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James B. Finley Letters

2-24-1844

Letter from Henry S. Gunckel to James B. Finley

Henry S. Gunckel

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Columbus Feb 24-1844

Father Finley

Cours of yesterday came to hand a few moments ago. I will give you such information as I possess on the subject of this strange and unexpected nomination of the Convention of the 22nd. You express a surprise at so singular a movement on the part of the Whigs, who usually do their business with a proper regard for public feeling & popular sentiment, when that feeling & sentiment is guided by a full & complete knowledge of all the facts relating to the subject. You are not the only one who has expressed astonishment at the unexpected selection, by the nominating committee of 147 appointed by the delegates from the 21 Con. Dist. I am one of that number, & I have no doubt a large majority of the delegates are with me. Collier was my choice & that of all the Montgomery delegates with the exception of 2 or 3 out of more than 50. He was the choice of the Western reserve & was therefore justly entitled to the nomination, for the Reserve has had but one or two Governors since the organization of the Government. Fisher & Olds were from a section having no local claim. I hoped the delegates from that quarter would divide between the two candidates named, & thus give the nomination to Mr. Collier, but was disappointed. Bartley was not named until a few days before the 22nd except by a small squad of personal friends.

Rev. J. B. Finley
Brownsville

RECEIVED
FEB 25 1844
COLUMBUS OHIO

Mr. Grubb

but, when the nominating committee was advised that Mr. Fisher voted against the Retrenchment bill of last Winter a different turn was given to things. Hon. Geo. Woods of Butler Co. (who is now sitting at my elbow & who give me this information) made the inquiry whether Mr. Fisher had not voted against the above bill? The Fisher man became excited - one or two denounced the propriety of making such an inquiry & no reply being made by the friends of Mr. Fisher, the delegates who had voted for other candidates, as well as some of Fisher's friends found it necessary to unite upon some one from the Reserve or who would be acceptable to it, & thus defeat the nomination of a man who had taken so unpopular a step as to vote against Retrenchment. Many delegates declared that in their district no candidate would receive the Whig strength who has opposed that measure which the Whigs of the last & present session have made their own. It is a pity that Col. Collier was not selected as our Flag Bearer. Mr. Bartley as you say is an honest man. Well this is the first necessary qualification - he is capable to fill the office with honor to himself & good to the State, but he is not a fit leader. His ability to lead off in a great campaign is not such as I think necessary for an efficient & successful political struggle. His debut at the City Hall immediately after his nomination was not calculated to impress his hearers with very favorable notions of his oratorical powers. His speech was considered plain & argumentative.

The Whigs will cheerfully support Mr. Bartley. In him we find at least an honest man. - a man of sound Whig principles. He is not just such an opponent as we would have liked to have put in the field against Tooh. but he is on the whole as faultless as perhaps any other one we could have selected. The necessity of the case makes it necessary for us to consider him our first choice now. - as Tom Corwin says - The greatest man in Ohio now? — — —

I heard from home a day or two ago, all is well there. The Retrenchment bill is out of our way now, & I hope we will be able to get along more speedily with our work. The apportionment bill will now be acted upon in a conference committee - where after all the question has to be decided. The Senate you know passed Rock's Bill & the House struck out Rock's bill & inserted White's amendment, which has no floats & give the Whigs 18 Senators & the Locos 18 & 36 to 36 in the House. However I should here state that White's bill in consequence of a Senator holding over in the Clermont District gives in 1844 but 17 Senators to the Whigs. The prospect is unfavorable for any relief on the subject of the currency. We may probably pass a few bills through the House for independent banks & if we think time will allow, we will pass a general banking law upon the State stock system or upon Corwin's plan.

In haste

Yours Truly J. S. Gurnee