

Gen. George B. Porter was appointed governor of Michigan on the 6th of August 1831, through my earnest & personal efforts with Gen. Jackson, at that time Roland A Luther was a member of his family. Cadets were to be appointed in March 1832. Luther & Wm Frazer were ~~to be appointed~~ the opposing candidates. I was attached to Mr. Frazer[']s mother; though the Solicitation of the Colonel I took an active & decided part in favour[sic]of his brother against Luther & succeeded in obtaining a promise of the appointment from Gov. Cass. This so wounded the pride of Gov. Porter, that we never had any personal intercourse afterwards until his death. Indeed we never exchanged words, although I have no reason to believe that he became my enemy; After Frazer[']s appointment had been secured, I strongly urged the appointment of Luther upon Gov. Cass & Mr. Heister, who was then the member of Congress from the district, insisted in his right to nominate the Cadet. The consequence finally was that all three – Frazer, Luther & Roland, from the same county, were appointed in March 1832.

Wm C Frazer, the father of the Colonel, had been intemperate in his habits, & was much involved in debt, he reformed & became religious. He was anxious to leave Lancaster & be appointed an Associate Judge of the Supreme Court of the territory of Wisconsin, great efforts were made to accomplish this object; but the difficulties arising from Mr. Frazer[']s former habit & character seemed to be almost insurmountable.

Mr. Muhlenburg & myself took the matter up earnestly & finally succeeded in our efforts, the Colonel[']s father was appointed on the 6th of May 1836 to take effect from the 3rd July following; & the Colonel professed everlasting gratitude to Mr. Muhlenberg – how he has redeemed this Judge you know.

But Judge Frazer soon relapsed into his former habits; & I was held responsible for the appointment by the Bar of Wisconsin, they appealed to me to get him to resign; I exerted all my influence with them to prevent any public explosion. He died after having been Judge about two years.

The Colonel was very importunate with me to obtain the appointment of Collector of the Port of Philadelphia for his Father in-law, Capt John Steele. I told him that I had been already committed in such a manner to my friend D. Lehman that I could not in honour [sic] urge the Claims of any other person for the office. He appeared, though reluctantly, satisfied with this answer. His next effort was in behalf of his Brother-in-law Jus. F Steele to be appointed a person in the Navy; & I determined to gratify him if this were in my power. There seemed to be almost insurmountable difficulties on the way & is one of the best, if not of the very best office under the Government both for permanency & Enrollment. Out of 62 purserships, Eleven had been appointed from Pennsylvania & were in the service at the time of my application in favour [sic] of Mr. Steele, Pennsylvania had doubled the number to which She was Entitled; & there were numerous pressing applications from other deficient states . I urged the appointment of Mr. Steele with all my power upon the occurrence of the first vacancy, this proved unavailing. I finally asked it as a personal favour [sic] from the President without better success. He



appointed Mr. Harris, formerly Editor of the Nashville Union, another vacancy occurred & though the aid of Mr. Bancroft & my reiterated personal request to the President [Jno ?] & Steele was appointed purser on the 29th of August 1845. This is the only appointment I ever asked as a personal favor from the President. But another obstacle was still in the way, he had still to pass the ordeal of the Senate & although there were no personal objections to him, yet his appointment from Pennsylvania, which had no claim to it, prevented an appointment from one of the other States, which had either no purser, or an inadequate number, besides, Gen. Cameron was believed to be hostile. Mr. Steele was nominated to the Senate on the 26th April 1846 – a period of 4 months. In the meantime I enacted all the influence I possessed to secure his confirmation; I do not consider it too much to say that he would have been rejected, but for my active aid. As it was he passed the Senate, I believe without objection in the meantime while purser Steele's nomination was pending before the Senate, the Colonel wrote me a letter dated on the 12th of March 1846, asking my interference to have the nomination confirmed. Such was voracious appetite for office, that in the very same letter, he urged the appointment of his father-in-law, Capt Steele, as treasurer of the Mint, his language is characteristic. He says: - I have been thinking for the last few days, that Capt. Steele might be appointed treasurer of the Mint instead of Roche. His papers for Collector are all before the President, & really he could not do better than to appoint him, both on the grounds of merit, claims, qualifications & popularity. It would be a matter of great importance to him if he could get it, he is scarcely able to attend to his farm, & it does not now even yield him a living. You know I could not interfere now & again it would appear so selfish in me to ask it. But the Capt. is one of the noblest men I know of, & I would ask you to aid him when I could no one else, please let me know if you could help him in the application, the President if you ask him ought surely to appoint him.

