

Union, Monroe County, W.Va

July 15, 1865

Hon. G. W. Summers

Sir,

Upon reaching this place a few days ago, my Wife¹ handed to me a summons, which had been left at her house, issued on the 27th May last from the Clk's Office of Circuit Court of Kanawha County against me in an action of trespass on the case of certain parties under the firm name of J. G. & J. M. Staunton & Co, who lay their damage at \$2000⁰⁰. I do not know who these parties are, or what is their alleged cause of action, but presume they are persons who may have lost or who claim to have lost something during the occupancy of the Kanawha Valley by the Confederate troops. I have heard that the General Assembly of West Va have passed some law authorizing suits against any Southern men by Union men whose property was disturbed by Confederate troops during the war. Whilst it is hard to believe that such an act could have been passed, yet I cannot otherwise account for this suit, as I never before heard of these men, and am confident that I never disturbed their property myself

¹ Refers to his second wife, Mary Cochrane Reid.

and never authorized or ordered any one else

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to do so. The summons is made returnable to July rules. I desire to secure your service in this suit in my behalf, if you are willing to serve me.

I say “if you are willing to serve me,” because I have been informed that you have complained of and still feel unkindly towards me on account of my requirement of you, when I was in command at Charleston, to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederate Government, attributing my course in this regard to some unkindness on my part toward you. My impression was that at the time I expressed to you the kind feeling and respect which I entertained for you, and the pain which it gave me to require anything unpleasant of you. If I failed at the time in giving you these assurances, I assure you now to that was my feeling, and that my course was only in obedience to express instructions from the Confederate Government, whose orders I was bound to obey. I understood that Gen. Loring² had been complained of on account

² Confederate General William Wing Loring.

of his leniency in this respect, and when
the command of the army was turned over
to me I received definite and positive in-
structions, which, whilst they did not mention

who were required to take the oath
you and the other gentlemen by name ^
yet so clearly embraced you, that I dared

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not disregard them, although I had always en-
tertained for you a personal respect nad
regarded you as a personal friend. I pursued
the same course towards Maj. Parks,³ who
was exceedingly kind to me and how entertained
me most hospitably whilst I was in Charleston
sick for a considerable time when the army
was there, and so with regard to some others
who were my friends, and who, I believe,
understood the cause of my actions.

I hope, if I have not been misinformed as
to your feelings and complaint in the
matter, that this statement will be regarded
as satisfactory by as to my action not
having been dictated by any want of kind
feeling toward you.

Be kind enough to let me know by letter

³ Major Andrew Parks was a Charleston area attorney.

addressed to me at Lewisburg, care of Mr.
Mason or Mr. Thomas Matthews, whether
you can or will attend to my interests in
this case, and if you do, when the case
will be called for trial, and what will
be necessary for me to do to prepare for
the defence [*sic*] etc, etc. I should be pleased
to hear from you at your earliest convenience
and by first opportunity, as I expect soon to
leave this place. I wrote to Maj. Thos. L.
Broun⁴ some time ago about the case, but
not hearing from him, I fear that he may

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not be in Charleston.

I am very respectfully

Your Obt. Sert

Jno. Echols

⁴ Thomas L. Broun (1823-1914) was a prominent Charleston attorney who had studied law under George Summers. He was a member of the Kanawha Rifleman & achieved the rank of major in the Confederate army.