

Braxton Bragg to Henry J. Hunt.

Barrancas, [Florida], April 21, 1861.

Autograph letter signed, 3 pages + envelope.

Near Barrancas,

Saturday Evening (21 Apl 61 H.J.H)

My dear Hunt:

How strange are the mutations of life! That we should be in hostile array against each other. A few short months since companions in army, and almost brothers in friendship, it is hard to realize the fact that we [*inserted: are*] in hostile array against each other. But so it is, and tho' I would have taken an oath that my old friend Hunt could never be the instrument of oppression in the hands of a Black Republic yet we see strange things in this world, and even must be content to put up with it as we find it. Each one of us of course will follow the dictates of his own conscience. But for fear you may rest under a misapprehension in regard to this move in the South, I will give you a few facts on which you may rely. This is no movement of politicians. The people, en-mass, are the leaders – and every man is now united in the cause. You may destroy us, but cannot conquer. Every class is represented in the ranks. Many of my privates here [2] are men of incomes from \$10,000 to \$50,000. a year and I could in twenty four hours raise \$20,000.000 by subscription, were it necessary to further our cause. I do not say this my dear old friend to influence you, I know too well your elevation character, to allow me to trifle with it – but I merely wish you to have the truth before you. We feel that we cannot live with the North in peace and we desire to be left alone to pursue the even tenor of our way. We submitted until we could submit no longer, and we decided to quit, and now we merely ask to be let alone.

We have asked for peace, but shall not decline War. Your president has decided on War. His orders to you are to get you into position and war is inevitable. His policy is at last declared [*inserted: “to subjugate us”*] and the result is that Virginia has at once seceded by an almost unanimous vote, and taken the Navy Yard & Vessels at Norfolk, and report says Harpers Ferry. North Carolina Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri & Arkansas have followed, and are pouring out troops by the thousands to defend themselves. Maryland has forbidden Northern troops to pass

her borders, and every avenue to Washington [3] is closed. Hundreds of officers from these States are resigning daily, and the whole country is on the eve of a long and bloody civil war. Surely this ought not to be, but so it is, and there is no help for it now that I can see, but for the people to rise up & decide to separate peacefully.

Fort Sumpter has surrendered to a “military necessity” – would to God the whole question could be submitted to three plain sensible men to settle justly. There is room enough in this world for us all to live in peace, and why should we not do so?

I enclose you a few slips of news, and only wish I could see you and my other old friends at the social board. For friends I still believe them, tho’ I think them mistaken in their course.

Yours most Truly,

Braxton Bragg.

[*envelope*]

B. Bragg

Maj. H. J. Hunt.

Fort Pickens –