TO CHARLES GOODYEAR

Sir: Washington City March 29th 1847

I have had the honour to receive by the hands of Edmund Burke Esqr. of this city a small box, containing specimens of your, “Gum Elastic manufacture,” and which in your letter of the 17th Instant, you present for my acceptance.

The degree of perfection which the manufacture of this substance has attained, and the many useful purposes to which it is being applied, is highly creditable to the skill and intelligence of the manufacturors.

Thanking you for the specimens of your manufacture, which accompanied your letter: . . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC~JKP. Probably addressed to New York City.

1. Goodyear (1800–1860) was a native of New Haven, Conn. His business ventures often landed him in debt and in prison. In 1839, he developed a process of vulcanizing rubber that allowed the material to retain its elasticity at all temperatures; he patented the process in 1844.

2. A native of Vermont and an attorney and newspaper editor, Burke (1809–82) represented a New Hampshire district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1839–45, and served as commissioner of patents during Polk’s presidency.