



Civil Liberties and the Civil War in Pennsylvania

Primary Source

Transcription: Letter from Pierce Butler to George Cadwalader, Aug. 24 1861

Found in: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, George Cadwalader Papers, Collection 1454, Box 411, Folder 3, Correspondence: June-December 1861

Fort Lafayette, Aug. 24, 1861

[Answ. 4th Sept. 1861]

My dear George,

After we parted at Camden [New Jersey] on the day of my arrest, nothing occurred until our arrival at New York. The Marshall, his assistant and myself walked to the Aston House, where we stayed about two hours. I wrote a note to Fanny from there, and one to my daughter Fanny at Lenox, to let them know of my arrest. We took a carriage and drove to Fort Hamilton; we reached there at 2 o'clock in the morning, and after the necessary ceremonies to gain admittance, we were introduced to Lieut. Col. Martin Burke, 2nd Artillery, who commands that Fort as well as this one. He received us courteously, and after a brief explanation by the Marshall, I was transferred in a boat to this Fort. Lieut Chas. O. Wood, 9th Infantry commands here; Lieut Sterling, 1st Infantry is second in command; there are about fifty recruits not yet assigned; these, and a sergeant of ordinance constitute the whole force. Mayor [C-y?] is also at Fort Hamilton, but I have not seen him. I found fifteen citizen prisoners here on my arrival on Tuesday morning; I made the sixteenth; four have come in since, so that we have twenty. More are expected. None of those here were taken in arms. We are lodged in the lower casemates, six prisoners are in our casemate, each having a single bed. We are allowed to have our meals furnished by the wife of the Sergeant of Ordinance, who gives us two comfortable meals at a charge of dollar a day to each person; breakfast at 8 o'clock and dinner at 3. We exercise in the quadrangle of the Fort from seven to eight in the morning and from half after five to half after six in the evening. At other times, we remain in our rooms, or sit outside the doors, and we may pass to the other casemates to visit our fellow prisoners. At 9.15 p.m. the lights are put out, and we must be in bed. Thus you perceive we have as much liberty inside the Fort as we desire, and our treatment is kind. No visitors are admitted: an order from Lieut Gen. Scott alone will admit any one. Our letters are of course seen by the Commander before they are sent away, and those written to us must be left open, and enclosed to "Lieut Col. Burke, Fort Hamilton, Long Island, N.Y." I have been this particular in my description of this place because as you have commanded Forts and held prisoners of state, I thought it might interest you. I am not in want of anything. We are allowed to receive whatever is sent to us, and anything that we may order for ourselves from New York. We get the daily New York newspapers. I have written to Charles Henry Fisher to ask him to pay the balance on the mortgage to Mr. James; and I have written to the latter to

say that I wish the whole sum invested in the 5 per cent loan of the State of Penna and if he agrees with me in the propriety of this investment, he will request our counsel Mr. Wharton to obtain an order from the Court to this end, without waiting for my return to Philada which is uncertain.

I hope you had no difficulty about the keys in my office; I gave Mr. Milluard [?] a written memorandum where to find them. I should like very much to hear from you in regard to the examination of my papers, and whether the Marshall found anything which he thought necessary to send to Washington. He promised me that he would not go to my office except in your company, and that he would make the examination of my papers himself: if he has observed his promise, I am satisfied. I have not made use of your card of introduction; there has been no occasion when I thought it would aide me. I will write to Fanny again.

Yours ever affectionately,

Pierce Butler

We are requested to add the following post script to all of our letters:

“It is my express desire that the contents of this letter or any part of it will not be put in such a situation as to be published in any newspaper.” P.B.