (and political friends of the Executive elect), would most respectfully present the name of Caleb

<sup>42</sup> The Papers of John C. Crittenden, XII, Library of Congress.



B. Smith to the notice of President Taylor, for some position in the Administration of the Government at Washington.

Indiana has never, as yet, enjoyed the high gratification of seeing one of her own citizens thus distinguished. From being the second child of the old Northwestern Territory, she has grown to a fifth rank in the confederacy, and with a continued present progress, exceeded by no state in the American Union.

We have known Mr. Smith long, personally and by character. As a business man—energetic, able, and faithful—he has no superior. In any Department where varied talent, industry, and comprehensive views, would be a prerequisite, we have the most unshaken confidence that the President would find him equal to any emergency, and a safe repository of his confidence, respect, and esteem.

Should it comport with the well-considered sense of duty, which the President elect holds paramount to all other considerations, to thus distinguish Indiana, by placing one of her most gifted sons near his administration, we cordially unite in expressing the opinion, that it would be received by the people of this Commonwealth with the deepest feelings of gratitude as a renewed evidence of the President's kindness to the State which yet contains the first memorial of his glory and renown.

Hugh O'Neal,	Godlove S. Orth,	S. Meredith
Abner T. Ellis	J. D. Cassatt	R. H. Rousseau
John D. Defrees	O. R. Dougherty	James Robt. Bryant
A. L. Osborn	David Commons	G. P. R. Wilson
John S. Davis	M. L. Bundy	J. B. Julian
D. Maguire	David Wade	R. G. Gesses
L. N. Rousseau	William Miller	C. M. Allen
R. N. Cameron	James Morgan	Jno Ryman
William Herod	G. W. Beakemone	J. S. Robbs
Milton Gregg	Jas. S. Frazer	John H. Sand
Thos. Dowling	J. W. Graham	Tho H. Blake
D. P. Holloway	John W. Gillum	Wm. D. Griswold
W	D. C. Dounohue	P. A. Hackleman
O. H. Smith	Archibald Johnson	James H. Suit
A. A. Hammond	J. M.	David Kilgore
Wm. Hannaman	Robt. S.	
L. S. B. Noil [?]	Edw. S. Tutter	
A. W. Hubbard	W. A.	
Thomas D. Walpore	Thomas D. Hankins	
J. S. Harvey	Benjamin Goodwin	
W. J. S. Cornett	W. M. Dunn	
Joseph Robinson	Henry Jackman	
Aaron Haughton	C. Parker	
Wm. P. Dole		
Harvey Day		
Henry Simpson		
Wm. Hendricks Jr.		
John Beard		

[To Caleb B. Smith]<sup>43</sup>

Lafayette Mar 26, 1849

Permit me to congratulate you upon your recent very flattering appointment under the administration.

I suppose you are overrun with the application of *friends* etc. in reference to office. This is all well enough. I have but one favor to ask of you, and it is this— We want our present Post Master removed, Genl. Walker, an active partisan, and his place filled by a good working Whig, Col. Daniel Brawley whose papers, etc. are now before the proper Department. I wish you therefore to call upon the powers that be and see that Walker is walked out & Brawley put in, and by so doing you will confer another to the many favors already received at your hands.

I am truly sorry that I cannot address this letter to you as Post Master General. The Cabinet is very good, only the great West is entitled to at least one more—But Old Zack" no doubt means to do what is right.

Dear Colfax—

Lafayette March 29th 1849—

Yours of the 26th inst was recd this evening. Enclosed you will find the recommendation you desire. I trust it may prove to be of some advantage.

As to Congress, my friends in this District would cheerfully send me to Washington, but alas, there are not enough of them to do any good. My own desire is that my name should not be used in connection with that or any other office. My practice is quite large enough to satisfy any ordinary ambition, and as my means are rather limited, I prefer adding a little to my private stores before I again enter the political arena. I trust your *modesty* will not prevent you consenting to run for the Senate, as old St. Joe has been misrepresented long enough. You can be elected and you ought to go. Take Mrs. C. along and you can have a pleasant time, but dont think of going without her. You know the *little ones* will be no inconvenience. As to editing your paper you can attend to it, a la Greely.

Seriously I think you ought to run for the Senate, but if you do not and the next Legislature should be Whig you must prepare to be elected State Printer. By the way, this matter was very generally talked about last session, and if alive and well you may expect to hear of, or see me, at Indianapolis as a lobby member in your behalf—for it is high time that the Whigs should have a *man* at the head of this central organ.

Bausman & Alert are doing very well. I am only sorry that *circumstances* prevented you from becoming a citizen of Lafayette & taking charge of the Journal. . . .