Very sincerely your friend,
Reah Frazer

I have preserved no copy [sic] of my answer to his letter, but it was impossible for me to encourage him to hope for success. I had just obtained from the President, the appointment of the son to a respectable & lucrative office as a personal favour [sic], whose nomination was yet pending in the Senate, & could not encourage the Col. to hope that the President would nominate the father for another lucrative & valuable office, to the Senate, to have given to Lancaster County two such valuable offices at the same time, would have been unjust to the other Counties of the State; & to have bestowed these two offices, on a father & a son, simply because the one was the Father-in-law & the other the brother-in-law of Col. Frazer, was entirely out of the question. Nevertheless I have no doubt my answer to him was kind. Indeed it may have been made to him verbally in the beginning of April 1846 when I visited Lancaster, suffice it to say, that shortly after the 26th of April 1846, when the nomination of his brother-in-law was confirmed by the Senate, I began to learn that he spoke unkindly & disrespectfully of me, & it has been growing worse & worse ever since, until the late grand explosion at the Convention in Lancaster on Wednesday last (the 11th Sept.) it is worthy of observation that my letter to the Democratic members of the Pennsylvania Legislative on the subject of Gen. Cameron['s] election to the senate, which is now made the pretext for opposition to me,



was dated on the 31st of March 1845; nearly a year before the date of Colonel Frazer[‘]s application to me for the appointment of his father-in-law as treasurer of the mint, I have just examined that letter; & can perceive nothing in it to retract or modify. It contains two leading ideas both of which are clearly correct. 1st. That as secretary of state in the Cabinet of Mr. Polk it would be wrong for me to pass sentence of condemnation upon the Legislature of a sovereign state for electing to the Senate whom they thought proper. 2nd. Whilst refraining from discussing the conduct or impeaching the motives of any of the Democratic members of the legislature during the senatorial elections I express a most decided opinion in favour [sic] of holding Legislature caucuses & adhering to Caucus Nominations. It is more than two years since I have seen this letter & upon a carefull [sic] re-examination of it, I am utterly at a loss to discover the cause of Col. Frazer & of Mr. Champneys violent hostility to it. If Col. Frazer has any private grief or cause of hostility against myself, except the disappointment of his father-in-law, I am utterly at a loss to Conceive what it is.

His objections to me before the Lancaster County convention were all of a personal, none of them of a political character, they all rest upon my parsimony; & this from Col. Frazer! It is not true as Col. Frazer asserts, that I have withdrawn 55:000\$ from Lancaster County & brought it to this district, on the Contrary, the bulk of what I am worth in the world is in that County & there it will remain. It is not true, that whilst I resided in Lancaster, I ever refused to contribute & that liberally to all election purposes. Col. Forney can bear witness to this, I always contributed far more than any other member of the party, & this it was my duty to do, & I did it with pleasure. I paid, without a murmur, the tax on my personal property for 1845; after I had removed my residence to this city the new triennial assessment was made for 1846, & I was assessed as I had been formerly, my condition in this city was anomalous, whilst I still remained a citizen of Pennsylvania [sic], I had changed my residence from the city of Lancaster to the city of Washington [sic], under the Constitution of Pennsylvania I certainly would not be entitled to vote in the state until I had returned & resided in proper Election district ten days previous to the election.

I might have been elected Representative, or Senator to the state Legislature, or Governor of Pennsylvania, under the state Constitution. Although I had not been “an inhabitant of the State for three years” or “four years” or “seven years” next before my Election; because the Constitution contains an Exception in favour [sic] of those who “have been absent on the public business of the United States.”

No such Exception, however, exists in my favour [sic] as a voter. The constitution of the U.S. requires that a person to be eligible as a Senator or Representative of Congress, must be an inhabitant of the State in which he shall be Chosen. John Bailey a citizen of Massachusetts, was Elected from his District as a member of the House of Representatives whilst he resided in this district as a Clerk in the State Department. After a long & able debate on the house he was on the 18th March 1824, decided to be ineligible & his seat vacated by a vote of 125 to 55. I voted that he was ineligible with P. P. Barbour, Mr. Forward, Mr. Lane of Del, Ford, Storrs, Webster, Wright, & other



leading Lawyers of the House. It was no party question & was Decided deliberately. Vide Journal of the House Rep. For 1823.⁴ page 325:6

The late Mr. Grundy was elected a senator in Congress by the Legislature of Tennessee, whilst he has the office of attorney Genrl under Mr. Vanburan [sic], & resided in this City, he was so firmly convinced that he was ineligible, that he resigned his seat, returned to Tennessee, Established his residence there & afterwards was Elected the 2^d time. It is true that Judge Woodbury was elected to the Senate by the Legislature of New Hampshire whilst he resided in this city, & took his seat without objections; but had objections been made from conversation among the members, I do not believe his Eligibility would have been sustained. Archer, Webster, Wright, & myself had been committed by our votes in Bailey[']s case.

Under all the circumstances I submitted to the commissioners of Lancaster County the question whether my personal property was liable to taxation, & they decided it was not had they decided differently I should have paid the tax without difficulty. Col. Frazer, however, I believe is the first man in the United States who ever expressed the opinion that a member of the Cabinet had lost his citizenship in the State from which he has been appointed; though unquestionably he loses his residence.

But I never intended to profit one cent by this measure, the only question with me was, whether I should pay the tax required by no law, or reserve it, & add it to the fund which I had already set apart for establishing a Charity in the City of Lancaster, as a testimonial of gratitude towards a people from whom I had received so many favours ['], this would have been done some time ago, had it not been for the assaults of Col. Frazer, the money is already vested for this purpose in United States Loan.

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