

Wm. H. ... George

Fort Randall, N.Y.

1st Dec 1860

(Double space)

Dear George

By the last mail I Received yours of the 11th ulto- in which you say that South Carolina will Secede and that all the Cotton States will follow on or before the 4th March next- You then say "If they do, what course will you pursue? I would like an answer to this question and if you will be governed by circumstances, tell me what they are." You being an officer of the Army I am particularly to hear from you what course you will pursue in case of a Secession of the Southern States."

Your questions are so Comprehensive that, in order, to give you a clear idea of my views and intentions, to state my convictions, inclinations and intentions somewhat in detail-

In the first place I have no Sympathy with Sectional parties North or South- the Abolition and Secession parties are the mutual growth of each other, yet I cannot but acknowledge that the South has just cause of complaint. The North has elected Lincoln upon a Sectional issue- upon a Sectional platform-pledged to carry out Swards "irrepressible conflict" and have nullified the laws of Congress-enacted to protect Southern Rights- have made war upon the interests and domestic institutions of the Slave States- All this I do not consider sufficient cause for Rebellion- for such is Secession- until we seek Redress and protection by legal means and within the Union- Secession should be the Ultima Ratio gentium, Rebellion against tyranny I consider justified by Duty, -when all other means of Redress have been tried. I believe we can get Redress within the Union- Let us demand it legally but earnestly and unitedly- if we fail we can appeal to the God of battles- feeling justified before God and having the Sympathies of the civilized World. Until we make that appeal it is my duty as an officer of the Army and as a citizen of the United States to be loyal to the genl government and to obey all legal and proper orders- Farther- Lincoln has been constitutionally elected the President of the Union- it is our duty to see him inaugurated- the South should insist upon this- Should he violate his oath of office insist upon his being punished- Should he use his power to oppress the South- though constitutionally we are absolved from our allegiance and Rebellion becomes a Sacred duty Should we fail in getting Redress. While we show ourselves a law-abiding people- we should unitedly demand Redress- we would get it- We have in the free States more conservative voters than all the votes of the Slave States- You may ask how we are to proceed- I leave that to wiser and more experienced heads than mine- I prefer a convention to amend the Constitution. Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee- the three great conservative States of the Union should call together their Legislatures and act in concert to Save the Union and protect every section from oppression- if necessary let them do this armed to the teeth.

Dec. 1, 1860

All my blood are South- My home is South- My interests and inclinations are South- I believe that Slavery is a blessing to the Negro yet I should be sorry to see a Separate Republic established upon the sole idea of Negro Slavery. Tennessee is my home and never would I draw my sword against her- When she is defending her Rights- Sooner would I Return my commission to the President and Retire to my Mountain home and labor for my daily bread- Neither would I feel justified in my own eyes should I for office sake allow myself to be used against my neighbor in an unjust cause- Yet I feel it a duty to shrink from no duty that the honor or interest of the Union demands- I should never willingly see northern troops sent to coerce the South-

Now as to what I will do- I shall stand by the Union as long as I can do so with honor and the Union answers the purposes for which it was instituted. When I can no longer serve her with the approval of my own conscience I shall Return my commission to the President- Return home and be a Rebel. Should there be a peaceable Separation I go with my State- When my State wants my services I shall be on hand- As to circumstances- we have to be governed by them- What these circumstances may happen to be I cannot foresee- events in these troubled times come upon us unawares- I believe I can safely say that I do not.....(Rest was missing)