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Letter from Maj. E. Barksdale to Gen. W. S. Featherston. 8 July 1880

E. Barksdale

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copy of my letter
to John J. Bull

May 16th 1858

1
(Confidential)

Holly Springs Miss. May 16th 1878.

Mr. John T. Hull
Jackson, Miss.

Dear sir:

Your favor of May 13th,
has been received & duly considered. I infer
from the tenor of your letter, that the object
you desire to see accomplished, is that, all of-
fices - state & national, should be filled by
^{the} ablest, purest & best men to be found, in the
state & nation. Your object is highly com-
mendable, & one for the attainment of which
a majority of the people would coop-
erate with you. As to the means by which
this great object can be accomplished,
there would doubtless be differences
of opinion, & perhaps a great variety of
of opinions. But every step in that direc-
tion, would contribute to the peace, pros-
perity & happiness of our common country.
Ours is in theory, & should be in practice.

a government of the people, they should control it, administer it, & direct all of its operations. But the people whose government it is, are often deprived of all participation in the nomination of candidates for office by political cabals, Juntas & Rings, who look not to the public but to their own individual interests. And to this fact is to be attributed the unfortunate state of affairs that now exists, to a very great extent - that weak & incompetent men are found filling high places in whose hands the public interests suffer, greatly. A change can only be effected, which will result in the abolition of ^{this} great evil by inducing the people, the masses, to come to the front & take hold of this question of such vital importance. They must be brought up to this point. Rings, cabals & Juntas, ^{must} be abolished, & the people ^{must} make their ^{own} nominations, selecting the men of their own choice. When this change shall be made, the ablest, purest & best men

in theory, for retrenchment & reform, com-
pensatory salaries, low taxes, cheap govern-
ments & a prosperous people. We have
wandered far from the true Democrat-
ic faith of our fathers, & hence the con-
dition of the country. We can get back &
get right without a new party. Let us
all go to work & do it. Our representative
in Congress from this district, is a
true man, able, faithful & sound
on all questions. I am for his reelec-
tion. I think all the newspapers in
the state that will adopt the policy
I have indicated in this brief letter,
would be endorsed & supported by a large
majority of the people. Each county & dis-
trict in the state must act for itself in
bringing about such reforms as are need-
ed. I do not mean to be understood as
saying, all offices are now filled by
weak & incompetent men, but I do say,
that there is a great necessity for re-
form in this matter - on this question.
I have endeavored to give you briefly,
my position & policy in this short
letter, which is of course private, & con-
fidential. Very truly & respectfully, yours
W. S. Featherston.

will be placed in office. This change can
 be made within the ranks of the Democrat-
 ic party, within its present organization.
 We need no new organization for the accom-
 plishment of this great object. Indeed, I
 am opposed to a new political party, & in
 favor of bringing ^{us up to} all desired reforms, &
 correcting all existing abuses under the old
 Democratic Banner. The battle must be
 fought in the Democratic conventions, coun-
 ty, District, state & national. The people
 must be heard, & their ~~own~~ voice must
 prevail. When this shall be accomplished,
 the victory will be for the people & against
 political Rings. Men must be placed in of-
 fice who acknowledge that they are the ser-
 vants of the people, & who are willing to obey
 their instructions, - men who are truly Jeffer-
 sonian, states rights Democrats, opposed to
 protective Tariffs, in favor of the silver
 dollar, a sound circulating medium, &
 one large enough to meet the wants of the
 people, - men who are in practice, as well as