

## John C. Fremont to Charles Robinson

Writing from New York, on March 17, 1856, three months before accepting the Republican Party nomination for president, John C. Fremont sent this letter of support and encouragement to Charles Robinson in Lawrence, Kansas Territory. The two men had participated together in the political affairs of California a few years earlier, and Fremont compares the current controversy over the "Kansas question" with their previous experiences. Fremont briefly addresses Robinson's questions about a possible presidential bid. Fremont addresses Robinson as governor but Robinson was governor of the "extra-legal" territorial government. He was not one of the territorial governors appointed by the President.

Creator: Fremont, John Charles, 1813-1890

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Fremont

New York, March 17, 1856. 36490.  
176 Second Avenue.

My dear Sir,

Your letter of February reached me in Washington some time since. I read it with much satisfaction. It was a great pleasure to me to find that you retained so lively a recollection of our intercourse in California. But, my own experience is that permanent & valuable friendships are most often formed in contests & struggles. If a man has good points then they become salient, & we know each other suddenly.

I had both been thinking and speaking of <sup>you</sup> lately. The Banks' balloting in the House and your movements in Kansas had naturally carried my mind back to our hundred and forty odd ballots in California, and your letter came seasonably and fitly to complete the connexion. We were defeated then, but that contest was only an incident in a great struggle, and the victory was deferred not lost. You have carried to another field the same principle with courage and ability to maintain it, and I make you my sincere congratulations on your success — incomplete so far but destined in the end to triumph absolutely.

I have been waiting to see what shape the Kansas question would take in Congress, that I might be enabled to give you some views in relation to the probable result. Nothing yet has been accomplished, but I am satisfied that in the end Congress will take

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efficient measures to lay before the American people the exact truth concerning your affairs. Neither you nor I can have any doubt what verdict the people will pronounce upon a faithful exposition. It is to be feared from the proclamation of the President that he intends to recognize the usurpation in Kansas as the legitimate government, and that its sedition law, the test oath and the means to be taken to expel its people as aliens, will all directly or indirectly be supported by the army of the United States. Your position will undoubtedly be difficult, but you know I have great confidence in your firmness and prudence. When the critical moment arrives you must act for yourself - no man can give you counsel. A true man will always find his best counsel in that inspiration which a good cause never fails to give him at the instant of trial. <sup>in all history</sup> <sup>in providence</sup> teaches us that great results are ruled by a ~~fact~~ <sup>fact</sup> & we are but agents in the great plan. Your action will be determined by events as they present themselves and at this distance I can only say that I sympathize cordially with you, and that as you stood by me firmly and generously when we were defeated by the nullifiers in California, I have every disposition to stand by you in the same way in your battle with them in Kansas.

You see that what I have been saying is more a reply to the suggestions which your condition makes to me than any answer to your letter, which,



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which more particularly regards myself. The notices which you had seen of me in connection with <sup>the</sup> Presidency come from the partial disposition of friends who think of me more flatteringly than I do of myself, and do not therefore call for any action from us.

Repeating that I am really and sincerely gratified in the renewal of our old friendship, or rather in the expression of it, which I hope will not hereafter have so long an interval I am,

Yours very truly  
J. C. Fremont.

Gov. Charles Robinson,  
Lawrence  
Kansas.