

the duties of a foraging party — When our soldiers were in the Enemy's country they could take what they pleased, but offered pay — when in our own dominions they could also take what they pleased necessary for their present use, but always gave an order on the Government to pay for that which they had taken — neither did they take all a man had; but those men took all and did not divide — If I had been at home and known them to be U.S. troops I would have divided with them, reserving a portion for myself, and would not have exacted pay or ever complained; but forcible entry I will always resist, let the matter in contest be ever so small — I act on principle. — If these men return here again they shall be met by me, if I am at home, as enemies, let the consequences be what they may. — I am willing to sustain my Government in all honorable acts; but will not submit to be robbed by a set of desperadoes while life lasts. — If they are U.S. Cavalry I am willing to submit provided I am paid for my property, as I shall have to pay a very heavy war tax in addition to my State, County & taxes which are considerable — both taxes united will amount to more than the proceeds of my property; and if the Government or Administration will give me credit on my War Tax bill for the amount of the produce they have taken from me, I will be satisfied.

Maryland, I conceive, is a sovereign and independent State (tho' now under Martial Law) — you are our chief Magistrate, and it is through you alone, that her citizens are to look for justice.

Very Respectfully yr. friend & servt.
John H. Sappington

P.S. This Major Hounsfield & troopers were from the State of Delaware guarding the Rail Road — as pickets on the roads. J.H.S.

State of Maryland
Executive Department
Annapolis July 30th 1863

Dr. John H. Sappington

Sir:

Yours of 17th Inst. was received in which you complain of the conduct of a foraging party of the Federal Army in taking your Grain &c without your consent and desire to know whether I can recognize such conduct.

We must all just now recognize the rules and the practice incident to a condition of actual War, and your own experience in former Wars will no doubt suggest that even these rules in times of imminent danger are not at all times properly observed by foraging parties.

Such I know was frequently the case during the excitement occasioned by the recent invasion of our State by the Rebel Army.