

(Private)

His Excellency }
M^{rs}. H. Water }
Montgomery }
Mobile January 29th 1864

My dear friend

I reached home last night after a fatiguing trip to Jackson in search of Genl Polk and Gov. Clarke. - I found and delivered your letter. - After reading it, he expressed his willingness to aid in any manner in his power to carry into effect any order which might be made by Genl Polk on this subject. He told me that Genl. Polk had left about an hour previous for Canton where he was to visit the troops stationed there, but that he would not be there until next day. - As there was no rail road to Canton I attempted to procure a private conveyance to Medford, twelve miles to the end of the rail road leading to Canton, and thence to procure one in the city. - Finding myself failed in the pursuit, the next morning very early telegraphed my business to Genl Polk at Canton and afterwards called to see Gov. Clarke who then told me that the Genl was at Knoxville, in an entirely different direction watching the movements of the enemy, but would be at Canton on the next day, where my despatch would reach him. - The next morning we left for Meridian, and while on the way the Genl told me that Genl Polk came back to Jackson late the night before, as he had then been just informed. - It was too late to go back, and moreover I thought I could accomplish my object by seeing Col. Jack Polk, adj. Genl & Chief of Staff. - I called on him immediately on reaching Meridian, and he both went to see the Governor, and started his willingness to aid Genl Polk in making the dispatch, but at the same time, for the first time, interpolated the idea that Meridian

Many, instead of calling upon the planter to get their negroes from them at the time they were needed them for commencing their crops, should make the soldier do all their labor - that it properly belonged to the army - that he had the works at Corinth built by the soldiers - and the producing capacity of the country should be interfused with a little of his pipe. He intimated very strongly his intention of urging the source of the supply of labor very strongly upon Genl. Polk, inasmuch as he thought the people of Mississippi should devote their labor to the production of food, and at no time could slaves be so idly spared from home as now.

I have however made arrangements with Col. Jack for forwarding by Carrier your letter, and an explanatory one from me to Genl. Polk. I was attempting to reply to the views of the Governor. - So soon as I receive information from the Chief of Staff, I will return to Meridian and adjust the system of improvements now in operation in the State.

There was intelligence in Jackson that Sherman's army had reached Hickory, numbering 15,000 men - that the garrison at Hickory (variously) consisted of 3 white and 5 negro regiments. - That a large force of the enemy were capturing the Big Black, moving in three divisions and capturing at three different points. The turnpike were various as to the object of the expedition. - Some persons supposed that they were intended to move up in the rear of Meridian, to meet at that point with a column coming down from Memphis and the troops from Corinth - the object being to protect Memphis - but after further and by a rapid movement across entire Mississippi and north Alabama - cutting off all communications with Tennessee. - Another idea was, that the troops were designed to aid in the reduction of Mobile, and to advance by the rail road to Meridian - which being taken - would with Jackson be depot of supplies for the army from Hickory - the big black and the turnpike cutting off the army banding at Pascagoula, cut off all communications between Mississippi and Mobile - Memphis & Selma, would then

come in for a share of Yankee civility. - There are however more numbers - and as Gen Polk is at Jackson, the presumption is that he will watch, and endeavor to circumvent their movements. - It seems that the supplies at Chattanooga had failed - the Mississippi and Ohio rivers being closed by the ice, and the Yankees withdrew their troops to escape starvation - and give them employment in a warmer latitude. -

I will make the inquiries suggested by you, and as soon as I get a little over the accumulation of business in my office, caused by my absence, will write you. -

I enclose the Hundred dollars you were so kind
to loan me for the public service. -

Very truly Yours
F. S. Moreau

