

Fort Randall N.S.

19 July 1861.

Dear George,

I Received yours of the 13<sup>th</sup> inst by the last mail. You do not seem pleased with my views or rather you do not exactly understand my position. Every stage of a disease require different treatment - so in the present condition of things - we must act as the disease develops itself. Blood once shed and I fear the Union is gone forever - I am for avoiding bloodshed - and to save the Union if possible. What might most conduce to these ends may differ every day.

I would with pain and grief see this great and free Nation torn to pieces.

I am a soldier with some Reputation in health and the prime of life and with twenty years experience and study. I might and I think I could rise in a civil war - let me take which side I would - God knows I seek not Reputation or Rank or Power at the expense or Ruin of my Country - I should prefer a humble home in the Mountains of East Tennessee. Yet I know should civil war obtain that I will and must be

an actor.

The "United States" is one of the great and one of the most prosperous nations of the world. Our system of government is an experiment - the eyes of enslaved millions are upon us. Our downfall is the downfall of the hopes of all the people of the world. We know what we are United - we can only guess what we would be divided by looking to the past history of the world. I admit that I am not willing to a dissolution of the Union. Yet events may so place us that it would be for the best - as the least of two evils. Society and government are all compromises - every individual in every community relinquishes some of his natural rights to the state for the benefit and safety of the whole - so is our Union. We should yet endeavor to compromise. The people should throw overboard the aspiring Demagogues and save the Union - not with the bayonet - but by conciliation. Tennessee Virginia & Kentucky should, as Central States, arm and maintain the peace of the country -

I will know the North have encroached upon the rights of the South and that Resistance to this encroachment is proper and necessary. I think it should be in the Union. Once seceded and we unite the North against us without giving them an opportunity to do us justice. By secession we place ourselves in the wrong. Yet things may come to that pass by the precipitate action of the South - the very Southern Man may have to fight for self preservation. While I condemn the course of South Carolina I should much regret to see force used against her. And I never could consent to see her coerced by Wide Awakes from the North. That would be no better than an Abolition Raid.

What I shall do depends upon events to come. So it is with all other men.

It is said a Southern Raid will be made on the 2<sup>d</sup> March on Washington City - I hope not. I would defend the City if I was there. I oppose mobs and Raids. What the South does, let it be done by authority of State or States and do it with dignity. No good could result to the South.

in a political or military sense by the taking of Washington by a mob. As a military position - I know none weaker south of Mason and Dixon's line. Fifty thousand men unsupported by authority, could not hold Washington three days - certainly not a week. Bear this in mind. Should Wise or any other man seize Washington - he will leave it with defeat and disgrace. This is a military opinion.

Suppose the Union dissolved and that peaceably - say fifteen Southern States form a confederacy - How are you to support a government - A Navy a post Office Dept. An Army. & co direct tax - for such would be the case. The expense would not be less than fifty millions. In case of war more. Tax the Southern States fifty millions one year and see how they will bear it. About five dollars on every man woman and child. But in the event of a civil war which is inevitable if the South

persist in secession. and a war on  
your own soil. Will it pay? When you  
count the loss of life and property by  
invasion. However much I deplore the  
course the South takes. Yet it is my  
home. My blood, interests and sympathies  
are all with the South.

I hear some people talk of annexing  
Cuba in the event of a Southern  
Confederacy - she can't do it. because  
the North would side with Cuba. We  
would soon be thankful for peace.

Some others I hear contrasting the  
Northern and Southern people - I  
dislike to hear it. They are both  
Anglo-Saxons. As to Resources - the  
North has the advantage in both  
men and money. By this I do not  
mean to say the North could conquer  
the South - neither could the South  
conquer the North - but she could inflict great  
injury upon the South - such as  
the people would not bear many  
years. I have no patience with  
extremists North or South. Let men  
look to an honorable adjustment of  
the difficulties.

I wish I could see Sumner - Vir. Ad.  
Mo and Kentucky - Armed and acting in  
Concert to Restrain the South and to  
Require the North to do justice. A violent  
Remedy for a violent disease. Unless  
they (said states) act soon they will have  
to elect between being an appendage  
to the North or go with the South.

The states North and South are Arming  
safety demands that Sumner should  
do the same. I wish I was at home  
during the session of the Legislature.

I have written this in a hurry and  
have not looked it over.

I am in command here of five  
Companies of My Regiment - with  
Officers from Maine to Texas. Two  
from South Carolina have Resigned  
and gone home. All keep cool  
and talk calmly of the difficulties -

I shall look with interest to the  
Action of Sumner - I love her and  
honor and her actions, will probably  
carry me with her. Yet I do not  
decide myself as to the position I  
should occupy should I find myself  
in the "Rebel Camp". When Rebellion becomes  
justifiable I will be there - Not before -

Your Uncle John M. [Signature]