

Andrew H. Reeder to Charles Robinson

From "Washington City" on February 16, 1856, former Kansas Territory governor Andrew H. Reeder wrote Charles Robinson regarding Reeder's efforts to influence Kansas Territory policy in the nation's capital. Reeder was working through friends, since he no longer had personal influence with President Pierce, and he was not pleased with the president's February 11 proclamation, which he called "the low contemptible trickstering affair which might expected from Pierce, and is like the Special Message [of January 24] a slander on the Free State Party." Nevertheless, Reeder thought it could have been worse and insisted that Robinson and the other free-state leaders "should not organize the State Govt" as Pierce would just use that action to justify aggressive moves to suppress the free state movement.

Creator: Reeder, Andrew H. (Andrew Horatio), 1807-1864

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Andrew H. Reeder to Charles Robinson

Reeder, Andrew H.

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36990.

Washington City
July. 16. 1856

Dear Doctor

Time passes alike amid the provincial delays and vocations of Washington and the hardships and dangers of the frontier. Though we cannot be with you we are constantly talking and thinking of you and watching for news of you & endeavoring to do all that we can to aid you. I recd. your & Col. James & Dutcher note at the same time I saw Gov. Chase's message and my anxieties and sympathies were of course aroused. As anything known to come from me would be very unfavorably recd. by the Administration I sought out some good friends of ~~the cause~~ mine who I knew had the ear of the President and could exercise influence with him and impressed on them a conviction that an invasion and bloodshed would certainly happen unless the President interposed, and urged them to go to Pierce (not in my name at all) and insist that he prevent it. They did so I know. Whether they were instrumental in bringing out the Proclamation I cannot tell. That document is just the low contemptible trickstuning affair which might expect from Pierce, and is like the Special Message a slander on the Free State Party still as it promises protection

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protection it will be to that extent at least acceptable if its promises are kept. It may very well be that if it had not been for the message of Gov. Chase and that of Gov. Clark the Proclamation would never have been issued. I saw a few days ago before the Proclamation was issued a Bill prepared to be offered in the Ohio Legislature which was first submitted to my inspection appropriating \$200,000 to pay emigrants to go across to Kansas with a provision that each man was to have a rifle and Revolver and to sign articles to remain in the Tg. as a settler and stay at least 2 years. Possibly the Proclamation may check it I hope not. I think you will have a good emigration next summer. I am constantly receiving letters asking information, and make it a point to answer. Hutchinson arrived here last evening. Parrot Johnson Latta & Phillips are here and have been for some time.

Our friends here as Hutchinson will explain to you are all of opinion that we should not organize the State Govt. adversely to the Territorial authorities. The Territorial Govt will not be withdrawn but on the contrary Pierce will continue it and back it by all the power of the Admin. and what is worst of all he will have the sanction of

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right on his side and many men will
side with him who would like to be
with us if we were clearly right. This you
know was my opinion in the beginning and
time has only verified it, altho' I have not
proclaimed that opinion here or in the State.
I know that opinion is unpalatable to
many mistaken friends and may injure me
with them, but the gods of the cause com-
pels me to speak ^{among ourselves} at ^{least} even if I suffer by it
myself. If you were here you would hold this
opinion as decidedly as I do. I have made
very thorough examination and preparation
upon the subject of this State movement and
have all the authorities collected. My opinion
is based on these and on public sentiment
among our friends in view of the determina-
tion of Pierce to put us in the wrong if pos-
sible and turn the tables upon us. He has
no other capital than that against us
for all his Messages and Proclamations.

There is a point to which you can go here-
over and still keep in the right, but it might
clearly to appear ~~that~~ in your proceedings
say yr. Message and perhaps your proclama-
tion and also in the proceedings of the
Legislature that you do not intend to go
beyond that point. You have according
to good authority "to settle a Constitution

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"and frame of Govt. by the appointment of
"these official agents which are indispens-
"sable to the action of the State and espe-
"cially to its action as a member of the
"Union". So that the Legislature may or-
ganize and elect Senators. When you go
beyond this you give Pierce the advan-
tage of us. By anticipating his movements
and demonstrating in advance clearly
and manifestly that you intend to stop
at that point you will forestall and
defeat him. Hutchinson will ex-
plain to you more fully.

Pierce takes the ground now that we
intend to go on and supersede the Terri-
torial Govt entirely, and if he can break
up and arrest the Legislature before you
can shew a contrary intent, he will do so
and be glad to do so, in order to infuse
an intention to subvert the Territorial
Govt from the previous proceedings. In
this he should be forestalled. If you can
do so it will be a victory for us and
a defeat for him.

Yours Truly

A. H. Reeder.

A. H. Reeder
Washington
Feb 11 1855