

Clarksburg Va
May 9th 1861

Hon John Letcher

Gov of Va

Dr Sir

We have formed and organized a Volunteer Company here but are without arms, uniforms &c. I suppose a report, of the organization of this Company, by the Col, was sent to you, through Mr Gittings, a few days since. It is important I think, with reference to the condition of this part of the State, that every facility should be afforded to enable the Companies formed and forming to muster and concentrate. There were but few Volunteer Companies in North Western Virginia, before the commencement of the recent difficulties, consequently every thing had to be done hurriedly and imperfectly. The old Companies have almost all been broken up by party differences. There is undoubtedly a wide spread and earnest movement here

to detach North Western Va from
the the other part of the State and
to hold it by means to be furnished
at home and to be supplied by
the Federal Government, Ohio and
Pennsylvania. The details of this
scheme cannot be given, by me at
least, but the purpose is manifest.
It is founded upon the supposition
that the State of Virginia cannot conven-
iently furnish means to prevent
this consummation and that
Ohio and Pennsylvania can and
will furnish the necessary aid for
the accomplishment of this object.
I fear that it will be necessary to
send from the Valley of Virginia
some troops, as far west as Grafton,
as a nucleus for the volunteer force
to be collected there. Drill masters
at least should be sent. The volunteers
that will concentrate there and
atoundsville and Parkersburg,
it must be recollected will be
the rawest militia and nothing
more, the most of them will not
even understand the simplest
words of command.



Any arms of war to this country,
through Grafton, will have to be
guarded at that point, at least;
a combination of men at that
place has for some time past been
breaking open and searching
the cars for arms of. It is useless to
deny that a large part of the people
of this part of the State prefer to follow
the fortunes of the north and what
they call the Union to a connection
with Virginia and the Southern
Confederacy. And they are willing
to act as well as to vote to secure
the success of this policy. And it
is true too that many of those who
would be disposed to adhere to
Virginia are overawed and
timid. The policy of sending troops
here from the Valley, will, I think,
have to be considered by those
in authority; it is true that a
good deal of prejudice may be
excited by it, if it is done. Our people
will be told that it is designed to
overawe them and to influence the
elections but still, I fear, that, if it
is not done, there will be with the



Robert Johnston

Consent of a large part of our people
an attempt to occupy this section
by Northern troops! This may not
be easily understood by those not familiar
with this country. But it must be
recalled that our intercourse is
almost entirely with the West and
the North, we have none with the
Central and eastern portions of
Virginia. We are not slaveholders,
many of us are of Northern birth,
we read almost exclusively Northern
newspapers and books, and listen to
Northern preachers. But I cannot go
into this subject fully.

The bearer of this
letter will explain the condition of
things here, more fully than I can
now; he is well informed upon it
and as you know entirely reliable.
A judicious distribution of improved arms
in this country would encourage us
greatly. Very respectfully.

Yours R
R Johnston