

From James H. Birch to Hamilton R. Gamble

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At Kingston, Mo.,
Sep. 7, 1862.

Sir:

Less in my own name, or in [*text stricken through*] what others may suppose to be my own interests, than in the name of what we have left of private right & of public liberty, I again respectfully address you, as the Chief Magistrate of the State, and the Commander in Chief of its Militia. Having to do this under circumstances of great hurry and inconvenience--writing on the side of my bed, and having to speak in a few hours--I will be excused, accordingly, [*text stricken through*] should what I thus throw together fall either below the requirements of self-respecting calmness, or appropriate diction.

As a candidate for Congress, I have been addressing assemblies of the people, in various counties, for several weeks. To what extent, if any, those addresses are deemed to have contributed to the mere probabilities of my personal success at the polls need not, of course, be here adverted to. Nor shall I do more than allude (as I otherwise might do) to the varied recognition I have received at the hands of [*text stricken through*] Military Organizations amongst whom I have been thrown--having been treated by some of them as a citizen who was once himself a soldier, who urged & advocated their present organization, (in the Convention and elsewhere), and every drop of whose blood, not "[muster?] free" is covered by the same uniform

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they wear--whilst by others I could not have been treated with greater discourtesy, or with more vulgar menace, had the antecedent & present position of my race and my [own?] been the exact reverse. I pass, hence, to the direct purpose of this communication, which is probably the last one with which I will trouble your Excellency during the present canvass.

Pursuant to appointment, I spoke on Thursday last, in Carrollton, for about two hours. The best men of the County, of all phases of political opinion were [*text stricken through*] present--listening with an earnestness and a courtesy which but gratifying denoted the absorbing interest which is beginning to be felt in our coming elections.

What I said was but an amplification of my public circulars--both of which you have seen. I had reached the point of having read extracts from the speeches of Senator Browning, in [*text stricken through*] reply to Mr[.] Sumner, on the [confiscation?] question, & was proceeding to read the concurring opinion of Mr[.] Allen, of Illinois, when I was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of a Captain of a militia company ([MS. illegible] in the Town) and compelled to desist from longer "abusing the government", as he chose to interpret and denounce my line of remark.

A copy of his subsequent official note, addressed to me at my Hotel, an hour or two after he had suppressed me at the Court-house, will be subjoined, and will of course sufficiently denote why I write--why, indeed, I am compelled to write. I trust I need scarcely add, in

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this connexion, that the note of the Captain is wholly untrue; and that of the large assembly who were present to hear not a man can be found to concur with him except the few who are either as ignorant as himself, or who put him forward to suppress all further free discussion in his county, in the hope, thereby to carry the elections in their own behalf, or in their own selfish interests.

I would here close this letter, were it not that what I hear of the military organization at this place--their treatment of citizens and their apprehended assumption of menace and force at the polls,

impels me to add a word in that connexion, as still further justifying and enforcing the appeal which I thus respectfully repeat in the name of free Government--sinuously and openly menaced at the ballot box. I will not repeat even the substance of the speech of my competitor yesterday, and to which I will fully reply in that connexion to-day; but I do say that after [*text stricken through*] the allusion he made to his "correspondence with the authorities in St. Louis," and to the [clan?] of persons who did not enroll in the Militia column, [*text stricken through*] men here who were compelled to enroll in the other column, are made afraid to vote, as well in view of indictment for perjury before my competitor, who is their judge, as of the military who (at this point) is composed of a majority of his friends.

At another place, in his own Court, as I came through, a friend of

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mine informed me that it had been threatened there that any man who voted for me should be drawn up and made to give bond, &c; and I hear of still another gentleman, [*text stricken through*] in Richmond, who feels constrained to vote for my competitor as a mere measure of protection to his property, &c. That competitor, Governor, is a Judge under your Administration & an aid-de-camp in your Military family--a circumstance to which I would not allude except as denoting (as I doubt not it will) the [*text stricken through*] still greater necessity, that by a [*text stricken through*] proper "general Order" the whole state may see that so far as it depends upon its Executive, (Commander in-chief) the first election which is to be held under his administration shall be commenced, full and free.

In less than half the time which it has taken me to thus jot down a few of the hundred reasons which cry aloud that "the Army should thus be called to Order", your Excellency can (and I doubt not will) make the necessary order, by which the military will be positively forbidden to interfere with the voters (leaving cases of perjury, should any occur) to the Courts, as heretofore; and making the commissions of the officers to depend upon the manner in which they shall see to it that the order is observed and enforced.

I [MS. illegible] add a copy of Captain Standley's official note, by which I was prevented from fulfilling my remain-

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ing appointments, and hence came here, (where court was being held,) and where I shall speak in an hour or so, as I shall at all my remaining appointments, unless prevented, which I will not be (of course) in the presence of such a general order [*text stricken through*] as will guarantee the freedom of discussion and the unqualified liberty of voting.

With great respect,
Your friend & Servant,
James H. Birch

"Head Quarters, Camp Hall,
Carrollton Mo.,
Oct. 2, 1862.

James H. Birch, Esq.,
Sir:--

You are hereby notified that after hearing your speech to-day, you are hereby forbid to address or interfere with the citizens of this county with your "secesh" doctrines.

Respectfully

Wakefield Standly,
Capt. Commanding Post.["]

(P.S.)--The mail having just come in, I am happy to see by your correspondence with Genl. Halleck, that you have (as no sensible man doubted) the entire control of the militia--as at present organized.