

Wheeling, April 10, 1858

To President Buchanan:

In order to gratify the curiosity which your expressed to me some time ago, I have made inquires of my father and other relatives respecting your family and now give you the few particulars which I have been able to learn.

Your grandfather was John Buchanan, a farmer, who lived near a town called Milford, about four miles from the more important town of Rathmelton in the county Donegal, Ireland. I have been unable to learn how long his family had resided there or the name of any of his ancestors.

About the middle of the last century he married Jane Russell, a daughter of Samuel Russell and his wife Mary, whose maiden name was Watt. Samuel Russell was a farmer living at a place called "The Ards" about a mile from Rathmelton. I have learned nothing about his ancestors, except that they resided at the same place as long ago as the famous siege of Londonderry and that, according y to tradition they had migrated from Scotland to Ireland.

Your father, the son of John and Jane Buchanan, was taken at an early age – it is said, at about two years of age – by his mother's parents to live with them. They brought him up, giving him the best education which the schools in that part of Ireland could furnish, and when he was grown they fitted him out for America. I have heard that when he arrived in this country, and before he left the vessel, he was met by his uncle – Joshua Russel, I believe – who conducted him from Philadelphia to the interior of Pennsylvania.

My informants knew more of your father than of the other members of his family, because he had been brought up among their own near relatives. They could only say, for the rest, that he had a brother John who succeeded his father on the farm and who had children, and they are not aware that any of your family of Buchanan, except your father ever came to America. There were other families of Buchanan in the same part of Ireland, but not related to yours, as it is believed.

Samuel Russell, above named, had four sons, Samuel, James and Joshua: of whom the three last came to the United States and are now represented by numerous descendants. The other, Samuel, who was my grandfather, never left Ireland. He lived with his father and mother until they died and was with them while your father was an inimate [sic] of the family. All his children came to this country at different periods and I have heard my aunt speak of your father from personal recollection of him in Ireland. Of course she was very young when he left there, but she well remembered his departure and some previous incidents.

Very Respectfully
Charles W. Russell

Envelope addressed to "The President." On side of the envelope in JB's hand "April 10, '58. Charles W. Russell, Concerning my father's family.

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