Washington Sept 12, 1836

Sir, I have been informed by the Secretary of the Senate, that he has apprized the Senators of his intention to resign the office which he holds at the commencement of the session.

Although aware of the importance of the trust to which I aspire, and the number, character & influence of those who will be solicitous to obtain it, I cannot, on the occasion to pass away without offering my name to the consideration of the Senate, in the appointment of his successor.

The attempt, however, I feel assured, must be useless, unless some of the enlightened members of the body, whose suffrages I ask, can be induced to consider the peculiar position in which I am placed, and the grounds upon which I perhaps might judge and receive my humble pretensions. And, among all the members of the body, I am induced to look with more confidence towards you than any other; not only as a representative of the state where we sit, my earliest and strongest association, but from the certain conviction that you will at least extend to my application a liberal indulgence.

It is known, perhaps, to many of the senators that I have spent the prime, and some portion of the vigor of life in the performance, occasionally, of all the duties of the Secretary’s office. It is now nearly twenty-six years since compelled more from necessity than choice, I reluctantly entered it. Even then I felt how greatly I had regarded prospects with which I had conversed a too credulous fancy.

During this long period I have performed to the utmost of my ability, the onerous labor of the office, and often others, in addition by which I hoped to acquire the good will essential to success.

During the greater portion of the last session I have been called, in consequence of the lamented
indisposition of Mr. McDonald, Ebenezer Carsen
gave up the performance of the duties of principal
 Clerk. The manner in which I have performed
them must be left to the judgment of the Senate.

In entering the office, I was not wholly insensible
to the claims which my friends, my family, and
society had upon me; the hopes of relaxation
from physical and mental labor were not wholly misapplied, and I cherish
the hope that, in time, even diligence and labor
might qualify me to rise to a different sphere.

Hitherto, however, these youthful aspirations
have not been realized. In the course of a quarter
of a Century, a single advance in the line of promotion,
and even that unattended with any increase of
pecuniary remuneration has alone contributed
to animate effort, or allay the bitterness of blighted
expectation.

If, however, by the resignation of Mr. Lawrie,
an instance has occurred which serves to show
whether, when all the elements of society are
industrious and active, and wherever I
look or turn my eyes, I behold the associates of my early
and mature years enjoying reputation, acquir
wealth, and rising to eminence, I alone must
maintain a stationary existence, and be content
to end my days at the very point where manly
efforts first commenced.

In the position in which I now am
placed, two alternatives only are before me.
If I decline to offer for the vacant office, after
the devotion of many years to the uninter-
mitting discharge of its incidental duties,
some few attribute my conduct to pusillanimity
and others to a consciousness of incompetency or
demerit. If on the contrary I apply, and fail
the prostration of all hope of future performance
in the path I have chosen, will be the least painfull
of the consequence of this decision by the Senate.
- The duties of the Secretary and those of his principle
- agents are not greatly dissimilar. Both should
- keep in an equal degree, the confidence of the
- Members: and either should be competent for
- the event of absence, to perform the duties required
- of the other. If then, when a vacancy stands just
- before me, another should be preferred, could
- I with useful prudence and self respect, remain
- in the Secretary's office longer than three years, unless
- necessity may enjoin? Ought I not rather to
- infer that an unfavorable decision by the Senate
- was as applicable to both as one? I need not
- anticipate an event which may so deeply
- involve the prospect and happiness of those who
- involve the premises of the honorable men,
- must forfeit the respect of all honorable men;
- must forfeit the respect of all honorable men,
- and, in time, become
- incapable of many principles and generous
- purposes as the lowest reptile of the Earth.
- It may perhaps be said that the higher
- Offices of Government should be filled by those
- who have some claim upon their Country,
- or who have at least acquired, in other pursuits,
- a point of distinction.
- It may be said, I can make no boast; for it has
- never been one of my fortunes to be placed in a sphere
- for which I was not properly qualified. But perhaps
- where there could be a necessity on this occasion,
- for the peace of Service, may, on this occasion,
- be permitted to rest in an humble state:
- it is to me prudentially, that the Senate and
- the Country are indebted for the preservation of
- the Country, in which no money can be restored;
- and which, if lost, would have replaced a layer
and more indelible disgrace than the burning of a hundred Capitols or the capture of every seacoast city of our land.

It would be tedious and perhaps unprofitable to dwell on all the circumstances of an event too deep, impressed upon my memory ever to be erased. Its prominent points, however, I will briefly state. Early in the year 1814 I was induced to purchase a small farm 8 miles distant from Washington not only as a means of relief from the expenditure monitory of a public office, but to add something by additional labor to a narrow income. To this farm I removed my family. By this move losing the right of domicile in Maryland I was informed by the colonel of the regiment of militia in which I held a commission, that an objection had been made to the legality of my holding it and that therefore when the militia were called out my name was omitted. After the force of the objection was given up I was then followed-expressed made thus deprived from military duty in Washington, except as a volunteer, and not enrolled in Maryland I hesitated whether to keep myself at liberty in order to assist or to keep myself at liberty which the officer might of necessity in any duty which the officer might require. The peculiar state of the officer made me to decide on the latter course.

