

Gen

Yankton D.T.
May 15 - 1870.

Hon W. W. Belknap
Secy of War.
Washington

My dear General.

The enclosed note I hope you will do me the favor to lay before the President. It is in behalf of the Secretary of the Territory, Turner M. Wilkins whose removal from office we have just heard of - Some weeks since the President removed Mr Wilkins upon representations made by the Delegate of the Territory, Hon S. L. Spinks of immorality & dissipation - Upon the intercession of friends Mr Wilkins was restored to his position upon his promise of reformation.

Since his return to the Territory his conduct has been characterized by the strictest propriety, morally and socially. The most exacting could not with reason demand

a more complete compliance with a promise
than has been exhibited by this young gentleman.

He has been followed by a most cruel perse-
cution by a set of men here for their personal
purposes and I do not doubt that the
President's mind has been poisoned by the misrep-
resentations - The only ^{reason} ~~report~~ that I have heard
assigned for the removal of Mr Wilkins is
that he has apostatized from his party, fealty
and allied himself to the Democrats, and in
support of the charge it is affirmed that his
bondsmen are of that political faith.

Dr Joel A. Patten, John Lawrence Esq and

and myself are his bondsmen and if
the three first named are not consistent
Republicans, there are none in the territory - as
for myself it cannot be claimed that I have ever
affiliated with that political faith, other than by
the support I gave the war measures of the
President during the rebellion - of this the present
President is well advised - I went upon Mr
Wilkins bond as act of personal kindness and
with the belief that he had been badly treated
by people here, his professed friends and companions

who obtained his confidence, and betrayed him,
and also in the hope that the probation upon
which he was placed, as understood here, by the President
would have the effect to restore him to himself.
And I believe the kindness of the President in
doing ^{this act} is fully appreciated by the Secretary, and
that he is now proving himself worthy of the
clemency extended to him. I write frankly
to you, General, that you may fully understand
the case and in the hope that the President
may be induced to withdraw the nomination of
Mr W's successor, now understood to be before the
Senate Mr Wilkins was a personal friend of Genl
Rawlins, to whom he owed his appointment.

I am General

Very Truly yours.

J. B. S. Wood