

(Henry Lafayette Pelouze)

Archive of Correspondence recommending H.L. Pelouze to Three Presidents to be Postmaster of Richmond, Virginia

Richmond: 1869-1889

\$3500



An interesting archive of 37 letters, mostly written in pursuit of securing the position of Postmaster for the city of Richmond for Henry L. Pelouze, owner of H. L. Pelouze & Sons Type Foundry (formerly The Richmond Type Foundry). Old folds, a few tears and a small chip affecting one word.

Pelouze, born in New York City into a family of type founders, founded The Richmond Type Foundry in 1859, in order to enlarge his New York City business. However when war was declared, and Mr. Pelouze was not able to get through the lines until 1862. While he was in Richmond he was imprisoned for some time in Libby Prison as a Northern sympathizer, but later, through the intercession of the proprietors of the Richmond Whig and influence of Gen. Harry Pelouze, adjutant under General Grant, he was paroled and engaged in typefounding, something the Confederacy was sorely lacking. He later changed the name of the business to the Henry L. Pelouze & Son Foundry when his son Edward Craige Pelouze joined as a junior partner.

Pelouze was nominated for Congress from the Richmond district in the campaign which elected Garfield to the Presidency. In the interests of party unity he was induced to withdraw in favor of John S. Wise, the representative of what was known as the Mahone wing. In some sources he was described as brusque, something that can be found in some of the correspondence here. Additionally, in at least one source, is recorded that Pelouze turned down the office of Postmaster of Richmond, something that seems unlikely in light of the efforts made here to secure the position for him under three different Presidents. the archive consists of:

A. 14 Autograph Letters Signed (one is incomplete, plus one telegram transcribed onto Executive Mansion telegraph stationary) from various prominent Richmond business men to three different presidents: James A. Garfield, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Benjamin Harrison, between 1877-1889 recommending Pelouze, owner of the H.L. Pelouze & Sons Type Foundry for Postmaster of Richmond. Also includes four Executive Mansion envelopes noting the letters as forwarded to the Postmaster General.

Each of the letters is from a prominent citizen, usually a business person, recommending Pelouze. Some are docketed by the Post Office Department Appointment Office. Presumably at some point the entire file was given to Pelouze. Among those recommending Pelouze are W.L. Cook of the New York & Richmond Granite Quarry; F.J. Arnold of the Northern Immigration and Colonizing Association of Virginia; Patrick Keenan, publisher of the Catholic Visitor of Richmond; publisher B.F. Johnson, Hon. R.W. Hughes; J.H. Derbyshire of the Domestic Sewing Machine Company; H.W. Rountree of Rountree & McGinness Trunks, Bags and Valises; George A. Ainslie of the Richmond Chamber of Congress, and others.

B. Two Autograph Letters Signed from Pelouze to Garfield (presumably retained copies). The first is sent to Garfield as President Elect, sending: "...this piece of Virginia pen knife whittling [not present] from one who has hoped to aid your administration as the Republican Representative from this District, but consented to withdraw on almost the eve of the election at the earnest request of the National Republican Committee..." The second letter, written to Garfield as President acknowledges a letter from Garfield and suggests that Dr. Gilmer, the present Postmaster of Richmond sabotaged Pelouze's attempt to be elected to the House, and that President Hayes had acknowledged that he had made a mistake in appointing Gilmer, thus suggesting, somewhat vindictively, that Pelouze thus wished to supplant Gilmer.

C. Additionally there are 13 letters written by other prominent Richmond citizens to other officials including the Vice President, and to successive Postmasters General in pursuit of the same goal (a couple of the letters are earlier, one in 1869 recommends Pelouze generally for a position in the government). One of the letters is from General Wyatt M. Elliott publisher of the *Richmond Whig*. Another is from Alex Vanderburgh of Vanderburgh, Wells & Co. Printers' Purchasing Depot, and another from George D. Wise, Congressman, former Confederate officer, and longtime Commonwealth's attorney of the city of Richmond.

D. Two letters to Pelouze suggesting ways to get the job including using influence on the president. One from O.H. Russell suggests "The first thing to do, is for you to get Jorgensen and Dezendorf to see the President, Lay the whole case before him, tell him why you were withdrawn, and ask him not take action upon Gilmer, until [?], Wickham and myself can be heard..."

E. Two letters to Pelouze on unrelated business matters.

F. Two letters from Pelouze (presumably retained copies) that seem to show a less politic side of the businessman: one to a Mr. Stevens, a local storeowner, wishing to cease all contact.

The second is a much more interesting letter to his wife Jennie in 1879, apparently after she had left without warning for a three week vacation using the household money, much to Pelouze's aggrieved and strongly stated consternation: "One thing more that you talk about your rights to my money. Any of my children can claim just the same rights and demand what they think is their due - but both you and them better wait until I die before claiming any as your dues for as long as I live I shall claim full control of whatever means my industry and abilities have given me - In conclusion I subscribe myself as ever your loving Husband. Henry".

G. One letter regarding Pelouze's estate (1898) in which Jennie does indeed claim Pelouze's estate!

An interesting file of correspondence of an aggressive office seeker in post War Richmond.

[BTC#413789]

~~122~~ All orders from parties unknown to us must be accompanied by city reference or cash to the amount of bill. When sent C. O. D. enough to pay Express charges both ways in case goods are not called for, will be deemed sufficient to insure prompt shipment of goods.

H. L. PELOUZE.

F. H. PELOUZE.

OFFICE OF

H. L. Pelouze & Son's,
Type Foundry,

—AND—

PRINTERS' FURNISHING WAREHOUSE,

(BRANCHES AT BALTIMORE AND WASHINGTON.)

Richmond, Va., May 7th 1881

To his Excellency

Dear Sir

In acknowledging receipt of Your esteemed favor of the 3^d inst - I have only to say