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Letter from L. Q. C. Lamar to Col. Van. H. Manning. 10 May 1876

L. Q. C. Lamar

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enough in appreciation among leading Citizens of this state to be
able to keep my own darling child, my own child - I have
read in the Declaration of Rights made by the Constitution adopted
by Mississippi in 1861 these bold words ~~made~~ in the first sentence
"We Declare that all freemen when they form a social
Contract are equal in rights; and that no man, or set of
men are entitled to exclusive separate public emoluments
or privileges from the Community except in consideration of
public service". This is holy doctrine - that woman, too, may
be rewarded for high and holy work in the Lord's vineyard, and
is also conceded by all noble and chivalrous manhood in
the land. Who has done as I have done in the mission field
of Mississippi? Not one. And yet my pupils in some
instances have been exacted by Republicans to hold a rod of
connection over my head, when it was publickly known they
were still in "the gall of bitterness" which belongs to blackness of
ignorance, while I have not received any public benefit except
from the youths who were not so much debased by party prejudice
and hate, or for from those whom I had educated into that
refinement which makes them true to all people. My salvation
from destruction at the hands of partisans is wholly due to my
own wisdom, and to the Lord of Heaven who gave it to me
in answer to prayer; I have lately told the colored people that their
own course in hardening their hearts towards neighbors, and towards
earnest workers in the Lord's vineyard has deeply wounded their
own prospects of success &c. - They have sneeringly replied to me
that I am wrong in believing any goodness can be found
among white neighbors here here, and have added warning to

be me to keep clear of them for fear of a terrible fate due. O! how I do
pray for a chance to teach better lessons to the colored race, than
they have got from such teachers as they have in this Normal
& elsewhere throughout the state. Politics has been in my way,
may I not now become a better educator than I have been
in this state - I ask it in the name of humanity and that
is the same as asking it in the name of the "Pity of God". I am
not at all selfish in one desire for the advancement of my cause,
It is my conviction that the Lord requires you and your friends to
accept me as worthy of aid, and I believe the more can be done
by you for my cause, the glory will be added to your labors as
legislators, as well as the more honor will be given to the Lord's own
Cause. - To counteract the evils of the long years of wrong teaching
among the colored race is the greatest of labors & is a high blessed
work to which any one will be honored in giving for it can not
be done at all without means and sympathy from beneficent
Christian people. The Normal teachers are neither your friends
nor mine. They have persecuted me and to every one who
honors you do as well as to predict terrible deeds to your whole
party. That is they tell people the Democrats are like friends do
and yet one of them has asked board at my home (Mary Abbott,
Keice) provided the Normal is not abolished this week, and
too I am not free enough to refuse because the colored people
know she asked it and they would be mutinous if I refused
in the circumstances. - Here you see is ~~the~~ a new trouble to which
I am always subject here, if I shall continually be understood
as without powerful political influence further persons intrude
upon all my home rights, expecting to meet colored friends as

well as Northern people at Langston headquarters, besides abusing
my opinion to my face hoping to gain by lessening my power with
Langstonites - Indeed my situation is unbearable unless you and
your friends aid me here in some measure. I have changed my
1st Assistant Miss Woodin, this week for a Miss Harrington for the
Express purpose of doing more good to the people. Miss Woodin was
influenced too much by the Normal teachers this year against the
Southern whites. I exchange her for this alone, will you keep
the Normal & let it continue to injure Langston new teachers
& all the colored people - Miss Woodin became angry
with me for defending the Southern people & the like, and
told her if she chose she might resign - She became pleasant
soon but I allowed her to offer the resignation quietly &
parted with her as a particular
friend. She has been with me
four years, has reversed me
in all opinions until this year
1846. Miss Dickey, a woman whom
Northern people have set up
in private schools at Chopton
& who has raised large sums
of money lately for the school
because Southern people have
been misrepresented by party,
stopped at my house on her way
home from a begging tour. I told
Miss Woodin stories too horrible for belief
about the Democrats &c. & since then I

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previously too, Miss Woodin could
not bear my views of Southern
people. I helped the Morgans
& others, Highgate, Griffin & other
influential colored folks, attack
my opinions & weaken my power.

