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NO. 2, APRIL-JUNE; SELECTION FROM
THE FOLLETT PAPERS, V, PP. 42-77**

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Vol. XIII, 1918, No. 2
APRIL - JUNE

Selections from the Follett Papers, V

CINCINNATI
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CONTENTS

- I. Sep. 12, 1848, Truman Smith to Oran Follett.
- II. Apr. 30, 1850, Millard Fillmore to Oran Follett.
- III. May 3, 1852, Millard Fillmore to Oran Follett.
- IV. Mar. 27, 1854, Benjamin F. Wade to Oran Follett.
- V. Apr. 25, 1854, Thomas Ewing to Aaron F. Perry.
- VI. Apr. 27, 1854, Oran Follett to Thomas Ewing.
- VII. Apr. 28, 1854, Thomas Ewing to Oran Follett.
- VIII. May 1, 1854, Oran Follett to Thomas Ewing.
- IX. May 2, 1854, Thomas Ewing to Oran Follett.
- X. May 10, 1854, Salmon P. Chase to John Greiner.
- XI. May 29, 1854, Joseph Medill to the Editors of Columbus Journal.
- XII. Dec. 24, 1854, Salmon P. Chase to Oran Follett.
- XIII. Jan. 1, 1855, Salmon P. Chase to Oran Follett.
- XIV. Jan. 27, 1855, Joseph Medill to Oran Follett.
- XV. Feb. 14, 1855, Salmon P. Chase to Oran Follett.
- XVI. Feb. 23, 1855, Salmon P. Chase to Oran Follett.
- XVII. Feb. 27, 1855, Salmon P. Chase to Oran Follett.
- XVIII. Mar. 23, 1855, Salmon P. Chase to Oran Follett.
- XIX. Apr. 18, 1855, Joseph Medill to Oran Follett.
- XX. May 4, 1855, Salmon P. Chase to Oran Follett.
- XXI. May 21, 1855, Jacob Brinkerhoff to Oran Follett.
- XXII. Sep. 3, 1855, Lewis D. Campbell to Editors of Ohio State Journal.
- XXIII. Oct. 17, 1855, Lewis D. Campbell to Editors of Ohio State Journal.
- XXIV. Dec. 20, 1856, Joseph Medill to Oran Follett.

Additional selections from the Oran Follett Manuscripts are printed in the present issue of the *QUARTERLY* of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, and like those letters published heretofore, treat of the political problems of the Nation and, more especially, of the political movements in Ohio during the period, ranging from 1830 to 1856. See Vols. V, No. 2; IX, No. 3; X, No. 1; XI, No. 1.

L. B. Hamlin.

Selections from the Follett Papers, V

I.

TRUMAN SMITH¹ TO ORAN FOLLETT²

Washington City, Sept. 12th, 1848

Dr Sir,

I address you in behalf of the Whig Executive Committee of the two Houses of Congress. My object is to invite your particular attention to the importance of the approaching state & national elections in Ohio. I am satisfied that the south will do its part towards electing the nominee of the Philadelphia Convention. I am convinced from information which I deem reliable that we shall win both Georgia & Louisiana, and perhaps some other slave states which did not vote for Mr. Clay³ in '44. But to make success certain you must carry Ohio in Nov[ember]. In Penn[sylvani]a & V[irgini]a our friends speak encouragingly but our hopes mainly cluster about the Buck-eye state. You must not disappoint us. Enter into no controversy with any on the subject of free soil, for controversy is what agitators desire. The assurance that the interests of the whole country will be safe in the hands of Gen[era]l Taylor⁴ is enough for us. In conclusion I beg you and (thro' you) your friends to make thorough preparation for the great struggle in Nov[ember] in the belief that Ohio will in all probability prove the great battle field of the present contest. Let me hear from you.

With much respect

I am truly your friend.

¹Elected to U. S. Cong. fr. Conn., 1839, 1841, 1845, 1847; to U. S. Sen. 1849. He was very active in the Presidential campaign of 1848. See *Quar. XI, No. 1, p. 29*.

²For sketch of Follett see *Quar. V, No. 2*; At this time editor of the Ohio State Journal.

³Henry Clay.

⁴Zachary Taylor, elected President of the U. S. 1848, died July 9, 1850.

II.

MILLARD FILLMORE^a TO ORAN FOLLETT.

Washington, April 30, 1850.

O. Follett, Esq.,
Dr. Sir,

Yours of the 24th came to hand this morning. . . .
In answer to your query, I can only say that in this slavery matter Mr. Clay is not likely to act a subordinate part. He has introduced a plan^b of settlement for himself, and now heads a committee of 13 for a compromise. I think there is a little personal feeling between him and the Pres[iden]t and there are enough to widen the breach. Mr. Webster^c also took ground independent of the Pres[iden]t's plan,^d I think though that he is more disposed to harmonize. Mr. Seward^e also had his own views—but Weed^f, in the Journal, keeps up a constant advocacy of the president's plan, and eulogizes the president, and cabinet,^g so that after all, S. . . . seems in better favor than Webster or Clay.

