

William Berkeley Lewis to Andrew Jackson, December 21, 1844, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>MAJOR WILLIAM B. LEWIS TO JACKSON.

Washington, December 21, 1844.

My dear Genl, I reached here on the night of the 18th, in the midst of a very cold spell of weather. Had I been one day later, I should have been, in all probability, frozen up in the Ohio, as we found the ice running in large masses long before we got to Wheeling. We were therefore very lucky in getting up as soon as we did, as I have no doubt the river was pretty well blocked up the next day.

I found your friends here quite well, and delighted with the result of the late political campaign, and all anxiously enquiring after you. Notwithstanding this gratulation, however, at the success of the democratic party, I fear things are not as harmonious and promising in other respects as could be wished. I allude particularly to the Texan question. In conversing with Mr. Tyler upon this subject I found he was by no means sanguine of carrying the joint resolutions of Annexation, which have been introduced in both Houses, the present session of Congress. I afterwards saw Mr. Calhoun and he seemed to be less sanguine even than Mr. Tyler. Indeed he told me that he had very little hope of any thing being done, as he had reason to believe that Northern democrats, the most of them at least, would not vote for the Resolutions. Probably in this he is not mistaken, as they say the Administration, having placed annexation exclusively, almost upon the ground of its being necessary for the protection of Slavery, they cannot go for it without destroying themselves at home. This, I believe, to be the true state of things at this present time; but I am confident the whole party will unite, including Col. Benton Mr. Blair says, and go

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for annexation under the lead of Col. Polk the very moment he shall be inaugurated. If, therefore, it cannot be effected now, I think there is no doubt but it will be accomplished by the new Administration.

Since my arrival here I have endeavored to ascertain the views and wishes of the present Cabinet, and I am satisfied that every one of them desires to retain his present position. I am told that they will probably offer their resignations but with the hope they will not be accepted. This will, of course, be an unpleasant subject to Col. Polk, but he must meet it, decide whichever way he may with unfaltering firmness. These Southern and Northern divisions of the democratic party I fear are to give him some trouble, unless he takes a firm and decisive stand at the very threshold of his administration; and this, I doubt not, he will do.