A few days after before the evacuation of Washington the collector of the city purchased a waggon which I knew required what I thought to be a case of emergency. I informed him to answer at the not of the owner of the team, he answered instead of the time of the destruction the third day, at the British, all in the City of the Capitol by the British, all in the City of the Capitol by the British, all in the City of the Capitol by the British. It was doubt, confusion and dismay. Men of business were absent. Every Means of business was deserted.
Transportation was either engaged or in use, and no certain intelligence of the enemy was either communicated or known. Some Executive Order was expected, but none was given. No one appeared to give directions for the removal of the Library or any thing appertaining to the Capitol. The Reverend Clerk of the Senate had recently paid the Debt of Nature. The President was absent from the City, and Mr. C. was absent from the Office. The responsibility of an erroneous decision was devolved on two young men, recently appointed to the Office, and unprepared for an emergency like this. In this situation I suggested to Mr. McDonald the third day before the Treaty of the British, the propriety of taking steps for the removal of the Books and papers, and the responsibility of such a step. But the contradictory intelligence which was well calculated to produce hesitation in me both, I proposed about 12 o'clock of the day. I expected that he would return my increasing apprehensions, and at the same time my increasing determination, if he did not concur in the propriety of immediate action. I proceed to proceed to act, and take the responsibility on myself. He therefore proposed the means of transportation, and we were wanting in the Conversation I informed him of the waggoners after School, that he had with the Waggoners after School, and that no time might be lost, and so and that no time might be lost, I proceed unannounced to procure the Waggoner I immediately procured Mr. H. from the House and the Waggoner to procure the Waggoner, in answer to my request, of Mr. H. I immediately procured him of his Waggoner, that he was made no impression, I at
length informed him that if he had not longer I must be compelled to use the power of impeachment. He yielded to this and declaration brought the stories from the place in which they had been concealed, and accompanied me to the Capitol. Mr. McDonald having departed from the Capitol for the purpose of making some arrangements for his family, I was prevented from seeing him pass during the day from seeing him pass during the day, from the aid of the messenger of the office, (a black man named Sevier) and the office, I engaged in removing from the wagon, I engaged in removing from the wagon, a book of papers from the office, which I considered of most value. When the sun was nearly setting, our vehicle was kept in motion, with it, for my residence in the county.

On the way two unpleasant occurrences took place. Before we passed the boundary of the city, one wheel of the wagon gave way: and when only two miles from my dwelling, the wagon was upset. The first was remedied by borrowing, without leave from the owner, a wheel from a blacksmith's shop; but a delay of several hours occurred before we were able to recover from the second.

About 10 o'clock of the second day Mr. McDonald joined me, and the scene at my residence was nothing new. As I conducted the train to Brookville, he conducted the train to the place, where the waggon of papers was found, and the papers were preserved for the meeting of Congress.
proceedings of the Senate: And if I do not greatly mistake, they constitute at that time, the only evidence in existence of the executive doings and votes of the Senate, during a period of twenty-five years. The value of the files and printed documents, a love was in some measure discovered, during the recent compilation of publications ordered by the Senate... But what would have been the feelings of every intelligence, had the individual, at home or abroad, had the knowledge and memory of men from the knowledge and memory of men.

It is far from my wish to arrogate to myself more than property belongs to me. From the merit of Mr. McDonough as an efficient and valuable officer, I cannot, if I would in the least detract, concede and enabled me to proceed perhaps under the only convenience which could have been obtained; all that happened to be saved was deposited in the Conveyance... and it is by my exections and directions: and it is certain that if the impending danger has proved itself real, and the confidential paper proved itself real, which I know to contain of the officer one of which I know to contain, the number and positions of the entire the American Military Force) thus withdrawn American Military Force) thus withdrawn...
would have fallen on me: the fact, of
my being the junior in the office, and receiving
no absolute direction from a competent
superior, would have been weighed;
and the motive with which I acted would
not have averted the withering frowns
of an indignant public: eternal approbation
would have rested on my name; and deprivation
of office, with inevitable reprimand, would have
been the least punishment I could have expected
to receive for an unauthorized removal of
the Confidential Archives.

Hitherto, content with the approbation of
my own mind and desiring no other reward,
I have scarcely even broached the subject
of the fact, of the transactions even to the
Ear of friends. I now, however, I have
thought it proper to unburden myself,
and, to mention any circumstances which can
properly operate in my favor.

Knowing your honorable and liberal
sentiment, I have trespassed, I fear, most
unreasonably, on your patience, and
disclosed my feelings with a fullness and
uncertainty which I would not hazard
in concert with any other individual
of a personal intimacy. I have
made the liberty, alas! to enclose, which
I have addressed to other Senators, and
which I consider myself highly honored
of consistent with public duty, you
could give my humble pretensions the
weight of your support.

With the highest respect,
Yr O.B. Serv.

C.H. Maeben.