I think there has been a systematic effort lately to attack the latter, which I much regret. For although I approve of the Pres[iden]t's plan, I do not think a difference of opinion on this subject should be a party test.

^aMillard Fillmore, elected V. Pres., 1848, became Pres. upon death of Taylor.

^bPresident Taylor's plan included California and New Mexico into the Union either as free or slaves States, leaving to the people of those proposed States the settlement of the question of slavery. Clay offered a compromise to admit California as a State; New Mexico and Utah as territories with slavery or without; Texas' claims to part of New Mexico to be purchased by U. S.; Slavery not abolished in the Dist. of Columbia but slave trade prohibited there; Cong. to have no powers over the interstate trade; and, the passage of a working fugitive slave law. See Rhodes' *Hist. of U. S. Vol. I, for account of Taylor's Administration.*

^cDaniel Webster, U. S. Sen. fr. Mass., 1850, but same year app. Sec. of State by Pres. Fillmore.

^dWilliam H. Seward, U. S. Sen. fr. New York.

^eEditor of N. Y. Journal, Thurlow Weed.

^fCabinet consisted of John M. Clayton of Del., Sec. of State; Thomas Ewing of Ohio, Sec. of Interior; Reverdy Johnson of Md., Attorney-Gen.; Jacob Collamer of Vt., Postmaster-Gen.; Wm. M. Meredith of Pa., Sec. of Treasury; George M. Crawford of Ga., Sec. of War; Wm. B. Preston of Va., Sec. of Navy.

I doubt not the senate will pass a bill admitting California, and organizing territorial governments for New Mexico and Utah, without the Wilmot¹¹ proviso. Whether such a bill can pass the house is doubtful; but many are sanguine that it will.

I believe this explains all that I know which does not appear on the surface.

Truly yours,

III.

MILLARD FILLMORE TO ORAN FOLLETT.

Private

Washington City,
May 3rd 1852.

O. Follett, Esq.
My dear Sir,

I have your favor of the 27th ult. and have perused it with a good deal of interest. I believe there were many here, who took the same view of the action of our Southern friends in the Whig caucus, which you have expressed. But the argument of our Southern friends, in favor of the course they have pursued, is this—that it was necessary to do something to call the attention of the Southern Whigs to the true state of things in the Whig party; that it was apparent from what was seen here, that a very large majority of the Whig party of the North, and perhaps enough to control its action in the National Convention, were determined to leave the Compromise question open for future agitation, and, especially, so much of it as relates to the Fugitive Slave Law. This is also the desire of the Secessionists of the South, for in this respect the Abolitionists and the Secessionists go hand in hand. The Union men of the South, having taken their position upon the Compromise, as a whole, hope to maintain it, if they can be sustained by their brethren of the North; but if they cannot, they have no alternative but to submit to the dominant feeling of the South in favor of secession. They therefore wish, by this movement, to indicate to their friends in the South, the danger to which

¹¹David Wilmot's Slavery proviso, attached to the first War appropriation, 1845, that slavery should be forbidden in any soil purchased with the money appropriated.

they were likely to be exposed in the Convention, and thereby, if possible secure a delegation from every Southern State favorable to the Compromise in the Convention, and by such means give confidence to the Union men of the North, in hopes of securing enough delegates from that quarter to either nominate a person openly and avowedly in favor of the Compromise, or to pass a resolution acquiescing in it as a measure of the Whig creed. They also profess to have had a further object, and that was, to have it distinctly understood, that without this they did not intend to unite in the support of any candidate that might be nominated in the Convention. This is a question of such vital importance to them that it will rise above all party considerations, and what may be the effect of it no one can foresee. They however, have become alarmed. They apprehend that the Abolition portion of the Whig Party at the North intend to evade this vital question, and select some man, who is not committed on the subject, who will necessarily fall into the hands of sectional men, and regardless of what may be his own individual views, be compelled to countenance the renewal of this slavery agitation. If these men felt that they had the power either to select a candidate or prescribe the platform they would doubtless pursue a very different course; but they are looking to the contingency where a majority in the National Convention may array the whole Abolition feeling of the country against them, and they are preparing for such an emergency. The Democratic Party encounters the same difficulty in reference to the Compromise measures, not only from the Abolition feeling in their party at the North, but still more from the Secessionists belonging to their party in the South, and the chances are that their Convention will avoid any declaration on the subject of the Compromise measures, and if the Whigs should do the same, the election will present the strange anomaly of the Secessionists of the South forcing a candidate upon the Democratic Party opposed to the Compromise, and the Abolitionists of the North forcing a similar candidate upon the Whig Party, and the whole tendency will be to stir up again this sectional strife between the North and the South. Such an event is deeply to be deplored, but time will soon determine whether it is not inevitable. One thing is clear—parties are in a false position,