(Private) Danville, Ill. May 20, 1845

Thomas Ritchie Esq,

Dear Sir,

A stranger to you personally you will probably be astonished at this intrusion — as a Democrat who has for 35 years been an active member of the Democratic party and although about to leave the stage of action, I feel an interest in everything belonging to it and an anxiety for its prosperity — the newspaper at Washington, which is considered the organ of the party has a powerful influence throughout the country in giving tone to the operations of the party and to do so ought to be confined to the diffusion of correct information on matters of government and Democratic principles and not filled with the idle tales of mercenary letter writers, most of them false, or extravagant flattering with individuals — such a paper ought to have a character for integrity, so that it can be relied upon by members of the party as a text —

I have been led to make those remarks by reading in the Union (to which I am a subscriber at the not in my own name) several letters from the kind I have named containing all the City talk and puffing individuals — several of the latter I knew not only to be extravagant but false, having a tendency to palmo means upon strangers for what they are not, and coming from the organ of the party of course dictated for orthodoxy — this might do for common newspapers but not for the Democratic official — I will briefly notice one —

In a letter dated 12th May the writer says, "I conversed this morning with that veteran soldier and veteran Democrat the Hon. Calvin Blakely, etc. — Does serving one campaign on the Canada frontier make a
"veteran Soldier?" If it does I have equal claims to the title; but I should be ashamed to claim it for in all my political contests I never would suffer my services to be named. I only do my duty — Dr. does Calvins Blythes advocating and using his influence to get all their mammoth acts of incorporation of all kinds passed by the legislature of Penna. which have almost thrown our State into the arms of the Whigs — or his advocating the U. S. Banks with all its enormities — or his denouncing Gen. Jackson for removing the deposits from the Monster — or his resigning his Judgeship a few years since to act as President at a salary of 75,000 per year of a rail road and coal company which became insolvent, or many other such, which want of room will not permit me to enumerate — go to make him "a veteran Democrat" — what I have stated cannot be denied and is it not a base slander to call him "a veteran Democrat" little? Your letter writer shows how he knows of matters in Penna. when he compares Blythe's popularity with that of Henry How; I will grant that among the aristocracy and the cow boy politicians Blythe is popular and Han unpopular and for this very reason How is a veteran Democrat without spot or blemish "An Idealite without guile" and of course hated by Blythes friends. among the genuine Democrats he is looked upon as a pilgrim to the party — Blythe the reverse — his Democracy consists in his cunning and making himself the tool of Whigs and demagogues and living on the best offices which he gets mainly by the influence of James Buchanan whose protege he has always been — It was by the zeal of Mr. B. aided by a host of "cow Boys" that Blythe obtained the Collectors office under Mr. Van Buren and those very
men by the aid of the Mail Contractors whose minds were poisoned
by L.R. Hobbs 1st Capt. R.N. Gent. lost 1st Van Buren the Vote of
Penn. in 1840 — I opposed his Appointment then as I would now.

Give us Democrats to fill offices, repudiate the common practice under Dem-
ocratic administrations of continuing Federalists in office, through courtesy or to
gratify private friendships, and no party paupers — I have given you this
case as a proof of the carelessness of my first assertion that the organ of the party
ought not to fill its columns with the trash and fabrications of letter
writers — It was with regret that I read the notice of the death of the
truly great Democrat and honest man W. H. Roane of Virginia, all you
said of him is true and you might have said more without being chargeable
with exaggeration. I knew him intimately while I was in office —

gave the two Sessions he served in the Senate. He was a last
tower of strength to the party and by his advice and example kept more
than one who wavered from going over to the enemy — There was no
time serving with him and no notions of expediency could induce
him to abandon his principles — Would God we had more such
men — I shall soon join him, beyond the grave, having been confined
to my bed for 15 months unable to write. I have to use the pen of another.

When I endorse this as private I mean only not for publication I
care not who sees it. I have no secret opinions of political men or measures.

I do not even place implicit confidence in a converted Federalist for
"the blood is in them" and in a general way, they will soon like returns
be their swallow — The person who forwards this for me knows nothing
of its contents — I hope you may enjoy health to enable you to discharge
the arduous duties you have commenced. — Very truly your friend

Daniel Peterkin
David Whitten
1846

Sir, 

Editor of the Whig

Washington City

[Signature]

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