

Transcript of 1881 May 12: T.F. Sorrells, Warren, Arkansas, to Governor Churchill, Concerning problems of Democratic Party of Arkansas, L.C. Gulley collection, Arkansas State Archives, Little Rock, Arkansas.

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/Confidential/

Warren, Arkansas,
May 12"/81

Gov_Churchill

Dear friend

I have determined to write you a few times; and indicate to you some of the signs of the times; Some, which to my mind, seem to foreshadow is it to the whole state; and unless the threatened evils can be turned a side, by the sober second thought of the people, no one can tell what calamity will befall us.

This is no cimira of the brain; or, a creature of the imagination, or, in any wise paradoxical, as you will live to see, in the result of the next state election, unless, something can be done to quiet the troubled waters. I allude the the Fishbock amend't
The people are not satisfied with the manner of the "count" and there are so many on that side, that are good Democrats, whose voices must be heard; and who seem determined

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to be heard; in some shape. Besides, that quite a number of Third Class politicians, engaged in this matter; who want; and expect to obtain place, and power, by riding into office upon such a hobby. So you see the public mind, will be heated upon ~~upon~~ upon ~~upon~~ the subject, by many men, who have but little at stake, as, is usually the case, Hence, they are shure to "strike while the Iron is hot." I am no alarmist, Still, I have my

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opinion, in common with other men; and I dare to express these, and I am determined to do so in behalf the State. I was so well, I have been here a long time, and I do know the people, whose confidence I have enjoyed and support, I have served, for over thirty years. And they take freely to me, upon every subject, that in any well affect their Interest. My advice to them is, to stand by the Democratic party, to the end, otherwise, we will all be overbared

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together. And unless, something is done, to quiet the conflicting elements, a disintegration of the Democratic party is inevitable. The two leading papers, at the City, of Little Rock, are loosing their political influence; and cannot control the public mind, as, heretofore, the truth is, they seem to be looked upon with some suspicion. The people have been induced to believe, that they are in the interest of the bond holders. Whether this be true, or false, I do not pretend to say, still, If the people believe so, the effect is the same, as if it was so. I did not vote for the Fishback amendments, though, a large number of good Democrats did and, they did so honestly believing that they were right, and they still, believe so. Hence, they are determined to have their opinions respected, in some unmistakable shape. In what shape their efforts will be presented, I can't tell, I can only predict. And my opinion is Simply

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this. They, will put into the race, for the various State officers, a regular Fishback Amendment ticket. Which, If they do, will likely be elected, the opinion of the Little Rock papers to the Contrary notwithstanding sixty thousand amendment men, together with a solid Republican vote, will be quite hard to get off with; they, will simply put the bond paying Democrats out of; and beyond all calculation that can at this time be made. Now, If you entertain any doubt, just wait and see.

So, something must be done, to save the Democratic party; or, the State will again return to the hands, of the Republican party. or, in to the hands of a worse set of men, If such a thing could be. Is there any way out of our crookedness; If so, let us go to work at it, at once. There is no time to delay the enemy is upon let us let us hold the Fort If we can.

I have thought of many things but, the only thing that presents itself to my mind with any force.

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is to have a State Constitutional Convention, but that will have to be called by the Legislature, which will be too late, for the present emergency. Something must be done before the next state Convention; and certainly before the meeting of the next Legislature; for, if we wait until then, the damage will be done; and I fear, the destiny of our people settled for years to come.

What will be the result, of a disintegration

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of the Democratic party, on the bond questions? it will simply put the Republican party, again in power; and the first Legislature thereafter they will vote, for the state to pay the entire outstanding bonds, and levy a tax to pay the interest annually, This result, little foresight is required to see. The truth is, I cant write but a small portion of what I think. Still, I have this to say. There ought to be a mass meeting of the leading Democrats of the state, requested to meet at Little Rock; & counsel together, as to the best plan to have the

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State from the impending ruin and let them discuss the questions; and come to some determination otherwise our selection will be worse than Tennessee or Virginia, There are more "Mohones" in this state, than in were all Virginia, and who would as willingly serve this state, for their own promotion, The matter to which I called you attention when at the Rock I have been writing up; and well explain the same to you when I come up on my way to the Convention at Memphis, on the 25 Instant.

I regret deeply the ~~you~~ ~~trouble~~ you have had in regard to the office formally held by you. Still, I feel very confident that you will come out all right.

I hope you will excuse the uninteresting letter, I would write you a shorter one but have not time. Accept my fondest regards for yourself and family

Truley TF Sorrells

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NB write me a letter Pine Bluff
to me as well (to the care of WL Dewood
which shall for be still private) and give
me your candid view

TF Sorrells