Is it not true, that northern people
can set up such a school as Miss
Dichays at Clinton near Jackson,
the Southern people can well afford
now to aid mine with subscriptions
or appropriations. I will ask for
subscriptions from the Southern
people only, & will not do that
until I am understood by principal
intelligent leaders of the people
as their educators for the common
good of all classes of the community.
I wish I could be protected
immediately from the attacks
of northern interlopers, however,
& I ask you with all earnestness
of prayer to aid me as soon as
possible, & you shall be repaid
by all my power of kindness &
public influence, at the proper
time & place now & forever.
It is a common saying here
that the Normal School does harm
& no good, but it is more except

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colored people that say
this, therefore they do not thank
Representatives for the Board
I will thank you. They say you may
fear their power as voters I leave
it but not otherwise because it is
useful. Now if it is abolished
colored people will cry out
in masses "The Legislature did
well it do not censure it do not censure
before ignorant voters.

A few days ago, Griffing said to
me, "it is certainly not wise to keep
up a school of 30 pupils at an
expense of \$4500 & the Democrats
have an advantage over us added
to, in regard to providing for the
Normal School. My school has
numbered 320. It is too great
for my means & I have had to
hire an assistant out of my
own salary nearly all winter
I want to make this school as much
a triumphant success as possible,
therefore I have sacrificed my
time in building it up as well
as paid much money towards
the scheme. I was born with one
hand & have many other reasons
for believing I ought to be a teacher.

(Copy.)

Holly Spring

Miss April 8th - 1876

Mr W. S. Featherston

Dear Sir

I have been trying to get an opportunity to send a very private letter to you for some time; but because of great responsibilities in my school I have found it impossible to begin such a pen visit until to day - I commence by saying to you I am very grateful to yourself for what you did do for Langston when you were President of the School board for this city, and I am willing that you profit by the past by winning friends while in the present you show a like statesmanship above malice or rather spiders web fetters which characterize littleness in party affiliations - I do hope I may be privileged to admire men who can do good deeds without a sycophantic crawling to party, for I think such a stooping down with eyes turned from the Lord weakens noble power to reach worthy success in life -

I am robbed of every thing to day which is most dear to women by political causes upon both sides of the party lines - Is there not some hero who will rise up for truth's cause in my field of work.

My husband is gone to Holmes County from whence he expects to journey by and by to Colorado, and he is never to return to me -

My Genieff my darling boy who has been my all so many years & from whom I have never before been parted has gone with Capt G to stay; for poor me poverty prevents my keeping him with me - With all my unexampled energy in building up this state in the good work of education, I am not wealthy

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I claim my rights as a citizen
of Mississippi to be recognised
for doing so much for the people.
The state money has been going out
to foreigners in generous donations,
will the state now own its own
daughters with generous treatment
and make a plan to reach
Whippings from Mississippi?
Please write a few brief words
to me. It is well known to me
how very arduous are your
duties labours, but a word will
cheer me. Please also keep
this letter a secret
(Signed) M. E. Gill

Copy

At Home

May 13th 1876.

Hon W S Featherston,

Dear Sir.

Please return to myself through the Post Office the letters you received from me in Jackson, and please be so kind as to seal them firmly, and find enclosed the stamps to pay for this trouble - I am very anxious to have these papers returned because I was troubled when I wrote them, and I simply asked you to comprehend my grief as a friend in order that myself might be appreciated, justly by you in regard to my vocation in the public service of the people, and yet I am extremely dissident about the public having any thing to do with the concerns which belong to my private domestic affairs, and to life within my most sacred feelings. Please take my confidence as a compliment to your Honor and something seemingly forced from me by the necessity that attends my devotion to school labors in which I felt particularly anxious to be understood by you! Also please take all the pains you can consistently to help my school, and I will do all in my power to return to yourself in a direct manner a kindness shown. Return this paper with the others & oblige very greatly by keeping all its contents sacredly to yourself in the same manner you would for any sister who needs such protection, in trying circumstances. I would like very much to get your advice especially upon the question of my school's best promotion - It seems to me if I could raise means to have a proper building

it would be well to unite my school with the Normal
but I cannot afford to be driven off the field to unite
the two schools. Can my school be properly assisted
by the city authorities, to do well if I take the proper course,
which is the best course for me to pursue to hold what
what belongs to myself in the educational field of Miss. State.

If you will advise me about the this question I will
repay you for the service. The sole reason I
resigned the principalship of the Normal is now not in
existence and I am anxious for a position in which I may
honor my friends and fulfill my high calling in my adopted
State. I have written in haste hoping that I may count
upon a friendly indulgence if you see an opportunity
to benefit me in any neighborly deed. My school's
popularity has ever given me so much pressure of
extraordinary duties that I seldom have much time
to write, and besides I write with my left hand having
been born with but one hand. - As the Indian said
"I was born an Orator" so I may add "I was born a
teacher"

Yours truly,

M E Gill

(Signed)

Hon W V Featherston

copy of
Mrs Gill's letter

Copies of Mrs Gill's
letters

copy of
first letter