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Executive Department
Annapolis May 18th 1853

Richard S. Merriess Esq
Attorney at Law, Baltimore City,

Sir:

His Excellency the Governor, has directed me to transmit to you the enclosed copy of an order passed, this day, by the House of Delegates, and to apprise you that in pursuance thereof, you are, in connection with Gerrit Spence, Esq, assigned as Counsel to carry out the instructions contained in said order.

You will please notify me immediately of your acceptance or refusal of this appointment.

Very Respectfully
Yours obt. Serv^t
Thos. H. Orin
Secy. of State

Note - A copy of the above was also sent to Gerrit Spence, Esq.

War Department
Washington, May 21st 1853

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of May 22nd ultimo, enclosing a copy of a resolution passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland, requesting the return of the Muster and Pay rolls of the Soldiers of Maryland in the War of 1812, which were sent to the War Department, to settle the accounts for their services, or Certified Copies of them.

This Department has uniformly declined to accede to requests of this kind, and I feel constrained to adhere to that course in the present case.

The many thousands applications for bounty land, granted under recent laws, as well as numerous claims for arrears of pay and various other questions relating to accounts, are settled chiefly by reference to the muster rolls which are, therefore, in hourly use; and as whatever may be granted to one cannot be denied to any, to attempt to have copies made, or to suffer them to be made, would greatly impede the settlement of the claims above referred to, and otherwise embarrass the public business. Another and not less urgent reason is, the use that would be made of the information thus made public, in the prosecution of fraudulent claims by persons who would not fail to avail themselves of it for that purpose. The surest and almost the only safeguard the Government has against the numerous attempts that are made to obtain bounty land and other dues by personating Volunteers and