

Congress of 13th March 1862 which prohibits officers in the service of the United States "from employing any of the forces under their respective Commands for the purpose of returning fugitives from service or labor who may have escaped from any persons to whom such service or labor is claimed to be due"

The claim which Congress seems manifestly to have here had in view, and which the officers of the United States are forbidden to assist by means of the forces under their command, is the claim of the owner upon the slave, and not a claim which the Law either for Criminal or Civil purposes has upon such fugitive property —

Such being the case I think you will see no impropriety in allowing the Sheriff (in such a case but the mere Custodian or Agent of the Law) to enforce any claim it may have upon any property so situated.

I assume of course, what you would doubtless take care to be assured of, that this is no mere cover or evasion of the Act of Congress in question — I have no reason to think that it is. And on being authentically satisfied that the Judgement was rendered, and the Execution thereon levied as stated, that the debt is still unpaid and the Sheriff as the officer of the law entitled to the possession of the property, I hope that if within your lines, you will not feel it to be inconsistent with your duty as prescribed by the Act of Congress referred to, to suffer the officer to take such property in charge

I am with great respect
Your obdt. Servt.

A. W. Bradford

Baltimore March 16th 1863

To His Excellency A. W. Bradford
Governor of Maryland

Sir:

I have received your communication of the 13th Inst. appointing me Agent for the State to ascertain and as far as possible, relieve the wants of the sick and wounded officers and men of the Maryland Regiments in the service of the United States, so far as personal visitation, advice, sympathy, aid in obtaining pay, and general watchfulness over their welfare and interests are concerned.

I readily accept the appointment, with the understanding that it brings with it no remuneration, but that necessary expenses, incurred in the discharge of its duties, may be refunded from the public Treasury.

The precise nature and extent of the duties required can of course be ascertained only by experience; — but I will make an honest effort to commence the work, and if it lies within the scope of my ability will faithfully pursue it. I shall at once commence a survey of the Hospitals in and around