<sup>43</sup> The Orth letters to Caleb B. Smith are in the Papers of Caleb B. Smith in the Library of Congress. Smith (1808-1864) studied law at Connersville under Oliver H. Smith. In 1832 he purchased an interest in the *Political Clarion* and changed it to the *Indiana Sentinel*. He served in Congress, 1832-1837 and 1840-1841; became speaker of the house, 1835-1837; and in 1861 held office under Lincoln. See Louis J. Bailey, "Caleb Blood Smith," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXIX (1933), 213-39.

[To Caleb B. Smith]

. . .

Lafayette April 16, 1849

I wrote you some few weeks since, but fearing you may not have received my letter to you owing to your absence from the City I shall write again.

Col. Daniel Brawley, a warm personal friend of mine is desirous of receiving the appointment of Post Master at this place. His application, with strong recommendations is now before the Department. Col. B is a good Whig, well qualified for the office, and his appointment would give general satisfaction.

Am I asking too much of you to see the powers that be, and put in a friendly word for him? I shall regard this a personal favor & will gratefully remember it. . . .

My dear Colfax—

Enclosed I send you the recommendation you desire. I owe an apology for the hasty & imperfect manner in which it is gotten up. My mind has not recovered from the stunning blow it lately received in the sudden and unexpected death of my beloved Wife. Oh! God what a sudden & afflicting bereavement! But my heart is too full for utterance. Even these hurried lines are bedewed with the tears of your distressed friend.

[To Caleb B. Smith]

. . .

Lafayette May 16, 1849

I recd your favor of the 5th inst. announcing the appointment of my friend Col. Brawley to the office of Post Master in our City, and am under obligations to you for the interest you have manifested in this matter. We have been daily expecting his commission, until yesterday our community was considerably agitated by a rumor that Brawley's appointment had been suspended, which rumor appeared to be confirmed by the fact that a petition was very industriously circulated in favor of a Mr. Reynolds.

Mr. Reynolds is a worthy old man, but quite too far advanced in life, being upwards of 70, to discharge the active duties of the office, and it is suspected that the object is to use the old man's name for the purpose of smuggling his son into the office, who would not be so acceptable to the community. The truth is Mr. Brawley is the man whom this community desires to see P. Master. He is an excellent citizen—a devoted Whig, a poor man, every way qualified for the office, and worth of it.

I fear some foul play in this matter else the summonssion [?] would have arrived, and if any charges have been preferred against Mr. B. and the appointment suspended it is but an act of Justice to him to have no other appointment made until he can be heard, and until the voice of this people can be heard as it doubtless will be if any attempt is covertly made to deprive them of their first choice. I shall be at Washington on the 1st of June, and if the appointment is not given to Brawley, I desire a suspension of action until my arrival, and it strikes me if the administration have any doubts as to the course they should pursue in this matter I can easily remove them.

This in itself is a small matter, yet you know how important it is to avoid doing anything to provoke bad feelings among our friends, and should the Department reverse their decision without good cause it would meet with general disapprobation.

At the request of sundry of our Citizens I enclose you the enclosed petition, which explains itself. I have this moment received your dispatch saying that Col. B. has received the appointment. In that event no use need be made of this petition, but should there be any further suspension you can place this before the Department.

I am giving you a good deal of trouble in this matter, but the truth is I have some feeling on the subject and situated at this distance from the Capital we must throw ourselves upon the generosity of our friends who are near the scene of action. . . .

Friend Colfax—

Lafayette Augt 18th 1849,

The cholera having measurably subsided I ventured to return to the City from my Prairie retreat a few days since.

The recent elections have proved truly disastrous to our friends, for which I am very sorry, but it proves also another thing, that the sink or swim original ultra Taylor men were grossly mistaken when they predicted that his popularity would carry both branches of Congress while any other Whig would be unable to do so. But I am out of politics now and shall remain so until '52 when if "Scott & Canada" are the watchwords I shall again enter the arena.

The Convention question has carried—if we can now manage to keep partisanship out of the Convention some good may be effected. This can be done by adopting the following plan. Have 100 delegates—2 from each senatorial District—each party nominating one candidate & then everybody voting for both.

I am satisfied the *people* would readily fall into this or some Kindred measure if the *politicians* would let them alone.

Suppose you editorial folks who sway the public mind in this government, take this position and suggest either the above or some better plan—but I sat down to write a business letter and find myself unconsciously running into politics—I sympathise deeply with my friends—Stanfield & Miller in their defeat, but they have this consolation in their retirement "that in these degenerate times the post of honor is the private station."

I sent you [?] since a note on Abr Harper et al for \$25.00 Have you received it? And if you got the money please remit by mail—if not—tell them I need it now and should like to have it *very soon*.

Please call on Harpers and tell them to forward me their policy of Insurance & note they hold against the Ind M. F. Ins Co—as I wish to bring suit against the Company immediately—also all papers in their possession relative to the assessment of their damages. . . .