



Civil Liberties and the Civil War in Pennsylvania

Primary Source

Fort La Fayette, N.Y.
Sept. 12, 1861

My dear George,

Your kind letters of Aug. 27, Sept. 4 & 5, were duly received. I am much bound to you for all you have done for me, and for your offers to do anything I may call upon you to do. At present I want for nothing. When the money you handed me - \$25 - was exhausted, I send a check on Bank North America, where I have money, to Mr. Hollis, and he sent me a bank draft on which I am now living.

In regard to the proposal of Mr. Fisher to borrow \$20,000 on mortgage, I have written fully to him, to Mr. G. M. Wharton and Capt. James. I object to loan on any mortgage security in these perilous and uncertain times, and have named the loan of State of Penna and City of Philada Gas loan - not the common loan - as the best secured loans in my judgment, and on which, with an order of court, I am willing to invest the whole \$40,000. Mr. Fisher understands my views, but I have not yet heard from Mr. Wharton or Capt. James in my reply.

We have now about 64 prisoners - 17 seamen and the rest citizen prisoners. Dr. Wister, Sarah and Fanny came to see on Tuesday 10th, and staid about three quarters of an hour; the interview was in the office of Lieut. Wood, Commander of the Fort, and in his presence. Dr. Wister returned home the same day, but the children came again yesterday the 11th by permission of Col. Burke, and remained an hour. Mayor [Clity?] accompanied me there, and was present at the time. The orders from Washington do not permit any interviews, excepting in the presence of an officer. They, the children, have returned to Lenox: Sarah will write to you and I wish Fisher to see the letter; also Dr. Wister; Fisher will take it to him, in case you do not see him. I want you to know my views, that you may not disapprove my course, or rather any action that I may be compelled to take.

I was glad to learn that my officer keys were in your possession, where I wish them to remain. You know that I had nothing to apprehend from an examination of my papers, but no one is pleased to have his private correspondence of years past, subjected to the vulgar curiosity of strangers: this you assume was not done, accepting so far as was necessary to convince the officers of the nature and dates of the letters. I am glad the examination was thorough.

I think that my arrest must have been caused by false information lodged at Washn by some person or persons residing in Philada. I would give not a little to know who they are. I would like of all things - it is the only thing that I do desire very strongly - to have my case fairly examined in

Philadelphia, the city of my birth and residence; and then my accusers, if there are any, would be compelled to show their faces.

More than this I will not ask, and I hope that no friend of mine will ask anything more. If I leave this prison, it must be by right, and not by favour. I have no wish to be pardoned out.

I annex, for your satisfaction and that of Fisher and Dr. Wister, a list of all and every fire arm I sent or took to the South; the character and disposition of them will satisfy you of my purpose. You may recollect that I spoke to you about rifled muskets, and that I wanted to get five or six to send to the plantation: I could not get them, and gave it up. Previously to last winter, I had no weapon of any kind, not even a shot-gun or pistol, on the plantation; and my desire was to establish a little armory in the house there, in case of any disturbance among the negroes.

I am,
My dear George,
Yours very affectionately
Pierce Butler

P.S.

You will recollect the post script to my last letter against publishing any part of what I write. P.B.