

From Orville Chester Brown to Friend Pomroy

[page 1]

Bellville Jef. Co[.] N.Y.

Dec[.] 12 1861

Friend Pomroy[,]

I see by the papers that the question of Slavery is squarely before Congress. Heretofore various means were resorted to, by politicians to put far away the evil day, and allow the barbaric institution to live on and multiply its victims, while it poisoned and demoralized not only the social and political system, but the most sacred fountains of justice. We are now reaping its ripe and bitter fruits in the rebellion of the Slave states.

In spirit every slave state has seceded. The leaders are slaveholders. The slave holders are nearly a unit in the rebellion.

Where are the leading slave holders in Missouri that have come out for the Union, except "Old Milt" Magee?

[page 2]

The number of slaveholders in 1850 was 247,000. For years they have endeavored to place slave property on the same ground [*text stricken through*] as other property: and by the aid of Judge Laney of the Supreme Court succeeded.

If therefore the highest Judicial authority of the land, has [*text stricken through*] reduced the slave to the [*text stricken through*] status of the mule or the horse how can congress discriminate in favor of the rebel title to his slave, while it puts the rebel mule or horse into the goat traces: The Supreme Court makes no such distinction. If it is in the power of Congress under the constitution [Constitution], to pass laws, confiscating the property of rebels in arms against the government, let the law reach all the property; and not leave in the enemies hand his best weapons of resistance.

Is it said that slave property is peculiar, and its general confiscation of rebels, would endanger similar property of union men? Admit it, it is ther misfortune. It is hard for loyal-

[page 3]

men all over the nation numbering hundreds to one of the other class, to be heavily taxed to carry on this war, to suffer in the general stagnation of business, depreciation of property; to loose the time and lives of their sons in putting down this rebellion. The slave holders have shared equally in governmental protection, while enjoying a monopoly of the slave trafic, bringing to their aid in flagrant outrage of the moral sentiment of the nation, peculiar priveleges from the genl. Govt. in favor of their property.

The general slave interest has now become the sworn & deadly enemies of govt. The few loyal slaveholders, cannot now expect any peculiar favors longer. If [they] are honest, they will not claim it, if the necessities of the war require them to take the common chances of other men for preserving their property. While the question of national [MS. illegible] which overrides

[page 4]

all others, hangs in suspense.

When the spirit of loyalty rises to its true level, property, homes and even life, will not be in the way of devotion to the government. Such is the spirit infused into the Southern mind; not of shareholders only but of the masses, who are putting their lives into this contest. We learned in Kansas that there was but one way to whip the BRS (which was [*text stricken through*] the putting of the little [MS. illegible] of this rebellion) and that was to go at them without gloves. Earnest work is required and

until the govt. meets them as they meet it, nothing will be accomplished. Too much [*text stricken through*] should be thrown upon the President[.] The slaveholders of the loyal states are broad enough to carry this responsibility. The country is rife for this action. The occasion requires measures commensuratively bold with those of the rebels. Snow balls will [*text stricken through*] not conquer or cool them.

[page 5]

If "slavery is the corner stone of the Southern confederacy" knock it out. This head stone of the corner gone what becomes of the superstructure?

This war is made in the interest of some 225,000 slave holders. By this act of rebellion they cease "to have any rights which the govt. is bound to respect[.]" Congress and the govt should not discriminate in regard to slave property when Judge Laney does not. The govt has given them abundant time for reflection. Every day [*text stricken through*] adds further proof, that no forbearance or its sort will to bring the Southern mind back to a sense of their duty. Bullets & Bayonets will be far more influential than Shermans Proclamations. They treat the conduct of the govt, thus far, as did the "rude boy["] in the apple tree when the old Farmer threw tufts of grass at him.

[page 6]

Bellville Jef. Co NY  
Dec[.] 12 1861

Friend Pomroy

I see by the papers that the question of slavery is squarely before Congress. Heretofore various [*text stricken through*] means were resorted to, by politicians to put far away the evil day, and allow the barbaric institution to live on, and multiply its victims, while it poisoned and [demoralized?] not only the social & political system, but the most sacred fountains of justice. We are now reaping its ripe & bitter fruits in the rebellion of the slave states--

In spirit every slave state has rebelled[.] The leaders are slave holders[.] The slave holders are nearly a unit in the rebellion.

Where are the leading slave holders in [*text stricken through*] Missouri, that have come out for the Union, except "old Milt,"

[page 7]

The number of slaveholders in 1850 was 247,000.

For years they have endeavored [endeavored] to place slave property on the same ground [*text stricken through*] as other property. And by the aid of [*text stricken through*] Judge Laney of the Supreme Court [*text stricken through*] succeeded[.] If [*text stricken through*] therefore the highest [*text stricken through*] Judicial authority of the land has [*text stricken through*] the slave [*text stricken through*] state [*text stricken through*] of the mule, indeed how can congress go back of that decision and [*text stricken through*] Why so Sensitive about negro property. Why should Congress make a distinction when the [*text stricken through*] Supreme Court makes none. Is it said that slave property is peculiar and its general confiscation of rebels would endanger similar property of union slave owners. Admit it, it is their misfortune. It is also hard for loyal men all over the nation numbering hundreds to one, [*text stricken through*] of the other class, to be heavily taxed to carry on this war, without having shared in any of the 'advantages' of slavery. And why should govt be more tender of the one & tax the hundred others?

[page 8]

If loyal slave owners loose their slaves by a rebellion springing from slavery itself, why should the government be under any obligation to return their property, and more than to return my horse that broke out of my enclosure. If they can catch them let them do so. But the govt can know no man as a slave until proved so by the state laws that make them slaves.

I have conversed with many intelligent people in Illinois and this state of all political opinions & have not seen a douzen men but are unanimous in the opinion that rebel property should be confiscated without distinction. Indeed it is a growing sentiment that the cause of the rebellion must

[page 9]

be removed. If "slavery is the cornerstone of the Southern Confederacy" knock it out. This head of the corner gone, what becomes of the Superstructure. If 225,000 slave holders are of more consequence than 5,000[,]000 "[MS. illegible]" of course Congress and the government will discriminate when Judge Laney does not. With regards to Gen.l Lane & Judge Conway

I am very truly yours

O[.]C[.] Brown