

Millport, Lawrence County, Ohio
August 7th 1861

Gov. F. H. Pierpont,
Sir,

The great anxiety that I feel for the Loyal subjects of Western Virginia, to have them relieved from the oppressions, privations, wrongs and danger to which they are subjected by lawless rebels called secessionists, is the only apology that I will offer for troubling you with this letter; and as I am a plain & humble farmer I hope you will excuse my awkward stile.

I live at Hamlin, a prominent neighbourhood in Cabell County, Virginia 20 miles S.E. from the Court House; where three mail routes connect, and I was the Post Master, (which you can see by reference to the list of post masters) and because I would not purge myself and act under the Southern Confederacy. I had on the 4th of July to leave my family, house and business, and flee in haste to the State of Ohio to keep from being taken by a guerrilla troop of rebels charged with treason, hung by a lawless mob, or sent to Kanawha Jail to await a more formal, but equally unjust trial & execution. One of my neighbours was taken, and we have not yet learned what his fate was: others hid themselves in the hills and have been lying out for days & nights & weeks and a number of us are in Ohio, impatiently waiting and hoping that the government will soon destroy or bring into subjection those rebels, and furnish the Union men with arms that they may be able to hold the Country after the rebels have been subdued against all uprisings in any & every place.

I hear that there is one regiment sent to Charleston, Kanawha County, and there is one regiment mustering into service at Ceredo on the Ohio River 2 ½ miles above the mouth of Big Sandy, this is all the force that I hear of being appointed for all that country lying between the Kanawha & Big Sandy Rivers, and they must take it like the farmers ploughs his fields by lands, consequently, it will be some time before the people upon Guyandotte, Mud & Coal Rivers can be relieved from their sufferings which are great, for it is now the dry season of the year the people have to get their grinding done at a very few steam miles, I am told that the Secessionists have placed armed squads on the different roads leading to those mills, which prevent the Union Men from getting meal for their families.

Now Sir, I will not dictate, but merely suggest to you the propriety of forming another regiment for the more speedy & effectual relief of the Guyandotte, Mud & Coal River Country to be mustered into the service at Boone Court House, and I would recommend the Rev. Robert Brooks as the most suitable man for Colonel to command said Regiment: he stands above six feet above his shoes commanding & martial in appearance, of a gentlemanly bearing, neither too old nor too young, he is deliberate, cool, & calculating, has an inventive penetrating mind, and sound judgment. Myself & others have solicited Mr. Brooks to accept the office & he has consented to do so. Now sir, if you can (after taking a survey of the whole ground) concur with our views & wishes, you will please forward a commission to Mr. Brooks by the first mail, authorizing him to raise a regiment to serve in Western Virginia. You will direct it to Quaker Bottom, Lawrence County, Ohio.

Very Respectfully Your Obt. Servt.
Jas. C. Black

P. S.

In the County of Lawrence, State of Ohio there is one regiment of reserve militia already organized and armed, which I feel satisfied would be pleased to go into Western Virginia and would do so were we called by our Governor (Gov. Dennison) I am Capt. of a Company at this Millersport, and I feel safe in saying my company would go readily. We know most of the Union Men who are drove from Va. And knowing them they have our sympathy and having no kind feelings for the rebels we would like to go over the river & assist the Union Men in getting organized & fixed up so they can defend themselves families of Union Men are undoubtedly suffering in Virginia the men compelled to flee to the State of Ohio to save their lives their families left unprotected & depending on the mills of the county for flour & meal. The rebels ruling supreme will not let them avail themselves of the advantages the county possesses

Respectfully Yours

M. M. Conn (signature hard to read)