

State of Maryland

Executive Department

Annapolis March 16th 1864

His Excellency, Abraham Lincoln
President of the United States

Dear Sir:

I feel it to be my duty to enclose to you a copy of a letter just received from the States Attorney of Prince Georges County in this State, and to invite your serious attention to its contents — It sets forth the particulars of an outrage committed by a detachment of Colored troops passing through that County about a week ago, who forceably entered the County Jail and set at liberty twenty one Prisoners therein confined, the greater part of them on Criminal charges, some already indicted and awaiting trial, and one under conviction for a capital crime and awaiting sentence —

I am not disposed to trouble your Excellency with any comments upon such a proceeding nor can I believe it to be necessary — I cannot for a moment suppose that such conduct will be tolerated by you, nor doubt that you will cause immediate enquiry to be made into the transaction, and promptly punish those engaged in it —

At a time like this when the proximity of our Armies brings into the State large numbers of Camp followers, and when many hundreds of our slave population have left their homes, and are straggling through the State, dependent in a great degree for support, upon what they can pilfer, our Citizens are subject in more than an ordinary degree to depredations, and if a squad of soldiers is permitted to pass through our County towns, and forceably deliver the jails of their inmates, your Excellency can well imagine the results to be apprehended.

I would therefore most respectfully suggest that it is due to the safety of our Citizens, as well as to the credit of the Government that such an outrage as is detailed in the enclosed letter should not only be promptly punished, but that some such order should be immediately passed as will prevent its recurrence, and hold the officers in command of such troops to a strict accountability.

I submit the subject for your Excellency's consideration, in confidence that you will apply the proper remedy.

I have the honor to be

With great respect

Your obdt. Servt.

A. W. Bradford