

Gales, Court House Virginia

September 23. 1860

Sir

As the Presidential election is approaching I would like to know from you what is to prevent me from voting for Lincoln, as he is the man I prefer. The reason of this letter is that there is a great deal of threatening on the part of slave holders in regard to poor men exercising the elective franchise and as I am a law abiding citizen and has paid my taxes to the commonwealth of Virginia every year and performed all the duties and complied with all the obligations imposed on me I think it hard if I should be prevented from exercising the right of suffrage that other men do in selecting any one of the four candidates before the people for the office of President of the United States as my choice, and if I go to the Ballot Box and present my ticket in a peaceable way whether it will be received as the tickets of the other three men I hope you will direct the commissioners through out the State to receive all peaceable citizens votes that may be offered please answer this soon as I wish to have no difficulty now



now on the day of election I wish merely to
have the privilege of casting my vote for the man
I prefer and nothing more
Yours

John M. Smith

[Faint, mirrored handwriting from the reverse side of the page, appearing as bleed-through.]

Mr. Smith
asking to be permitted
to cast his vote
in the Presidential
election for Unionists.
Sept 26 1860