

Hon. M. Van Buren

Dear Sir

Several years ago I received from you (through the agency of Col. Stevenson) a lot of Fruit-Trees Pears and Plums. I am still anxious to transplant into N. Carolina some of the fruits of Kinderhook, not only because they are good but because I have always felt pride and pleasure in being regarded as your friend & c.

So I make bold to say that I would be greatly obliged to you if you can send me a few more such Trees. Those I got before have all died (in consequence of their long delay in the transportation) and the failure of my first attempt to rear so many of the kind as a living memento of the Giver has only increased my wish to renew it.

Should you find it convenient to gratify me I would suggest a direction to the gardener to bind a little free soil about the root with canvas and send to the care of Mr. Peebles White & Davis in Petersburg. I have no part or lot in politics now a days. And it is well I do not care for such things at present as the region in which I live would promise but little of _____ believing as I do that it is neither right nor constitutional to plant slavery in a free soil by the sanction of a Government like ours. Of one thing however I feel certain and that is that North Carolina can never be brought to go for disunion because Congress does not consent to let her slavery go to California the slavery _____. The politicians who may make that experiment [upon?] our people will be woefully disappointed in the end.

I am with high respect now & ever

Your friend

William Haywood Jr.

Raleigh, N.C.

Dear Sir

Lindenwald

March 14, 1849

I have written to _____, and after I hear from him I will, if necessary avail myself of your polite offer, for which please to accept my thanks.

Very respectfully yours,

M Van Buren

T.W. Olcott, Esq.

Philadelphia 28 March 1849

My dear Sir

Ever since my return from Washington _ about two weeks since – I have designed to write you but the many matters occupying me, that occurred during my absence, have put it out of my power until now. I have not a great deal to tell you, but it may amuse you to hear something of my observations on the new order of things; and as we are not, I fear, to have the pleasure of chatting over news in person this spring as we did this time last year. It may be some compensation to me to do so by a letter. We have watched the newspapers and made inquiries whenever we had a chance in the hope that you would have wandered these weeks as far as New York and thinking that we could then induce you to come and make us a visit; but all we could hear was that your time was divided between Lindenwald and Albany. How happy we should be if you could again^ come and see us this year; I need not tell you. Your room is always ready and even Smith in Albany or the Major in New York cannot welcome you with more real happiness than Mrs Gilpin and myself would do, at any time, when you will let us know that you can come to us. We have the household [-----] and made more lively by our daughter in law from Louisiana and her little boy who engages [our thoughts] and care as much as Singleton or [Mattie] does yours and who from his cheerfulness, good temper and intelligence [presents/provides us

a

a new sense of domestic happiness.

I have been in Washington with [reasonable/seasonable] interval a great deal of the time during which the Supreme Court has been sitting, though its progress was so very slow as to advance me but little with the briefs I had before it. I saw nothing of the late President or the members of his administration except Mr [Miller/Walker] and the Attorney General Mr [Grundy] in court; indeed nothing was more remarkable than the very little personal [consideration] they had attained after their four years rendered and the [striking] public events that had occurred during it. I found almost no[--lutions] of ardent party spirit – a contrast indeed that was most remarkable to the corresponding [session] of 1841 and even to that of 1845. General Taylor's complete[silence] as to his opinions on public questions and his preferences for men made all the politicians loath to elicit any very strong determinations themselves about [one] or the other and the universal and really incredible [anxiety] for office, from which it seems to me that there was scarcely a Whig in Washington, high or low, who [was]free[presented any thing like the cordial political and party association among them. The General himself is at first sight very unprepossessing in appearance, quite short and awkward and slovenly in his dress; not having the slightest military bearing; but he is cordial and friendly in his manner; giving at once the idea of candour(sic) and frankness. There is no indication of much intellectual ability, nor, I should think, of great self confidence; but ardent honesty of purpose; relying at first on the information and views of others[-----] he may hope

hope to possess better means of knowledge than himself, but when his own opinion is thus made up resolute enough in adhering to it. It seems to me that his views of public policy and his choice of men was very much hap-hazard and that he has [composed] his administration almost entirely without any plan. I [heard of few ---/heard from many ---] like the disappointment and [condemnation] among the prominent [-----] at Washington when the cabinet was announced and there was a [----] and [----] about the influences [----] each member as he was brought forward; [assessing] that in reality the real arm of the Whig leaders has been their [potential -----]. It never seemed to be a question [at all] about the public [influences]; but merely about gratifying [those -----] [-----][predictions/predicting] in the selections for the office.

I believe there is doubt but that a desperate effort [like] made by the incoming administration to [carry ----- Mathers's] scheme about California and that during the last week of the session all that could be done in the [way of perspective influence [among] the northern [d---- - faces] was reported to. I thought at the time they had succeeded; indeed nothing but the [ayes] and [nays] and the [repla--] conduct of a few Northern democrats is the [----] who were resolved that the people who would see and understand the whol [---] proceeded in heading off the treacherous scheme. Mr. Calhoun seemed to be quite despondent; feeble in health [abstracted/distracted] in deportment; and satisfied that his chance of leading the South had [departed] from him. The affair of nullification has left such a [-----] of the word

[dissolution]

["dissolution"] and so much misgiving as to the [position] in which his plan will lead them; that the Southern men who have any future aspirations shrink from [signing their names] or pledging themselves to any definite scheme that [e supports]. The South for the first time seems to be [irresolute, dis united] and without a definite plan with the force of public sentiment the North is forcing the [----- feeling] and the timid into a union – in their votes at least with the friends of freedom.

I send you a pamphlet on slavery given me by the author for you – he is like you an [amateur] farmer who prides himself upon having his farm in better order than his neighbors notwithstanding they are much older hands at the business. He heard that Smith and Mrs Van Buren had been [enchanted] by you so completely that they are going to leave Albany and learn the philosophy of farming in the school of Lindenwald so as to be prepared to establish at some distant day an American ["Holkban"] for themselves. Is this so? I hope so for their sake – and yours too. If it is, I think I shall plot with Mrs Van Buren to effect my scheme of the summer house on the top of the hill, looking over the meadow which you promised but relinquished for the more solid improvements; that and the walk wind to it through the orchard, I shall claim as my [p-----] Mrs Gilpin begs me to give you her kindest regards. Remember us to Martin too and believe me ever

Most truly affect' yours

H.D. Gilpin

His Excellency

Martin Van Buren

Gilpin, H(enry) D(ilworth) to MVB

Library of Congress, MVB Papers

March 28, 1849

4 Pages